

LOSS AND SURVIVAL: EXPLORING THE DEVELOPMENT OF SUSTENANCE  
AMONG UNACCOMPANIED MINORS THROUGH THEIR INTERPRETATION OF  
LOSS

By

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## ABSTRACT

### LOSS AND SURVIVAL: EXPLORING THE DEVELOPMENT OF SUSTENANCE AMONG UNACCOMPANIED MINORS THROUGH THEIR INTERPRETATION OF LOSS

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Since 1999 Congolese unaccompanied refugee minors have been displaced from their homes in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and forced to resettle in other countries and some of them make their way to Tongogara refugee camp in Zimbabwe. Research has shown that these youth have to find means to make a typical living. The purpose of this study was to understand how unaccompanied refugee minors develop and use survival skills, and resources and how this contributes to the development of sustenance. The study focused upon Congolese youth who were resettled in Africa and their experiences. Using in-depth interviews, this study elucidated the role of contextual variations in the development of sustenance.

“Being born black and poor is like holding a candle in the wind. The wind may precede the calmness, but it always passes and the restless wind will be no more. It is better to have been burned a little by the flame while shielding it, than to let it be snuffed out by a passing wind.”

Hazel Kisimisi Moyo

To Mom MYDSRIP and my family thank you for not being easily broken and always supporting me.

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES.....	vii
LIST OF FIGURES.....	viii
<b>Introduction: Significance.....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Prevalence of Forced Migration.....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Unaccompanied Refugee Minors.....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Refugee Minors: Trauma, Stress and Resilience.....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Regional and Continental Forced Migration: Camp Settlement.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Sustenance Development and Survival.....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Dearth of Contextually and Culturally Relevant Research.....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Congolese Refugee Minors Context.....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Outcomes after Displacement.....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Life Satisfaction.....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Refugee Minors Mental Health and Wellbeing.....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Importance and Purpose of the Study.....</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Innovation.....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Conceptual Model.....</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Research and Study Questions.....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Purpose of the Study.....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Methods.....</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Overview.....</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>IRB Approval.....</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Study Setting.....</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Recruitment and Procedures.....</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>Data Collection.....</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Demographic Information.....</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Semi-Structured Interviews.....</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>Pre-Migration and Post Migration Experiences.....</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>Study Scales.....</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>Life experiences.....</b>	<b>23</b>
<i>The satisfaction with life scale.....</i>	<i>23</i>
<b>Trustworthiness.....</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>Reflexivity.....</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>Researcher Bias.....</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>Data Analysis.....</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>Results.....</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>The Satisfaction with Life Scale.....</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>Summary of Findings.....</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>Conflict Provokes Migration.....</b>	<b>31</b>
<b>Escaping /Journey from the Congo.....</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>Fictive Kin.....</b>	<b>32</b>

<b>Sense of Community</b> .....	33
<b>Values and Positive Attitude</b> .....	33
<b>Hope of Resettlement</b> .....	34
<b>Contentment and Faith</b> .....	34
<b>Repeated Loss</b> .....	34
<b>Surviving Disappointments</b> .....	35
<b>Livelihoods</b> .....	35
<b>Discussion</b> .....	37
<b>Sustenance Factors/Constructs</b> .....	37
<b>Adversity</b> .....	38
<b>Promoters of Alternative Developmental Pathway</b> .....	39
<b>Ecological resources/ familial resources</b> .....	39
<b>Personal Resources</b> .....	40
<b>Hope and attitude</b> .....	40
<b>Resilience</b> .....	41
<b>Non-Profit Organizations and Sustenance Development</b> .....	41
<b>Resilience Theory and Ecological Systems Theory</b> .....	42
<b>Limitations</b> .....	42
<b>Ethical Considerations</b> .....	43
<b>Conclusions and Implications</b> .....	45
<b>APPENDICES</b> .....	47
APPENDIX A: IRB Approval.....	48
APPENDIX B: Department of Social Services Approval Letter.....	50
APPENDIX C: Consent Form.....	52
APPENDIX D: Social Services Handout.....	56
APPENDIX E: Unaccompanied Refugee Minors Demographics Questionnaire.....	60
APPENDIX F: Qualitative Interview Schedule.....	67
APPENDIX G: Token of Appreciation Acknowledgement of Receipt.....	73
<b>REFERENCES</b> .....	75

## LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: <i>Participant Demographics</i> .....	21
Table 2: <i>Participant Life Satisfaction Scale</i> .....	29
Table 3: <i>Theme, Definition &amp; Theoretical Theme</i> .....	30

## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: <i>Conceptual Model</i> .....	15
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## **Introduction: Significance**

### **Prevalence of Forced Migration**

Forced migration occurs when individuals or targeted groups are pressed to flee their homes because of political persecution, violent conflict or natural man-made disasters (Betts, 2009; Davenport, Moore, & Poe, 2003; Ingleby, 2004; Moore & Shellman, 2004). Globally, involuntary mass migration has increased due to socio-economic and political instabilities. In 2016, an unprecedented 65.3 million people around the world were forced out of their homes. Africa shoulders most of the refugee burden being home to 27% of the world's refugees and coming second to the Middle East at 37% (Derluyn & Broekaert, 2008). Uganda hosts approximately 875,655 South Sudanese Refugees (UNHCR, 2017). Zimbabwe is currently home to over 6000 Congolese refugees, with 3500 new refugees entering Zimbabwean camps in 2017 (Chikanda & Crush, 2016, CAJ News Africa 2017).

### **Unaccompanied Refugee Minors**

A large number of the world's refugee population is made up of children and adolescents (Rousseau, Said, Gagné, & Bibeau, 1998). Over half of the nearly 21.3 million refugees who were displaced from their homes, were under the age of 18 (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees 2016) most of whom seek refuge as unaccompanied minors, lack identifiable guardians and may have travelled extensively without adult supervision (Lustig, Kia-Keating, Knight, Geltman, Ellis, Kinzie, Keane & Saxe 2004; Fazel, Reed, Panter-Brick, & Stein, 2012). As of 2015, 51% of the world's refugees were children, and unaccompanied refugee minors made up a significant proportion of that percentage (UNHCR, 2015).

Conflict is one of the many causes of forced migration and Africa is considered to be

one of the contemporary settings of recurrent conflict (Ingleby, 2004). Approximately 3 million people have been displaced since violence erupted in South Sudan in 2013. Similarly, in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) 2.2 million people have been internally displaced, and over half a million have fled the country as refugees (UNICEF 2016, NRC, 2017). The DRC has been suffering from and has been torn apart by recurrent conflict from the early 1990s' up to now (Guruge et al., 2015, Steinberg, 2005) and recent resettlements show even higher numbers associated with new outbreaks of violence in the DRC. Almost half a million people have been displaced from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), the 6<sup>th</sup> highest displacement rate in the world. A (2017) Borgern Project Report showed that of the 495,724 people displaced as a result of the crisis in the DRC, 73% were under the age of twenty-five. A majority of these refugees are under the age of 18, and 11 percent were displaced within Southern African (UNHCR, 2014).

### **Refugee Minors: Trauma, Stress and Resilience**

Refugees are exposed to a lot of stressors, before, during and after their flight (Fazel & Stein, 2002). Unaccompanied refugee children are exposed to displacement, the harsh conditions of war and trauma, and extreme traumatic events, such as watching their parents being killed (Huemer et al., 2009; Sourander, 1998). Western research has demonstrated a strong relationship between unfavorable childhood experiences, and negative outcomes is strong, and may lead to substance use disorders, and behavioral problems (Chapman et al., 2004; Danese et al., 2009; Dube et al., 2001, 2003; Felitti et al., 1998; Foege, 1998).

Unaccompanied refugee minors experience an abrupt end to their period of parental dependency and socialization as they are forced to flee because of war, and experience ambiguous loss as a result of not knowing if one's parents are alive or have passed way, what

became of one's home etc. Family separation and loss, has a huge impact on emotional wellbeing, as families greatly influence refugee future outcomes (McMichael, Gifford, & Correa-Velez, 2011; Rousseau, Mekki-Berrada, & Moreau, 2001) and mitigate against mental health risks (Ajduković & Ajduković, 1993). Family separation resulting from forced migration may increase vulnerability to abuse and neglect and result in psychological, emotional, physical and health related problems in adulthood and eventually death (American Academy of Pediatrics, 1998; Anda, 2006; Danese et al., 2009; Dube et al., 2001, 2003; Edwards, Holden, Felitti, & Anda, 2003; Felitti et al., 1998; Foege, 1998).

Many studies have been focused on mental health and wellbeing of refugee children and their coping strategies and this may have led some to over-emphasize pathological aspects of refugee children's experience (e.g., Tempany, 2009; Khawaja, White, Schweitzer, & Greenslade, 2008; Goodman, 2004). Despite the harsh and unfriendly environments, an abrupt end to their period of dependency and socialization, and being forced to flee their homes due to ongoing civil war, some studies have highlighted the resilience and factors contributing to it among refugee minors (Bates et al., 2005; Luster, Qin, Bates, Johnson, & Rana, 2008; Wong, 2013; Kiteki, 2016; Bates, Luster, Johnson, Qin, & Rana, 2013). One of the ways in which unaccompanied refugees have shown resiliency is doing well in school despite having had no form of education before (Carlson, Cacciatore, & Klimek, 2012).

However, this resiliency is measured mostly from studies which focus on transnational migrants and typically looks at educational resiliency and how unaccompanied minors cope with ambiguous loss (Luster, Qin, Bates, Johnson, & Rana, 2009; Rana, Qin, Bates, Luster, & Saltarelli, 2011). This focus on educational resilience and coping strategies may be related to structured environments such as foster homes that unaccompanied minors are exposed to

when they are in international migration, (Bates et al., 2005; Luster, Qin, Bates, Rana, & Lee, 2010). We believe there is a need to explore how unaccompanied refugee minors develop and use survival skills, and resources and how this contributes to the development of sustenance.

### **Regional and Continental Forced Migration: Camp Settlements**

A 2017 American Refugee Committee report pointed out that continental displacement, unlike transcontinental displacements, results in transitional camp settlements. Often times refugees in the African context reside in refugee camps, however after registration some opt to reside outside the camp, and maintain contact with the camp (Fox & Tang, 2000). In a refugee study by Fazel and colleagues they ascertained that for those refugees who have settled in low income and middle income countries they usually stay within or near their home country, while living in camps awaiting their return home (Reed, Fazel, Jones, Panter-Brick, & Stein, 2012). Unaccompanied refugee minors needs are usually overlooked in some African countries and they aren't given the precedence that they deserve, such that they end up living in overcrowded and unsafe shelters (Fritsch, Johnson, & Juska, 2009).

Some well-known refugee camps, are the Bidi Bidi refugee camp near the small Ugandan border town of Yumbe, which is currently home to 270,000 of South Sudan's Refugees, and the Tongogara refugee camp in Manicaland Province Zimbabwe which shelters, 6,713 Congolese refugees, (Guardian Online 2017, IOL News 2017). These refugee camps often grow in large townships which become home to many hundreds of thousands of refugees. Unlike refugee minors settled abroad, those in camp settlements in Africa do not have access to foster homes and other secure placements (Bates et al., 2005; Duncan, 2001; Savic, Chur-Hansen, Mahmood, & Moore, 2013). The lives of unaccompanied refugee youths

are very independent in comparison to US settled youth. Most find a way to sustain themselves through setting up stalls where they sell various goods including food. Congolese refugee minors have little connection to structured environments minors also and when going through the camp experience during in country displacement, they are subject to the insecurity of camp life and the risk of being moved from camp to camp if a camp is overpopulated (UNICEF, 2017).

Children who are nurtured and provided with economic and other support usually grow into well rounded children, African children get this support and are taught to be self-sufficient and look after siblings from an early age,(Mann, 2004). This support is often short-lived as they are separated from their parents and caregivers due to death and forced to fend for themselves e.g. (Lischer, 2015), states that approximately 3 million Congolese died due to conflict between 1994 and 1996.

Most refugee camps go beyond their purpose as a temporary measure, are turned into market towns and refugees stay there longer than anticipated (Montclos & Kagwanja, 2000). Ideally the camps are to be located a reasonable distance from the border for security and economic reasons (Crisp & Jacobsen, 1998; Rwamatwara, 2005). In Zimbabwe their refugee policy is said to allow integration of refugees with the local populace, however camp settlement is favored as it enables refugees to get support from aid and humanitarian groups, and most probably for accountability and ease of repatriation (Chikanda & Crush, 2016). The refugee camps offer shelter, however they do not protect the unaccompanied refugee minors from some of the psychosocial challenges that affect them such as food inadequacy, and living and learning conditions leading to them, working more than average hours for less than average pay to survive (Muchini, 1993; Mutsvara, 2015).

One article that had a deep description of what an unaccompanied refugee minor is and what they face during the experience was found in an article which was in the form of a dialogue between an academic theologian and a community activist and former unaccompanied refugee minor working with an organization that helped refugees, “Growing up as child in a refugee camp was not easy. I am very familiar with issues surrounding a refugee child: poverty, inequality and exclusion. I am experienced at living in places that many would consider disadvantaged. My experience of living conditions in both Dzaleka and Tongogara refugee camps has left me with deep concerns and a conviction that we are witnessing a paradigm shift and entering a new normal.....” (Kritzinger & Mande, 2016). Facing such challenges and having favorable outcomes while being self-sustainable to some extent says a lot about unaccompanied refugee minors.

### **Sustenance Development and Survival**

Sustenance, is described as the activities that the sole economic provider engages in to ensure family subsistence (Agarwal, 1989). Jaiyebo (2003) defines sustenance as livelihoods and survival strategies of low-income households. Sustenance for the purpose of this study will be defined as the skills, and resources that unaccompanied minors make use of to survive. Colson (2003) asserts that the consequences of an uprooting depend largely on whether youth resettle on their own using their existing social and economic resources, are processed through agencies, or are kept in holding camps administered by outsiders.

However sustenance may be used interchangeably with survival because of the above description that defines sustenance as livelihoods and survival strategies of low-income households, or activities that a sole provider engages in to ensure subsistence which is loosely translated as survival (Agarwal, 1989; Jaiyebo, 2003).

Some studies on unaccompanied minors have shown that unaccompanied refugee minors sometimes develop educational and other forms of resilience (Rana et al., 2011; Bates, Luster, Johnson, Qin, & Rana, 2013; Luster, & Qin, Bates, Rana, & Lee, 2010). Studies of educational resilience do not follow the more deficit medical model of development, as they show that unaccompanied refugee minors do not always experience the negative trajectory of adverse childhood experiences portrayed in western literature. One of the many questions to be asked is “whether their resilience is a result of strengthening skills that lead to sustenance development?” Alternatively, is it due to adapting to scarcity of resources after negative, influences like war, displacement, forced migration, lived experiences in holding camps or through mimicking others like their peers, as explained by Bell’s theory of reciprocal influences of parent and offspring which states that children are socialized by their parents and are demanding beings (Bell, 1979), as such peers can be socializers as well. As a result this research is more inclined toward issues of sustenance as unaccompanied refugee minors seem to be coping well and display positive outcomes as shown above, and we wanted to see if this was true for Congolese refugee youth.

Some studies in the Western literature show that often young unaccompanied minors, such as young Sudanese refugees, have displayed positive outcomes even after having gone through unfavorable childhood experiences (Luster, Qin, Bates, Rana, & Lee, 2010) and have shown themselves to be resilient (Duncan, 2001). Given the expectation of negative outcomes following difficult childhood experiences, unaccompanied refugee minors may be vulnerable to failure. Yet, we find there are many unaccompanied minors who are currently doing well as demonstrated by research on Sudanese refugees in the US. Still, we wanted to ascertain whether this could be said of other unaccompanied refugee minors, such as Congolese

refugees, who have undergone the similar experiences. The main objective of this study is on sustenance development, during the refugee experience. Thus, the main objective of this study was to study in-country experiences to explore how unaccompanied refugee minors develop and use survival skills, and resources.

### **Dearth of Contextually & Culturally Relevant Research**

Bronstein and Montgomery (2011) propose that as part of development children are subjected to various risks or stressors. Refugee youth have experienced more than the normal stressors of childhood. During childhood most refugee youth were separated from their families and experienced a series of horrific life events (e.g., war, the death of friends, treks across deserts with insufficient food and water) as well as chronic adversity (e.g., fear of violence in the refugee camps, insufficient food rations, schools with very limited resources) without the support of their biological parents (Bates, Baird, Johnson, & Lee, 2005).

When children are exposed to chronic stressful events, their neurodevelopment can be disrupted (Glaser, 2000; E. F. Walker, Sabuwalla, & Huot, 2004), over time and often during adolescence, the child may adopt negative coping mechanisms, such as substance use or self-harm (SAMHSA, 2016, Anda, 2006; Dong et al., 2005; Glaser, 2000; Walker et al., 2004). The basic conceptual structure of unfavorable childhood experiences literature in the US focuses on abuse and neglect, which may be different from the kind of neglect that refugees face, which is usually “involuntary neglect” leading to ambiguous loss. The consequences of these tough experiences may be two-fold, showing positive and negative responses to trauma as shown by resilience studies (e.g. Boss, 2006, 2007, 2014). Some unaccompanied refugee minors do well despite abruptly severed attachments. They are unique in defying the logic of negative outcomes due to disturbed attachments which are emphasized by unfavorable



childhood experiences studies which focus on abuse and neglect and its impact on chronic diseases of aging and future development attachments (Bowlby, 2005, 2008; Brennan, Clark, & Shaver, 1998; Haene, Grietens, & Verschueren, 2010).

Much unfavorable childhood experiences literature in the US makes use of a pathological model of trauma, which emphasizes the relationship between negative childhood experiences and negative future development e.g., substance abuse issues, depression, chronic diseases of aging and the threat of a person also being an abuser themselves (CDC 2016). There are key theorists who posit pathways to overcoming this negative trajectory and some unaccompanied refugee minors displayed this trait for their development was inconsistent with the chronic model of trauma, as they had good outcomes despite being high-risk children and fit the description of individuals who do well in toxic situations portrayed in resilience and risk studies (e.g., Masten, Best, & Garnezy, 1990). In addition, Bates and colleagues (2013) indicate that “.... for the most part, these youths found strategies that promoted positive development, unlike many other children facing high levels of risk.” Thus adversity in child development may be said to reject the bio-medical deficit view of development and provides a lens to view adversity and it’s relation to positive youth development (Bates et al., 2013; Lerner, 2005; Luster et al., 2010; Park, 2004).

While some research has shown that unfavorable childhood experiences result in negative outcomes some studies such as the one by (Kritzing & Mande, 2016) has shown that some unaccompanied refugee minors in the African context defy the negative trajectory. Evidence suggests that these refugee children work hard, as such not all refugee children may have the worst outcomes (Bushman et al., 2016; Chikanda & Crush, 2016; Kritzing & Mande, 2016).

## **Congolese Refugee Minors Context**

In an ecological model, context is very important as the environment plays a role in shaping development (either positive or negative) (Bronfenbrenner, 1977, 1989, 1995, 2009; Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006; Hess & Schultz, 2008). Context may play a role as survival in the Western context is heavily guided and nourished through school and foster homes as shown above (Bates et al., 2005; Luster et al., 2010).

Data was collected from Congolese refugees who were staying in Tongogara refugee camp. Tongogara is one of two major refugee camps closest to the southern Manica border, and was established in 1980 after obtaining its independence, to accommodate Mozambican refugees who were fleeing conflict between the Mozambican government and the opposition Mozambican National Resistance Movement (RENAMO) (Lubkemann, 2008). A UNHCR 2014 report expounded that 97% of the total populations of 8,407 are individuals from the Great Lakes region countries (D.R. Congo 80%, Rwanda 10% and 7% Burundi), the remaining 3% are mainly from the Horn of Africa Ethiopia, Somalia and Eritrea. The camp has a population of approximately 10000 people and has assisted families with child headed households making up 5 percent of the population (UNHCR and WFP, Langa, 2017 & Xinhua, 2017.) According to one of the articles the participants stay in makeshift tents, do not have proper ablution services and survive on a government stipend of \$13.50 per month (Langa, 2017 & Xinhua, 2017).

## **Outcomes after Displacement**

Western research has demonstrated a strong relationship between early childhood problems and substance use disorders, and behavioral problems (Chapman et al., 2004; Danese et al., 2009; Dube et al., 2001, 2003; Felitti et al., 1998; Foege, 1998). However, there

is a scarcity of research conducted in Africa, which may be more inclined toward issues of sustenance as foster homes or organizations that offer a sheltered existence for refugees are less prevalent and youth stay in refugee camps. As such their need for survival skills and sustenance development is greater, and whether or not they develop sustenance may be dependent on their interpretation of loss. Although some studies in the Western literature show that some young unaccompanied refugee minors have not followed the expected negative outcomes trajectory after experiencing childhood trauma (Luster, Qin, Bates, Rana, & Lee, 2010) and have shown themselves to be resilient (Duncan, 2001) an in-country perspective of displaced unaccompanied refugee minors needs to be studied. With the sometimes-negative outcomes of exposure to childhood trauma, one would think unaccompanied refugee minors are set up to fail yet there are some unaccompanied minors who are currently doing well, it is interesting to know how this occurs under these dire circumstances. The main objective of this study is to understand sustenance development, thus negative outcomes after adversity will not be dwelt upon.

### **Life Satisfaction**

Pavot & Diener (1993) postulated that, the satisfaction with life scale was established to evaluate a respondent's contentment with life in its entirety, to give researchers a broad spectrum to work with without focusing on specific areas such as health. The paper emphasized sustenance development as a positive marker of development after experiencing forced migration. The paper chose to measure subjective wellbeing through sustenance development as depicted above.

### **Refugee Minors Mental Health and Wellbeing**

Current literature reviewed above showed that the functioning of unaccompanied

refugee minors refugees does not often lead to poor outcomes despite many factors undermining their wellbeing, this is in line with previous research that focused on socialization and its impact being either positive or negative e.g. (Bandura, 1989; Khawaja, White, Schweitzer, & Greenslade, 2008; Savic et al., 2013; Tempany, 2009). Instead they have coped well and this was shown through their favorable adjustment in many aspects for example in educational resilience (Bates et al., 2013; Boss, 2006; Masten et al., 1990; Rana et al., 2011).

### **Importance and Purpose of the Study**

Unaccompanied Congolese refugee youth are subjected to unfavorable childhood experiences from an early age and often for prolonged periods of time. They have experienced displacement from 1999 to the present and unaccompanied refugee youth have been living in Zimbabwe for a number of years now. Interviews with Congolese unaccompanied refugee minors gave us an understanding of how in-country experiences and childhood experiences impact how they cope in the face of hardship or tough circumstances or existence. In the current study the focus was on youth who were resettled continentally and their experiences, to learn what drives them to develop sustenance. Little research focuses on this construct and there is much to learn from a qualitative approach when subtleties can be highlighted.

This study is important as it may inform forced migration research from an African perspective as forced migration is currently prevalent as shown above. The study tried to highlight the strengths of African cultures and settings in terms of receiving and taking care of refugees through sustenance development. Further the study sought to move away from a deficit model of child development through exploring sustenance development while highlighting some of the positive stories that come out of holding camps. The study examined

the experiences of Congolese children who had been forced from their homes, separated from their families and walked for miles to escape potential or imminent death.

### **Innovation**

No studies have addressed loss and survival together among unaccompanied refugee minors, and the camp experience provided a platform to study this phenomena as the loss was somewhat still ongoing. Furthermore most refugee camp reports are said not to include refugee voices (Kreitzer, 2002). As such the study was unique in that it gathered unaccompanied refugee minors thoughts on what influences them to find ways to make a living to sustain themselves inside the camp. Another valuable addition was the focus on continental migration. Patterns of sustenance in this population of young people had not been drawn, and acquiring data from current refugees in camps was unusual, which made this data very important.

The study also focused on the interpretation of loss and survival and the association with contextual variance in developmental outcomes such as the development of sustenance. This research was conceptually innovative exploring sustenance development and parental loss which was due to circumstances beyond one's control and was not premeditated, unlike unfavorable childhood experiences in US literature which are usually as a result of willful child abuse and neglect. Most research (Savic, et al 2013; Oppedal & Idsoe, 2015) concentrates on the impact of separation from family members on the mental health and wellbeing of refugees, however no studies had focused on sustenance development, as intertwined with resilience, survival, coping and mental health amongst unaccompanied minors. Also, there were a variety of contextual variables such as whether the country of

resettlement was a high or low context culture<sup>1</sup> and implications for sustenance development (Kim, Pan, & Park, 1998). Thus, the research sought to find out if resettlement in a cultural setting similar to their culture of origin mitigated against the lifelong and crippling effects of trauma on development across the lifespan or whether outcomes were better determined by the internal resources of the individual and their ability to develop and sustain themselves.

A final perspective centers on the influence of their perceptions of loss and neglect, which has not been looked at in previous studies which focused on mental health problems, e.g. (Bean, Derluyn, Eurelings-Bontekoe, Broekaert, & Spinhoven, 2007; Derluyn, Mels, & Broekaert, 2009; Fazel & Stein, 2002) or the consistency with which unaccompanied refugee minors reported stressful life events (Spinhoven, Bean, & Eurelings-Bontekoe, 2006). The unaccompanied refugee minors' literature above shows that most of the unaccompanied minors display high level of sustenance development in the face of family and parental separation.

### **Conceptual Model**

A review of unaccompanied refugee minors' literature showed that there is a need to propose a new model to describe sustenance development as the development of sustenance

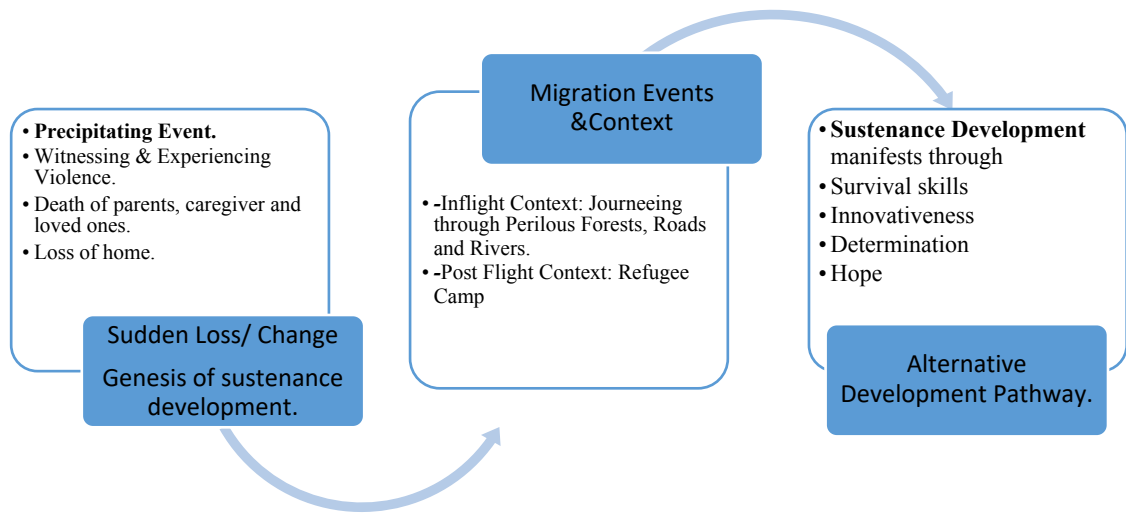
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<sup>1</sup> Low context and High cultures is a popular cultural framework proposed by Edward Hall where he stated, "all cultures can be situated in relation to one another through the styles in which they communicate"(Edward T Hall, 2000; Edward Twitchell Hall, 1989; Würtz, 2005).

skills can mitigate the impact of toxic stress resulting from extreme precipitating events and hardships associated with migration.

Figure 1:

*Conceptual Model*



### Research and Study Questions

1. What survival skills and resources do unaccompanied refugee minors use to survive, and what are the factors that contribute to unaccompanied refugee minors development and use of these survival skills and resources?
2. What do unaccompanied refugee minors see as the driving factors for migration?

### Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to understand how unaccompanied refugee minors develop and use survival skills, and resources and how this contributes to the development of sustenance

We argue that sudden change is the genesis of sustenance development. Part one of the

model depicts precipitating events: We are proposing a three part model of how to think of sustenance in the refugee context. Migration events and the context in which they occur trigger a sequence of events that result in the development of sustenance. In the model the precipitating events are sudden and total loss, of all physical, social and material resources.

The model depicts the adverse experiences and the systems which they impact: Sequence of the events, integrate the ecological systems with resilience build into it. Events can be happening at different levels, the loss itself is the catalyst of these adverse events .

We offer an alternative developmental pathway that happens as a result of going through the unfavorable events happening in the systemic context. The unaccompanied refugee minors environmental context changes, family: micro-system their definition of family changes, it can now consist of fictive kin, friends etc. (where they were once born into their families they now build families i.e. sustenance.)



## **Methods**

### **Overview**

The study employed an ethnographic research design which is described by (Blomberg, Giacomi, Mosher, & Swenton-Wall, 1993) as an approach designed to enable researchers to describe the behaviors and practices of participants to explain and understand their experiences (Aronson, 1995). To fulfil the proposed purpose of the study we recruited 7 participants from the individuals who migrated as unaccompanied minors (n=7).

Ethnographic data was collected using qualitative interviews conducted with Congolese unaccompanied refugee minors from Tongogara refugee camp in Zimbabwe. The interview was conducted using a semi-structured guide and the questions were designed in a way that allowed participants to express themselves without the influence of the researcher, to keep in line with the tenets of ethnographic research which emphasize the importance of, the subject's opinion and interpretation of interview questions (Blomberg et al., 1993).

Interviews were conducted with 7 former unaccompanied minors to better understand their sources of sustenance development emphasizing an understanding of survival, family loss, and coping but also inclusive of their sense of purpose (Bates et al., 2013; Flynn, Dudding, & Barber, 2006; Luster et al., 2010).

### **IRB Approval**

All prerequisite and necessary legal and IRB specifications for research were carried out. IRB approval was acquired in August 2017 as a component of the larger study of Sudanese unaccompanied refugee minors where I am listed graduate student researcher.

### **Study Setting**

Tongogara is located near Chipinge Zimbabwe, about 420 km southeast of Harare. The

camp is home to a large and diverse group of refugees, government and non-profit workers, Congolese refugees being one of them. Being a former cease fire base during the war Tongogara was not built for long term use however people are surviving there. The camp is located in Chipinge which has been hit by droughts and 2016 was the worst resulting in the weather being arid and causing most of the major rivers to dry up. It was hard to get in and out of the camp as it was in the outskirts of the country, also it was dangerous to venture out alone as the camp is near a national park and elephants and other wild animals sometimes roam the area at night.

### **Recruitment and Procedures**

Participants for the current study were drawn from the pool of Congolese refugees who fled to surrounding nations in Africa (particularly, Zimbabwe). Participants were asked about their interest in participating in a study and whether they would consent to be part of the study, after which the purpose of the study was explained, and they completed the pre-interview protocols. Eligibility for participation was determined by the following inclusion criteria: 1) Presence in Tongogara Refugee Camp, 2) between 13 and 19 years and 3) had been unaccompanied minors during their time of flight. This information was sought from the ministry of labor and social welfare. Eligible participants were interviewed. Interview and survey logistics were communicated on site. To ensure participant involvement till the end \$5 was given to each participant upon completion of the study.

Initial data collection had been scheduled for Summer 2017, and IRB came just before one of the researchers was supposed to leave for Zimbabwe for a summer internship. However, approval was acquired towards the end of the summer and one day before I was supposed to return to the US. Funding had been another challenge as there wasn't enough

funding to collect data in Tongogara. Thus after returning to school with the help of my advisor, we applied for and were awarded funding from the Graduate school, Human Development and Family Studies Department and my academic advisor. Plans for data collection were then revised for a new date in December 2017.

Many obstacles were confronted in the process of acquiring permission to go to Tongogara. I was fortunate to have professional colleagues from the company where I interned, World Education INC Bantwana, to help me connect with the Department of Social Welfare. Acquiring permission from the Director of Social welfare was hard, at first, as they needed to make sure the research was legitimate and for academic purposes. Zimbabwean officials in Harare and officials in Tongogara were in communication prior to researcher's arrival in Zimbabwe and permission had been obtained via word and notice. However, the Director of Social Welfare's signature could only be obtained after dropping off the request to collect data at their offices in Harare in person. Many additional documents were needed from Michigan State University (MSU) and after all were received from my advisor, trust was built and the governmental bureaucracy provided approval and became easier to navigate.

Family became essential in assisting me to conduct the research. My research assistant in Zimbabwe, happened to be my sister who was in college at the time and I was able to train her to aid me in data collection. I passed on the knowledge that I had been given during my own training here at MSU and over the phone additional training sessions from my advisor. Due to time differences the additional training usually took place during the early hours of the morning, Zimbabwean time.

With my sister and two of my cousins, one who was our driver, we set out for the camp, we left Harare at 3:00 am and got to Tongogara at 1:00pm the roads were bad and the terrain

was rough. They had very high temperatures in Chipinge on the day and we had to occasionally stop to ask for directions on the way. It was a long distance as Tongogara is 420 km from Harare and we had to make occasional stops for food and rest, as our driver was 8 months pregnant.

That day onsite supervisors were required to sign the notice of approval before recruitment and data collection could take place. We had been informed that many Congolese refugees spoke English fluently however this information was not as valid as hoped, this created surprise obstacles for us when attempting to recruit participants. Accuracy was left up in the air either due to concern by the government that information about the refugees be presented in “good light”. After ascertaining that there would be a reasonable number of participants onsite, recruitment was carried out with Congolese participants for the current study after meeting with the camp administrator and processing and signing all paperwork.

## **Data Collection**

### **Demographic Information**

Demographic information was collected and participants were asked to highlight their gender, level of education and employment status. We ascertained their age during arrival at the camp, and the number of years they had been staying in the camp. All the 7 participants had been separated from their parents.

Table 1:

*Participant Demographics*

Characteristic	<i>N</i>
Number of Participants	7
Age	
Range,	13-19
Mean	16
Gender	
Male	4
Female)	3
Education	
Current	4
Past	2
Never	1
Work/Employment	
Self	7
Formally	0
Never	0
Mean Age of Entry	10
Mean Years in Camp	5
Separated from Parents	7

## **Semi-Structured Interviews**

The study used and research tools from a longitudinal study conducted on the ‘Lost boys of Sudan’ and other related young Sudanese refugees’ materials. In addition demographic data on Congolese refugees’ population in Zimbabwe was collected from unaccompanied minors in order to note how they developed sustenance development. Data, was collected after talking to the camp administrator and sorting out all the necessary paperwork.

Interviews with the participants explored issues of ambiguous separation and loss, and participants’ interpretation of loss. The interviews were conducted through a questionnaire and scales such as the *life satisfaction scale* were used to try and understand how they developed sustenance. Qualitative questions were adapted from the research on the “Follow-up Study of Strangers in a Strange Land: Lost Boys of Sudan” (Luster et al., 2001). We wanted to assess how Congolese unaccompanied refugee minors’ sustenance was described through their refugee experiences and stay in refugee camps. The focus of this study was on pre-migration, in-flight and post-migration experiences. The youth were asked about their previous experiences and their adjustment to camp life.

## **Pre-Migration and Post Migration Experiences**

Participants were asked to describe their pre-migration experiences to understand the genesis of their forced migration experiences. Participants were asked questions related to their family life, and how life was before they had to flee and if they had any family in the camp. In so doing they would tell the story of how they came to be in Tongogara, by describing the journey, who they were with and whether any experiences were stuck in their mind. In this section we also asked a bit about their experiences since being in the camp. The

questions asked included life challenges and experiences in the camp. We also sought to understand what positive experiences they had in their new situation in Zimbabwe this was done through a description of their livelihood activities, success and achievement. We asked questions to determine their employment status or activities and how they otherwise made a living i.e. sustenance. The researcher sought to know what different sources of livelihood they had since arriving in the camp since arriving in the camp among other things. We were interested in learning more about the refugee minor's progress since coming to the camp.

Participants were asked to describe their most significant accomplishments and main goals and how well are they were doing in achieving those goals and meeting them. We sought to understand participants current goals sense of purpose and emotional strain. Participants were asked what keeps them going and what gives them hope for the future, e.g. motivations and responsibilities. This question was asked to ascertain their thoughts for the future. We sought to find out if participants experienced emotional and financial strain. This was done through asking how the economic situation in Zimbabwe had impacted them. The measures, tools and constructs above were used to evaluate the impact of forced migration on unaccompanied refugee minors and how they survive separation and loss. They were replicable in the African context and were used to understand how sustenance which is a purposeful act is developed by unaccompanied refugee minors

### **Study Scales**

#### **Life experiences.**

#### ***The satisfaction with life scale.***

The *satisfaction with life scale* (SWLS; Diener, Emmons, Larsen, & Griffin, 1985) has favorable psychometric properties, including high internal consistency and high temporal

reliability. Scores on the SWLS have been shown to correlate moderately to highly with other measures of subjective well-being (e.g., Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale, Marlowe-Crowne Social Desirability Scale) and correlated predictably with specific personality characteristics. The SWLS is suitable for use with different age groups. Participants were asked to rate their life satisfaction by being asked to express their contentment with life in the camp: 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = slightly disagree, 4 = neither agree nor disagree, 5 = slightly agree, 6 = agree, 7 = strongly agree).

### **Trustworthiness**

Trustworthiness in the study was achieved through developing an audit trail, and clarifying researcher' bias (Creswell, 2013; Marshall and Rossman, 2016). In this study from the beginning of forming the research idea to the end of writing up the results an audit trail was documented to keep track of the process (Richards, 2015). The primary investigator and two other coders worked on the interview data, and some of the coders provided some work on a subset of the data, discussions between coders were held in order to ensure coding consistency between coders (Richards, 2015). According to Creswell (2013) reflexivity is a method with which researchers use to inform the readers of their backgrounds, how it influences data interpretation, and what is gained from the study.

### **Reflexivity**

Prior to coming to MSU I had limited knowledge of refugee wellbeing. My knowledge of refugees was shaped by what I saw on the news and I thought Zimbabwe did not have a large number of refugees much less a refugee camp. My views changed after going to the camp as I saw a huge settlement with diverse people young and old. I learned that much as Zimbabwe had difficulties it possessed one priceless thing, peace. Refugees could only flee



conflict and come where they are welcome and where they feel there is security and a chance to have a peaceful existence. I felt proud as a Zimbabwean to know that my country was lending a helping hand during the refugee crisis.

Going to the refugee camp was difficult it was located in the furthest remotest part of the country and the journey began as early as 3 am. The terrain was rough and the location of the camp caused us to get lost multiple times such that we arrived at the camp past midday. I was not prepared for what I saw, the camp was a huge settlement that was bustling with activity. The camp was mix of mud and brick houses as the refugees had been provided land to accommodate them during their stay in the camp. On the day, we arrived it was toward the end of year, thus most non-profit organizations were at the camp to collect data and check on the progress of various projects they had implemented during the course of the year. This made it difficult to access a large number of unaccompanied refugee minors as some were already engaged with the visitors.

The area was very hot the main rivers there had dried up many years ago and it was so bad that refugees regularly complained about the weather. Reading about and seeing refugee stories on the news is different from listening to someone younger than you describe their horrific experiences. I had to fight my emotions to maintain professionalism though the empathetic person in me was greatly disturbed and distraught from this whole situation. Had it not been an interview I would have wanted to console the refugees and cry with them however I had to maintain professionalism.

I had no time to rest between the long journey and the interview and even after we were done rest was impossible. We had no place to sleep, fortunately we were offered a room by the camp administrator however there were a lot of mosquitos' due to the hot weather. Our

driver who was with child at the time was bitten by mosquitoes and we feared she may have been exposed to Malaria. We had to look for a place to buy food and the only available food left for sell was goat tripe and vegetables as it was late by the time we managed to go and buy food prepared by some of the refugees to sell. After eating we tried to sleep although I could barely sleep as the camp was next to a game reserve and I imagined us being attacked by animals especially elephants. I have a dreaded fear of elephants after being chased by one a few years ago. In the morning we were told that a group of elephants had passed by while we slept, I was petrified as we had slept with the door open the whole night due to the heat and I imagined what would have happened if I had awoken to an elephant hovering over me!

My experiences before and after getting to the camp influenced my data collection. Prior to my experience in the camp I had expected to see broken down and hungry people who had no will to live. Most of the images I took with me were of desolation as I had come across mostly negative print, audio and video material on unaccompanied refugee minors. My perspective has greatly changed as refugee minors have shown themselves to be resilient, hopeful and courageous people.

### **Researcher Bias**

The study made use of primary data. A pilot of the questionnaire was done by administering it to one individual who is not a participant in the study (Shoeb, Weinstein, & Mollica, 2007). This was done to reduce the bias that the researcher had going into the study. The bias was not significantly reduced as the questionnaire was self-administered.

I was able to identify some of my biases and address them before data analyses began. I believed refugees were broken individuals who have been worn out by war, turmoil and displacement from their countries. My assumptions were wrong as the participants displayed

strength, and dreams of the future that any average teenager would have. They did not let their experience define them or own them and they did not personalize it. It was shocking to see no bitterness I would be angry and bitter at the government, the militia and anyone I thought was causing the war. The URM were different they expressed pain yes but no bitterness.

The assumptions of the research are that interpretation of loss may be one of the factors that contribute to sustenance development among unaccompanied minors and this is aligned with the context. Also sustenance may be a phenomenon that is unique to unaccompanied minors who experience regional rather than transnational migration.

### **Data Analysis**

The data was analyzed using thematic analysis which is another form of a qualitative analytic method (Braun & Clarke, 2006). According to (Aronson, 1995) thematic analysis is often used after a researcher has ethnographically collected data and now seeks to report, analyze and report patterns or themes. (Boyatzis, 1998) offers a simpler definition of thematic analysis and simply describes it as a method researchers make use of to encrypt qualitative data. Thematic analysis relies on the description of participants in the study, and is a stage process which starts by data coding and then identification of themes (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006). Thematic analysis was ideal for use in this study for it has been shown to be a reliable qualitative method (Vaismoradi, Turunen, & Bondas, 2013). Analysis focused on the themes of, displacement, emotional wellbeing, family memory, new view of life and attitude.

Coding was accomplished through the use of deductive coding by making use of the ideas that researchers had before the interview, and inductive coding by drawing themes from the interview data (Joffe & Yardley, 2004). Interview recordings were transcribed and our

codes were data and theory driven and we analyzed raw data to ascertain key themes in which we could discern sustenance development, from the participant's narratives,(Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006a; Joffe & Yardley, 2004). Data interpretation was done through searching for patent and recurring themes in the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This process was applied, to the data and an example was when we were looking at participants descriptions of the genesis of the refugee experience. The theme was conflict provokes migration and the following statements were processed using the above mentioned method. The statements were, Participant number 1, "My family was have a good life but there is a trouble that come in our lives that provoked us to leave our country, Participant number 4, "It was very difficult because of the noise and the government", "Like my father and mother were burnt in the house." A table of themes, their descriptions and definitions was drawn up to make it easier to search for and organize the themes and patterns. The results are shown in table 3 below.

## Results

### The Satisfaction with Life Scale

Table 2:

*Participant Life Satisfaction Scale*

Scale	<i>N</i>
Number of Participants	7
Extremely satisfied	0
Very satisfied	2
Moderately satisfied	1
Slightly satisfied	1
Not at all satisfied	2

Participant responses indicated how satisfied they were with their lives. Their responses showed that none of the unaccompanied refugee minors were extremely satisfied with life in the camp. Some were not at all satisfied like participant number 1 and 7 e.g. participant number 1, “Without liar life is not going well, we receive our food only but other thing there is a problem with life.” One of the participants was slightly satisfied, their only complaint being about the weather, “Here... it’s not everything because the sun here is too much.” Participant number 4 was moderately satisfied while participant number 3, 5 and 6 were satisfied with their lives.

### Summary of Findings

The themes that were extracted from the study were centered around precipitating events, migration events and context and sustenance development. The following ten major themes were identified: conflict provokes migration, hope of resettlement, fictive kin, contentment and faith, escaping or journey from the Congo, repeated loss, sense of

community, values and positive attitude, surviving disappointment and livelihoods. Table 3 lists each of these themes and their associated definitions.

Table 3:

*Theme, Definition and Theoretical Theme*

<u>Theme</u>	<u>Definition</u>	<u>Theoretical Theme</u>
Conflict Provokes Migration	Migrations were initiated or forced by various aspects of violence, fear of nearing violence or violence toward the family. The youth flee to survive.	*Sustenance, Survival, *Family Separation,
Hope of resettlement	The youth were not expressing any desire to go back to the DRC. They accepted their fate, did not think back and focused on what lay ahead.	*Sustenance, *Survival Family Separation,
Fictive Kin	Youth made and kept relationships with older youths and adults in the camp. These friendships provided them with company during and after their migration and someone to look after their needs if need be.	*Sustenance, *Survival Family Separation,
Contentment and faith.	Youth expressed no negativity and although they acknowledged life was difficult they appreciated the peace. When down their faith helped them cope.	*Sustenance, *Survival Family Separation,
Escaping /Journey from the Congo	The flight experience was taxing and involved hitch hiking, securing boat rides and train rides without any money.	*Sustenance, *Survival *Family Separation,
Repeated loss	Further separation and losing communication with a sibling after getting to Tongogara was coded as repeated loss	*Sustenance, *Survival *Family Separation,
Sense of community.	The people who would be killing each other if they were in the Congo, coexist peacefully.	*Sustenance, *Survival Family Separation,

Table 3: (cont'd) *Theme, Definition and Theoretical Theme*

Values and Positive Attitude	Some of the youth lived by the values taught to them by their parents. Also they were inspired by successful people that they knew.	*Sustenance, *Survival *Family Separation,
Surviving disappointments	Uncertainty of getting help and rising past disappointments.	*Sustenance, *Survival Family Separation,
Livelihoods	The work that youth engaged in in order to survive.	*Sustenance, Survival Family Separation,

Sustenance appeared in all of the ten themes, while Survival was a feature in nine of the themes and Family separation came up in four out of the ten themes. The common themes in the study supported our alternative developmental pathway theory as it showed that what unaccompanied minors went through shaped who they were individually and as a group. They could have been overcome by their experiences yet they overcame and were resilient and expressed a unique and alternative developmental pathway through sustenance development.

### **Conflict Provokes Migration**

Migrations were initiated or caused by a variety of experiences. Unaccompanied refugee youth came to the camps after fleeing conflict in the Democratic Republic of Congo. The youth remembered or were disturbed or sad because of the loss of stability, especially the stabilizing force of family. One of the participants' quote expressed the cause of migration lucidly, "My family was have a good life but there is a trouble that come in our lives that provoked us to leave our country". Their flight was abrupt and most of them came from the Congo with nothing. They had to set flee to Zimbabwe to preserve their lives.

## **Escaping /Journey from the Congo**

Sociohistorical events that affected some of the unaccompanied refugee minors were precipitated by conflict and the loss of loved ones as shown above. The journey was unplanned and as such, the unaccompanied refugee minors took the journey in bits and pieces, some taking a boat at first and ending it by road. The following excerpts from the interviews provided a clear description of this perilous time, “Yes I remember that what I remember is I was taken by boat from Congo to Zambia, from Zambia I was taken by a truck,” “We just travel from DRC then from Zambia then, I don’t know how we take the truck then we arrive here in,” “...from there we take a train from Congo to here in Zimbabwe,” “Mm mm, when they killed my mother and father it was at night. When I ran I saw some trucks coming from Lusaka and I asked for a lift here and I came here. Thus began their journey to find a new place to call home.

## **Fictive Kin**

Separation from their parents as role models, providers, protectors and socializers, played an important role in shaping their outcomes as separation was at the genesis of their experiences. Sustenance skills for survival may have been borne that moment as most of them experienced a sudden loss of their families, some were made double orphans, and left to fend for themselves. Creating and maintaining fictive kinship is perhaps, a response to their sudden loss of guardians and immediate flight to safety. Relationship with fictive kin were one of the most important coping strategies as they acted as temporary caregivers. They now had family not only by blood but through association and friendship. Most of the participants had this type or relationship as shown by the following examples “No we live here in Zimbabwe as friends only. “...I just met a friend she was older, she just helped me,” “Ok she supported me



by schooling, she bought me stationery something like that.” These relations provided them with a sense of community.

### **Sense of Community**

The unaccompanied refugee minors did not feel alienated in the camp and there were no divisions through ethnicity or political affiliation in the camp. This was something the refugees greatly appreciated and despite lacking in other basic needs, peace was what they needed most and they had it. They all echoed that peace was what they were most proud of, “I’m most proud because we are, we don’t have tribalism,” “Am just proud of people are helping each other...”, “There is a peace in Zimbabwe, that making me happy.”

Unaccompanied refugee minors had values that helped them to live peacefully in the camp.

### **Values and Positive Attitude**

Some of the unaccompanied refugee minors made use of the values that they were taught before separation from their family to restore stability in their lives. The time period that they spent with their parents may have influenced the positive outcomes that unaccompanied refugee minors displayed through sustenance development. Some of the unaccompanied minors recalled values they were taught by their parents, e.g. “Ok what I remember is that my mother told me respect all people and be with peace of all people wherever you go searching for life.” Although they themselves were suffering, they still had positive advice to give others, they did not spew hatred, e.g. “Ok, I could just tell them that they should not be downhearted something like that, they should just hope like I have.” The refugee youth had dreams and they did not let their situation quash their hope for the future, “...when I see the journalist when they go and take some news and write down in the newspapers and then I just say one day I want to be like them.”

## **Hope of Resettlement**

Staying positive was one way in which the unaccompanied refugee minors kept themselves on track. They had hopes of resettlement and thus they worked hard to maintain a standard for them to be eligible for when it happened. It was crushing to learn that they thought we were interviewing them to ascertain their eligibility for relocation outside of Africa. Their hope was high such that even during the interviews they all expressed the desire to move to a country other than the Congo, e.g. “To me I can say that I don’t know what I can do, but I cannot go back to the DRC, other things I left it...” “....To work in other countries,” “To work in America, Canada... hmm Australia.”

## **Contentment and Faith**

The unaccompanied refugee minors adhered to some form of religion e.g. Catholic and Jehovah’s Witness. Religion provided some sort of anchor it was an outlet for hopelessness and it gave them a sense of belonging to a community that cared about them and in which they shared the same values. Church helped some of them accept and make sense of the patterning of environmental events and transitions that were happening in their lives and were likely to happen over the life course, one short but powerful statement “I just pray to God to help me”, was from one of the participants when prompted about what makes them cope with life in the camp. They needed to keep their faith for the camp although reunites them with loved ones they sometimes experience repeated loss.

## **Repeated loss**

Unaccompanied refugee minors may experience further separation from loved ones who leave the camp to look for better opportunities. Without access to cellphones or any form of communication the only hope the refugee minors have of loved ones returning is their

promise to return. They do not know when they will return nor if they are made it to their destination and are doing well. The unaccompanied refugee minors are alone yet again but they hide this from the camp administrators in order to keep on receiving their absent sibling or relative's monthly ration. This phenomenon was captured in these examples, "I stay alone, when my brother comes we will stay together." ".....No she is in Harare," "I lived with my uncle but now my uncle is gone, I live alone." Experiencing repeated loss exposed the unaccompanied refugee minors to disappointments but they rose through them.

### **Surviving Disappointments**

Life in the camp was peaceful but hard, for the unaccompanied refugee minors. They were given first preference for the little resources that were there however they were not always enough. Furthermore not everyone has a heart willing to help and the unaccompanied minors felt that sometimes they did not get all the help they needed. Their disappointment was evident in these examples, "I can some were helping me and some were not helping me," "Disappointments? Disappointments like what, oh my gosh. There are many disappointments in this camp e.g. schooling when I was going to school I just failed, there is no way to go back to school. I just stay home something like that," "I just try to apply so I go back to school but the answers have not yet come."

### **Livelihoods**

The camp had few resources, sources within the camp attested to that and it was shown that unaccompanied refugee minors like everyone else had to survive on a monthly stipend of \$13.50 per month. In order to survive and sustain themselves they had to be resourceful. They sought ways to supplement their income through engaging in informal means of survival as there was no formal employment available. Some had vegetable gardens,

some learned how to make bricks, and some learned how to make reed mats. The choice of work was influenced by their setting and the relations they had. Families and friends were the market for their produce and wares and some were taught these skills by a knowledgeable individual within the camp. Work was made possible and relied greatly on an individual's relations within the camp and connections between mini contexts in the camp. Most of the refugees partook in an income generating activity, "I make bricks and I have the masonry to do the work," "Sewing mats and doing mentoring," "A garden."

The themes above helped us understand what unaccompanied refugee minors saw as the driving factors for migration. Their migration set the stage for an alternative developmental pathway i.e. sustenance development seeing that they experienced disruption in the early stages of their lives. Unaccompanied minors not only had to adapt in order to survive but they had to develop and use survival skills, and resources. By understanding what survival skills and resources unaccompanied refugee minors used to survive we tracked the genesis of sustenance development and the factors promoting its development e.g. contextual factors.

## **Discussion**

### **Sustenance Factors /Constructs**

Sustenance Development is a necessity for unaccompanied refugee minors after experiencing the loss of all their possessions material and otherwise. Masten and Coatsworth (1998) suggest that the same powerful adaptive systems that promote development in positive environments operate the same way in negative environments. Thus, sustenance development may be an inert phenomenon triggered and shaped by one's experiences either negative or positive. We offer sustenance development as an alternative developmental pathway, for Congolese unaccompanied refugee minors, which is shaped by the interaction between the individual and conflict situations. Depending on context and experiences one goes through the outcomes may be either negative or positive. The factors which shaped unaccompanied refugee minors outcomes will be listed below. We described the trigger of sustenance development which was adversity, and followed this up with a description of resources or filters for positive or activated outcomes. The resources were familial and ecological resources support structures from without such as family, siblings, camp administrators and older refugees. Another set of resources were personal resources, which were support structures from within the individual e.g. hope and attitude towards life.

Activities that unaccompanied refugee minors partook in to survive shaped their sustenance development. Most unaccompanied refugee minors are never reunited with their families, participant number 1 provides meaning for this circumstance, "I am alone", are a painful and sad reality in the lives of unaccompanied refugee minors. In order to survive unaccompanied refugee minors have to work even when they should be in school, for example, participant number 1 was only 19 years old and old enough to be in college, but he

was already making bricks for employment. There are no options for unaccompanied refugee minors to opt out of work, they are their own caretaker and provider. Participant number 1 describe the situation, “You know I leaving alone, I see many problems in my life that is the reason I am not happy. I am not together with my family.” The unaccompanied refugee minors showed ingenuity in acquiring jobs and keeping their skills. Some unaccompanied refugee minors engage in these activities not only for themselves but to ensure the survival of their siblings too, “Ok like for example I have my young brothers they are too small. I am their big sister I have to look after them so for example sometimes they don’t have clothes to wear so I have to sell mates and buy them clothes.”

### **Adversity**

Adversity can be one such initiator of sustenance development, as it creates the need for a new system after ecological, economic and social structures make the existing system unsustainable (B. Walker, Holling, Carpenter, & Kinzig, 2004). Adversity enhances skills as unaccompanied refugee minors attempt to learn from competent adults. Adversity pushed unaccompanied refugee minors to learn new skills such as learning how to make bricks to sell and supplement one’s stipend (Masten et al., 1999; Masten & Reed, 2002). Some of the refugees were made sudden primary caregivers yet they were surviving and managing to look after themselves and younger siblings, which is another demonstration of sustenance development. Sustenance development is a combination of many processes that lead to these outcomes. Some of the processes found in the data were sudden loss of care givers, youth suffered initial losses and as they were being driven from the DRC. In the camp some were reunited with relatives and or siblings who had managed to flee to Tongogara. However some experienced repeated loss as older siblings or an older relative would leave the camp to go

and look for work in Harare. The need to sustain oneself and younger siblings if any would arise for those suddenly left behind and they would join their peers in trying to find means to live a decent life in the camp and working towards achieving sustenance.

### **Promoters of Alternative Developmental Pathway**

#### **Ecological resources/ familial resources.**

Some researchers have found out that family support is critical to the development of strength. In tough situations early family relationships have particular importance in lifelong uncontrollable outcomes (Luthar, 2015). Many researchers also view familial and social support as a protective factor and a marker of child resilience at various developmental stages positively influencing resilience (Armstrong, Birnie-Lefcovitch, & Ungar, 2005; Wilks & Croom, 2008). Some of the unaccompanied refugee minors have no family and some have been forced into the role of major caretaker to younger siblings. This negative circumstance helps them have positive outcomes as they try to provide for younger siblings after taking up the parental role. Thus they draw from prior experiences with their parents to look after themselves and ensure the survival of them and their siblings, they display selflessness in doing this although it may be a way for them to cope through keeping busy (Tweed & Conway, 2009). The will to survive in order to ensure the survival of another is yet another aspect of endurance.

Family and siblings and sometimes fictive kin helped unaccompanied refugee minors to cope with their refugee experiences. Familial and sibling support was either direct or indirect and it provided unaccompanied refugee minors with the appropriate coping resources. These factors all strengthened them and worked to promote the sustenance development among the minors notwithstanding their unfavorable environment.

Research on forced migration and unaccompanied refugee minors focuses on studies that assess the functional and behavioral health of unaccompanied refugee minors. Tempny (2009), suggests that researchers and practitioners have developed considerable interest in culturally-specific studies on the mental health and wellbeing of refugees. However, Tempny's (2009) study was not specific to unaccompanied refugee minors who underwent regional or in country migration, who are the population of interest in this study. Thus the findings from the study may contribute toward another aspect of unaccompanied refugee minors, who are currently in refugee camps, and how their experiences and context lead to the development of sustenance.

### **Personal Resources**

#### **Hope and attitude.**

One great attribute that unaccompanied refugee minors possessed was their hope and positive attitude. Evidence has shown that losing hope hinders future achievement (Brooks, 2001). Unaccompanied refugee minors all demonstrated a desire to do more with their lives and they were hopeful for the future. Hope was a motivator and it worked to improve their circumstances because it made them more engaged and content with their surroundings for their mere existence to them was a sign that so much was yet to come. This attribute proved to be one of the mechanisms through which unaccompanied refugee minors coped, and when asked what their future plans were, most said, "one day I hope to...", this removed any permanency from their situation and made it bearable and preparation for the good life to come. In addition to hope they had a positive attitude and they were proactive as they worked to make their lives comfortable during their stay within the camp. They did not express any bitterness and although they expressed hurt for what they had gone through they were not



blaming anyone for their situation. They had a positive energy about them which contributed to them developing strength and surviving in the camp.

### **Resilience**

Resilience was displayed through the absence of post-traumatic stress disorder symptoms even after witnessing violence, for example a participant describing how they lost their whole family, “Yes, I lost my mum, my dad, my grandmother, my grandfather, my younger brother and my young sisters. I came with my 3 brothers only,” participant number 5 also lost most of her family “my mother and my grandmother and my grandfather and my uncles’ dead,” “Come to my grandfather for asking, for ask the, for ask the ,who is the ,who is the chief of this church, my grandfather is telling it’s me. The, maimai, the maimai they was his name, my grandfather they took my grandfather my mother and my uncle they put in the home and took fire and took fire and burned them,” “My mother and my mother and uncle they cry, Jesus come and help us, my mother took me and right when, when they were, when they were ,when they were in the root my aunty, when they were in the root my aunt the maimai come for us, for asks ,ask ,ask us you know you know you know the chief of church ,my mother, my aunt, my aunty tell, my father took they were took my aunty for beat, when they beat my aunt my mother.....she was injured.”

### **Non-Profit Organizations & Sustenance Development**

Organizations such as the UN worked with the Ministry of Public Works and Social Welfare to provide comprehensive care to the unaccompanied refugee minors and other refugees within the camp. One of the nonprofit organizations set up a free clinic for the refugees, and unaccompanied refugee minors receive free stationery, soap, oil and beans in addition to the monthly stipend that they get. Among many of the organizations that worked

to make the refugee experience easier for unaccompanied refugee minors were, Terredice Home (TDH), which focused on child protection, gender based violence, education and food. GOAL Zimbabwe that focused on livelihoods, livestock and food, etc. JIRS which focused on vocational studies, tailoring and cosmetology. UNHCR provides some financial support and protection to resettle refugees into different countries. Having people who cared about and were concerned about their wellbeing also contributed towards unaccompanied refugee minors sustenance development. Their monthly ration and stipend was supported, in part, by these organizations.

### **Resilience Theory and Ecological Systems Theory**

The ecological systems theory and resilience theory guided the study. We used these theories to inform our alternative developmental pathway. We believe that sustenance is one of the outcomes that may occur after an individual goes through threatening experiences, during the absence of and presence of protective factors that determine how they will cope during and after a perilous situation. Sustenance development has been shown not to be a result of a single factor, but a result of interactions of many factors e.g. individual attitude, availability of resources, and contextual factors (social norms of host country, location of refugee camp, and political and economic situation of the host country). The sustenance development processes were not only between each process and the adolescent, but also involved both processes working together to influence the outcomes of the unaccompanied refugee minors.

### **Limitations**

The study had fewer participants than anticipated associated with English fluency. A camp counsellor was assigned to help the researcher identify unaccompanied refugee minors,

as there was no separate space to conduct the interviews. This was a limitation as the camp counsellor tried to help participants with their responses a number of times because of his perceived role as their helper. Also he was present at all times during the interview which may have influenced participants responses because of the presence of an authoritative figure.

Interviews were done outside on site and this was a major limitation as the camp community was busy during this time of the month. There was a lot of outside noise and activity which affected the atmosphere of the interview as it was conducted at the residences or living spaces (some very basic shantys') of potential interviewees. The noise coupled with communication difficulties may have caused some of the participants to give short answers after a great deal of probing.

### **Ethical Considerations**

I was wary of human study considerations based on (Jacobsen & Landau, 2003; Mackenzie, McDowell, & Pittaway, 2007) a combined list of ethical dilemmas that include, "security and confidentiality, 'doing no harm' difficulties of constructing an ethical consent process and obtaining genuinely informed consent; taking fully into account and responding to refugee participants' capacities for autonomy, challenges involved in applying the central normative principles governing ethics review processes, the principles of beneficence, integrity, respect for persons, autonomy and justice to the context of refugee research."

I explained the purpose of the study consistently and that the participants were free to leave the interview at any time should they felt threatened. Confidentiality assurances were made as well. Consent forms were signed and participants were given their copies. The token of appreciation, a monetary remuneration, was explained so that participants would not

confuse it for payment and thus distort their responses.

## **Conclusions and Implications**

The study met its aim to understand how unaccompanied refugee minors develop and use survival skills, and resources and how this contributes to the development of sustenance. Camp counsellors may take these factors into consideration, and encourage and nurture behaviors that promote sustenance development as a way to cope with trauma and encourage unaccompanied refugee minors or other adolescents to develop skills, to help them survive during and after conflict. The Department of Social Services should also try to connect unaccompanied refugee minors with other schools that provide remedial classes to those who fail school during their first attempt. Resources may also be pooled from former Congolese unaccompanied refugee minors by taking advantage of the sense of community and desire to help that was expressed by some of the participants.

In this study, context and experiences were found to play roles in the development of sustenance amongst unaccompanied refugee minors after fleeing conflict. A study by Bell, (2014) showed that adolescents could play an active and indirect role in their decision making processes, thus in this study unaccompanied refugee minors were seen to be pro-active participants in the process of sustenance development (Bell, 1979; Mariano, 2014).

Key findings from the study were that unaccompanied refugee minors who experience regional migration may experience positive outcomes after displacement. Their experience is not easy and resources are limited as they have to share the few resources that are there with others in the camp. The study inferred that displacement may seed motivation in the lives of unaccompanied refugee minors, leading to an alternative developmental pathways via sustenance development. Sustenance development is a new phenomenon that was believed to be influenced by a number of factors such as selflessness and a desire to succeed to be able to

help others for example participant number 4, “Oh my gosh, I want to do something good but maybe if I apply and the answer come well I will go back to school and if I finish school I will do my Technology or Human rights. If they help me then I can just help my own.” We assume that sustenance development is an alternative developmental pathway that grows out of the need to live permanently in an impermanent situation which is characterized by an innate desire to succeed and be of service to others.

New family forms were emerging in relation to the survival theme and this was found to be stronger than the “fictive kin” term. This was seen as new construction of support and we believe this is something that needs to be studied further to understand how it can be reinforced in other unaccompanied refugee minors going through similar or related experiences of childhood trauma. In the analysis sustenance development or survival was found to be manifest in various forms e.g. determination manifested through refugee minors fleeing to survive. Innovativeness which was through refugee minors developing skills to provide for themselves and supplement their camp rations. Hope was also another aspect of sustenance development as it helped them to be optimistic despite their negative circumstances and made them look forward to their circumstances changing.

Unaccompanied refugee minors endured repeated loss which is very important to the discussion of resilience. This is something we believe to be new and can be another point of discussion in refugee minors and other groups experiencing positive outcomes after repeated separation and loss.

We recommend more studies into sustenance development, to gain more understanding of how this alternative developmental pathway occurs and try to implement it in intervention and therapeutic activities with children exposed to trauma to prevent negative outcomes.

## APPENDICES

## APPENDIX A:

### IRB Approval



**MICHIGAN STATE  
UNIVERSITY**

September 6, 2017

To: Deborah Johnson  
103 B Human Ecology Bldg

Re: **IRB# x17-1157e** Category: Exempt 2  
**Approval Date:** September 6, 2017

Title: South Sudanese Refugee Adolescent to Adult Project: Long-term Adjustment Post Resettlement

**Initial IRB  
Application  
Determination  
\*Exempt\***

The Institutional Review Board has completed their review of your project. I am pleased to advise you that **your project has been deemed as exempt** in accordance with federal regulations.

The IRB has found that your research project meets the criteria for exempt status and the criteria for the protection of human subjects in exempt research. **Under our exempt policy the Principal Investigator assumes the responsibilities for the protection of human subjects** in this project as outlined in the assurance letter and exempt educational material. The IRB office has received your signed assurance for exempt research. A copy of this signed agreement is appended for your information and records.

**Renewals:** Exempt protocols do not need to be renewed. If the project is completed, please submit an *Application for Permanent Closure*.

**Revisions:** Exempt protocols do not require revisions. However, if changes are made to a protocol that may no longer meet the exempt criteria, a new initial application will be required. If the project is modified to add additional sites for the research, please note that you may not begin your research at those sites until you receive the appropriate approvals/permissions from the sites.

**Problems:** If issues should arise during the conduct of the research, such as unanticipated problems, adverse events, or any problem that may increase the risk to the human subjects and change the category of review, notify the IRB office promptly. Any complaints from participants regarding the risk and benefits of the project must be reported to the IRB.

**Follow-up:** If your exempt project is not completed and closed after three years, the IRB office will contact you regarding the status of the project and to verify that no changes have occurred that may affect exempt status.

Please use the IRB number listed above on any forms submitted which relate to this project, or on any correspondence with the IRB office.

If we can be of further assistance, please contact us at 517-355-2180 or via email at [IRB@msu.edu](mailto:IRB@msu.edu). Thank you for your cooperation.



**Office of Regulatory Affairs  
Human Research  
Protection Programs**

**Biomedical & Health  
Institutional Review Board  
(BIRB)**

**Community Research  
Institutional Review Board  
(CRIRB)**

**Social Science  
Behavioral/Education  
Institutional Review Board  
(SIRB)**

4000 Collins Road  
Suite 136  
Lansing, MI, 48910  
(517) 355-2180  
Fax: (517) 432-4503  
Email: [irb@msu.edu](mailto:irb@msu.edu)  
[www.hrpp.msu.edu](http://www.hrpp.msu.edu)

c: Desiree Qin-Hilliard, Laura Bates, Junghee Yoon

## APPENDIX B:

Department of Social Services Approval Letter

**DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES**

**HAZEL MOYO**

**PERMISSION IS HEREBY GIVEN TO**

**MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY  
(Michigan, United States of America)**

**OF:**

**TONGOGARA REFUGEE CAMP**

**13<sup>TH</sup> - 21<sup>ST</sup> DECEMBER, 2017**

**TO VISIT**

**ON:**

**CONDUCTING A RESEARCH THESIS: TOPIC IS**

**FOR THE PURPOSE OF**

**"LOSS AND SURVIVAL", EXPLORING CONTEXTUAL VARIATIONS IN THE  
DEVELOPMENT OF SUSTENANCE AMONG UNACCOMPANIED MINORS  
THROUGH THEIR INTEPRETATION OF LOSS**

  
S. Soko

**COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES**



Signature of the Camp Administrator



**NB** Please return duplicate to Commissioner for Refugees after the visit.

**REMARKS**

Managed to collect data with the  
assistance of a community lay  
Counselor.



## APPENDIX C:

### Consent Form

## **Congolese Sustenance Development Study Consent Form**

Dear Participant,

We are asking you to be a part of a study of Congolese refugees who were displaced from the Democratic Republic of Congo in the past 19 years. **Project Information.** This study is an African extension of The Sudanese Refugee Youth Project involving Michigan State University and local resettlement agencies from 2001 to 2010. In this newest study, we will interview Congolese refugees who have resettled in Zimbabwe as unaccompanied refugee minors between 1998 and 2017. The purpose of the project is to learn about the accomplishments and experiences of Congolese refugees living in Zimbabwe since their displacement. Information from each individual will be used to help us understand how unaccompanied refugee minor youth adapt to resettlement life in new places. The interviews will also help us determine the nature of challenges refugee youth face and how they have coped with those challenges.

If you decide to be part of this research, you will be asked to participate in a face-to-face interview audio- recorded interview. The interview will take about 60 minutes of your time. During the interview, you will be asked about your feelings about yourself, school/work experiences, resettlement, challenges and coping, your satisfaction with your achievements, and future goals. In addition, you will be asked about your, work, family, and about your strengths.

Participation in this study is voluntary. If you do decide to participate, you can refuse to answer any questions that make you uncomfortable, and you can stop participating in the research at any time without penalty.

You will receive a \$5 gift card for participating in the interview. We really appreciate

your time and participation.

**Benefits and risks.** You will not receive any direct benefit from participating in this study. However, we do believe that the knowledge gained from studying the long-term adjustment process for refugee youth resettled in a different culture and context will help agencies plan better approaches to assist new refugees here and abroad.

Participating in this interview may cause you to experience negative feelings related to remembering your previous traumatic experiences in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) or in discussing challenges and disappointments you have experienced since you resettled in Zimbabwe. Of course, you are free to discontinue participating at any time.

**Confidentiality.** The interview will be audio recorded for the purposes of accurately recording your responses. We will only ask your first name in the interview in order to protect your privacy. Several other steps will be taken to help ensure your rights to privacy. Each participant in the study will be assigned a number and only that number will be used to identify the files and transcripts of files. Recordings and transcripts of interviews will be protected in a secured database at Michigan State University. Access to the interview files will be limited to the research team or for educational purposes that may include audio clips or portions of the record may be used in classroom instruction or conference presentations of research findings. If any quotes from your interview are used in publications or presentations, we will remove any identifying information so that no one can identify the individual being quoted. Your privacy will be 07-27-2017

protected to the maximum extent allowable by law. You should also be aware that if you report ongoing child abuse we must by law report it to the proper authorities. As a participant, you have the right to ask questions and to refuse to answer a question at any

time. Your individual responses to questions will not be shared with other participants in the study.

**Contact information.** If you have concerns or questions about this study, such as scientific issues, how to do any part of it, or to report an injury, please contact the PI Deborah J. Johnson, Ph.D., Department of Human Development and Family Studies. You can reach her by mail at 552 W. Circle Drive, MSU, East Lansing, MI 48824, USA; by phone at 517 432 9115; or by email at john1442@msu.edu / Hazel Moyo MS Candidate, Department of Human Development and Family Studies. You can reach her by phone on +263775162040 or by email on moyohaze@msu.edu.

If you have questions or concerns about your role and rights as a research participant, would like to obtain information or offer input, or would like to register a complaint about this study, you may contact, anonymously if you wish, the Michigan State University's Human Research Protection Program at 517-355-2180, Fax 517-432-4503, or email irb@msu.edu or regular mail at 4000 Collins Road, Ste. 136, Lansing, MI 48910. 07-27-2017

**Consent to participate.** Your signature below means that you voluntarily agree to participate in this research study.

**Signature**\_\_\_\_\_

**Date**\_\_\_\_\_

**Print name**\_\_\_\_\_

I agree to allow audio taping of the interview.

Yes No **Initials**\_\_\_\_\_

You will be given a copy of this form to keep.

## APPENDIX D:

### Social Services Handout



## **List Social Services of Zimbabwe**

Thank you for your time and participation in the study. We are providing you with a list of resources and supports in your community, should you need them.

The Secretary

Ministry of Public Service, Labour & Social Welfare

9th Floor Kaguvi Building

P.O. Box CY 17

Causeway

Harare

Zimbabwe

Telephone Numbers:

+263-4-704085

+263-4-703871

+263-4-251288

+263-4-251022

+263-4-251471

Go Zimbabwe

12-13 Cumberland Street,

Dun Laoghaire,

Co. Dublin,

Ireland

Tel: 00 353 (0)1 2809779

Fax: 00 353 (0)1 2809215

Email: [info@goal.ie](mailto:info@goal.ie)

Postal Address:

GOAL, PO Box 19,

Dun Laoghaire,

Co. Dublin

For Livelihoods Services.

Terre Des Hommes

Contact

Postfach Laufenstrasse 12

CH - 4018 Basel

Tel.: +41 61 338 91 38

Fax: +41 61 338 91 39

[info\(at\)terredeshommes.ch](mailto:info(at)terredeshommes.ch)

Child line

Head Office

31 Frank Johnson Avenue

Eastlea

Harare, Zimbabwe

Call: 116

Tel/Fax: +263 4 796 741

+263 4 793 715

+263 4 252 000

Bulawayo

34A Samuel Parirenyatwa Street

Between 1st & 2nd Ave

Bulawayo, Zimbabwe

Tel/ Fax: +263 9 880 052

+263 9 888 891

+263 9 644 27

## APPENDIX E:

### Unaccompanied Refugee Minors Demographics Questionnaire

**Congolese Unaccompanied Refugee Minors**

**Demographics Questionnaire (2018)**

**Contact Information**

**Date** \_\_\_\_\_

**Your Name** \_\_\_\_\_

**Email Address** \_\_\_\_\_

Your age: \_\_\_\_\_ Number of years in Zimbabwe \_\_\_\_\_

***Below are just some quick background questions that I would ask you to fill in.***

**(Please check the answer that best fits your situation)**

1. Gender: ☐ Male ☐ Female
2. Year of Birth, if known \_\_\_\_\_
3. Place of Birth, if known \_\_\_\_\_
4. What is your Marital Status?
  - ☐ Single and not dating
  - ☐ Single and dating
  - ☐ Cohabiting (living with partner), how long? \_\_\_\_\_
  - ☐ In a long-distance relationship (in a relationship with someone living in another city or country)
  - ☐ Married
    - How long have you been married? \_\_\_\_\_
    - Does your wife/husband live in the same city as you?
      - ☐ Yes ☐ No

▪ If no, where does he/she live? \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Legally Separated

☐ Divorced

☐ Widowed

5. Where is your wife or husband from? \_\_\_\_\_

6. Do you have children?

☐ Yes ☐ No

▪ If you have children, please list your children and tell us their age and gender

Child	Age	Boy or Girl
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		

7. Are you currently in school?

☐ Yes ☐ No

▪ If yes, answer the following questions:

Where (at what school) are you studying? \_\_\_\_\_

What degree are you working toward? \_\_\_\_\_

What is the highest level of education you have completed?

Check the highest-grade level that you have completed	Where was each degree acquired name of school or country?
---	---

<input type="radio"/> Some primary school (grades 1-7)	
<input type="radio"/> Completed primary school (7 <sup>th</sup> grade)	
<input type="radio"/> Some secondary school (Form 1– Form 6)	
<input type="radio"/> Completed secondary school (Upper Six)	
<input type="radio"/> Some Secondary School (grades 9-12)	
<input type="radio"/> Secondary school diploma	
<input type="radio"/> Some college but no degree	
<input type="radio"/> 2-year college) degree	
<input type="radio"/> Vocational or trade school certification (Type of Certification: _____)	
<input type="radio"/> Four-year college degree (B.A. or B.S)	
<input type="radio"/> Master's degree (MA or MS)  (What was your major? _____)	
<input type="radio"/> PhD  (What area? _____)	
<input type="radio"/> Professional degree (e.g., law, medicine, or pharmacy) (What field? _____)	

8. Are you currently working?

☐ Yes ☐ No

▪ If yes, where do you work? \_\_\_\_\_

What do you do? \_\_\_\_\_

How long have you been in your current job? \_\_\_\_\_

▪ Are you currently supporting family members in Congo? ☐ Yes ☐ No

How many? \_\_\_\_\_

▪ Please list other jobs you've held since 2002 and for how long you worked in those positions

Position	How long?	What did you do?

9. Has the economic situation in Zimbabwe had impact on your life circumstances (ex: job, housing, education, marriage, international travel, sadness)?



---

1	2	3	4
5			
Not	Very	Some	A lot
Devastating			
at all	little		

- If you answered a lot or devastating, please tell us how it affected your life circumstances

---

—

---

—

---

10. How old were you when you left DRC? \_\_\_\_\_ years old

11. Did you leave with any other members of your family? (e.g., brothers and sisters, cousins)

☐ Yes ☐ No

- If yes, who? \_\_\_\_\_

12. Were you and your family members resettled in the same place?

☐ Yes ☐ No

13. Who did you live with immediately after arrival in the Zimbabwe?

---

14. Have you lived in a foster family setting at all since arriving in Zimbabwe?

☐ Yes ☐ No

15. What tribe or ethnic group do you belong to? \_\_\_\_\_

16. What languages do you speak? \_\_\_\_\_

▪ Which do you consider your first language? \_\_\_\_\_

17. What language do you read and write in best? \_\_\_\_\_

18. Do you practice any religion?

☐ Yes (if yes, which religion \_\_\_\_\_)

☐ No

19. Have you returned to DRC since living in Zimbabwe?

☐ Yes ☐ No

▪ If yes, when? \_\_\_\_\_

20. What are your plans regarding residence in Zimbabwe?

☐ I plan to return to DRC permanently

☐ I plan to live in Zimbabwe and return home when I can.

☐ I will be permanently living and working in the Zimbabwe

☐ I will be permanently living and working in a different country,  
where \_\_\_\_\_

21. Please rate your life satisfaction at the current time.

1	2	3	4	5
Not	Slightly	Moderately	Very	Extremely
at all	satisfied	satisfied	satisfied	satisfied
satisfied				

(Thank you!)

## APPENDIX F:

### Qualitative Interview Schedule

## **Qualitative Interview Schedule**

Interview Schedule for Congolese Refugee Youth.

### **Introduction**

My name is Hazel Moyo and I am a Master of Science candidate at Michigan State University. Thank you for participating in this interview that will help to inform research on what facilitates sustenance development among young Congolese refugees despite childhood hardships. I would like to ask you some questions about your background, your migration experiences, who accompanied you during this period, and how you believe you overcame in order to learn more about you and how you adapted in spite of separation from family and your parents.

I hope to use this information to better understand the future outcomes of young Congolese and other unaccompanied refugee minors, globally, who were exposed to adverse childhood experiences.

Introduction of consent form. Before we begin we need to review the consent form together which provides more details on the study and your rights. If you chose to participate we need a signature on this form (present the consent form). We will start with the interview, then I will ask you to complete some general information questions, following which I can provide a small gift. (Further questions... )

Are you ready to begin? Let me start by asking you some questions about your journey from the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Note: The Demographic questionnaire should be administered prior to conducting the formal interview. (before or after depending on pilot or practice)

### **Pre-migration experience**

1. Tell me about your family and what life was like at home before you had to leave
2. What is the story of how you came to be here.
  - a. Who accompanied you when you were migrating from The Democratic Republic of Congo?
  - b. Any memories of that experience that especially stick in your mind?
  - c. Do you have relatives here with you? Siblings, cousins, others?

### Post Migration

**In this section, we ask a bit about your experiences since being here.**

3. What life challenges have you encountered/faced since living in the camp (name of camp)?

In Zimbabwe?

- a. Any challenges related to daily life? Schooling? Employment? Shelter/housing?
- b. What positive experiences have you had in your new situation here in Zimbabwe?
4. How have you coped with any challenges you've encountered? Which were hardest?
  - a. Are there values you were taught that help you now? How does these values help? (adjust this accordingly)
5. Are you in touch with any family in the Congo?
  - a. How have been contacting them?
  - b. Are you providing any support to them? What kind?
  - c. Have you been able to return home at all? If so, how did it go?
6. You were a youth when you arrived in Tongogara, were there any significant adults here that you count as important?
  - a. What makes them important? Can you describe any kinds of supports they offered?

**In this next section, we are interested in employment or how you otherwise make a living**

### Sustenance

1. What have different sources of livelihood since arriving in the camp? (regular salary, h  
Have you been a small-scale vendor or small-scale farmer?)
- b. Are you formally employed by Social Services/ Agencies if not do they provide resources in  
any way?
- c. Have you ever worked in exchange for goods? What service did you offer?  
c. Are there any other ways that you have adjusted here that you have not described? What  
other ways are you making you way here in Tongogara?

#### Survival Strategies

2. What keeps you going, (i.e. beliefs or people, other things?)  
a. Do you go to school within the camp? What has that experience been like? Easy, Hard,?

#### Success and Achievement

**We are interested in learning more about your progress since you came here, what challenges you have faced, and how you have coped with those challenges.**

1. What would you say have been your most significant accomplishments? What are you most  
proud of?
2. Tell me about your main goals? How well are you doing in achieving those goals – in what  
ways are you meeting your goals?
3. In what ways, have those goals not been met?  
9. If you feel you have been or are being successful in achieving your goals what has helped  
you to achieve (e.g. personal attributes, people, opportunities)? What supports have you  
received that helped you?

Probe categories:

- a) Financial supports: from where?

- b) Personal supports; housing, mentors/foster families, employment, school?
- c) Own family here or in Congo?)
- 4. What would say motivates you to keep going and to continue working hard toward your goals? Have you had any disappointments along the way? What were they?
- PROBE: What has helped you to cope with your disappointments

**Current goals and purpose**

**We will now talk more about your goals and responsibilities.**

- 5. What do feel are your biggest responsibilities here?
- 6. What challenges do you face in meeting these responsibilities and obligations? How do you manage multiple responsibilities if you have them?

[NOTE: IF THE PARTICIPANT HAS REFERRED TO “GIVING BACK TO CONGO”  
ASK THIS QUESTION].

- Earlier you talked about “giving back” to the Congo. (If this is true). What does it mean to you to be able to do that?
- 7. What are your thoughts for the future?
- 8. What would you recommend to fellow refugees, faced with displacement?
- 9. Are you involved in helping other refugees? [you may not need to ask]
  - a. If so, what are you doing to help other refugees cope?
  - b. Are there specific activities or projects associated with the support you provide?

Well, it has been a pleasure finding out more about you and your migration experiences. I appreciate the time you took for this interview. Is there anything else you think would be helpful for me to know so that I better understand how migration and relocation have impacted you?

I think I have all the information I need. Would it be okay with you if I contact you by phone or email if I have any more questions? [*record yes or no and if email, get the email address*]

Thanks again. This information will go a long way in informing research on coping strategies adaption and sustenance development among young Congolese refugees and others experiencing similar adversity during their early years.



## APPENDIX G:

Token of Appreciation Acknowledgement of Receipt

MP SHAURI - ETU NIGA  
 Section 6 No 80031.  
 WILONDISA RAMAZANI \$5  
 ANTONY ENINGA \$5  
 GERALD - SANGU \$5  
 Sista Selestine - \$5  
 Ngandu Matombo \$5  
 Ferdi Longe Museme \$5  
 Kitenge Fanny \$5  
 0717995417 WILONDISA RAMAZANI  
 manyuar1@gmail.com

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