



Research Paper

Psychosocial Interventions and Girl child's Access to Emergency Education within Kakuma Refugee Camp, Kenya.

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ABSTRACT

Scanty studies have been done on the impact of psychosocial interventions and empowerment of the girl child's access to education during emergencies especially those situated within refugee camp settings. Education is not just a fundamental right and public good, it also provides an empowering right through which economically and socially marginalized adults and children can liberate themselves out of poverty and fully participate in their societies. This study sought to address this empirical lacuna with reference to girls in Kakuma refugee camp in Kenya. The urgency was reinforced through an assertion by other studies that education needs to be a priority for refugees because children under 18 comprise about half of the global refugee population and that girls are most disadvantaged globally in all refugee contexts. This study evaluated influence of psychosocial interventions on the girl child's access to emergency education within Kakuma Refugee Camp, Kenya. The study was guided by Maslow's Hierarchy Theory of Needs as advanced by Abraham Maslow and the psychosocial interventions framework as modified from Ministry of health. The study area was Kakuma Refugee camp within Turkana West Sub-County in Kenya. The study employed a sample survey design. The sample frame was 27 primary schools with a pupil population of 57,000. The girls who formed the targeted population were 14,496 across the 27 primary schools and those sampled for the study were 6000 from 8 schools which had documented psycho-social cases. Guidance and Counselling teachers and Head Teachers were also sampled for this study in addition to two education officers based on their roles and expertise. The study found that only three of the nine psychosocial interventions were fairly rated between 50% and 65% on their application. These were psychotherapy at 64%, guidance and counselling at 60% and remedial classes during holidays at 51%. The study concluded that roll out of psychosocial interventions in the Kakuma refugee camp schools is still low and could have a negative bearing on girl's access to education in this emergency setting just as could be the case in other emergency settings as averred by previous studies outside the study area. It's recommended that capacity of teachers and increased funding should be boosted so that psychosocial interventions can be fully applied and spread across to cover a wider number of girls in the emergency settings like Kakuma refugee camp, Kenya.

Key Words: Psychosocial, Interventions, Girl child, Emergency, Education, Refugee Camp

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I. Introduction

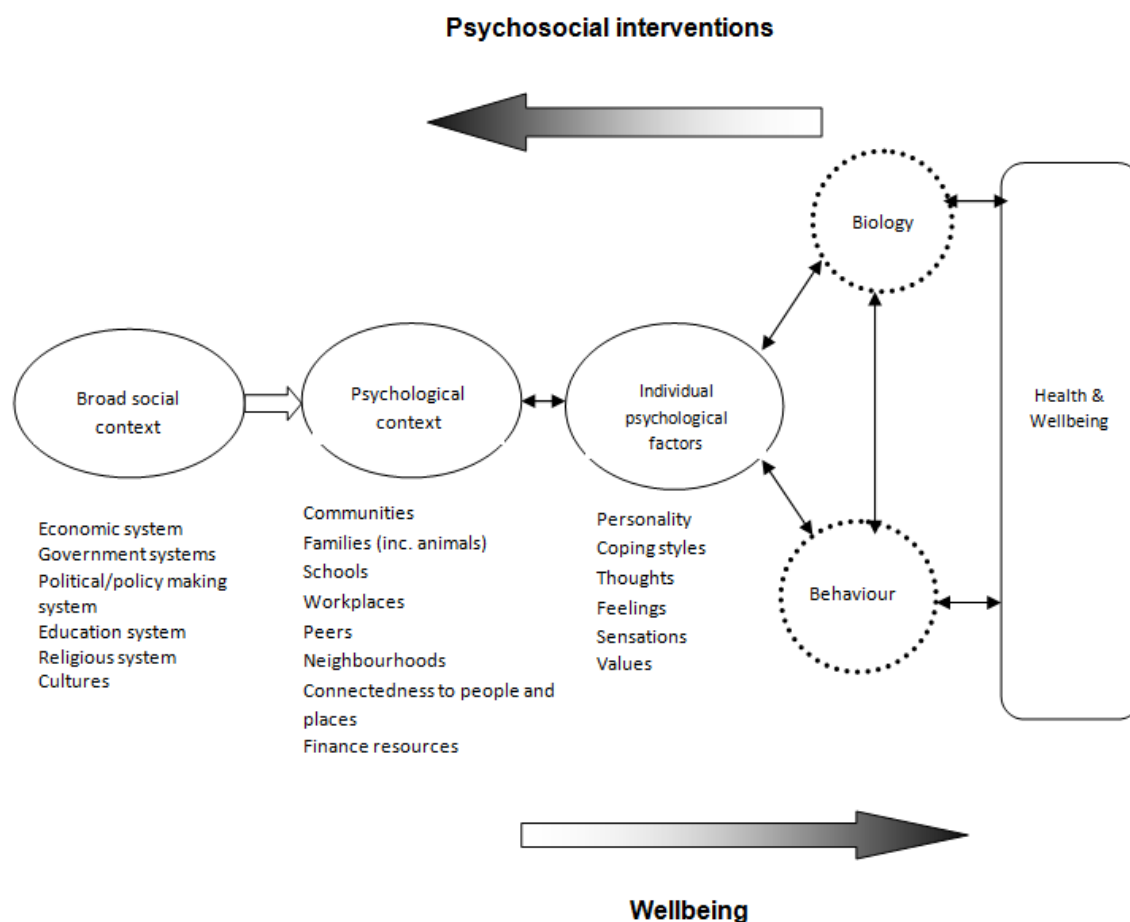
Psychosocial interventions seek to enhance a victim's wellbeing, resilience and capacity to alleviate suffering in addition to improving his or her social ecology (IFRC, 2009; Ministry of Health, 2016; UNHCR, 2019). Ultimately, the targeted population, in this study being the girl child in school within emergency settings should be empowered to achieve and sustain both her personal and interpersonal wellbeing and capacity. This focus is anchored on the research findings which point out that girls in emergencies are disadvantaged at all stages of education and are more likely to be out-of-school than their counterparts in non-emergency settings (UNICEF, 2021). Its further argued in studies by UNHCR(2019) that education need to be a priority for refugees because children under 18 comprise about half of the global refugee population and that girls are most disadvantaged globally in all refugee contexts; worse off in the low- and middle-income countries that host millions of refugees like Kenya.

Community-based psychosocial support in crisis response and development work especially in the contexts of major disasters and follow up post disaster operations has been researched upon and its importance acknowledged (IFRC, 2009). Whereas it's an established fact that psychosocial interventions empower individuals and their communities to tackle emotional reactions to critical events in addition to creating community cohesion that is essential for adaptation and transformation of problems into opportunities for sustainable progress (INEE, 2016), scanty studies have been done on their impact on the girl child's access to education during emergencies especially those situated within refugee camp settings. As averred by UNESCO (2017) and Linda (2021), education is not just a fundamental right and public good but it also has an empowering right by which economically and socially marginalized adults and children can lift themselves out of poverty and obtain the means to participate fully in their societies. This study was an attempt to fill this empirical lacuna using girls in Kakuma refugee camp in Kenya as a case reference.

According to IFRC (2017), several psychosocial interventions have been known to yield tangible outcomes. These include: establishment of a functioning referral system; provision of contextual psycho-education to target beneficiaries wherein aspects like stress and coping, victim protection, recovery from crisis events and background are covered; provision of relevant life skills like conflict resolution, communication and negotiation, together with stress management; mounting of a Psychosocial First Aid (PFA) to assist target beneficiaries or survivors of crises events according to their needs and in a timely manner; establishment of self-help and support groups relevant to victims' situation and background; provision of quality psychosocial, recreational, creative and/or sport activities relevant to victims' situation and background; and provision of informal counselling appropriate to their needs, situation and background. This study evaluated influence of psychosocial interventions on the girl child's access to emergency education within Kakuma Refugee Camp, Kenya.

Conceptual Framework of the Study

The study was guided by Maslow's Hierarchy Theory of Needs as advanced by Abraham Maslow (1943) as cited by Tay and Diener (2011), and Psychosocial interventions framework as modified from Ministry of health (2016). According to Maslow's theory, basic level needs which are internal as opposed to external influencers, must be met before one becomes motivated to learn and self actualize. While this assertion is true, there has been empirical evidence that points to the exceptions to this view; that there are cases where people/individuals overcome their adverse conditions and are able to pull against odds to succeed (Tay & Diener, 2011; Kirti, *et al.*, 2020). The interrelatedness of needs demands that while focus is put on safety needs, there is need to focus on physiological and even love and belonging as per hierarchical order if the girl child within emergency education contexts is to be sustained in school. Psycho-social interventions carry the motivational mechanism that represents the tenets of Maslow's theory (Tezcan, Sibel & Emine, 2017) and subjective well-being which is key to reflect situated quality of life of the learners (Sim & Diener, 2018; Kirti, *et al.*, 2020). Since emergencies disrupt the fabric of normal life and require multiple forms of assistance often with a psychosocial implication during recovery, the psychosocial interventions framework as modified from Ministry of health (2016) reinforces the Maslow's theory to buttress or strengthen our theoretical underpinnings of the study. As illustrated in Figure 1, a girl child's wellbeing as she pursues education within emergencies will be affected by the psychosocial context that influences, and is in turn shaped by, individual psychological experiences, basic biological physical reactions, as well as behaviour.



Source: Modified from Ministry of Health (2016)

Study Area

The study area was Kakuma Refugee camp within Turkana West Sub-County in Kenya. Kakuma refugee camp is located in Kenya, approximately eight hundred kilometers from Nairobi city by road. It lies 95 kilometers south of Lokichoggio, and 120 kilometers south of the Sudan-Kenya border. It is situated in north-western Kenya. The refugee camp sits on the outskirts of Kakuma Town, which also serves as the administrative Centre for the Turkana West Sub-County. Kakuma refugee camp is surrounded by the dry seasonal river called “Lagga” prone to flash flooding after heavy rain in Uganda, even when it does not rain in Kakuma. Most residents within the Kakuma refugee camp are housed in a mixture of dwellings made of mud-bricks, Iron-sheet houses, and locally assembled materials or *manyatta* by the host community. Others are housed in temporary shelters including tents. The camp is divided administratively into four Sub-Camps, namely Kakuma 1-4 and has 158,365 registered refugees and asylum seekers as per official UNHCR records (UNHCR, 2020). Although the refugee population is made up of eighteen different nationalities, for example, Somalis, Ethiopian, Burundian, Eritrean, Rwandan, Ugandan, DRC Congo, Sudanese, Central Africa Republic, Malawian, Angolan, Nigerian, Egyptian, Burkina Faso, Guinean, Tanzanian, Afghanistan and over twenty ethnic groups, most of them are from South-Sudan (Jamal, 2000). Due to the harsh local conditions, both the refugees and the host community, the Turkana of Kenya, largely depend on the Humanitarian assistance from various agencies that supplement the government of Kenya and UNHCR

II. Methodology

The study employed a sample survey design. The sample frame was 27 primary schools with a pupil population of 57,000. The girls who formed the targeted population were 14,496 across the 27 primary schools and those sampled for the study were 6000 from 8 schools which had documented psycho-social cases. Guidance and Counselling teachers and Head Teachers were also sampled for this study in addition to two education officers based on their roles and expertise. Table 3.1 shows sample distribution of respondents and the respective sampling methods. This study was conducted between the months of June to August 2021, although the scope in terms of the periods focused upon was from 2013 to 2019. The choice of this period was informed by the inception period based on documented record of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) deliberate

policies targeting several psychosocial support initiatives to the schools within Turkana West Sub-County where Kakuma refugee camp, Kenya is located.

Table 1: Sample Distribution Table

Population Unit	Target Population	Sample size	Sampling methods
Girls	6000	387	Simple random
G&C Teachers	16	8	purposive
Head teachers	8	8	census
Ministry of Education	1	1	purposive
Emergency Education experts	1	1	Purposive

Source: Researcher 2021.

III. Discussion

According to IRC (2009) and Save the Children (2019), targeted psychosocial interventions seek to address learners' issues and needs in a holistic manner usually situated inside wider developmental contexts such as education or healthcare. The study sought to evaluate influence of psychosocial interventions on the girl child's access to emergency education within Kakuma Refugee Camp, Kenya. Table 2 shows various psychosocial interventions being applied in the study area and how they were rated by respondents on their applicability in the study area. Eleven psychosocial interventions were put to the respondents to agree or disagree depending on whether they felt the interventions assisted in so far as the girl child's access to education during emergencies within Kakuma Refugee Camp, Kenya was concerned.

Table2: Psychosocial Interventions as rated by Respondents within Kakuma Refugee Camp Schools

Psychosocial interventions	Evaluation		Rank
	Agreed	Disagreed	
Girl Incentive	119 (31)	268 (69)	8
Remedial Classes during holidays	199 (51)	188 (49)	3
Case Management	86 (22)	301 (78)	9
Peer Group Counselling	135 (35)	252 (65)	5
Guidance and Counselling	234 (60)	153 (40)	2
Teacher Gender Responsive	85 (22)	302 (78)	9
Distance from Home	139 (36)	248 (64)	4
Mentorship Programs	134(35)	253 (65)	5
Psychotherapy	248 (64)	139 (36)	1

Source: Researcher 2021; Note: The figures in parentheses are percentage frequencies n= 387

As presented in Table.2, only three of the nine psychosocial interventions were rated between 50% and 65% on their application. These were psychotherapy at 64%, guidance and counselling at 60% and remedial classes during holidays at 51%. Based on this, the researchers posit that roll out of psychosocial interventions in the study area is still low and could have a negative bearing on girl's access to education in emergencies as averred by UNICEF (2021). This view is anchored on the account of leveraging social protection strategies to reduce financial barriers to girls' access to education during emergencies in addition to the assertion that specialized support decreased dropout amongst women and girls and reduced barriers to scaling (American Institute for Research, 2019)

Girl incentive as a psychosocial intervention was packaged in different forms, though the most common one is by financial assistance. Creating psychosocial support through financial incentives is one means of equalizing possibilities for adolescent females in elementary schools, according to the Education for All (EFA), Global Monitoring Report (UNESCO, 2011) and UNICEF (2021). These financial incentives come in the form of direct cash transfers, in-kind contributions, and reduced educational costs for girls from low-income families. These incentives ensure that the girl child remains in school rather than dropping out due to financial constraints (UNHCR, 2019). In this study, access to girl incentive was rated at 31% with 69% saying they never accessed incentives. This finding is corroborated by a study by UNHCR (2019) which besides affirming that refugee education was in crisis, had specific statistics on failure to access education and with Kakuma Refugee camp rated as having one of the sharpest drops in enrolment from primary to secondary. Girls are often disadvantaged because of a cultural set up that puts a lot of premium on them performing household chores or being married off; often seen as a revenue stream to the struggling refugee families than any investment in their education. This perception is however understandable since refugees lives are characterized by immediate needs

as conceptualized in the Maslow's hierarchy of needs; basic immediate survival often takes over higher order or strategic needs (Grech, 2019). Furthermore, Grech (2019) averred that sometimes donor basis or criteria for financial incentives lacks equity and inclusion issues that could be unique to the beneficiaries. The limited financial aid could also be attributed to the decline in aid to education in low-income countries globally but more drastically to the Sub-Saharan countries (UNESCO, 2011; 2014)

Remedial classes during holidays were also a psychosocial intervention applied in Kakuma refugee camp. The respondents were asked whether remedial classes is one of the methods that teachers and humanitarian organizations use to assist needy girls from refugee and host communities to continue with learning in schools. As captured in Table 2, the results revealed that 51% of the respondents agreed while 49% of them disagreed. A study by Save the Children, tapped 'hear it from the teachers' (Save the Children, 2019) and American Institute for Research (2019) packaged as 'scaling education innovations in complex emergencies' agrees with this psychosocial intervention and notes that where it has been applied, significant impact on students' progress was recorded. It not only allows catch-up supports but also makes curriculum coverage possible in addition to the time being used to focus on polishing language acquisition. Language barrier insufficiency not only often inhibits refugees' progress but in some cases consideration for financial incentives too (World Vision International, 2021; Grech, 2019). According to Migration Policy Institute (2015), dominance of teacher- centred methodology disadvantages refugee learners' participation hence the importance of remedial teaching to make-up. A follow up interview with some key informants from organizations involved with refugee education confirmed this psychosocial intervention, thus:

Remedial classes were used to help needy girls from the refugee and the host community to continue learning and that incentives like solar lamps, cash transfer, sanitary pads, were provided to needy girls to improve their performance. Lutheran World Federation Officer, (2021).

Efficacy of this psychosocial intervention can be seen from the perspective that this increases the amount of time girls spend in school away from home, significantly reducing their vulnerability to exploitation, sexual and gender-based violence, teenage pregnancy and child marriage that are threats to their access to and continuation with education (Kinoti & Philpott, 2011; UNICEF, 2022). World Vision International (2021) and American Institute for Research (2019) posit that remedial classes when well handled have been proven to be one of the best ways possible to build learners' character in addition to boosting their confidence and therefore reduced susceptibility to mental health and other distractions within emergency contexts. These studies, as cited above therefore corroborate the usefulness of remedial classes as a psychosocial intervention to boost girls and/or other disadvantaged groups' access to education during emergencies.

Regarding mentorship programs as a psychosocial intervention applied in Kakuma refugee camp, the study found that 35% agreed to have benefitted from it while 65% said they hadn't benefitted from the intervention. Mentorship especially from teachers within emergency institutions of learning is so critical and as posited by Save the Children (2019), teachers matter in a learning environment more than any other single factor yet in many emergency education settings this has been neglected. The low uptake of mentorship as a psychosocial intervention in refugee education settings for girls is reinforced by a study by Mohamed (2019) at the Dadaab Refugee Camp, Kenya, on the Influence of Psychosocial Support on Refugee Girls' Academic Performance in Primary School Education. According to the findings, 79% of respondents strongly agreed that mentorship programmes have not been fully adopted as a technique for enhancing girls' performance in refugee primary schools, while 21% agreed.

As averred by IOM (2018; 2019), a case management approach is a model of providing assistance to individuals with complex and multiple needs who may access services from a range of agencies and organizations. From the perspective of psychological intervention, it allows for collaboration between multidisciplinary stakeholders and is useful for the assessment, planning, implementation, coordination and monitoring required to effectively meet the girl child's needs and to promote positive outcomes, including access to education within emergency settings, Kakuma refugee camp in Kenya inclusive (Seed Foundation, 2020). The American Institute for Research (2019) and Global Protection Cluster (2014) affirm this school of thought in its assertion that Case management in refugee schools entails provision of intensive support to newly resettled families by educating them on the special education process, connecting them with supports from multidisciplinary stakeholders.

In this study, the researchers sought to know how case management as a psychosocial intervention was applied in the study area of Kakuma refugee camp, Kenya. The results revealed that 22% of the girls had accessed the service of case management while 78% said they had not accessed the service and further disagreed on its benefit so far in assisting girls' access education in the Kakuma refugee camp. The respondents intimated that some of the activities on case management involved the school management helping in solving the issues that girls face in school so as to ensure they perform well in the exams in spite of their challenges from their home environments. The results paint a low roll out of this psychosocial intervention within the Kakuma refugee

camp, Kenya. Minimum appropriate training and supervision for teachers handling refugee students could explain for low roll out of case management as a psychosocial intervention given that it requires elaborate procedures (Global Protection Cluster, 2014). The low figures are further corroborated by UNICEF (2019; 2020) on the account of underfunding by donor funds and Covid-19 pandemic that apparently worsened the case during the study period in mid 2021.

Regarding Peer group counselling as a psychosocial intervention, the study found that 35% of the respondents agreed that teachers and humanitarian organizations formed peer groups as a mechanism of counselling to help the needy girls while 65% were of the contrary opinion as they had never experienced it in their school life at the point of this research. Peer counseling is cited among common psychosocial intervention that is among creative techniques with potency to achieve positive impact on refugees generally but immigrant children and adolescents in particular (Alfadhi & Drury, 2016; Reeta & Emma, 2022). This is also amplified by UNHCR (2021) on its report on emerging practices being utilized for targeted psychosocial support in refugee operations especially during pandemics like Covid-19. While applauding it, Migration Policy Institute (2015) however cautions that peer groups have been conduits of discrimination and ethnically inclined bullying and that peer counselling should be used with caution. According to INEE (2016), peers play a critical role as their absence means a loss of the emotional support and social interaction that comes from other children and young people. The loss of peers, even temporarily, can be a source of enormous distress for children and adolescents hence the need to support peer counselling as a psychosocial intervention in refugee schools set up like ones in the study area of Kakuma refugee camp, Kenya.

Education and psychosocial support have been demonstrated empirically to have a dynamic and mutually reinforcing relationship especially from the perspective that the latter addresses the negative effects of displacement like trauma, shame and withdrawal, which can have significant consequences for individual learning (INEE, 2016; Ahmed, 2017). This study sought to investigate how guidance and counselling as a psychosocial intervention aids girls access and retention in school within emergency contexts, using Kakuma refugee camp as a case reference. From Table 2, 60% of the respondents agreed that guidance and counselling services were being provided to the needy girls while 40% of them disagreed having received any guidance and counselling services. In terms of ranking, guidance and counselling as a psychosocial intervention was ranked second signifying an effort to roll it out in the study area. Such ratings compares well with other studies in similar emergency environments. For example, according to studies by George and Laban (2010) and Scott and Mark's (2014), guidance and counselling is a significant and successful means of offering aid to students in their surroundings. Also the study finding concurs with that of Onyilofor (2012), who stated that an educational system that encourages guidance and counseling fosters self-reliance, a sense of industry, and the development of learners' capabilities. This is in agreement with a key informant's response who said that:

The humanitarian assistance is often also offered in form of guidance and counseling packaged as psychosocial support for girls in addition to other provisions like learning material, sanitary pads, uniforms and solar lamps for reading at home.

Gender-responsive is about not just creating awareness of the effects of gender norms, roles, and relations as they impact education but also taking measures to actively reduce those effects that pose barriers to gender equality (GEP, 2019). As posited by INEE (2016), emergencies are experienced differently by men and women, boys and girls whether in the different roles assigned or skills, activities, positions, and status held within their families, communities, and institutions. These create gender-differentiated risks, vulnerabilities, and capacities in any emergency situation hence the need by the study to interrogate applicability of teacher gender responsiveness as a psychosocial intervention to girl child's access to education in emergencies within the study area of Kakuma refugee camp, Kenya. The study revealed that 78% of the respondents said they have never received assistance purely on the basis of their gender as girls while 22 of the respondents agreed that they had benefitted in being assisted to access education in emergencies context purely on the account of their gender. The low figures of girls who had benefitted from this initiative in the study confirms gaps by a study as reported by GEP (2019) that the approach taken on gender responsiveness to date has been in a *piecemeal* way rather than strategically and holistically. This has been attributed to, among other factors; low capacity on teachers especially within emergency contexts perpetuated by a limited number of staff with gender expertise, limited opportunities for peer learning and experience sharing.

The researcher sought to establish whether psychotherapy was one of the strategies used by the NGOs to ensure the girls' well-being is safeguarded while attending education in emergencies, using Kakuma refugee camp as a case reference. According to American Psychiatric Association (2009) and Wampold (2019), psychotherapy types that can be situated in school set up take the form of cognitive behavioral therapy, interpersonal therapy and psychodynamic therapy. These three therapies aim at helping victims, in these context girls in refugee camp schools within the study area of Kakuma camp to among others, identify and change

thinking and behavior patterns that are harmful with more accurate thoughts and functional behaviors; resolve their underlying interpersonal issues like unresolved grief due to displacement, and overcome mental health issues particularly as a result of their childhood relationships and experiences that stamp psychological conflicts. The results revealed that 64% of the respondents agreed to have accessed a range of psychotherapy services while 36% said they had never accessed such services in school. A study by American Institute for Research (2019) corroborates this finding on the account that in Bangladesh and Romania emergency settings, NGOs were found to offer holistic pedagogical approach that mainstreamed cognitive behavioral therapy in their psychosocial services within education programmes. As posited by Wampold (2019), psychotherapy services are in some circumstances offered by human services professionals among them being religious or spiritual advisors and counsellors not in a mental health setting. This could explain availability of such service in an emergency setting like Kakuma refugee camp schools.

According to UNHCR (2019), some of the costs that hinder girls' access to education in emergency contexts are slightly more disguised but no less real. For instance, longer distances to and from the school gates make reaching school more expensive and, in areas of instability, potentially more dangerous. Moreover, in some regions, refugees have limitations placed on their freedom of movement, preventing them from going to schools that are far from their homes. This study sought to establish how minimizing on distance from home as a psychosocial intervention was being implemented in Kakuma refugee camp, Kenya. The results revealed that 36% of the respondents had benefitted by having their costs subsidized on coming to school because of distance while 64% indicated they have never been assisted. Interview with key informants however pointed to financial constraints as a main impediment on taking more girls into the program. A study by American Institute for Research (2019) corroborates this low figure of beneficiaries as in the study 'scaling education innovations in complex emergencies', only 2560 out of possible over 14,000 students, being approximately 18% are targeted for assistance in Kakuma and Dadaab refugee camps, Kenya for innovative intervention to ease on their extreme circumstances.

IV. Conclusion and Recommendation

Whereas global trends are increasingly recognizing the intrinsic and extrinsic needs for investing in girls' education, including in situations affected by fragility and conflict like Kakuma refugee camp, Kenya, there is still a lot to be done to realize sustainable impact. This was demonstrated by limited deliberate efforts to assist the girl child's access to education. Out of the nine psychosocial interventions, only three had a positive rating of between 50% and 65%. There is therefore need to boost capacity of teachers and increase funding so that the psychosocial interventions can be spread across to cover a wider number of girls in the emergency settings like Kakuma refugee camp, Kenya.

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