



Reflections on Contextualizing the INEE Guidance Note on Teacher Wellbeing in Emergency Settings

Context: Kakuma Refugee Camp, Kenya
 Domain: 3, Teaching and Learning
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Introduction

From May to June 2022, a team of three consultants consisting of two teachers teaching in the refugee camp and a teacher trainer working at the Center for Mathematics, Science and Technology Education in Africa (CEMASTEA), contextualized Domain 3 of the Teacher Wellbeing Guidance Note to the context of Kakuma refugee camp. In our team the contextualization process did not start as planned because schools were closed, and therefore INEE extended our contract.

The contextualization process was done in coordination with INEE and UNHCR, the agency in charge of the refugee affairs in the camp. We worked in close consultation with the following agencies; Lutheran world federation (LWF) which implements primary and early childhood education in Kakuma, Windle International Kenya (WIK), responsible for implementing secondary education in Kakuma, Humanity and Inclusion supports learners with disability within the LWF schools, and NRC implementing accelerated learning programs.

The research team maintained a democratic climate, encouraged volunteerism, active participation, freedom of expression in our meetings and mutual respect in all our interactions with teachers as we administered questionnaires, held focus group discussions, and conducted interviews with Head teachers.

During the contextualization process we identified several challenges in the process, as well as opportunities and strengths. In this report we highlight these challenges, the opportunities and give recommendations for future contextualization efforts in the camp.

Overview and Analysis of the Contextualization Process

The Guidance Note for Teacher Wellbeing is written in general terms and provides generic guidance on how to support teacher wellbeing in emergency settings through the framework of the INEE Minimum Standards. In order to be applicable and usable in Kakuma, the guidance note needed to be contextualized to their context. We worked with teachers

and school administrators to contextualize Domain 3 of the Teacher Wellbeing Guidance Note.

Due to limited time and budget constrained, we divided up the work among ourselves to make the process easier, as follows; Mayen Aguer focused on Primary Schools, Vianney Mpitabavuma on Secondary Schools, and Gladys Mwiguzi on school leaders and doubled up as the lead researcher and overall coordinator of the contextualization process. The research team held regular planning, assessment and evaluation meetings through virtual and face to face meetings at every step of the contextualization process. We had regular communication through emails, texting and WhatsApp messages, and kept in touch with INEE through emails.

Before embarking on the project, the research team requested INEE through Rachel to write an introductory letter to UNHCR on the purpose of the contextualization process and the team involved. INEE informed the UNHCR about the Contextualization through an email. The research team then held meetings with organization heads and school leaders, to discuss with them the activities they intended to carry out in the camp in order to contextualize Domain 3 of the Teacher Wellbeing Guidance Note. The research team was granted access to sample the teachers' data in the field, and this involved going to schools to sample the participants.

Our team contextualized Domain 3 of the Teacher Wellbeing Guidance Note to Kakuma refugee camp context in four phases as follows:

Phase 1: Understanding the purpose and goal of contextualization purpose

In the preparation phase, we held two virtual meetings lasting 2 hours each. In the first meeting we discussed the concept of contextualization and understood it as: the process of engaging relevant stakeholders, who in our case were teachers and school administrators in discussing, building consensus and agreeing upon the meaning of global guidance in their local situation, so as to make the content appropriate and meaningful to them. After the

meeting we agreed that each one of us reads Domain 3; Teaching and Learning of the draft Teacher Wellbeing Guidance Note that had been shared with us. In the second meeting we discussed how to approach the contextualization process of Domain 3, of the Teacher Wellbeing Guidance Note and agreed on the following;

- i. Use a survey that would enable us to understand the demographic information, challenges & work related needs, and strategies teachers and school leaders use to take care of their wellbeing in Kakuma refugee camp.
- ii. Conduct focus group discussions with teachers to gain deeper understanding of how teachers actually conceptualize their well-being, and the various methods that would be used to support them
- iii. Interviews school administrators for strategies and recommendations that could be considered in designing programs and policies to support teachers' wellbeing in such settings.

Phase 2: Planning

We held a series of virtual meetings to plan for the following; sampling of teachers and head teachers, preparation of research instruments, logistics for administering questionnaires and conducting the focus group discussion and interviews

a) Sampling and contextualization processes

The research team prepared a sampling frame; however it was not used, because when we visited schools majority of the head teachers selected teachers they wished to participate in the contextualization process by targeting those who had enough experience from refugees, hosts community and the differently abled. 10 teachers in high school and 12 in primary were sampled to participate in focus group discussion, 127 teachers were sampled for the survey and 12 head teachers sampled for interview.

b) Preparation of research instruments

The lead researcher developed a teacher questionnaire that was divided into three sections as follows: Demographic information (Part A), Challenges (Part B) and Tools and Strategies to Support Wellbeing (Part C). The research team discussed the questionnaire in a virtual

meeting, and then shared it with the INEE team, who gave some valuable input that was added. The questionnaire focused on the three principles of the Teacher Wellbeing Guidance Note; promote teachers' access to MHPSS, create an enabling work environment for teachers, enhance teacher voice, agency, and leadership.

The lead researcher also developed the interview guides and schedules for focus group discussion that were discussed by the research team in a virtual meeting.

Phase 3: Information Gathering

a. Survey

Before administering the questionnaire to teachers, we briefed them on the purpose of the survey, and reassured them that the data we were collecting would be kept confidential and used only for the purpose of contextualization of Domain 3 of the Teacher Wellbeing Guidance Note to Kakuma refugee camp context. We then administered the questionnaire to 127 teachers, who filled them in our presence and supervision, while guiding and answering all the arising questions. The findings from the survey gave us insight on the challenges that affect the wellbeing of teachers living in emergency settings, as well as the strategies they use to take care of themselves and their own wellbeing.

b. Focus group discussion

We held four focus group discussions with teachers and each focused on a different standard within Domain 3 of the Teacher Wellbeing Guidance Note. The discussions enabled us to gain deeper understanding of the challenges teachers experience in implementing each standard, how these challenges contribute to promoting teachers wellbeing, and the possible recommendations that can be used to overcome the challenges.

Two members of the research team who reside in the refugee camp, held four focus group discussions with 10 teachers teaching in secondary and 12 in primary school. Each focus group discussion was led by one researcher, who took the role of discussion facilitator and at the same time recording the discussion. The focus group discussions lasted up to 60 minutes and were conducted in English, and Kiswahili, where possible in Arabic and French. The researcher transcribed the discussions and translated them into English.

c. Interviews

In our initial plan, we intended to have face to face interviews with heads of schools, however due to delays in obtaining clearance from UNHCR for the lead researcher to travel to Kakuma; this was done virtually, with six head teachers in secondary and six in primary schools. The interviews focused on getting the views of the head teachers on the challenges sighted by the teachers and the possible strategies and recommendations that could be used to support teachers' wellbeing. The interviews were conducted by the lead researcher, who took the role of discussion facilitator as well as recording the discussion. The interview lasted about 30 minutes with each head teacher.

Phase 4: Discussion and Drafting Deliverables

In the fourth phase of our contextualization process, the lead researcher compiled findings from the survey, and feedback from focus groups discussions and interviews, which formed the basis of the contextualized Domain 3 of Teacher Wellbeing Guidance note. The drafted contextualized Domain 3 reports were discussed by the research team through a virtual meeting and reviewed. It was then submitted to the INEE team who gave suggestions on corrections and raised areas that required further clarification. The corrections were done by the research team and the final contextualized Domain 3 report was submitted to INEE.

Strengths of the contextualization process

Opportunities for emotional support

Teachers who participated in the survey and focus group discussion were happy to have their emotional voices expressed together for a common interest, and were surprised to learn that some people out there were concerned about their daily struggles. One teacher explained "this is great, I must talk without fear through this unusual window." The climate was friendly during the focus discussion, and teachers were given freedom to choose how to conduct it. They agreed to speak once on every topic and then write on paper any other idea after their turn. Teachers listened to each other's views on their wellbeing. It was a good moment to listen, reflect, build or strengthen relationships and oneness in the teacher circle.

The contextualization process gave a clear insight into the organizations way of handling their employees' morale while revealing issues that affect teacher wellbeing in emergency setups. The participants realized that Wellbeing was part of their work-life which can even extend up to their homes. It was for them a rare moment to openly participate in a democratic conversation which helps them to fully take part in their own problem-solving. Throughout the process teachers hoped that their voices will reach their bosses for possible adjustments where need be, to help them do their job with a happy mood.

This brought out an ethical dilemma, whereby teachers and head teachers were engaged in discussing the challenges of their wellbeing, and giving recommendations of how to address them, with so much expectation that this will be implemented like yesterday. Yet the outcome to implement the suggested recommendation to support their wellbeing was well beyond the mandate of the research team

Challenges of the contextualization process

During the contextualization process, we identified the following challenge;

Understanding the concept of contextualization and teacher wellbeing

Understanding teacher wellbeing and the idea of contextualization and its purpose, presented the biggest challenge to us. For instance some teachers were not free to talk about their wellbeing, as one teacher explained "Why tell the truth and lose my job?" A few of the teachers accepted to disclose their identity while others accepted to tell the truth if they did not. Also some organization and school leaders interpreted the whole exercise differently, as they thought their organizations systems were being spied on and asked the following questions;

- a) "Did you inform our main office?"
- b) "Can you show us the written permission version?"
- c) "Are you starting with my school?"
- d) "Can you give one questionnaire for school filing?"

We realized that some of these organization heads and school leaders had not received information from the UNHCR on the contextualization process and therefore were not in

support of the process in the camp. This almost killed the morale and the pace of the process. We overcame this by printing the INEE letter written to UNHCR and gave it to such leaders.

Also another challenge was witnessed during sampling, where some leaders demanded to select teachers by themselves, whom they trust to participate in the research. We were very patient, flexible, persuasive and ready for any scenario including rejection.

Some teachers asked for money or refreshment in order to participate. Others could not take the risk of missing the vehicle and would ask for the fare in case they stay behind. We went out of our way and gave such teachers transport, even though it was not factored in our budget.

This challenge would be overcome by the following recommendation; UNHCR should inform education leaders in time for any upcoming research. The consultants should also be provided with one copy of the letter, so that they can share with leaders in the organization to grant them permission, especially in cases where they have not received official communication from the UNHCR. There should be a budget set aside to cater for transport, refreshment and communication throughout the process.

In the context of Kakuma refugee camp, the term “wellbeing” was not well understood, therefore we used phrases such as “being well, capable and confident” to express the concept of wellbeing. We asked the teachers to write the words they would use in their mother tongue to talk about “being well”.

Weaknesses of the contextualization process

We observed the following two main weaknesses in the contextualization process;

Limited scope of the contextualization process

Due to time and resource constraints of implementing the project, we carried out the contextualization process by sampling teachers and head teachers in Kakuma refugee camp, and excluded Kalobeyi settlement camp. Through the survey, the focus groups discussions and interviews, we collected information relevant that informed our contextualization of Domain 3 to Kakuma refugee camp. It is important to note that the

contextualized guidance note can be applicable to similar camps such as Kalobeyi and Dadaab.

Limited time and budget

Contextualization process requires significant time, adequate budget and effort. The time scheduled to begin the contextualization process in March, coincided with closure of schools in Kenya, to enable candidates in standard 8 and form IV to sit for National examinations. Schools reopened in May, and we began our project then, and were expected to submit our deliverables by 30th June, 2022. We therefore operated in time constraints with a limited budget, and therefore opted to target a smaller sample of teachers, and divided up the work among ourselves to make the process easier as follows; Mayen Aguer focused on Primary Schools, Vianney Mpitabavuma on Secondary Schools, and Gladys Mwuguzi on school leaders and overall coordinator of the process.

Lessons Learned and Conclusion

Contextualizing of Domain 3 of the Teacher Wellbeing Guidance Note to the context of Kakuma resulted in a number of recommendations aimed at improving the teacher wellbeing in Kakuma refugee camp in Kenya. The contextualization process pointed to important opportunities for future contextualization, as well as challenges and weaknesses that require to be addressed. Lessons learned from this process include:

1. Involving teachers and school leaders in the contextualization process offers great opportunities to hear their voices expressed together for a common good. However this requires demystifying terms such as wellbeing and contextualization to enable ease of interpretation and adaptation of such terms in the global good.
2. Asking teachers to give meanings of key terms such as wellbeing in their mother tongue brings to fore the gaps in the global good which can then be addressed in the contextualized version.
3. The process of contextualizing the Domain 3 of the Teacher Wellbeing Guidance Note served as a real opportunity for teachers to reflect upon their own wellbeing, and participate in a democratic conversation which helps them to fully take part in making decisions that improve their own wellbeing.

4. Contextualization process requires significant time, adequate budget and effort. As such INEE should have this in mind as they endeavor to contextualize Global goods in future

Our research team is optimistic that the opportunities, weaknesses and lessons learned from this research project will be beneficial to INEE and other stakeholders, who may want to understand how to contextualize a global good.