CHAPTER 11

GLOBAL LEARNING COMMUNITIES: BRIDGING BORDERS AND BUILDING CAPACITY OF COMMUNITIES ON THE MARGINS

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ABSTRACT

This chapter describes an online certificate program offered to refugees who are in refugee camps and other populations living on the margins. The program was created in partnership with diverse stakeholders to reflect the need for pathways to higher education for refugees who have few, if any, opportunities to participate in higher education. The authors briefly discuss the gaps in services in refugee camps that informed and inspired the creation of an online program that focuses on social work skills. Next, the authors provide a background and description of a multi-player partnership that was needed to create the pathway for refugees to attain higher education credentials in an accredited US institution and share findings from instructor and program feedback instruments, as well as focus groups, that speak to elements of the program, both in design and in implementation. The chapter concludes with a recommendation, for what can be implemented in online social work education as to enhance student experience and create possibilities of sharing varied values and respect across differences, as well as common language of social justice and transformation.

Wars and persecution have created an unprecedented period of forced migration the likes of which we have not witnessed at any other time in history. United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)'s annual Global Trends Report: World at War states that worldwide displacement is at the highest level ever recorded (UNHCR, 2015a). The number of people forcibly displaced is increasing rapidly every year. At the end of 2018, it had risen to 70.8 million compared to 68.5 million a year earlier and 23.7 million a decade ago (UNHCR, 2018, 2019). The increasing growth in the number of individuals experiencing forced migration represents the largest recorded increase in a single year and the situation is likely to worsen further as the number of conflicts and complex emergencies is not decreasing. UNHCR António Guterres stated:

> We are witnessing a paradigm change, an unchecked slide into an era in which the scale of global forced displacement as well as the response required is now clearly dwarfing anything seen before. (UNHCR, 2015b, para. 5)

The response that the UN High Commissioner alluded to is undoubtedly complex. The UNHCR is an entity given the mandate to provide refuge for people displaced during and after World War II. Today, UNHCR works to "promote coordination across nations, and provides services for refugees residing in 'legal limbo' outside of nation states" (Hammerstad, 2014). The paradox of UNHCR's enactment, however, is that it has the mandate of protecting people who are seeking refuge but also restricts peoples' rights and freedom to move, organize and voice their concerns. What was established as a temporary space has now turned into a protracted arrangement whereby children are born, raised, get married and have children in refugee camps. Refugee camps in Sudan and Kenya are typical examples whereby refugization (Schrijvers, 1999) is transferred to generations to come, since the early 1970s and 1990s, respectively, as refugees are not able to return safely to their countries of origin due to unresolved conflicts and political impasse or inaction. Education of refugees and internally displaced populations (IDPs), therefore, is not one of the needs that is immediately addressed, mainly due to the way policies and services were originally conceived with the view that forced displacement and migration is temporary. However, in the last couple of decades, both policy-makers, practitioners, as well as the academe, have come to realize that the protracted nature of the refugee experience requires different responses and intervention, including a focus on education on all levels, from the primary to higher/tertiary education.

In this chapter, we describe a university–community partnership that offers a Social Work Case Management Certificate (CMC) program for paraprofessionals, volunteers and community social change agents living in refugee camps and other marginalized settings where communities are in forced migration. The CMC

is a nine-month post-secondary education program credentialed and accredited through a US university and delivered online. Beginning in 2013 as a response to the local needs of a community within the United States, where there are high numbers of resettled refugees, over the last six years the program has grown and expanded globally offering a pathway to employment and higher education for individuals living at the margins.

MIGRATION, A GLOBAL TREND: REFUGEES' EXPERIENCE

Current forced movements of people and experiences of being physically uprooted from their homelands have become a global trend. The rapidly escalating number of people moving toward varied geographical directions, on one hand, reflects global socioeconomic divides between the global South and the North, widening gaps between the poor and rich, and complex social and cultural transformations including growing unemployment, marginalization and dire poverty. The fear of hosting societies toward (im)migrants, which is leading to extreme nationalism of the far-right groups, exclusionary policies toward (im)migrants and blocking borders to migrants, on the other, places global migrants in dangerous, insecure and unsafe conditions. These are the self-contradictory faces of globalization. Ignoring expanding impoverishment and unstable lives for the last six decades in the name of a global economy, resulting in adverse impacts on the majority poor due to neoliberal policies since the 1980s in particular, have uprooted peoples from their homelands in countries with lower and developing economies (Giddens, 1990; Giddens & Pierson, 1998). Neoliberal economic policies are resulting into global environmental and climate changes and disrupting the lives of people in the global south more so than the conventional representation of local conflicts, war, drought and fear of political and religious persecution (Ghosh, 2013). In other words, foreign interventions and imposed policies are the major contributors to forced migration rather than local conflicts. What is even worse is that over 50% (51%) of those seeking refuge are unaccompanied children (UNHCR, 2015a).

EDUCATION FOR REFUGEES: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

While higher education is not prioritized in refugee camps by the service providers, it is also neglected by scholars, donors and policy-makers, even though its benefits have been widely documented (Crea & McFarland, 2015; Dryden-Peterson & Giles, 2010; UNHCR, 2016a; Wright & Plasterer, 2010; Zeus, 2011). A recent report by the UNHCR (2016a) asserted that "Highly educated refugees can become leaders in their communities … and [I]n doing so, they support and contribute to peace and stability, at a local, national and regional level" (p. 30). The benefits of higher education can range from individual socioeconomic development, to durable solutions

for both individuals and society, including improved camp conditions, increased human and social capital resources that bolster the economic development in both hosting countries and countries of origin (Dryden-Peterson & Giles, 2010; Wright & Plasterer, 2010). Further, higher education enables refugees to develop critical thinking, engage in planning and decision-making processes regarding their own situation and empower them to be agents of their own and their communities' development (Topuzova & Lock, 2013; Wright &Plasterer, 2010; Zeus, 2011).

Although the right to education has been established as such by Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and the Convention Relating the Status of Refugees advises host countries that they should afford the same opportunities that their nationals enjoy to refugees, the reality is that refugees face numerous challenges when it comes to implementation. Higher education for refugees largely remains outside of the global educational movement (Crea, 2016; Dryden-Peterson & Giles, 2010; Wright & Plasterer, 2010). According to UNHCR, only 1% of refugees have access to university education compared with 34% globally, and "despite their potential, young refugees are greatly disadvantaged in accessing university education as well as technical and vocational training" (UNHCR, 2016a, p. 30).

Documented challenges of accessing to higher education include the lack of funding, lack of interest in its benefits by the host countries, as well as viewing higher education for refugees as "luxury" or "pull factor." Often the quality of education is poor because there is a lack of trained teachers, inadequate books and other instructional materials, and overcrowded classrooms. Further, language can represent a significant barrier to access for refuges, because of the lack of availability of programs and educational program providers' ability to meet the refugees' linguistic diversity. Missing documentation, including birth certificates, examination results, transcripts or proof or completed educational level, as well as citizenship status, can present often insurmountable challenges in the refugees' quest to further their education (Anselme & Hands, 2010; Crea, 2016; Crea & McFarland, 2015; Dryden-Peterson & Giles, 2010, UNHCR, 2016a; Wright & Plasterer, 2010; Zeus, 2011).

As pointed out earlier, forced migration and displacement is no longer a temporary situation, and considering the protracted nature of the refugee experience, a number of practitioners and scholars advocate for educational interventions that go beyond an emergency approach and reflect the social reality and needs in refugee camps (Dryden-Peterson, 2010; Topuzova & Lock, 2013; Zeus, 2011). There are many challenges to providing quality education such as infrastructure, safety, host country capacity and willingness, need for recognition of the granted degrees/credentials. Since 2009, UNHCR has consistently worked toward a strategy for improving the educational opportunities for refugees as well as detailing specific recommendations (Dryden-Peterson, 2011; UNHCR, 2009, 2016a). Improved partnerships both locally and globally is part of those strategies. Consequently, the role of educational institutions and partnerships with local stakeholders should receive more attention. Most recently, UNHCR (2016a) called for "more flexible education opportunities" for refugees, including accelerated programs, and "connected courses, [that] combine digital access with face-to-face learning" (p. 34). Although online learning is seen as important, the UNHCR guidelines emphasize the importance of face-to-face interaction and mentoring.

In this chapter, we describe a Social Work CMC program as one example of how the College of Social Work at one university sought to address the issues of overall scarcity of higher education opportunities in camps. The CMC is a social work-blended learning education pathway for paraprofessionals, volunteers and community social change agents living in refugee camps and other marginalized setting where communities are in forced migration. This program provides high-quality education which we believe has important socioeconomic impact on the communities in which our students live and work. In both design, and based on learning from the growth, the need for a collaborative partnership between the community and other stakeholders was clear. That way, we were able to develop strategies that address the challenges, avoid program overlaps, as well as consolidate resources (Tecle, Ha, & Hunter, 2017).

A CASE EXAMPLE: THE SOCIAL WORK CMC PROGRAM

Our practice and research draws on several years of mutually beneficial partnerships and community-based research with communities of immigrant and refugee backgrounds who have resettled in Salt Lake City, Utah, USA, and those communities who are living in refugee camp and communities at the margins (i.e., Ban Mae Nai Soi, Thailand; Kakuma, Kenya; Dzaleka, Malawi, West Nile district, Uganda; and in Myanmar). These partnerships seek to develop sustainable relationships-focused partnerships that are centered on community-identified issues with a high priority on maintaining local/global connections. Originally, the CMC program was created for US-based communities, as a response to the high number of individuals of refugee experiences. However, we soon learned from our students that there were no borders that could separate them from caring for their communities at a distance. Local leaders of immigrant and refugee background pressed these academics to "not forget the people that they had left behind." At the same time, the College of Social Work was in the process of developing an online version of its undergraduate program. Thus, the timing was right for the certificate program to be added to the plan and with the support of a local grant, the team began consulting with international partners and building the online version of the CMC program.

The Need

Despite its promotion of social justice and human rights, and its recognized role in addressing refugee issues, the response of the social work profession to refugees living in camps has been inconsistent. Social workers are involved in designing and implementing interventions and programs mostly for resettled refugees in host countries, but they are not present in the context of conflict and humanitarian crisis either in practice or research (Al-Qdah & Lacroix, 2010; Blaauw, Schenck, Pretorius, & Schoeman, 2017; Harding & Libal, 2012; Holscher & Bozalek, 2012).

A large number of both local and international aid actors have few social workers on staff. Rather, they employ refugees either as staff or as volunteers to deliver services. Harding and Libal (2012) found that most of the non-governmental organizations (NGOs)' staff that were interviewed "lack formal social work

education and have essentially learned 'on the job,' and in some cases, Iraqi refugees themselves were employed" (p. 100). These refugees acting as paraprofessionals contribute greatly to improving their communities' conditions through individual-to-individual caring or participating in community-based organizations (CBOs) or NGOs. Refugees helping refugees, or utilizing indigenous human resources, has been proved to be a successful strategy in serving the populations in need (Drumm, Pittman, & Perry, 2004; Hunter & Mileski, 2013; Kanyangale & MacLachlan, 1995; Tecle et al., 2017). Al-Qdah and Lacroix (2010) illustrated that attracting community volunteers in implementing projects was one of the most productive models for community advocacy and raising awareness among Iraqi families.

In sum, the lack of social workers working directly in camps and the reliance on paraprofessionals who have experience in working with refugees but lack the professional knowledge and skills, calls for social work educators and practitioners to be more active in humanitarian relief and refugee response (Al-Qdah & Lacroix, 2010; Cocks et al., 2009; Drumm et al., 2004; Harding & Libal, 2012). The training of paraprofessionals, volunteers and community agents could increase the human resources that are available where they are often most needed (Drumm et al., 2004). While short-term trainings for social workers in countries in which the social work profession is not developed have been recognized (Cocks et al., 2009), social work education certificates or degrees for camp-based refugees have not been documented in the literature. Few higher education programs are offered for refugees living in camps (Crea, 2016; Crea & McFarland, 2015; Dryden-Peterson & Giles, 2010; UNHCR, 2016a; Wright & Plasterer, 2010; Zeus, 2011), and there is a lack of examples of programs in social work or social services in the literature.

The Partnership

In 2012, the College of Social Work at the University of Utah began a partnership with Jesuit Worldwide Learning (JWL). The partnership reflected the vision of both partners of providing quality education and educating globally minded citizens. JWL is a global collective of colleges and universities dedicated to providing higher education to communities who are *at the margins*. Beginning in 2010 as Jesuit Commons: Higher Education at the Margins (JC: HEM), JWL provided a combination of onsite and online higher education courses to individuals living in refugee camps. Through JWL, refugees can obtain a diploma in Liberal Studies (online, 45 credits). In addition to the two-year academic degree, JWL also offers a number of Community Service Learning tracks delivered in a blended format with some instruction online and support onsite. JWL's mission is to provide:

> equitable high quality tertiary learning to people and communities at the margins … so all can contribute their knowledge and voices to the global community of learners and together foster hope to create a more peaceful and humane world. (JWL, n.d., para. 2)

The University of Utah already had a few successful programs that included study abroad and service learning in several locations around the globe, and the partnership with JWL was a good fit with the College's mission and vision of expanding its global reach (Blessinger & Cozza, 2016). JWL was a partner in the first year of the CMC, and later the partners decided that a social work

concentration would better meet the needs of the students and organizations. Since its pilot year, the CMC program has grown to new sites and added new international partners such as, Jesuit Refugee Services, Thailand; Aura Regional Hospital, Uganda; and CBOs in Myanmar and Malaysia. These international partners assist with the recruitment of students and provide resources and supports for students to pursue higher education at the onsite learning centers in partnering refugee camp communities as well as some urban settings.

Online Learning, Materials and Instruction

Through a blended learning approach, the program makes use of an asynchronous online learning platform (Canvas) with grounded discussion to prepare entry-level social service workers (i.e., case managers, family and youth advocates, women empowerment workers, community health workers) living in or employed in refugee camp communities, urban refugees and others marginalized groups. Delivered over two semesters, and taught in English, the four courses that fulfill the requirements of the CMC program utilize a capacity building and empowerment framework that makes use of critical perspectives and strives to be inclusive of all voices.

The program includes a four-week orientation course and four core courses. Each of the core courses is eight-weeks long. Upon completion of the CMC program, students are expected be able to: understand and practice basic social work theory and skills; communicate effectively with individuals, families and communities; understand and practice common case management roles, processes and responsibilities in a multicultural context; and act as system change agents in ways that empower individuals, families and group. A brief description of the CMC curriculum is provided below:

CMC Program Orientation – This four-week online course is focused on the basics of navigating the online learning platform (Canvas), as well as introductory discussion boards that are designed to support relationship building and the formation of a learning community. Assignments are also strategic with assisting students to locate the university digital library and other student support mechanisms.

Introduction to Social Work – Located within a strengths perspective, this course provides an introduction to human behavior, the ecological model and systems theories that guide social work practice. Students explore the various examples of social change agents in their own context. They become familiar with the various roles and the systems engaged in the delivery of social services, as well as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and guidelines for ethical practice.

Introduction to Interpersonal Communication and Documentation – The focus of this course is to assist students with developing interpersonal skills from a multicultural perspective, establishing a relationship with individuals. Building on the first course, students continue to learn the basic skills for engagement with clients including: deep and active listening; facilitation conditions (paraphrasing, summarizing, clarifying, questioning); exploring skills (asking questions, reflecting content, reflecting meanings, seeking clarification); preparatory skills (reviewing, exploring, consulting, arranging, empathy).

Introduction to Social Casework: This course presents the fundamental aspects of casework with individuals and families, including common case management roles, processes and responsibilities in a multicultural context.

Introduction to Community Practice & Advocacy: Located in a capacity building, power and change framework, this course focuses on understanding human rights, social justice and practice. Students focus on how to act as system change agents in ways that empower individuals, families and groups. Human service professionals develop the skills to improve clients' capabilities of knowing their basic rights and advocating for marginalized communities.

The courses were designed with global learners in mind; they are culturally sensitive, and conscious of the challenges students face in camps where there is lack of technology, and a wide range of experience with formal educational setting. To address some of those challenges, the CMC program engages with international site-based partners who have access to existing camp-based or community-based computer labs with tech support, as well as physical space for student discussions. Often, these partners are able to provide one-on-one tutoring. At each site, there is a dedicated coordinator who acts as a teaching assistant. Thus, each course has a University of XXX faculty who provides the online academic instruction and a site-based teaching assistant who facilitates face-to-face discussions and tutoring. That does not mean that there are no challenges with implementation, however; some of those include, staff turnover and compensation, students who continue to migrate, students who may go to a location that does not have a site coordinator, and so on.

Program Participants and Locations

Participants for the program are recruited in collaboration with in-country partners at each site. In the 2014–2015 pilot year, partners began work with the in-country partner, JWL, and the students in the online diploma program in Kakuma Refugee Camp, Kenya, and Dzeleka Refugee Camp in Malawi. Once students graduated from the JWL offerings, those interested in social work were referred to the CMC program. Due to the large interest in social work, the university partner negotiated with JWL to expand their offerings to include a social work concentration as part of the diploma program.

In the following three years, the CMC program was offered through additional international partners located in Thailand, Myanmar (Burma) and Uganda. The most recent cohort also had students from Malaysia and Pakistan. Program participants have ranged in age from 20 to 47 years old with a wide range of work and life experience. In all cases, the program participants are acting as social change agents in their communities including 47.8% working at local or international social service providers; 60.9% volunteering at communities or agencies; and 43.5% participating in CBOs/groups. For example, some of the younger participants were serving as teachers in refugee camp communities and/or at monastic shelters in Asia. Other participants were volunteering and/or working with international NGOs as youth advocates, case managers, community health workers, and with women's programs. At one of the Thailand learning sites, the CMC students were engaged with serving urban refugees. In Myanmar, CMC students

volunteer in monastic shelters and schools, serving children in extreme poverty; and in the Uganda partner site, the CMC students are part of the Rhino Refugee camp community serving in community health areas. Table 1 shows the number of students and locations since the beginning of the online CMC program in 2014. There is a large increase in the 2017–2018 cohort with the addition of two sections for each course. A larger evaluation of the CMC indicated that the increase in these numbers is primarily due to the lack of other options for formal social work training, and the CMC is promoted by word of mouth communications, stressing the increase in the skill level of the graduates.

Program Outcomes and Student Voices

In this article we present an analysis of instructor and program feedback, as well as focus groups, provided by four cohorts of students (included are cohorts 1, 3, 4, and 5; see Table 1). As part of the CMC program, students have several opportunities to provide instructor and program feedback. This is accomplished in several ways and at different times throughout the course of the program. For example, students complete annual end of year online survey tool and they also complete university course evaluations at the end of each course. These course evaluations include a section on instructors and a section on the course materials. CMC students also participate in an end of program essay question related to their learning experiences. Once students have received their final grades and certificates, focus groups are conducted at each site. Onsite focus groups are accomplished annually by a combination of university faculty who visit the site and/or site partners. The collection and use of those data have been approved by the university's Institutional Review Board (IRB).

   To conduct the annual end of program evaluation, an online survey is sent to students at the end of the last course of the program. The participation in these surveys is voluntary, confidential, and students are aware that choosing to participate or not will not impact their grades or participation in the CMC program. The survey does not collect any identifying information. The survey includes 14 close-ended questions and four open-ended questions focusing on two main aspects: (1) program outcomes and their implications; and (2) program feedback and suggestions. Students can also fill out university evaluations after each course. However, the response rate for the online instruments has not been great.

Table 1.   Online CMC Student Numbers and Site/Location.

Academic Year/Cohort	No. Enrolled Students	No. Students Who Graduated	Sites
2014–2015: Cohort 1	12	11	Kenya and Malawi (pilot year with JWL)
2015–2016: Cohort 2[a]	8	7	Thailand, Uganda and Myanmar (Burma)
2016–2017: Cohort 3	12	11	Uganda and Myanmar (Burma)
2017–2018: Cohort 4	26	20	Thailand, Uganda and Myanmar (Burma)
2018–2019: Cohort 5	47	40	Thailand, Uganda, Myanmar, Malaysia, Pakistan

[a] No evaluation data were collected from cohort 2 students.

Twenty-four students from the four cohorts participated in the online evaluation survey; this is 29% response rate, a limitation of this online survey.

In addition to the online surveys, at the end of the last course students write a brief essay about their experience. Since the essay is required, the majority of students complete it, and the insights gleaned from those responses provide a way to triangulate the data from the online surveys. After graduation, the partners conduct focus groups. The focus groups are led by a team of both local partners and US-based instructors. Participation in the focus groups is strong because those are done shortly after classes are over and are in-person. Notes from the focus groups are transcribed and analyzed together with the feedback from the online surveys.

The unique combination of students living in many diverse settings and from diverse life experiences provides a distinctive class setting where students can exchange their knowledge and cultural perspectives with each other over a nine-month period. During this time, students develop new understandings of social change internationally and critically address the issues facing individuals, families and communities around the world. The different sources of data we used for the evaluation showed the learning outcomes of the program were achieved. The program included content on social justice and human rights education and in addition we believe the data support the conclusion that the program develops *global thinking* – coming together across differences to find solutions to complex social issues. This global thinking is captured in three distinct themes that are related to the curriculum. In addition, we present a theme about elements of online pedagogy and design that supported student learning.

Social Work Knowledge and Skills

All students who completed the survey (24) reflected their satisfaction with taking part in this program, and their responses were either "a great deal" (66.7%, $n = 16$), or "a lot" (33.3%, $n = 8$). The majority of students (96%) reported they would definitely recommend this program to other people, and one said they would probably recommend it. Similarly, the majority of students in the participating four cohorts reported satisfaction with the academic material. They stated the CMC program provided them with the knowledge and skills needed to work as case managers, skills needed to work with communities, advocacy skills, interpersonal communication skills, and documentation skills. A five-point Likert scale from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree" was employed to examine students' attitude toward these knowledge and skills. The means for these skills areas were high ranging from 4.25 to 4.75, with ability to design and implement evaluations rated lowest, at mean of 4.08. The following short vignettes from graduates help us to understand how the CMC program can provide a space for the professionalization of skills and a space of strength and empowerment:

> [I] got and developed different skills as well as run discussion in focus group, sharing emotions with clients and advocate for him/ her in order to promote his/ her social wellbeing. Those skills will help me to promote and improve social wellbeing of vulnerable and marginalized people in my community. (CMC student, Cohort 1)

I already apply and using the skills and knowledge from this course in my current community driven development project. Assess their needs and priority to develop community action plan. (CMC student, Cohort 4)

Students expressed their desire for accomplishing further social work education and practice after graduating from the CMC program. The majority (79.2%) of participants said that they would like to enroll in other social work courses or programs if any were available, while 37.5% wanted to enroll in other education courses/programs. The need and desire for opportunities to pursue higher education in refugee camps was a theme that was present in the data. Finally, it was also clear that the CMC program impacted not just students' personal development but also the development of the local community and environment. Participants shared:

I live in a community that needs help and these are cases that exist in my community … therefore I am partly a resource to my community, area, and country. (CMC student, Cohort 3)

I have learned [much] from this course … whereby I am now able to work with people. For when I reached in the camp I didn't know how to work with such people but I now have the ability to work with the community … So I am not going to sit on what I learned for I am trained to serve. I will help the community using what I gained from you. (CMC student, Cohort 1)

There were also a few topics that the students identified as desirable and needed for their professional context. Although peace education was not intended as a learning outcome of the CMC program, our students identified conflict resolution (18 students) and mediation (14) as topics that could enhance further the content. Diversity and gender, specifically gender-based violence, were also topics related to peace education, that more than half of the participants identified.

Leading Change

As is evident in the last quotes, participants in the CMC recognized the importance of advocacy, and their responsibility to use their knowledge and lead change. The following short vignettes illustrate this:

I use the knowledge to handle cases and teach my community members how to live together and advocate for people who are the most vulnerable, like orphan children, and unaccompanied minors. This course has empowered me in making change … I became an effective leader who can promote change and motivate peace. (CMC student, Cohort 1)

I have pioneered a self-development program designed to help student intellectually grow despite the situation of the camp is tough …. I'm also volunteering with the organization of people living with disabilities in the refugee camp. I advocate and develop individualized programs for people with disabilities to respond to their unique needs. (CMC student, Cohort 1)

Transformation in Perceptions

Before joining the CMC program, some students had the same conventional understanding of social work as a "helping profession," and therefore depoliticized, with social workers perceived as "problem fixers." After 9 months immersion into the program, students observed a transformation in their perceptions about the profession, a shift from "helping" to capacity building as part of their roles. This excerpt illustrates this shift:

Up until taking up this program, although I have been involved in social work, it did not occur to me that one of the goals of social work is capacity building. To me social work was more of addressing or fixing problems. This perspective and approach of building capacity of those who are facing social problems so that they can deal with problems themselves brings about a more efficient and long-term benefits. How capacity building consequently empowers individuals (clients) seems to not only equip them with skills but also uplift their self-esteem, which more than anything else is a powerful source of strength in many senses. Moreover, this perspective adopts a collaborative approach of work ethics that power structure fades into the background, giving the clients the helm, as it were, metaphorically to steer through the troubling water. (CMC student, Cohort 3)

Other graduates emphasized the sense of belonging and expanded awareness in being part of a global community of social change agents:

In the last 9 months I learned that team work approach helps learners to determine how far they have gone not estimating where they come from and from this course, we have moved the whole world and shared all walks of life as shared knowledge; but it is not all about where we come from which matters but where we are going; a sign of determination, hope, courage and resilience in all challenges that come our way. (CMC student, Cohort 3)

Online Engagement and Learning Strategies

Based on student feedback we also gleaned some important information around the design of the program. The majority of students did not seem to have difficulty navigating the Learning Management System (LMS) (Canvas); however, students mentioned that access to the internet and quality of the connection limited their ability to fully benefit from all the course had to offer. This is consistent with challenges that both researchers and UNHCR have identified and underscores the importance of continuing to seek local partners that have networks and the ability to secure resources that facilitate the learning process.

Students identified reading materials, discussion board, videos and video lectures, and field projects in their communities as activities that supported their learning. Quizzes, essays, and audio lectures were identified as less helpful to their learning and engagement. As expected, our global learners identified the role of the instructor as key, which is consistent with findings in US-based contexts (Berry, 2019):

The instructors are flexible and considerate to our (camp) situation interns [in terms] of course schedules, deadlines and any of our requests. (CMC student, Cohort 1)

The fact that its an online course where it's not possible to have face to face interaction with the instructor, they were very efficient in having frequent communications through email as soon as an email is sent to them. They have also been so willing and always remind us about their willingness to help in case we get stuck and needed help along the way. (CMC student, Cohort 4)

Although our data collection instruments did not focus explicitly on online engagement strategies, but were rather limited to a discussion of strengths and limitations of the course, a clear theme was the instructors' personal and professional presence or, in the words of a student, "inspiration," and empowerment they felt to be independent and confident learners and practitioners. Our students' acknowledgement that instructors modeled authentic leadership and care has important implications for future program design and implementation, both in terms of pedagogy and partnerships.

MOVING FORWARD: EXPLORING SPACES FOR INCLUSIVE LEARNING

Moving forward the authors have examined the next steps for extending the CMC program and online higher education pathways. These programs create possibilities of sharing varied values and respect across differences, as well as common language of social justice and transformation. Further, we share a summary of our learning, informed by both the literature and experience in the field about the importance of partnerships in creating and sustaining spaces for inclusive learning.

Global Learning Communities

As social workers, we have the duty to prepare students to better understand the global condition and be well equipped with knowledge, skills and tools that recognize and acknowledge the uniqueness and similarities of migrants' and refugees' experiences and demands. The unsettled global context requires that social work education develops innovative programs that will adequately prepare students to practice across diverse communities and complex socio-political settings. Due to geographic, cultural and socioeconomic divides, US-based students are often not sufficiently exposed to the global context. As a next step, we propose creating Global Learning Communities (GLC) which will have cohorts inclusive of "traditional" College of Social Work (CSW) students, new arriving communities in Salt Lake City and international students living at the margins. The mechanism for developing these inclusive learning communities is the integration of "traditional" CSW students with CMC cohorts. This innovation in online education provides a point of increased access for underrepresented and marginalized communities and the role of global education in preparing social work students for global practice, conflict resolution and peace-building. Through the GLCs, participants will be qualified to capture the nuances and realities of such a global condition that requires communication and information across regions and continents.

The trend of forced migration is contributing to growing protracted refugee communities that form complex and diverse societies inside refugee camps and urban settings. Their condition calls for the need of trained social work forces in both settings. Those who serve as case managers have linguistic and cultural skills but often are not supported by professional training and/or higher education. Likewise, increasing numbers of communities in forced migration are left with no access to higher education despite their life and professional experiences. The CMC Program is one initiative with great potential to expand toward different regions and groups of migrants. Providing online education as a means of greater access for marginalized communities and serving migrant communities is a social justice issue that social work and service providing institutions should uphold to better serve these communities. Likewise, in addition to the traditional social work topics, curricula can benefit from more focus on grassroots leadership, leadership and change, and elements of peace education.

Partnerships and Collaborative Work

Our experience with implementing the CMC, and the student feedback we presented here is consistent with the recommendations of both scholar practitioners

and UNHCR priorities –work with different stakeholders, understand the legal framework and organizational dynamics within which partners operate, avoid competing for resources, and very importantly, validate programs and learning attainments from the very start. Collaborative work across disciplines, peers, non-governmental agencies and international organization to promote, develop and redesign curriculum is therefore key to sustain initiatives for GLC.

Overall, global learning is about helping students understand themselves and the world around them, including their exploration, critical thinking and transforming societies in their search for truth and justice. Global learning is no more about student exchange, volunteering and service but rather establishing connections with people and ideas new to them. It can no longer be only exposure to difference, but needs to also be about experience with difference as they engage with diverse students to better understand and strive to find solutions for the complex social ills, as well as solutions, for the future and wellbeing of the global community.

As already stated, refugees face numerous challenges when it comes to the implementation of the right to education. A number of studies have demonstrated that higher education for refugees largely remains outside of the global educational movement despite the wide range of positive outcomes higher education has both on the individual and societal levels. Global education and inclusion of refugees in the movement requires hard work from both individuals and institutions. Faculty need to understand the global learning process, risk trying new methods, gain support from peer faculty and embedded institutional power relations, and need to be willing to learn how to allow their students to co-create the curriculum by adding culturally and professionally relevant knowledge and cases. Creating an interdisciplinary faculty community and ensuring strong organizational, physical and financial resources that would ensure the sustenance of global learning, and promoting open process of participatory dialogue remains critical for organizations and institutions engaged in such endeavors. To materialize such efforts with students, faculty and staff, global awareness, global perspectives and global engagement are central.

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