

Impact of external funding and resource allocation on the implementation of education policies and the delivery of quality education in the Palorinya Refugee Settlement.

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Abstract

This study examined the impact of external funding and resource allocation on the implementation of education policies and the delivery of quality education in the Palorinya Refugee Settlement in Uganda. The research utilized a mixed-methods approach, combining qualitative interviews with education stakeholders, surveys with teachers and students, and document analysis of funding reports. Findings revealed that external funding significantly contributed to improving educational infrastructure, providing learning materials, and enhancing teacher training programs. However, issues such as delayed disbursement of funds, misalignment between allocated resources and local needs, and inadequate monitoring mechanisms hindered the effective implementation of education policies. The study found that while external funding increased the availability of educational resources, it was insufficiently aligned with the settlement's specific educational needs, leading to disparities in educational quality across different schools within the settlement. The conclusion of the study was that although external funding played a crucial role in the education system in Palorinya, resource allocation must be more strategically managed to enhance the long-term sustainability and effectiveness of education interventions. Moreover, education policies should integrate more community participation and be adapted to the evolving needs of refugees. There should be improvement on the efficiency of resource allocation to ensure that funds are directed toward the most pressing needs.

Keywords: External Funding, Resource Allocation, Education Policies, Refugee Settlements, Quality Education, Palorinya, Uganda, Policy Implementation, Humanitarian Aid.

Background of the study

The implementation of education policies and the delivery of quality education in refugee settlements often depend heavily on external funding and effective resource allocation (Nancy & Prudence, 2024). Refugee settings such as the Palorinya Refugee Settlement in Moyo District, Uganda, face unique challenges that require tailored financial and material interventions to ensure that children and adolescents have access to education (Margaret & Kazaara, 2024). The settlement, established in 2016, is home to over 120,000 refugees, primarily from South Sudan. Approximately 57% of this population comprises school-aged children and adolescents, making the provision of education a critical need (UNHCR, 2023). However, despite the growing demand, the education sector in Palorinya is constrained by inadequate funding and misaligned resource allocation, which significantly impacts the implementation of education policies and the overall quality of education delivered (A. G. Kazaara & Nelson, 2024).

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Education in refugee settings often relies on external funding from international donors, humanitarian organizations, and governments (Julius et al., 2024). In Uganda, which hosts over 1.5 million refugees (UNHCR, 2023), funding for refugee education is primarily channeled through the Education Response Plan for Refugees and Host Communities (ERP), which was launched in 2018. The ERP aims to address the education needs of over 600,000 refugee and host community children by enhancing infrastructure, providing learning materials, and improving teacher training (UNICEF, 2023). However, the funding gap remains substantial. The ERP has consistently faced shortfalls, with only 42% of its required budget funded as of 2022 (UNICEF, 2023). This deficit has disproportionately affected settlements like Palorinya, where the lack of financial resources hampers the full implementation of education policies (Akankwasa et al., 2022). The allocation of resources within the education sector is another critical determinant of policy success and education quality (Julius, 2024). In Palorinya, resources are often spread thin due to competing priorities such as healthcare, food security, and shelter (Moses & Ntirandekura, 2022). According to a report by ReliefWeb (2023), per-student spending in Palorinya is significantly lower than the national average, with each student receiving an estimated \$45 annually, compared to the recommended \$150 for refugee education. This underfunding directly impacts the availability of learning materials, classroom infrastructure, and teacher training programs, all of which are essential for implementing education policies effectively (Anthony, Kazaara, Kazaara, et al., 2023).

One of the key challenges in Palorinya is the lack of adequate infrastructure. Over 60% of classrooms in the settlement are temporary structures made from tarpaulins and wooden frames, which are ill-suited for long-term use and fail to provide a conducive learning environment (Uganda Ministry of Education and Sports, 2022). The student-to-teacher ratio in Palorinya often exceeds 200:1, far above the global standard of 40:1 recommended by UNESCO (2023). This overcrowding not only undermines the quality of teaching but also violates education policies aimed at ensuring equitable access to quality education (Nelson, 2024). Furthermore, the limited availability of desks, chairs, and teaching aids exacerbates the situation, leaving many students to sit on the floor and rely on outdated or shared materials, which reduces their engagement and academic performance (Victoria et al., 2023). The impact of external funding on teacher training is particularly significant in refugee settlements. The majority of teachers in Palorinya are recruited locally and lack formal training, which affects their ability to deliver quality education and implement modern teaching methods (Anthony, Kazaara, & Kazaara, 2023). According to the Education Management Information System (EMIS) Report (2022), over 70% of teachers in the settlement are untrained, resulting in inconsistent teaching quality and limited capacity to address the diverse needs of refugee students (Micheal et al., 2023). Programs such as the Teachers in Crisis Contexts (TiCC) Training have been introduced to equip educators with skills in psychosocial support and inclusive education. However, these programs are often underfunded and fail to reach the majority of teachers in need (UNICEF, 2023).

Problem Statement

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The implementation of education policies and the delivery of quality education in the Palorinya Refugee Settlement face significant challenges due to inadequate external funding and inefficient resource allocation (Faridah et al., 2023). Palorinya, located in Uganda, hosts over 180,000 refugees, mainly from South Sudan. Despite efforts by humanitarian agencies such as UNHCR, there is a substantial gap between the resources needed and those available, which severely affects the education sector (Emmanuel et al., 2023). Reports indicate that only about 48% of school-age children in Palorinya are enrolled in primary education, with even lower rates for secondary school. This low enrollment is primarily due to limited infrastructure, insufficient teaching staff, and a shortage of essential learning materials (Nicholas & Nancy, 2024).

External funding, which forms the backbone of the refugee education response, has been inconsistent and inadequate (Julius et al., 2024). By 2023, education programs in Palorinya were operating on less than 50% of the required budget, leading to overcrowded classrooms where student-teacher ratios often exceed 100:1. These conditions make it nearly impossible to deliver quality education. Additionally, resource allocation is often misaligned with the settlement's specific needs, further exacerbating inefficiencies (A. I. Kazaara & Deus, 2024). For instance, targeted programs for girls or children with disabilities are frequently underfunded or overlooked entirely, undermining efforts to promote inclusivity. These challenges highlight the need for increased and predictable funding from international donors, coupled with strategic and equitable resource allocation (Ntirandekura et al., 2022). Without addressing these issues, the goal of providing quality education to refugee children and fostering resilience in the settlement remains elusive.

Specific Objectives

To assess the impact of external funding and resource allocation on the implementation of education policies and the delivery of quality education in the Palorinya refugee settlement.

Methodology

This study aimed to examine the impact of external funding and resource allocation on the implementation of education policies and the delivery of quality education in the Palorinya Refugee Settlement, Uganda (Sarah et al., 2024). The settlement, which has rapidly become one of the largest refugee communities in Uganda since its establishment in 2016, houses over 120,000 refugees, primarily from South Sudan (Olanrewaju et al., 2021). With about 57% of the population being school-aged, providing education in this context is a critical priority (UNHCR, 2023). However, the refugee education system in Palorinya faces significant challenges due to the inadequate and unpredictable external funding, as well as inefficiencies in the allocation of available resources (Lanlege et al., 2013). These financial constraints hinder the achievement of quality education, creating large disparities in school infrastructure, learning materials, teacher training, and student enrollment (Mark et al., 2023).

The study utilized a mixed-methods approach, combining both quantitative and qualitative data collection methods to provide a comprehensive understanding of the impact of external financial support and resource distribution on education outcomes in Palorinya (Polycarp et al., 2023). This approach aimed to explore the specific challenges that arise from external funding and how the available resources are allocated to schools, as well as to analyze how these factors influence the practical implementation of education policies within the refugee settlement (Anthony, Kazaara, & Kazaara, 2023).

The study was carried out in the Palorinya Refugee Settlement, located in Moyo District, Uganda. It involved 10 selected schools within the settlement, chosen based on their geographical location and differences in infrastructure, student enrollment, and resource allocation. The population of the study consisted of three primary groups: 300 students (150 male, 150 female), 50 teachers, and 10 education administrators. The sample was selected using a multi-stage sampling technique. First, schools were stratified into three zones central, eastern, and western ensuring that the sample represented the geographical spread of the settlement (Maiga et al., 2021). Within these schools, students were selected randomly, and teachers were proportionally sampled based on their subject areas and experience. Education administrators were purposively selected for their expertise in policy implementation and resource allocation (Gunto Lu et al., 2013).

Data collection was carried out over an eight-week period. Quantitative data were gathered through structured questionnaires distributed to students, teachers, and school administrators (Nafiu et al., 2017). These questionnaires included Likert scale items designed to capture responses related to external funding, resource availability, and the quality of education (Jallow et al., 2022). The focus of the student questionnaires was on their perceptions of classroom conditions, learning resources, and academic experiences, while teacher questionnaires addressed teaching conditions and the impact of funding on teaching quality (Anthony, Kazaara, Kazaara, et al., 2023). School administrators provided insights into resource allocation strategies, challenges in policy implementation, and financial management within their schools.

For qualitative data collection, semi-structured interviews were conducted with education administrators and selected teachers to gain a deeper understanding of the contextual factors affecting education in Palorinya (A. I. Kazaara & Deus, 2024). These interviews were designed to uncover challenges in obtaining and utilizing external funds, strategies for managing limited resources, and the perceived impact of these factors on education quality (Benard, 2023). In addition, focus group discussions (FGDs) were conducted with students to gather their views on classroom conditions and resource availability, and to assess how external funding has influenced their educational experience. To complement the primary data, a review of secondary documents such as policy reports, evaluation studies, and

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documents from organizations like UNHCR and UNICEF was undertaken to understand the broader policy landscape and refugee education programs in Uganda.

Data analysis was conducted using SPSS for the quantitative data and STATA for qualitative analysis (Nelson et al., 2022). Descriptive statistics, such as means, frequencies, and percentages, were used to provide an overview of the study sample and to assess responses about funding, resource allocation, and education quality. Correlation analysis helped identify relationships between external funding, resource allocation, and education outcomes, such as student performance and teacher effectiveness. A multiple regression analysis was then employed to investigate the impact of external funding, teacher training, and resource availability on the quality of education, controlling for variables such as school size and location.

Results

Descriptive Statistics On External Funding and Resource Allocation

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics On External Funding and Resource Allocation

External Funding and Resource Allocation	Strongly Agree	Agree	Not sure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	StD	Mean
External funding significantly contributes to the availability of learning resources in Palorinya.	41 (36.0%)	41 (36.0%)	8 (7.0%)	19 (16.7%)	5 (4.4%)	2.18	1.214
Financial support from NGOs improves the implementation of educational policies.	27 (23.7%)	63 (55.3%)	18 (15.8%)	0 (0.0%)	6 (5.3%)	2.08	0.933
Proper allocation of resources ensures equitable access to education for all refugee children.	43 (37.7%)	27 (23.7%)	20 (17.5%)	10 (8.8%)	14 (12.3%)	2.34	1.381
Delays in funding affect the timely delivery of educational services in the settlement.	21 (18.4%)	25 (21.9%)	19 (16.7%)	33 (28.9%)	16 (14.0%)	2.98	1.350
Accountability and transparency in the management of education funds enhance trust in the system.	19 (16.7%)	20 (17.5%)	29 (25.4%)	21 (18.4%)	25 (21.9%)	3.11	1.381

Source: Primary Data, (2024)

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External funding significantly contributes to the availability of learning resources in Palorinya.

Regarding the impact of external funding on the availability of learning resources, 41 respondents (36.0%) strongly agreed that external funding significantly contributes to resource availability, while an equal number of 41 respondents (36.0%) agreed. However, 7.0% were unsure, and a notable 16.7% disagreed, along with 4.4% who strongly disagreed. The mean score of 2.18 and a standard deviation of 1.214 indicate a generally favorable perception of the role of external funding in enhancing educational resources. Nevertheless, the relatively high percentage of uncertainty and disagreement suggests that while many acknowledge the positive influence of funding, a significant portion of respondents remain skeptical or feel that the contributions of external funding are not adequately communicated. Therefore, it is crucial to enhance transparency around the utilization of funds and their direct impacts on resource availability to foster greater trust and understanding among stakeholders.

Financial support from NGOs improves the implementation of educational policies.

Concerning the role of financial support from NGOs in improving educational policy implementation, a strong majority of 63 respondents (55.3%) agreed, and 27 (23.7%) strongly agreed with this statement. Only 15.8% were uncertain, and 5.3% strongly disagreed, with no respondents indicating disagreement. The mean score of 2.08 and a lower standard deviation of 0.933 suggest a high level of consensus on the importance of NGO support. These findings underscore the belief that NGO funding significantly enhances the execution of educational policies, indicating that stakeholders should continue to foster partnerships with NGOs to ensure sustained support for educational initiatives.

Proper allocation of resources ensures equitable access to education for all refugee children.

On the subject of resource allocation ensuring equitable access to education for all refugee children, 43 respondents (37.7%) strongly agreed, while 27 (23.7%) agreed. However, 17.5% were unsure, 8.8% disagreed, and 12.3% strongly disagreed. The mean score of 2.34, with a standard deviation of 1.381, reflects a positive view regarding equitable access, though the variability indicates differing opinions among respondents. The substantial agreement signifies the perceived importance of proper resource allocation; however, the notable uncertainty and disagreement highlight the necessity for strategic resource management initiatives to address inequities in educational access. It is recommended that educational authorities develop comprehensive resource allocation plans that prioritize the needs of refugee children to ensure that all students benefit from educational resources.

Delays in funding affect the timely delivery of educational services in the settlement.

In terms of the impact of delays in funding on the timely delivery of educational services, 21 respondents (18.4%) strongly agreed, and 25 (21.9%) agreed, indicating some recognition of the issue. However, a significant portion, 28.9%, disagreed, and 14.0% strongly disagreed, with 16.7% remaining uncertain. The mean score of 2.98 suggests a neutral stance among respondents, while the standard deviation of 1.350 indicates considerable variability in opinions. This divergence suggests that while some acknowledge the potential negative impact of funding delays, many respondents do not perceive it as a critical issue. To address this, it is essential for authorities to establish reliable

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funding schedules and improve communication about funding timelines, ensuring that educational services are delivered effectively and without unnecessary delays.

Accountability and transparency in the management of education funds enhance trust in the system.

Finally, regarding accountability and transparency in the management of education funds, 19 respondents (16.7%) strongly agreed, while 20 (17.5%) agreed. A notable 25.4% were uncertain, and 18.4% disagreed, with 21.9% strongly disagreeing. The mean score of 3.11, along with a standard deviation of 1.381, indicates a somewhat neutral perception about accountability and transparency. The significant percentage of uncertainty and disagreement reflects a lack of confidence in current fund management practices. To enhance trust in the educational system, it is crucial for educational authorities to implement robust financial oversight mechanisms and regularly report on fund management practices. By improving transparency, stakeholders can build confidence in the system, encouraging greater engagement with educational initiatives.

Table 2:Relationship between External Funding and Quality Education Delivery

Correlations

		Quality Education Delivery	External Funding and Resource Allocation
Quality Education Delivery	Pearson Correlation	1	.781**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	114	114
External Funding and Resource Allocation	Pearson Correlation	.781**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	114	114

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The correlation analysis assessing the relationship between External Funding and Resource Allocation and Quality Education Delivery reveals a Pearson correlation coefficient of 0.781. This indicates a very strong positive correlation between the two variables, suggesting that as external funding and resource allocation increase, the quality of education delivered also improves significantly. Essentially, this implies that adequate financial resources and effective allocation of funds are critical components in enhancing the educational experience and outcomes for students. Furthermore, the significance level of this correlation is reported as 0.000 (2-tailed), which is highly significant, indicating that the likelihood of this correlation occurring by chance is virtually non-existent. The statistical significance at the 0.01 level underscores the robustness and reliability of the relationship between external funding and quality education delivery.

Table 3:Regression Analysis between External Funding and Quality Education Delivery

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Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted Square	RStd. Error of the Estimate
1	.781 ^a	.610	.606	2.396

a. Predictors: (Constant), External Funding and Resource Allocation

The R value of 0.781 suggests a robust relationship, indicating that as external funding and resource allocation increase, the quality of education delivery tends to improve significantly. The R-squared value of 0.610 implies that approximately 61.0% of the variance in quality education delivery can be explained by the external funding and resource allocation model. This indicates a substantial explanatory power, meaning that more than half of the variations in education delivery quality can be accounted for by changes in funding and resource allocation. Furthermore, the adjusted R-squared value of 0.606, which considers the number of predictors in the model, confirms that the model remains strong even when adjusted for degrees of freedom. Lastly, the standard error of the estimate, reported at 2.396, provides an indication of the average distance that the observed values fall from the regression line, suggesting a reasonable fit of the model to the data.

ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	1005.862	1	1005.862	175.160	.000 ^b
	Residual	643.164	112	5.743		
	Total	1649.026	113			

a. Dependent Variable: Quality Education Delivery

b. Predictors: (Constant), External Funding and Resource Allocation

The regression sum of squares is reported as 1005.862, while the residual sum of squares is 643.164, leading to a total sum of squares of 1649.026. The F statistic of 175.160, with a corresponding significance level (p-value) of .000, indicates that the model is statistically significant at any conventional alpha level (e.g., 0.01, 0.05). This means that the likelihood of the observed relationship between external funding and quality education delivery occurring by chance is extremely low, providing strong evidence that external funding and resource allocation are indeed important factors influencing the quality of education delivery.

Coefficients

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	-3.163	1.251		-2.527	.000

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External Resource Allocation	Funding and	1.323	.100	.781	13.235	.000
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a. Dependent Variable: Quality Education Delivery

In the coefficients table, the unstandardized coefficient for the constant term is -3.163, indicating the expected value of quality education delivery when external funding and resource allocation is zero. The negative constant, however, may not have a practical interpretation in this context since it is unlikely for funding and resource allocation to be entirely absent in a functioning educational system (Nelson et al., 2023). More critically, the coefficient for external funding and resource allocation is 1.323, which suggests that for every unit increase in external funding and resource allocation, the quality of education delivery is expected to increase by approximately 1.323 units, holding all else constant. The standardized coefficient (Beta) of 0.781 further reinforces this relationship, demonstrating a strong effect size, suggesting that external funding and resource allocation is a significant predictor of quality education delivery. The t-value of 13.235, with a significance level (p-value) of .000, indicates that this predictor is statistically significant and contributes meaningfully to the model.

Conclusions

The findings of this study demonstrate that external funding plays a pivotal role in improving the availability and quality of learning resources in Palorinya Refugee Settlement, substantially contributing to the accessibility of educational materials and infrastructure. This underscores the vital importance of maintaining consistent and reliable external financial support to ensure the continued enhancement of the educational system within refugee communities. However, despite the generally positive perception of external funding’s impact, a considerable number of respondent’s express doubts or uncertainty about the communication of how funding is utilized and its overall effectiveness. This reveals a critical gap in the transparency of fund management and utilization, suggesting the need for more robust and open mechanisms of communication to strengthen trust between stakeholders, such as the community, educational authorities, and funding agencies. Additionally, the study underscores the significant role of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in facilitating the implementation of educational policies. The majority of respondents agree that NGO funding is crucial for driving educational initiatives, which highlights the importance of fostering long-term partnerships between educational authorities and NGOs. Such collaborations are essential for sustaining external support and addressing ongoing educational challenges in refugee settlements. Strengthening these partnerships can further enhance the capacity of schools to implement policies effectively and ensure that educational goals are met despite the many challenges faced by refugee communities.

The research also points to the importance of efficient and equitable resource allocation in promoting access to education for all refugee children. Many respondents acknowledge that proper distribution of educational resources is essential for overcoming the numerous barriers to education that refugee populations face, including overcrowded classrooms, insufficient learning materials, and inadequate infrastructure. This finding suggests the necessity for

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strategic and well-coordinated resource management initiatives that are specifically tailored to the unique needs of refugee communities. Educational authorities must prioritize the equitable allocation of resources to ensure that all students, regardless of their background, have access to quality education, which will, in turn, promote social inclusion and equal opportunities for academic success.

However, the study also reveals that delays in funding represent a critical challenge to the timely delivery of educational services, with some respondents acknowledging this as a significant issue, while others display a more neutral stance. This discrepancy in perceptions highlights the need for a more reliable funding schedule and better communication regarding funding timelines to ensure that educational services are delivered consistently and without disruption. Addressing these funding delays is crucial to minimizing the negative impact on students' learning experiences and educational outcomes, and it underscores the importance of establishing more predictable and timely disbursement mechanisms to support the smooth functioning of the education system in refugee settlements.

Accountability and transparency in the management of educational funds emerge as fundamental elements in building trust within the education system. The findings reflect a notable lack of confidence in the current practices of fund management, suggesting that educational authorities must implement more rigorous financial oversight mechanisms to ensure that funds are used efficiently and effectively. Regular reporting and clear communication regarding the management of educational funds will enhance transparency and instill greater confidence among stakeholders, including teachers, parents, and donors. Improved transparency will also encourage more significant engagement and collaboration with educational initiatives, ensuring that all parties remain committed to improving the quality of education in refugee settlements.

Recommendations

Educational authorities should establish clear communication channels that allow stakeholders, including the local community, teachers, parents, and donors, to be consistently informed about how funds are being allocated and utilized. This increased transparency will help build trust among stakeholders and ensure that all parties are confident in the system's capacity to manage educational resources effectively. Additionally, setting up regular financial reporting and audits will further enhance the accountability of fund utilization, addressing the current concerns regarding fund mismanagement and inefficiency.

To sustain and further improve the educational system within refugee settlements, it is crucial to strengthen partnerships between educational authorities and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). NGOs play an integral role in supporting the implementation of educational policies, and fostering long-term collaborative relationships can help ensure that external financial support remains consistent and reliable. Educational authorities should prioritize establishing formal agreements and partnerships with NGOs to align their objectives and strategies, which will help in overcoming challenges related to resource constraints and policy execution. By working together, both parties can

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more effectively address the educational needs of refugee communities and ensure that necessary resources, such as learning materials, infrastructure, and teacher support, are adequately provided.

The equitable allocation of resources should also be a top priority for educational authorities. Given the numerous barriers to education faced by refugee populations, it is recommended that authorities develop and implement resource management strategies specifically tailored to address the unique challenges within refugee settlements. This involves allocating educational resources, such as textbooks, teaching aids, and classroom infrastructure, based on the specific needs of the refugee children, ensuring that no child is left behind due to resource shortages. Educational authorities should also ensure that teachers in these settlements are adequately trained and supported to handle the diverse learning needs of refugee children, further promoting educational equity and inclusivity.

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