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# “Education Should Be Number One”: Life Stories of Migrant Crèche Teachers and Their Impact on the Early Childhood Education of Vulnerable Youth

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“EDUCATION SHOULD BE NUMBER ONE”: LIFE STORIES OF MIGRANT  
CRÈCHE TEACHERS AND THEIR IMPACT ON THE EARLY CHILDHOOD  
EDUCATION OF VULNERABLE YOUTH

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Fall 2014

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## Abstract

This project seeks to identify, examine, and analyze how the life experiences of African migrant women manifest in the aspirations, visions, and goals for their school children's education and integration in society. The study focuses on the teachers and young children at the Union of Refugee Women's Children Care Centre, an organization that provides early childhood education to children in refugee and economically disadvantaged communities. In this paper I explore how life experiences influence the curriculum and daily activities at the crèche as well as which skills the teachers find essential to pass on to the refugee and economically disadvantaged children. The teachers' life histories give insight into the unheard stories of refugee women and their experiences adapting to South African life through skills and lessons they have learned.

Through participant-observation and interviews with six women who work at the crèche, this study identifies themes that translate from past experiences into daily life in the classroom. These themes show the intergenerational aspirations and goals instilled in the children by the teachers. Lessons in the classroom increase school readiness while also preparing the children for life hindrances often presented to people in refugee and economically disadvantaged communities. The teachers' life stories, along with understanding daily life at the crèche, show how these women use life experiences and education to best prepare the children to tackle the difficulties that face vulnerable communities in South Africa.

## Introduction

The ideals of post-apartheid South Africa include equality for all people regardless of race, socioeconomic class, and background, specifically when referring to education. Yet such ideals have not been met, as seen with the treatment of refugees – those who have fled violence, political warfare, or persecution – and impoverished communities and their educational opportunities. When trying to access schooling, these populations often encounter obstacles such as lack of identification documents and the inability to pay school fees, even for public schools. The South African Constitution guarantees basic rights and freedoms to everyone living within the country's boundaries, but reality does not match legislation and communities of stateless and vulnerable people are left behind. Children are put at an even greater disadvantage, as they miss numerous learning opportunities.

Aiding this situation begins with young children, as those who receive the right preparation during early childhood are given the skills needed to develop better literacy and numeracy skills as well as basic life skills. This starts during the years children go to crèche, or daycare, and begin to work on their language and learning abilities. Ilifa Labantwana<sup>1</sup>, a national Early Childhood Development program, illustrates that focusing on early education positively impacts the learning of numbers, language, and social skills. During their earliest years, children are at their most vulnerable to both positive and negative influences; they have the opportunity for immense growth yet can also experience lasting consequences if exposed to deprivation and abuse. It is therefore essential to use the early childhood years to foster learning and social skills, as research shows that children who participate in quality early childhood development programs are better prepared when they begin primary school.

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<sup>1</sup> "The Early Childhood Development Sector in South Africa." Ilifa Labantwana.  
<http://www.ilifalabantwana.co.za/the-early-childhood-development-sector-in-south-africa/>.

While these facts apply to all children alike, they are particularly relevant in the discussion on refugee, asylum-seeking, and impoverished children, as they are the main victims of unequal educational opportunities. Early childhood education creates a solid foundation for future learning while playing a vital role in intergenerational integration of migrants and refugees. Therefore specific attention must be given to children from refugee and economically disadvantaged communities in order to provide a means of social mobility and integration. This is exemplified in the Children Care Centre, which provides quality early childhood education to members of these vulnerable communities. The teachers, most of whom are refugees themselves, provide the children with basic skills needed for later years of schooling as well as for overall success. The children also experience the effects of education on intergenerational integration, as the teachers provide the children with the skills necessary to prevail in a society that lacks in refugee assistance. In order to see the impact of life lessons on education, this research project sought to identify and understand *how* the experiences of these African migrants living in Durban manifest in the vision for their students' social and educational integration.

In order to see the relationship between life experiences of the teachers and lessons instilled within the children, I had to be able to gain sight of the daily occurrences in the crèche and help unfold the life stories of the teachers who were willing to open up. Doing so helped me achieve the essential objectives of my study. Through participant-observation and interviews I sought to learn, understand, and analyze the unique relationships and goals within the crèche. I examined the prevalence of English language within the crèche and its influence on future possibilities for the children. I aimed to understand how the teachers define their community and place within South African society. I analyzed the life stories of the teachers to better understand how they ended up at the crèche and why they teach there. Through interviews I learned what

the teachers define as the most necessary aspects that the crèche provides for the children they teach. By identifying key themes from the teachers' life stories, I learned how life experiences of the teachers translate into lessons for the children and how the crèche is run. This led to understanding the intergenerational aspirations and goals instilled in the children by the teachers. By seeking the aforementioned objectives, I was able to understand how early childhood education may be adapted to best serve the vulnerable youth in the crèche.

My interest in the relationship between life experiences of refugees and early childhood education for vulnerable communities stems from my job at a preschool, studying education, and my newfound awareness of and attention to the vast inequalities that refugees in South Africa face. When I arrived in South Africa, I was immediately interested in the education system due to my previous academic focus on education and my career trajectory of becoming a primary education teacher. Yet I was also struck by the treatment of refugees in South Africa, and shifted my focus towards understanding more about the topic. Visiting the crèche brought both of these interests together and provided an opportunity to study the relationship between them.

The Union of Refugee Women's Children Care Centre addresses the need for refugee, asylum-seeking, and economically disadvantaged children to access quality early education. The crèche is both a place of learning and a safe haven for the children, who are served two hot meals each day. The program is run by women who themselves are refugees or are seeking asylum, therefore the goals of the crèche are influenced by direct and personal experiences. Through their curriculum and daily activities, the women help prevent certain obstacles, such as language barrier, and prepare the children for certain unavoidable obstacles – all familiar to them from their own experiences. The program is run in English, as it is largely the language of both education and the workplace, which shows the impact of life experiences of the women on the



knowledge passed down to the children. Such aspects of the crèche are particular to the community in which it is serving. The refugee and economically disadvantaged children need the dedication and attention of these women in order to succeed in later schooling. These women, most of whom belong to the same communities as the children, instill what they see as necessary in the children at the crèche.

This paper consists of four primary sections. The first addresses and reviews literature that is relevant to the discussion of the multifaceted goals of the crèche. It explains research on early childhood development and the importance of a child's earliest years in acquiring motor skills and an educational basis that lead to school readiness. It then discusses diversity in school and its subsequent impact on vulnerable communities. Combined, this literature clarifies the implications for early childhood development when applied to schools serving children of various backgrounds. The second section is an account of the methodological procedures used to conduct this research. The third section, data and analysis, can be further divided into three sub-sections. The first describes a day at the Children Care Centre and the second discusses important highlights from my participant-observation in the classroom. The third sub-section focuses on the teachers' stories and explains their obstacles, opinions on the crèche, and goals for the future. The fourth and final section of the paper is a conclusion of these research findings, addressing the accomplishments of the crèche as well as means of improvement. Overall, this project seeks to understand the reality of "equality" in the nation for vulnerable communities as it pertains to education. Life stories and daily life at the crèche show how those who live as refugees within South Africa use life experiences and education to best prepare the vulnerable youth to combat the obstacles that face disadvantaged communities in this country.

## ***Background***

The Children Care Centre was founded in 2002 by the Union of Refugee Women in Durban to aid childcare problems in the local South Beach area amongst refugee and economically disadvantaged communities. Beginning with merely six children in the classroom, the crèche now serves over 120 children between the ages of three months and six years divided into a nursery, preschool, and Grade R. The vision of the crèche is to “give hope through love and education”<sup>2</sup> to these children who face many obstacles, and it does just that. Besides its curriculum designed to prepare the children for primary school by increasing school readiness, the crèche provides essentials for the children. Each day the children are given two hot meals, breakfast and lunch, as well as donated snacks after naptime. They are also given a safe environment in which they spend a majority of their days. An underlying goal of the crèche is to fight xenophobia by accommodating South African and refugee children alike. Because it is a registered non-profit organization, it keeps school costs low for families and relies heavily upon donations from a variety of companies, churches, organizations, and individual people. One of the Children Care Centre’s biggest challenges is its facility, as the current building is too small for the number of children served. The kitchen is difficult to cook in, especially for so many people, and the bathrooms are too few. The ideal facility would include an outdoor area where the children could play and get some fresh air. A short-term solution for the need to spend time outside is fieldtrips, though those are based on donations.

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<sup>2</sup> “Children Care Centre in Durban.” *Children Care Centre in Durban*. (2010). <childrencarecentre.co.za/>.

## Literature Review

This literature discusses the importance of early childhood development for school readiness and later success. It also explains the obstacles faced by vulnerable communities and their youth to illustrate the necessity of funds, care, attention, and commitment to the earliest years of education of such communities.

### *Early Childhood Development*

Early childhood development encompasses programs for young children aimed at allowing a child to develop his or her cognitive, psychological, and social capabilities to the fullest extent. The kind of care a child receives during the earliest years of life determines how a child learns in school and many spheres of life, as during these years a child develops all the key elements of emotional intelligence and cognitive ability. The acquisition of educational foundation skills is a vital development at this age due to lifelong impact of learning language, motor skills, numeracy and problem-solving skills, and an interest in education.<sup>3</sup> Good early childhood education is a key way to allow a child to grow and learn essential information while the mind is most malleable. A child's daily experiences directly affect the development of intelligence and personality, therefore such experiences, positive or negative, have long-lasting impacts on both the child and his or her society. Low-quality care can have detrimental effects on language, social development, and school performance. These negative consequences are magnified for children from disadvantaged situations.<sup>4</sup> Unfortunately, these are the children that are least likely to have access to adequate, higher quality early education and child care programs, thus the cyclical nature of vulnerability and poverty are not combated.

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<sup>3</sup> "Education White Paper 5 on Early Childhood Education: Meeting the Challenge of Early Childhood Development in South Africa." 2001, 1-43.

<sup>4</sup> "Quality Early Education and Child Care From Birth to Kindergarten." *American Academy of Pediatrics* 115, no. 1 (2005): 187-91.

In a study on early childhood development and social mobility,<sup>5</sup> Steven Barnett and Clive Belfield show that preschool programs raise academic skills on average; while social mobility is not vast, families on welfare that utilize early schooling are more able to break links between parental situations and child outcomes. While their study was not focused on South Africa, Barnett and Belfield provide findings and analyses on early childhood education that can be applied to various countries and situations. They argue that increased investment in preschool could raise social mobility, as program expansions focusing on disadvantaged children would help them move up the socioeconomic ladder. Their pointed analysis of the status of these children allows for reasonable and educated suggestions for the advancement of early childhood education. Their in-depth and supported research shows that early childhood education programs in which children attend classrooms improve cognitive development, which allows for advancements in language, numeracy, and problem-solving abilities. A focus on providing quality early childhood development programs would help combat the cyclical nature of missed opportunities within communities. These programs can provide a positive early childhood experience, as children who have negative home environments can fight their circumstances by thriving in a positive educational environment.

Increased investment in early childhood education could raise social mobility; increasing the educational quality of programs would create greater outcomes than merely increasing participation rates, as children need proper opportunities to develop and grow.<sup>6</sup> Investment of finances and time should focus on equity in order to give all children, regardless of race or class,

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<sup>5</sup> Barnett, W. Steven, and Clive R. Belfield. "Early Childhood Development and Social Mobility." *The Future of Children* 16, no. 2 (2006).

<sup>6</sup>Barnett, W. Steven, and Clive R. Belfield. "Early Childhood Development and Social Mobility." *The Future of Children* 16, no. 2 (2006).

the chance to thrive.<sup>7</sup> While government funds must be divided among myriad departments and focuses, investing in early childhood education is vital to the growth and progress of a society as a whole. Becoming involved during a child's earliest years helps alleviate socioeconomic gaps and racial inequalities in a society, which are both prominent in South Africa.<sup>8</sup> Providing opportunities for quality early care allows for children of all backgrounds to form an educational foundation from which they will continue to grow as they progress through school and in life. According to the Education White Paper 5 on early childhood education, the official South African argument for the importance of such education, it is the children of South African poor rural and poor urban communities who most urgently need more thorough investment in early childhood education, as they are most likely to benefit from such efforts towards equal education. It is noted that these investments can help fight intergenerational cycles of poverty and discrimination. Such a statement from an official document is excellent support for the case of investing in early childhood education, yet the struggle is to create a reality out of legislation. Essential to the progress of South Africa as the "Rainbow Nation," early childhood years are found to be the ideal time for the transmission of values such as respect for human rights, appreciation of diversity, and tolerance.<sup>9</sup> Therefore investment in early childhood education has positive impacts on individual children and their successes as well as South African society as a country of acceptance and as a whole.

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<sup>7</sup>Kagan, Sharon Lynn, and Jeanne L. Reid. "Invest in Early Childhood Education." *The Phi Delta Kappan* 90, no. 8 (2009): 572-76.

<sup>8</sup> "Education White Paper 5 on Early Childhood Education: Meeting the Challenge of Early Childhood Development in South Africa." 2001, 1-43.

<sup>9</sup>"Education White Paper 5 on Early Childhood Education: Meeting the Challenge of Early Childhood Development in South Africa." 2001, 1-43.

### ***School Readiness***

Quality early childhood education directly affects school readiness, as successful programs provide the children with skills in language and numeracy before they begin their first year of primary school. Such preparedness positively impacts the rest of the child's years as a student, therefore affecting later success in the workforce and other spheres of life. School readiness in a child is defined by motor, social, and emotional development, language acquisition, overall cognition, and approaches to learning.<sup>10</sup> When explaining school readiness and its importance, Pamela High explains, "Our new knowledge of early brain and child development has revealed that modifiable factors in a child's early experience can greatly affect that child's learning trajectory."<sup>11</sup> Therefore children need opportunities to develop their skills and abilities at an early age. High's well-informed argument includes the science behind child cognitive development as well as the implications of such development when applied within a school setting, allowing her to effectively argue for beginning education during a child's earliest years. High explains that focusing on merely the "education of children beginning with kindergarten is to ignore the science of early development and to deny the importance of early experiences."<sup>12</sup> Therefore it is imperative that adequate early childhood education programs be available to all families, regardless of their socioeconomic status, in order for their children to thrive and succeed.

The implications of quality early childhood education are seen in the transition from Grade R to Grade 1, in which students properly prepared in Grade R more easily adjust to

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<sup>10</sup>High, Pamela C. "School Readiness." *American Academy of Pediatrics*, 2008.

<sup>11</sup> High, Pamela C. "School Readiness." *American Academy of Pediatrics*, 2008: 1008.

<sup>12</sup>High, Pamela C. "School Readiness." *American Academy of Pediatrics*, 2008: 1008.

primary school in terms of social, behavioral, and academic skills.<sup>13</sup> Emphasis on programs that help orient children to school practices as well as instill passion for learning will ease transitions to primary school and aid overall school readiness. Past studies have suggested the “cumulative role of cognitive and socio-emotional skills, as well as skill investments made by families, preschool programs, and schools in producing human capital,” further arguing for attention to acquisition of such skills through early education.<sup>14</sup> Repeated research in this specific area of the educational field substantiates findings, as they are clearly prevalent in a variety of studied societies. Undoubtedly the actual *quality* of such pre-primary school programs is a direct influence upon a child’s school readiness and overall success during later schooling years. Stimulating interactions between teachers and students, clear intentional instruction, and focus on cognitive development are important aspects of high-quality early childhood education.<sup>15</sup> These aspects facilitate essential qualities for children to obtain in order to be ready for primary school, including intellectual skills, motivation to learn, and strong social-emotional capacity.<sup>16</sup>

### ***Diversity in School***

As previously discussed, early childhood years are the best time to transmit values such as diversity and tolerance, which is especially relevant in the South African context. Integration of refugee and economically disadvantaged children into larger society begins with early childhood education. Crain Soudien highlights an important point in this topic by explaining that the term and notion of *integration* depends on how the concept of difference itself is defined; if

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<sup>13</sup> Phatudi, Nkidi Caroline. "A Study of Transition from Preschool and Home Contexts to Grade 1 in a Developing Country." 2007, 1-205.

<sup>14</sup> Keys, Tran D., George Farkas, Margaret R. Burchinal, Greg J. Duncan, Deborah L. Vandell, Weilin Li, Erik A. Ruzek, and Carollee Howes. "Preschool Center Quality and School Readiness: Quality Effects and Variation by Demographic and Child Characteristics." *Child Development* 84, no. 4 (2013): 1172.

<sup>15</sup> Keys, Tran D., George Farkas, Margaret R. Burchinal, Greg J. Duncan, Deborah L. Vandell, Weilin Li, Erik A. Ruzek, and Carollee Howes. "Preschool Center Quality and School Readiness: Quality Effects and Variation by Demographic and Child Characteristics." *Child Development* 84, no. 4 (2013): 1171-190.

<sup>16</sup> High, Pamela C. "School Readiness." *American Academy of Pediatrics*, 2008.

differences are not seen as points of conflict and if children are given equal opportunities and respect, they will be integrated. Such integration begins with early fundamental changes in attitudes among learners and teachers of minority and majority groups alike, as seeing differences as positive aspects of life and accepting all cultures and socioeconomic classes allows for better equality in and out of the classroom.<sup>17</sup> Instilling these ideals in children of early ages aids in the prevention of prejudice and class- or race-associated disadvantages.

The United Nation's Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity 2001 proclaims cultural diversity as the "common heritage of humanity" and "as necessary for humankind as biodiversity is for nature."<sup>18</sup> The declaration goes on to acknowledge the essential role of education in promoting awareness and understanding the positive value of cultural diversity, further validating the vast necessity of investment in and commitment to education as a means of social integration. Such intercultural education helps address and alleviate certain challenges within the educational system, as well as outside the classroom, including social inclusion and exclusion, respect for diversity, and prevention of discriminatory attitudes.<sup>19</sup> An important way in which education practitioners can help eliminate bias in the classroom is to use language as a means of inclusion rather than exclusion; using a more universally accepted educational language helps create a unified classroom.

Yet a universally accepted language, such as English, can simultaneously be a means of inclusion and exclusion, as students who are not exemplary in English can easily fall behind. Soudien, in discussing language as a means of inclusion, reiterates and supports this point when he explains that "medium of instruction, particularly English, defines, for large numbers of

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<sup>17</sup> Soudien, Crain, "'Constituting the class': an analysis of the process of 'integration' in South African schools" in *Changing Class: Education and Social Change in Post-Apartheid South Africa*, ed. Linda Chisholm

<sup>18</sup>"UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity." 2001.

<sup>19</sup>Murray, Jaclyn. "Learning to Live Together: An Exploration and Analysis of Managing Cultural Diversity in Ten Early Childhood Development Centres in South Africa." 2009, 1-162.



children in South Africa, the degree to which, epistemologically, they have access to and understand what they are being taught,” beginning at an early age and continuing throughout schooling years. He continues, “For many, because their English language competence is so poor, exclusion is a structural experience.”<sup>20</sup> Therefore, if a language such as English is used as a method of integration and unification, teaching the language must begin early in life when a child’s brain is most susceptible to language. While using English may appear to create extra obstacles, many academics acknowledge the prominence and importance of English within education and business. Thobeka Mda reflects upon the thoughts of many African-language speakers and other South Africans, saying that they “perceive English as offering greater socioeconomic and educational opportunities and as potentially ‘unifying’ a linguistically diverse nation. English is therefore perceived as a... language of learning.”<sup>21</sup> Because of this perspective by a respected intellectual, learning English can be seen as a challenge worth accepting and overcoming due to its long-lasting positive impact.

Because English is largely the language of education, the workplace, and international communication, many teachers help prepare their students to face the society in which they are living. In an analysis of the presence of English in South Africa, Bronwyn Peirce examines the varying uses of the language, stating that teachers and learners alike have been “appropriating the language in the interests of freedom and possibilities” for those in South Africa.<sup>22</sup> Though dated, Peirce’s work sheds light on the rise of English as a means of communication and the implications of this rise within the specific South African context. Language, and the ability to

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<sup>20</sup> Soudien, Crain, “‘Constituting the class’: an analysis of the process of ‘integration’ in South African schools” in *Changing Class: Education and Social Change in Post-Apartheid South Africa*, ed. Linda Chisholm: 110

<sup>21</sup> Mda, Thobeka, “Multilingualism and education” in *Changing Class: Education and Social Change in Post-Apartheid South Africa*, ed. Linda Chisholm: 184

<sup>22</sup> Peirce, Bronwyn Norton. "Toward a Pedagogy of Possibility in the Teaching of English Internationally: People's English in South Africa." *TESOL Quarterly* 23, no. 3 (1989).

communicate with others in many spheres of life, directly impacts a person's life. Therefore the preemptive measures taken to teach English at an early age can be seen as having long-term positive effects on the students. Having sufficient communicative language when starting primary school can influence the rest of a child's educational experience.

### ***Vulnerable Communities***

In this context, the term *vulnerable communities* refers to economically disadvantaged and refugee or immigrant communities, as these groups are susceptible to varying hardships due to culture, background, and socioeconomic status. Often, members of refugee communities are also members of economically disadvantaged communities due to the nature of displacement as well as xenophobic attitudes of locals. In a study of childhood poverty, Gary W. Evans presents and explains the physical and psychosocial environments faced by both children and, due to the circumstances of family units, their parents in these economically disadvantaged situations. Poorer neighborhoods are often more dangerous than others, and they are lower in social capital, have fewer social resources, less interpersonal trust, less mutual aid, and less cognitive stimulation.<sup>23</sup> It is the cumulative nature of such shortcomings that creates a riskier situation for adults and children alike. In terms of development, children in these communities are often behind others due to their home environment or available resources. They engage in fewer literary activities, which correlates with lack of age-appropriate toys and books as well as less encouragement for educational skills due to busy parental schedules.<sup>24</sup>

Immigrants, including those who fled their home countries or came to South Africa for better opportunities, are faced with myriad hardships due to the lack of support by the government, cultural stereotyping, and xenophobic attitudes. Technically, on paper, South

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<sup>23</sup> Evans, Gary W. "The Environment of Childhood Poverty." *American Psychologist*, 2004, 77-91.

<sup>24</sup> Evans, Gary W. "The Environment of Childhood Poverty." *American Psychologist*, 2004, 84.

Africa is committed to respecting the right to asylum of refugees, however it is apparent that the situation of refugees is critical and demands greater attention.<sup>25</sup> The treatment and rights of foreign migrants are “violated and based on an exaggerated threat perception of the foreigner of xenophobia,” which plagues South African society.<sup>26</sup> Prejudices against and violence towards immigrants is due to fear of the “other,” as during the construction of “a new, nonracial sense of South African national identity” in the post-apartheid era, there began the “creation of a new oppositional ‘other,’ and that this ‘other’ is essentially defined as ‘non-South African.’”<sup>27</sup> Although xenophobia exists in many countries, this type of xenophobia is more specific to the South African context due to this post-apartheid sense of otherness. While many migrants have brought various skills from their home countries, their positive contributions to the South African economy and overall society are repeatedly overlooked.<sup>28</sup>

Cultural stereotyping and the denial of xenophobia itself both further the divides between immigrants and South Africans. While South Africa is “committed to building a ‘non-racial society’ it is racializing immigrants and migrant workers,” contradicting the notion of a Rainbow Nation that is so often described.<sup>29</sup> In trying to achieve a non-racial society, the South African political economy “was not de-racialized; it was multi-racialized.”<sup>30</sup> The economic, social, and political foundations of xenophobia have become enmeshed in everyday society, creating endless obstacles for immigrants despite the legal promise to respect them. Migrant workers are used as

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<sup>25</sup> Modi, Renu. "Migration to Democratic South Africa." *Economic and Political Weekly* 38, no. 18 (2003): 1759-762.

<sup>26</sup> Modi, Renu. "Migration to Democratic South Africa." *Economic and Political Weekly* 38, no. 18 (2003): 1760.

<sup>27</sup> Dodson, Belinda. "Locating Xenophobia: Debate, Discourse, and Everyday Experience in Cape Town, South Africa." *Africa Today* 56, no. 3 (2010): 6.

<sup>28</sup> Modi, Renu. "Migration to Democratic South Africa." *Economic and Political Weekly* 38, no. 18 (2003): 1759-762.

<sup>29</sup> Trimikliniotis, Nicos, Steven Gordon, and Brian Zondo. "Globalisation and Migrant Labour in a 'Rainbow Nation': A Fortress South Africa?" *Third World Quarterly* 29, no. 7 (2008): 1323-339.

<sup>30</sup> Trimikliniotis, Nicos, Steven Gordon, and Brian Zondo. "Globalisation and Migrant Labour in a 'Rainbow Nation': A Fortress South Africa?" *Third World Quarterly* 29, no. 7 (2008): 1330.

cheap labor with limited, if any, security as well as minimal pay; hypocritically, some members of South African society express xenophobic attitudes yet enjoy the fruits of the exploitation of migrant workers. Such cyclical hardships of immigrants are “mutually entangled... at which discrimination and exclusion are enacted and experienced, from the microscale of dwelling and neighborhood to the national level of immigration law and constructions of citizenship.”<sup>31</sup> Daily difficulties of immigrants stem from xenophobic attitudes of locals, exploitation, and displacement, as well as lack of support from the government. While each obstacle is individually challenging, it is the combination of them that truly puts immigrants in vulnerable situations.

### ***Implications for Early Childhood Education***

The status of vulnerable communities has direct impact on early childhood education through the environment of the classroom as well as the home. The daily setbacks previously described hinder sufficient preparation for children to thrive academically as well as in the workforce later in their lives. Sustained attention allows young children to explore and understand aspects of their environment, skills that are essential to later success. In a study on associations among family environment, sustained attention, and school readiness for low-income children,<sup>32</sup> findings by Rachel Razza, Anne Martin, and Jeanne Brooks-Gunn support associations between home environment characteristics and individual differences in children’s sustained attention during early childhood years. Because sustained attention allows children to prepare for the environments in which they live, this skill is seen as essential for success both in and out of a schooling environment. While this study did not take place in South Africa,

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<sup>31</sup> Dodson, Belinda. "Locating Xenophobia: Debate, Discourse, and Everyday Experience in Cape Town, South Africa." *Africa Today* 56, no. 3 (2010): 17.

<sup>32</sup> Razza, Rachel A., Anne Martin, and Jeanne Brooks-Gunn. "Associations Among Family Environment, Sustained Attention, and School Readiness for Low-Income Children." *Developmental Psychology*, 2010, 1528-542.

educational and developmental skills like sustained attention are applicable to all people, therefore this study can be brought to the South African context. Home environment characteristics, such as family dynamic and access to food, have a direct impact on child development, therefore families living in economically disadvantaged communities face larger setbacks due to the effects of their home lives on their children.

Because parental involvement in school activities is strongly linked to income, there are trends of parents in low-income communities volunteering less and attending school functions less frequently when compared to parents of higher income.<sup>33</sup> Parents of lower income have incredibly demanding work schedules, therefore a child's education within the home often suffers. Providing a child with quality attention, food, and care during the earliest years of life has long-lasting positive affects on them, which shows that aiding home life and early childhood education will help curb the impact of socioeconomic class on child development and opportunity.<sup>34</sup> Because children in low-income schools are less likely to have well-qualified teachers and suffer from trends of both student absenteeism and teacher turnover, increased funds and focus on low-income schools are necessary to provide children of all backgrounds equal educational opportunities.<sup>35</sup>

While access to equal education is a post-apartheid ideal, and socioeconomic status shouldn't play such a large role in the influence of education, people from refugee and economically disadvantaged communities often fall through the cracks and are left behind. This regrettable actuality applies to refugee adults and children alike, as both groups face barriers due to their status. Juliet Perumal highlights that many qualified teachers have made up a fair

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<sup>33</sup> Evans, Gary W. "The Environment of Childhood Poverty." *American Psychologist*, 2004, 77-91.

<sup>34</sup> Razza, Rachel A., Anne Martin, and Jeanne Brooks-Gunn. "Associations Among Family Environment, Sustained Attention, and School Readiness for Low-Income Children." *Developmental Psychology*, 2010, 1528-542.

<sup>35</sup> Evans, Gary W. "The Environment of Childhood Poverty." *American Psychologist*, 2004, 77-91.

amount of professionals seeking a new home in South Africa. She explains that because many teachers “frame their identities in relation to how they feel about themselves politically, professionally, and emotionally,” refugee teachers must face the reality of being both “a guest and a host in classrooms in a foreign country.”<sup>36</sup> She stresses the need to be cognizant of refugee teachers who are teaching in the South African education system as they serve the country and foster learning in the next generation. These teachers simultaneously combat their own obstacles as refugees and help prevent obstacles for the young children they teach. Focus on refugee teachers would, hopefully, bring about more follow-through for refugee rights for both adults and children, as these teachers play a vital role in the progression of South African society.

The role of early childhood development practitioners is influential and vital for all children, though their work with children of vulnerable communities is especially necessary for the social integration of such children into the larger society. Early childhood development practitioners play an enabling and facilitating role through varying practices to reach young children and their families to impact both their immediate and more general environments.<sup>37</sup> They aid with necessary foundation educational skills such as language, numeracy, and motor skills while also instilling overall lessons of resilience and tolerance. Despite their important role in facilitating social integration, early childhood development practitioners are faced with a lack of recognition and therefore lack of funding and support. In order to encourage the positive work done by such teachers, and to expand their impact, early childhood education must be consistently supported and checked upon by educational officials.

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<sup>36</sup> Perumal, Juliet Christine. "Pedagogy of Refuge: Education in a Time of Dispossession." *Race Ethnicity and Education* 16, no. 5 (2013): 673-95.

<sup>37</sup> Ebrahim, Hasina Banu, Bev Killian, and Peter Rule. "Practices of Early Childhood Development Practitioners for Poor and Vulnerable Children from Birth to Four Years in South Africa." *Early Child Development and Care* 181, no. 3 (2011): 387-96.

## *Conclusion*

In South African legislation, everyone living within the country's boundaries has basic rights and freedoms, which includes quality education and respecting the right to asylum of refugees, yet people of refugee and economically disadvantaged communities often do not experience these rights in reality. Children of these communities suffer from lost opportunities and prejudice, yet the solution lies within early childhood education. Because the first few years of a child's life are incredibly important for cognitive development and adaptation, early childhood education is an ideal way to facilitate social integration for vulnerable children. It is during these years that a child develops the groundwork that prepares them for further education, social interactions, and various spheres of life. School readiness becomes apparent, morality and lessons are taught, and motor skills are developed. Diversity within schools shows children that differences are positive and instills tolerance and acceptance, which can curb the trends of xenophobia and cultural stereotyping. People of refugee and economically disadvantaged communities are faced with numerous hardships due to their culture, background, and socioeconomic status. Daily setbacks hinder sufficient preparation for children to thrive academically, and quality schools can help alleviate educational disparities while fostering social integration.

## Methodology

### *Overview*

My research was based mainly on qualitative research, as I sought life stories and opinions and to understand daily life at the crèche. I looked for *what* occurs at the crèche in terms of the influence of teachers' experiences on lesson plans, daily activities, and overall qualities they instill in their students, and did so through both participatory and empirical methods. Based on my specific objectives, I decided upon two methods of research: semi-structured interviews and participant-observation. Due to the nature of the research, it was more subjective than objective – life stories are extremely personal and therefore are incredibly individualized and qualitative. My daily experiences within the classroom also come with natural biases. These naturalistic methods of research prompted me to look at my fieldwork through an interpretivist eye, as what I sought to observe and learn was based on culture, social settings, and relationships amongst people.

This research was conducted from the 29<sup>th</sup> of October to the 17<sup>th</sup> of November, with additional visits to the crèche after the official end of the research period in order to continue relationships that had been built. I worked at the crèche, my participant-observation, three days a week for the first two weeks and then sporadically for the next two weeks as I conducted interviews. During my time as an assistant teacher at the crèche I arrived in the early morning while the children were served breakfast and left after the children were served lunch and preparing for naps. While conducting interviews I based my schedule on teacher availability and would come in while the children were napping in order to have a quiet interview environment.



### ***Reasoning***

I chose to begin my research with participant-observation because it allowed me to simultaneously experience daily life at the crèche while also building a relationship with the teachers and children. The participant-observation was essential to understanding daily activities and occurrences in the crèche. It also helped me personally view relationships and interactions that later helped me understand responses during my interviews. It was also important to me that I gain the trust of the teachers and children at the crèche and participating in their daily school schedule gave me the opportunity for that to happen. My time in the classroom showed the teachers that I truly respect everything they do for the children and helped me develop a rapport with them that translated into successful interviews. Participant-observation also gave me plenty of opportunities for asking questions in the moment and casually discussing topics with the teachers as they occurred in the classroom.

Interviewing women working at the crèche gave me insight into the perceptions of South African life from a migrant perspective, and how the teachers' experiences impact the management of and educational content within the crèche. The interviews provided viewpoints and interpretation about the crèche and its children as well as narratives and personal experiences that influence the present lives of these women. Their stories painted their histories and allowed for understanding of the implications of their experiences. Their oral histories provided deep insight as well as a forum in which their stories could, and can, be heard.

### ***Strengths and Weaknesses***

While I could have viewed and understood the lessons and interactions in the classroom through merely observing along the outskirts of the room, participant-observation allowed me to build relationships that were invaluable to my interview process and my overall perception of the

crèche. My observational research would not have suffered had I not participated, yet my participation showed my dedication to the crèche's purpose. It showed my appreciation for everything the crèche does for the children and the women on a daily basis. I did not want to simply take from the crèche – *take* information, *take* stories, *take* data – I wanted to give back in return. Helping in the classroom was the least I could do in return for the opportunity to conduct research at the crèche and to hear these women's moving stories. While at times I know I was a distraction for the children because I was new, young, American, and, undeniably, white, I believe that overall I was helpful in the classroom because I provided an extra pair of eyes and hands. For example, Grade R children can use puzzles and play memory games after they have finished their educational activities but can only do so with the supervision of a teacher. Because I was there, a group of about eight additional children could play these games.

The interview process was successful in gathering information I had hoped to find, though I had to keep my process slightly malleable in order to accommodate needs, timing, opinions, and to remain sensitive to the topic at hand. The biggest obstacle in this process was language. While all of the teachers speak English, as it is the only language used in the classroom, some of my questions needed rewording or explaining for full understanding. At times a word or a question was interpreted differently than I had anticipated, therefore eliciting a response that was appropriate yet unexpected. For example, I asked if the teachers used skills from their previous experiences in order to help them teach at the crèche. The common answer interpreted "skills" as teaching skills rather than including life skills or skills from journeying to South Africa. Therefore if I had the opportunity to do this study again I would make sure my questions were phrased in a way that had one interpretation of meaning. Overall the use of

English as the medium of communication was not a problem and I was able to get plenty of meaningful information out of the interview process.

Because I had already established relationships with the teachers by the time I conducted interviews, their responses were overwhelmingly honest and open. I believe the interviews were successful because of the trust involved in the relationships and the mutual understanding of passion for the crèche. Reflecting on methods used by oral historians, Sean Field states, “Deeper levels of trust are not necessary for all projects but it is crucial when interviewing people who have endured considerable suffering.”<sup>38</sup> This opinion applied to my study because these women truly have endured such suffering and discussing the past was difficult at times.

### *Ethics*

My research at the crèche involved working with a vulnerable population, as I interviewed refugee women who have faced numerous obstacles and interacted with refugee and disadvantaged children regularly. Therefore I kept my ethical standards in mind at all times. For the participant-observation period I took notes in my field journal and kept the journal with me in the classroom at all times, making sure that I was the only person with access to the journal. For the interviews and life history accounts, I recorded the conversations and later transcribed them, omitting certain words or stories for privacy. I recorded and fully transcribed four interviews and took notes and expanded them later for two interviews. I am the only person who has the full version of any of these interviews. Before each interview began I explained the study, privacy rights, the ability to skip any question, and the ability to stop the interview at any time. After explaining these I opened the floor to any questions and then confirmed consent with the signed form.

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<sup>38</sup> Field, Sean. "Beyond 'Healing': Trauma, Oral History and Regeneration." *Oral History* 34, no. 1 (2006): 34.

## Limitations of the Study

The primary limitation of this study was the short timeframe during which all aspects of the process had to be completed. The four-week ISP period included participant-observation in the classroom, six interviews, transcriptions, research, analysis, and write-up, therefore time management was essential. Had there been a longer research period I would have liked to spend more time working at the crèche in the classrooms in order to build upon my relationships with the children and the teachers. It felt as though my research time within the classroom ended just as mutual trust and understanding were truly developing. A longer research period would also have given me the opportunity to conduct follow-up interviews with the teachers in order to clarify events and discuss trends I saw across stories.

Another limitation to the study was the sensitivity of the subjects discussed, as these women have experienced and witnessed things unimaginable to others. Because I kept ethics in mind, I made a conscious effort to remind the women that they did not have to answer a question if they felt uncomfortable. While the women certainly opened up to me more than I had expected them to, given the amount of time we had known each other, there is a possibility that they would have felt more comfortable and opened up more had they known me better or longer. This relates back to yearning for a longer research period.

The final limitation in the study was language. Although communicating in English was not a problem for a majority of the time, there were a few times during the interviews in which questions were interpreted differently than I had intended due to the variability of some vocabulary. Had there been more time, I would have conducted a test run in which I could examine and anticipate the interpretation of questions and vocabulary.

## Findings and Analysis

### *A Day at Children Care Centre*

Located on the fourth floor of the Lionel House on Pickering Street, the Children Care Centre is seemingly hidden from passersby. The area surrounding the building entrance is strewn with garbage and car parts and people of all ages, mostly men, loiter in the streets at all hours of the day. Yet just up the stairs of this scenery is a hub of safety, comfort, and education for the children in the nearby communities.

Upon reaching the fourth floor, the sound of children playing, singing, and talking rings through the hallway. The crèche is made up of a 0-2 classroom and a 3-4 classroom on one half of the floor and a 5-6 classroom, Grade R, on the other half. It also has restrooms, an office, and a small kitchen used to feed the whole crèche twice a day. I split my time at the crèche between the 3-4 classroom, which I will refer to as the preschool, and the Grade R classroom in order to understand the progression of lessons across age groups. Each classroom has two teachers along with a volunteer that switched between groups. With 50-60 children in the preschool and 40-50 children in Grade R, the teachers work hard to keep everyone focused and well-behaved.

Children are dropped off between when the crèche opens at 7:00am and when the official school day starts at 9:00am. At 8:30 breakfast porridge is served to the whole school and at 9:00am the cups and bowls are cleared. In both classrooms in which I participated, the day begins with a circle on the carpet. During this time teachers take roll and then review the days of the week, the months of the year, the seasons, and numbers. The teachers quiz the students on the current, preceding, and following days of the week and months. Repetition through routine and songs is used to help the children remember these facts while the quizzes promote critical

thinking. The daily interactions, especially during this morning circle period, improve the children's English and communication skills.

After the morning circle finishes, the teachers explain the day's assignment(s) that pertain to the week's topic. In the preschool the teachers hang up a model of the assignment for the children to refer to while they work. In Grade R the teachers show a model but do not hang it up, as they encourage the children to work on their own. Children in both classrooms must get their work approved by the teachers before they can proceed to their free time activities. Free time activities include dressing up, playing tag-like games, using building blocks, and playing with dolls. Grade R has puzzles and memory games as well, which are very popular, but they must be played under the supervision of a teacher so participation is limited.

Around 11:00am the preschool children clean up and gather on the carpet again for some more songs, dancing, and sometimes a story. At 11:30am Grade R children clean up and sing songs while groups of children rotate using the restroom and washing up before lunch. Around noon the entire crèche has lunch, which consists of pap, phuthu, rice, or pasta with a stew. After lunch the plates are collected and the children are required to lie on their mats for naps until about 2:00pm, at which point the children have free time until they get picked up. The crèche is open until 5:00pm, so parents can come any time after nap until then. During this period the children eat afternoon snacks; some children eat snacks from home while others eat bread and porridge provided by the crèche.

### ***Focal Points from the Field***

My participant-observation not only allowed me to understand the daily schedule and interactions but also gave me the opportunity to take note of important standout occurrences

firsthand. Lessons taught, teaching styles, and daily and long-term challenges all became apparent as essential to the understanding of the crèche.

### *Weekly Lessons*

During the three weeks in which I participated at the crèche, the weekly lessons included firefighters, teeth (as well as dental hygiene and dentists), and the water cycle. From my experience walking between classrooms, there is a fair amount of crossover between lessons in the preschool and Grade R. By comparing my field notes from the individual classrooms I have noticed that the preschool and Grade R are on similar trajectories but go more or less in depth depending on the classroom. For example, both classrooms learned about the water cycle but their post-lesson activities varied. The preschool children were given a picture of the water cycle to color in with appropriate colors. The Grade R children were given a water droplet to cut out (for motor skills) and a picture of the water on which they had to count and number the raindrops and then color in the picture appropriately. The lessons these children covered during my time there are useful for later schooling or personal skills, such as learning about dental hygiene, and therefore are worthwhile.

### *Teaching Styles and Learning Mechanisms*

The aforementioned weekly topics were conveyed and explained to the children in ways that promote true understanding and increased school readiness. When presenting the lesson, the teachers tell the children information but make a point to directly involve the children by asking them questions and telling them to really listen and think about what they are learning. This emphasis on participation is important to ensure the children are actively learning and is a means of testing their understanding. The manner in which the lessons are taught, and the way the classrooms are run overall, also teach classroom etiquette. Often forgotten when considering

school readiness, classroom etiquette is vital to the success of a student in later schooling years. The teachers stress the importance of good behavior by only choosing students who quietly raise their hands and by explaining appropriate primary school behavior, such as listening to the teacher. While the children are prepared with the basic skills upon which they will build their education, they are also taught the social skills necessary to successfully participate in school.

Lessons are also taught through a variety of activity types that each contribute to the learning process. Repetition is used to solidify memory of lessons and facts, yet activities are also essential to the acquisition of knowledge. Motor skills are taught and honed through art activities. During my second day at the preschool, the children learned how to use scissors to cut out shapes of increasing intricacy. Some of these children had never used scissors before and had to really concentrate on their movements in order to achieve the final product. Art activities are also used in Grade R, though they are more elaborate – they involve cutting, gluing, and stitching thread. Lessons vary in order to cover both motor skills and school readiness, especially within Grade R, where there are two activities going on simultaneously. The children are split into two groups in order to do the assignments in varying orders. One assignment often stresses school readiness while the other covers motor skills and art, along with more school readiness. For example, while learning about teeth, the school readiness activity required the children to circle the foods that are good for them and cross out the foods that are detrimental to their dental hygiene. The other activity required the children to cut out a mouth and glue the correct number of teeth on the “top” and “bottom” halves. Combining motor skills and school readiness, this assignment was a great way to solidify the lesson that had just been taught.

The Grade R students are taught to write their names early in the school year so that they can enter primary school with that essential skill. They are also required to write their names on



everything, which uses repetition as a means of keeping lessons fresh while instilling responsibility in the children. In both classrooms each child has a binder in which their work is stored, though in Grade R each student is in charge of putting away their work. This furthers the sense of responsibility as well as organization, both important skills for school and other spheres of life. Responsibility is also instilled in the Grade R children through their animal groups; the class is split up into five groups that rotate tasks. The groups – lion, rhino, elephant, bear, and camel – allow for smooth transitions to lunch. Pre-lunch restroom rotations use the animal groups to maintain order and keep the children active in the songs until their animal is called. Each group has one day of the week in which they serve the other children lunch. For example, on Mondays the lions pass out the food-filled plates to the other students before taking plates for themselves. This way of having the children help is both creative and effective.

The crèche has multiple ways of teaching and increasing English skills, which provides holistic learning opportunities. The only language used in the classroom is English, allowing the children to be fully immersed. Repetition and routines are helpful in confirming correct pronunciation and the ability to master words important for primary school. The morning circle routine that reviews days of the week, months of the year, seasons, and numbers cements these important words in the children's minds. Teaching and reviewing a variety of songs also aids English acquisition in a way that is really enjoyed by the children. The teachers make a point to speak clearly and repeat important words and instructions to promote understanding. They also ask for vocal responses from the children as both a means of confirming understanding and encouraging the use of English in the classroom.

*Challenges*

Because the crèche relies heavily upon donations, classrooms are under-resourced in regards to school and art materials, toys, and worksheets. A common theme within both classrooms and across activities is the concept of possession and subsequent disputes. These children frequently acted possessive over what they held, whether a doll, a puzzle, or a crayon, which caused others to become upset. Sometimes children would come up to me in order to tell on their peer or explain their frustration, but a majority of the time the children sorted these problems out themselves. These conflicts over possession shed light on the probability that these children do not have many materials at home with which they can play. This furthers the need for the crèche to be well supplied with school and art materials as well as games and free play items. There were times in which an activity required the children to use a certain crayon color, such as with the water cycle, but there were too few of those crayons. This created an unnecessary obstacle for the children while they tried to complete their assignments.

Another significant issue, often unacknowledged, is that because the crèche is not registered with the government as a school, there is no official curriculum to follow. The teachers are not given lessons to cover and therefore are merely trying to cover what they feel is necessary to promote school readiness. The worksheets used in Grade R are from the head teacher, who saved the worksheets from her previous job at a registered crèche. Without that resource, the Grade R teachers would have to completely guess which lessons to teach before sending the children to Grade 1. The teachers also rely on feedback from the parents of past students. If parents report a lesson not met that is required for Grade 1, the Grade R teachers work to incorporate the feedback to best prepare their students. The head Grade R teacher admits she always wonders if she is doing the right thing for the students and that it is a source of

anxiety for her. She questions whether she is doing enough.<sup>39</sup> The crèche needs overall resources as well as curriculum and educational resources. A related issue to this challenge is the trend of children going to Grade 1 even when the Grade R teacher tells their parents they are not ready. Because there is a push to proceed with education, level of school readiness is sometimes forgotten or ignored. Yet these children, who are either too young to enter primary school or who have not mastered their basic skills, will suffer academically later on. The teachers at the crèche do their best to prepare all of the students but sometimes a child needs more time before primary school, which some parents do not acknowledge.

### *Recalling Stories from the Past*

The Children Care Centre does not only have refugee students but is also made up of mainly refugee staff. These teachers came to South Africa from countries such as Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Rwanda, and Uganda for a variety of reasons. Whether they escaped violence or looked for better economic opportunities, these teachers have since created lives for themselves in South Africa and are now providing opportunities for the vulnerable youth attending the crèche.

### *Reasons for Leaving Home*

To begin my interviews, I asked the women where they are from, what their home life was like, and why they left their home country. The responses to the last opening question were overwhelmingly about violence. Half of the women left their home country, Rwanda, because of the immense 1994 violence. Another teacher left her home country because her daily experiences led her to understand that her life was in danger. One woman left because of family issues as well as economic opportunities. Individual reasons for leaving home are a means of

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<sup>39</sup> Interview 4. Interview by Romi Messer. 10 Nov. 2014.

explaining the type of experiences had by someone because they create a window into the past. A simple answer, such as violence, speaks volumes. These answers have wider implications than the words themselves because they offer explanations and insight into the other aspects of these women's lives. The later parts of the interviews were put in context due to the reasoning behind leaving home, as doing so is not an easy decision. Past experiences have continuous influences on present and future life, as the memories have been engrained. While home is always on their minds, safety is more important.

### *Obstacles Faced*

Regardless of the reason for leaving their home countries, these women all faced a variety of obstacles upon their arrivals. Some obstacles still affect the women today and continue to complicate daily life and overall wellbeing. Many of the women immediately recalled the xenophobia they experienced when they first came to South Africa, and some women explained they continue to encounter xenophobic attitudes presently. While illustrating life upon her arrival, one woman explained that much of the prejudice and xenophobia towards her were results of being "dark-faced" because people knew she was a foreigner.<sup>40</sup> Even members of the police have treated some of these women poorly because of their refugee status. Following the beating of her son at school, that woman went to the police for answers. She was met with a policeman saying, "Don't open your mouth, it's not your country."<sup>41</sup> Another member of the crèche went to the police to report that a child had been abandoned at the school. The policewoman at the desk told her, "You refugee, don't come with your problems, I'm sick

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<sup>40</sup> Interview 5. Interview by Romi Messer. 11 Nov. 2014.

<sup>41</sup> Interview 5. Interview by Romi Messer. 11 Nov. 2014.

and tired of you.”<sup>42</sup> In a country where, legally, refugees and asylum-seekers have rights and freedoms, even members of the police cannot be held accountable, as they too are xenophobic.

Another prominent obstacle faced by a majority of the women interviewed was language barrier. Many of the women either did not know any English or only knew a small amount when they arrived in South Africa, hindering communication and complicating even simple tasks. Those who did not know English expressed that they wished they knew English at the time because of the added difficulties that come with poor communication. While they eventually learned English on the street, by communicating with coworkers and from neighbors, there was a consensus that English is an invaluable tool for refugees in South Africa. Being able to communicate with others increases opportunity and lessens xenophobic encounters. Such life experiences and insight continuously influences the crèche – the children are only allowed to speak English while in the classroom, better preparing them for South African life.

Misperceptions of South African life also led to unforeseen obstacles upon arrival. While South Africa is a safe haven for those escaping violence and warfare, it is not an easy country to live in, especially for refugees. Merely reaching South Africa can be a challenge in itself. One woman was arrested at the border and had to spend a night in a cell with her small children. Her arrival in South Africa is credited to a woman who helped her sneak across the border under the seats of a car.<sup>43</sup> Yet life does not get easier once within South African borders. South Africa is often seen as a place of better life, yet documentation, job opportunities, money, and assistance are all scarce. One woman recalled, “You know when I came I had idea that life is very easy and nice in South Africa but what I saw was completely different. I find that people... We are not welcome in South Africa, the refugees. We find that the government doesn’t care about the

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<sup>42</sup> Interview 3. Interview by Romi Messer. 10 Nov. 2014.

<sup>43</sup> Interview 5. Interview by Romi Messer. 11 Nov. 2014.

refugees, no church, no NGOs... You have to support yourself and think what you're gonna do, how you're gonna survive, where you're gonna stay."<sup>44</sup> The process to receive adequate documentation is complicated and takes a long time, which keeps refugees from going after other opportunities. It is extremely unfortunate that the reality for refugees in South Africa is only discovered and understood upon arrival.

*“Education and Care”*

The crèche provides so much for the children in more spheres than just education, covering a variety of daily needs. Therefore I asked the six teachers I interviewed what they personally believe are the best or most necessary things the crèche gives to the children. Repeated answers include education, care, love, two hot meals a day, shelter, basic skills and school readiness, language skills, and a place in which the children feel safe. While the primary purpose of a school is to provide education, this crèche provides so much more – it acts as both a school and a home, and at a low cost too. The crèche helps refugee parents because those parents have many obstacles themselves, therefore it is hard for them to provide for their children. The teachers are incredibly understanding of this situation because they either experienced or are currently experiencing the same things as part of the refugee community. The school gives parents peace of mind, as they know their children are safe and well taken care of during the day.

The two hot meals served at school are the only meals of the day for some children, therefore the crèche is contributing to the overall health and wellbeing of these children. One of the teachers, while explaining the importance of the meals at the crèche, said that “even if at

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<sup>44</sup> Interview 3. Interview by Romi Messer. 10 Nov. 2014.

night there's no food at home, they're gonna wake up in the morning and get food here."<sup>45</sup> The sustenance the crèche provides is both nutritional and educational, making it a holistically helpful organization. The teachers care for and love the students as their own children so that they feel safe and comfortable while at school. The atmosphere is such that "when they spend eight hours with us, they find that here they have mothers somewhere else, that's why you see always they are happy."<sup>46</sup> The children love the teachers because of their kindness and love the crèche because it feels like a home.

Because the crèche has students from foreign countries as well as South Africa, promoting integration is a vital aspect used to create a sense of community within the school. When asked about a key method of promoting integration, responses overwhelmingly included the use of a single language, English, as a means of unification among students and teachers alike. Because English is the sole language of the crèche, children can become friends with each other regardless of their backgrounds. Students do not group based on nationality or language because everyone has a mutual means of communication and the crèche makes everyone feel equal. All children are treated alike and learn in the same environment, there is no separation in the classroom. They eat and sleep at the same times, they eat the same food and use the same supplies, and they are all disciplined similarly. Integration comes from the way the children are treated, cared for, spoken to, and communicated with. Everyone is seen as on the same level – there is no difference between refugees and South Africans within the crèche because it is a single educational community. It is important to note that the integration includes teachers as well, as they are all respected equally. Whether a director, a teacher, a caregiver, a cook, or a cleaner, all staff members are considered teachers and are referred to as such by the children. All

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<sup>45</sup> Interview 3. Interview by Romi Messer. 10 Nov. 2014.

<sup>46</sup> Interview 3. Interview by Romi Messer. 10 Nov. 2014.

of the teachers use English as the only means of communication as well, therefore the children do not know if a teacher is from South Africa or elsewhere.

English is a second, or third, language for a majority of the women at the crèche, therefore I asked for their opinions on its use and prominence in the classroom. All of the feedback was positive, as English is seen as a good medium of communication among people from varying backgrounds and because it is used in primary schools. Its use addresses the need for a common type of communication, vital in many scenarios but specifically important in a setting that has people from more than five countries. It is seen as a good tool to have for school and therefore part of the basic skills the crèche teaches the children. Important in the discussion on school readiness, one teacher explained, “We choose to use English at school because we know it’s the language of education.”<sup>47</sup> The children learn quickly because their minds are malleable at their early ages, therefore it is an ideal time to teach a new language. While I observed varying levels of English language skill, among both students and teachers, everyone at the crèche is able to communicate with one another in this common language. Because English is “a two-way street” where the “learning is continuous,” people benefit from speaking with one another on a daily basis.<sup>48</sup> New vocabulary and understanding are acquired and increase the overall English language ability within the crèche.

Speaking with the teachers at the crèche, it is clear they are passionate about the children as well as the refugee and economically disadvantaged communities they belong to and serve. They want the best for their students, whom they treat and love like their own children. Overall, the teachers hope each child has a good education and a good life – they want them to build their futures. They want them to take the educational basis given to them at the crèche and do well in

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<sup>47</sup> Interview 3. Interview by Romi Messer. 10 Nov. 2014.

<sup>48</sup> Interview 1. Interview by Romi Messer. 31 Oct. 2014.



their later educational years and life. They want to make sure the children are not xenophobic and are free of xenophobic experiences. If the children remember the qualities instilled in them at this age, they will be accepting of all types of people due to the emphasis on integration. When I asked about goals for the children, one teacher replied that she wants the children to “become someone more than me,” she wants them to get the most education they can so that they can be a doctor, lawyer, or teacher.<sup>49</sup> She was not sad when she said this, as she just wants the best for these children.

The crèche is filled with passion for teaching and for the children to succeed. It aids many people, in multiple ways, simultaneously and without much money or help. The crèche provides a place of solace for the teachers, as when they are at work they do not think about their personal troubles.<sup>50</sup> It also provides a safe place for children, some of whom would otherwise be in dismal circumstances, which brings pride to the teachers and the organization. The teachers do the best they can for these children, despite not having enough money, because they care about them. They commit themselves to instilling lessons and skills within the children that will help them overcome the obstacles that vulnerable communities face. One teacher admits that she wishes she had put more “mind in education,” but uses this hindsight to inform the children of the importance of education so that they put their minds in education. She said, “Education should be number one, that’s what I tell them.”<sup>51</sup>

### *Reflecting on the Past, Looking to the Future*

Throughout the interviews it was clear that these women often think of their pasts and of their home countries. Their experiences not only remain in their memories but also manifest

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<sup>49</sup> Interview 5. Interview by Romi Messer. 11 Nov. 2014.

<sup>50</sup> Interview 1. Interview by Romi Messer. 31 Oct. 2014.

<sup>51</sup> Interview 5. Interview by Romi Messer. 11 Nov. 2014.

themselves in their thoughts on current circumstances. The concept of “home” is one that includes the concept of belonging, and with South African attitude towards refugees, these women do not consider South Africa home. One teacher admits she continues to see herself as a foreigner because after all of these years, her documentation is still temporary and she can be sent back at any time.<sup>52</sup> Despite the causes of leaving, these women long for home. One woman expressed this by revealing, “Home is home, home is in my heart... Always Rwanda is in my heart.”<sup>53</sup> Another woman explained that the war really changed her life, yet she always misses home. She expressed that if there was peace in her home country she would return. But despite the longing for home and family, being safe in South Africa has made past decisions worthwhile. One teacher explained, “Now that I am safe here in South Africa, I can move, I can go to school, I can do whatever I want, something which I appreciate.”<sup>54</sup> Safety has made the hardships worthy. Faith was, and is, used to combat obstacles and remain strong. Some of the teachers expressed that they credit their triumphs to their dedicated faith. Whatever the cause of the strength, it is undeniable that these women have endured great amounts and move forward by helping others in similar circumstances.

Faith was also spoken about in regards to the future and remaining strong. When I asked the women about goals for themselves, they touched on their own lives but mainly focused on their families and communities. The women expressed their goals for peace of mind and peace in the outside world and for a happy future. They wish to help themselves in order to help others within their family and community. They want their children to do well in their studies and have bright futures. One teacher admitted that it is difficult for her to think about the future because there are continuous obstacles. She explains, “You think, where is my future in South Africa?

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<sup>52</sup> Interview 5. Interview by Romi Messer. 11 Nov. 2014.

<sup>53</sup> Interview 1. Interview by Romi Messer. 31 Oct. 2014.

<sup>54</sup> Interview 3. Interview by Romi Messer. 10 Nov. 2014.

We don't have a future here but we hope maybe one day we can have peace in our country and then we can go back."<sup>55</sup> This insight and vulnerability illustrates how people can feel so torn about where they belong, and also informs the type of care the children receive at the crèche. The children are given a place where they belong so that they can build their futures.

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<sup>55</sup> Interview 3. Interview by Romi Messer. 10 Nov. 2014.

## Conclusions

This project used participant-observation and interviews to understand how the life experiences of African migrant women manifest in the goals for their students' education and integration in society. The Union of Refugee Women's Children Care Centre, which provides early childhood education to children in vulnerable communities, exemplifies a school in which past experiences of refugee teachers influence the lessons taught to young children.

Through participant-observation and interviews I was able to gain insight into daily life in the crèche and help unfold the stories of migrant teachers who have combated endless obstacles in South Africa. During my research I found that the crèche provides the children with fundamental educational skills upon which they can build and grow while also attending to their basic physical needs, such as the need for food. The crèche relies heavily upon donations and is continually under-resourced, yet the women do the best they can to provide as much as possible for these children. These refugee women left their homes to escape violence or to pursue economic opportunities, but upon arrival were faced with more obstacles. Lack of documentation, xenophobia, language barriers, absence of government involvement, and economic hardship are all battles experienced by these women.

The teachers at the Children Care Centre believe that the crèche offers much more than just basic education to the children. They have expressed the importance of the two hot meals a day, love and care, English skills, and promotion of integration present within the crèche. The children are raised in an environment that does not include prejudice or xenophobia, fighting against the norms of a society in which "outsiders" are not welcome. The crèche aids the children and their parents as well as the women who work there. The children receive skills that help them with school readiness and overall integration in society. The children's parents have a

safe, trustworthy, and inexpensive place where they can send their children while they work long hours and face obstacles themselves. The women who work at the crèche have more than just a job, they are part of a community that has been created within the walls of the Lionel House fourth floor.

These women commit themselves to using their experiences and lessons learned to positively impact the children they teach. They equip them with the tools necessary for future schooling and integration – they give them a good start to their lives so that they can combat the many obstacles that face vulnerable communities. If these women’s home countries find peace, they would like to return home. Yet in the meantime they are very happy to work at the crèche and help these children grow. Their passion for teaching combined with their insight from past experiences makes for excellent life preparation for these children. Through my research I was able to understand the intergenerational aspirations and goals instilled in the children by the teachers who have witnessed so much and fought so hard to see themselves through. The teachers give the children the basics needed to succeed in a society so intolerant of refugees.

As seen through the literature review and research findings, early childhood education and its practitioners are incredibly influential and vital for facilitating understanding and social integration because children are very impressionable at such a young age. Beginning with the earliest years of life has the most positive impacts on the children, vulnerable communities, and overall society due to the timeline of child development. Investing in widespread quality early childhood education as a means of facilitating social integration would have lasting effects. Children of vulnerable communities would have access to better education, which would lessen the disparity between socioeconomic classes, and children of non-vulnerable communities would grow up with classmates of different backgrounds, aiding in acceptance of all people. A

classroom setting in which monetary differences are not a source of distinction and where cultural differences are seen as positive, while also providing excellent educational services, is the ideal type of classroom. In order to create such classrooms, the government should become involved in founding and maintaining quality crèches. The government's participation would allow these crèches to be effective yet low cost so that vulnerable youth would be able to attend. Such schools do exist, as seen with the Children Care Centre, yet they are mainly NGOs and therefore lack many needed resources. Thus the government must become involved so that such crèches become more accessible and well resourced. Investing in early childhood education will make social integration of vulnerable youth within larger society an attainable goal, preventing these children from falling by the wayside. Immediate action is imperative to uphold the South African commitment to refugees and support progress towards a more unified and inclusive nation.

## Recommendations for Further Study

Reflecting on my time at the Children Care Centre, I have found that there are many opportunities for further study within the refugee community served at the crèche and also within the crèche itself. A future study could compare the experiences and opportunities of refugees and their South African-born children who have grown up within the country's borders. Many of the women at the crèche expressed their hopes for their children, and I believe it would be worthwhile to delve into this topic. This project could be pursued through conducting research with refugee parents who have raised their children in South Africa and watched the hopes for their children manifest in reality. Another study could focus on language acquisition by refugee youth by exploring language at school versus within the home. Many of the children at the crèche do not speak English at home, therefore language development and use differs between families of varying backgrounds. Lastly, while I worked at the crèche I noticed that there are a couple children on the autism spectrum. I found that there would be an overwhelming amount of information on this topic and therefore I could not include it in my study, though I recommend that it become a study on its own. A project on this could investigate the reality and implications of autism within the refugee community in South Africa.

My time at the Children Care Centre has been invaluable and irreplaceable. The children are eager and cheerful, the women are compassionate and insightful, and the overall atmosphere is welcoming and loving. I highly recommend future studies and fieldwork within the crèche.

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## Appendix A

### *Interview Guide*

#### *Personal Background*

Where were you born?

What was your neighborhood like?

What big events do you remember happening during the time you were growing up?

#### *SA Experience*

At what age did you come to South Africa // why?

Did you encounter any obstacles when you first arrived?

What do you wish you knew when you arrived?

Did you know English when you moved here?

How would you define or describe your community here?

Where do you see yourself fitting in South African society?

#### *Crèche Involvement*

How did you start working at the crèche?

Why did you start working at the crèche?

Do you use skills from your past to help you teach?

What skills do you teach the children that you wish you had earlier in life?

How do you promote integration in the crèche while also promoting individual pride?

What do you think are the most necessary things that the crèche provides for the children?

How do you feel about the teaching of English at the crèche?

What goals do you have for the children at the crèche?

#### *Life Issues*

What three events have influenced your life the most?

What are your goals for the future?

Would you have done anything differently in your life?

## Appendix B

Interview 1.

Location: Children Care Centre – Crèche; School Office

Time: 1:00pm-1:10pm 31/10/14

*Expanded version of handwritten interview notes.*

*Explain informed consent form, receive consent, begin.*

Was born in Rwanda in a city that had a lot of violence.

Came to South Africa in 2003; left Rwanda in 1994 because of the violence, spent time in DRC, then came to South Africa.

Still scared to go back home; worked in government, fear of being jailed or put to death.

“There’s nothing like home.”

South African experience has generally been good despite some xenophobia.

Came with her husband and four children – fourth child was born in DRC.

Received no help upon arrival. Learned English here on the street, went to the library for help. Wished she knew English upon arrival because it helps with going to the hospital and dealing with Home Affairs.

Xenophobia still exists now; people are rude to her and she is still fearful of them, yet it has gotten better. 2003 was the worst because it was the year of her arrival in South Africa and she was very scared. Her neighbors now are generally nice.

Working at the crèche: Union of Refugee women recruited her to join the organization and therefore the connection to the crèche. She is working at the crèche because she needs money. Says most refugees are car guards because there’s no help for them when they arrive. She worked as a car guard 2003-2006 and learned English during that time. She tried to sell crafts but needed more money; she just started working at the crèche this year.

Says English is a two-way street, the learning is continuous.

Best things about this crèche: It helps a lot because before this crèche, kids would have to stay home. Here they learn English, receive food, and increase school readiness.

She wishes the crèche could take in more kids, as some kids don’t have anything. The children at the crèche are refugees and/or very poor.

Goals for the children at the crèche: To have a good life, good education, and to build their futures.

Goals for herself: She's 50 and still wishes for a lot; wishes for peace of mind, peace out and in (in physical world and within), comfort, productivity, to help her children and family. Wishes to help herself so that she can help others, she has a heart for helping.

If Rwanda is safe she will return. "Home is home, home is in my heart." "Always Rwanda is in my heart."

Wants people and the government to care and help refugees.

The crèche opens doors for women.

Working with kids here is great because you don't think about your outside/personal troubles while at work.

The crèche instills safety and creativity in children.

## Appendix C

Interview 2.

Location: Children Care Centre – Crèche; School Office

Time: 12:15pm-12:53pm 6/11/14

Transcribed: 2:00pm 12/11/14

*Explain informed consent form, receive consent, begin.*

Interviewer: To start off, where were you born?

Respondent: I was born in Burundi.

I: In Burundi. And what was your neighborhood like when you were growing up? (*See clarification is needed*) Did you live in a city, in a rural area...?

R: In a rural area.

I: Okay; do you remember any big events happening there when you were growing up? (*See clarification is needed*) Or was everything sort of the same?

R: Hmm... What happening, is what?

I: I mean, was every day in your life the same?

R: Yeah, it was the same, life was the same.

I: What age did you come to South Africa?

R: Come again?

I: At what age did you come to South Africa?

R: Oh, I came here in... 1997... 28.

I: When you were 28?

R: Mhm.

I: And why did you leave Burundi?

R: It was, uh... Well my parents was doing a business and then they left Burundi to go to Rwanda. And I had four years in Rwanda.

I: You left just because you wanted to leave?

R: Yeah we left... we left because of business. But at that time I was too small, I was four years old.

I: Oh, and so then you moved to South Africa from Rwanda?

R: Yes I grew up in Rwanda. When I left Rwanda I came to South Africa.

I: Why did you leave Rwanda?

R: Rwanda it was the war, 1994.

I: Oh I see. Did you encounter any obstacles when you first came to South Africa?

R: Yes... When I came in '97, um... We first, what you can call, xenophobia, yeah... And we have a language problem, we was not talking English, and... Yeah, life were tough, very hard.

I: Right, so how did you end up learning English?

R: Uh, we were doing the car guards on the street and... yeah... we end up learning from people. We learned from people, but when I was in Rwanda in my high school we had a one-hour lesson for English, one week... One hour a week. And when I came from Rwanda, through my journey I passed Tanzania, in there three months, and I managed to learn English for one month also. And when I came here, I could understand but couldn't talk... Because I was facing people who talked in English every day, I managed to open my mouth and talk.

I: Wow, that is very impressive. So, what do you wish you knew when you first got here?

R: Sorry?

I: What information or skills do you wish you had when you first got to South Africa?

R: When I came in South Africa... It's a crime, they say there is too much crime in South Africa. But yes we settled ourself and we tried to... to... to... to integrate ourself by doing this job, this small job where we are meeting people... Yeah.

I: Do you wish you knew English better when you first moved here?

R: Come again?

I: Do you wish you knew English better when you first moved to South Africa?

R: Yeah, I wish, cause if I knew English I could maybe get a nice job. I could, because in Rwanda I was a teacher, maybe I could go straight to school or I could teach.



I: Right. So where you live now, the community that you have here – is it mainly people from other countries or is it mixed with South African people?

R: Uh, in the community now, um, there's a mixing. South Africans, foreigners... yeah.

I: Great. Moving onto the crèche; how did you start working here?

R: I start working here in the 2004, (*unclear*) but when we open the crèche in 2002, October 2002, I wasn't working inside but I was supporting the person that was working because I was doing car guarding but maybe one hour or two hours there coming to help the person in here.

I: And after that you started to work here fulltime?

R: Yes, I decided to work, yeah.

I: Is there a reason why you started working here?

R: Yes, I was stopping doing car guards and I have no other job, and because I am a member of this project, I decided to work for my project.

I: Got it. Do you use any skills from your past – living in Burundi, Rwanda, your journey here – to help you teach the kids?

R: Yeah I used it... I used it cause I was a teacher. So being in the position of teaching or caring or yeah, being a caregiver or being a teacher with the children, it's... it's good for me because I am always in my field. Yeah, cause I learn... uh... My studies it was about education, then I finish education then I start teaching, I was teaching Grade 5 in Rwanda.

I: Okay so working here is natural?

R: Yeah, it's easy for me, it's natural.

I: Do you teach the children any skills that you wish you had earlier in life?

R: Come again?

I: Do you teach the kids any skills, like English or math or things like that, that you wish you had learned already earlier in life, when you were their age?

R: Oh, yes. I do but it's not... It's not easy because the children are too small, they are small, but we teach them, like, English, pronunciation, to speak nicely English, more vocabulary, and also counting, is the math, we teach them to count.

I: How do you help the children integrate so that there's no xenophobia while also making sure that they are proud of who they are and where they come from?

R: Yeah we teach them by using one language, English, only so it help them to not... to... to... to be, yeah... It help them to not be separated cause of the... the race or the nationality. And also everything is together. When they eat, they eat together. They can sit a foreigner and a South African, they sit together in one table. When they sleeping, as you can see, a South African can sleep with a Congolese, Burundian, or whatever... They child does not know... And also us, as a staff, also, is... we work as different people, South African, foreigners, we are also together so the children they never see us talking different language, always use English.

I: So they don't know if anyone is from somewhere else.

R: Yeah actually they don't know, the children they don't know about foreigners and the South Africans, they don't know.

I: Wow, that's great. What do you think are the best and most important things that the crèche provides for the children?

R: Uh, the most of the things provide is education, yeah, it's education and... uh... and the care. Care and education, yeah.

I: Do you have any goals that you hope these children achieve when they get older.

R: Yes, the goal, we have, uh we really want our children to perform well. Whatever they will be in primary school, even in the high school, and we give them basics... We, yeah, we give them basics, basic tool which will help them to perform well whatever they gonna be. Yeah, and we want them to not forget where they come from. Yeah.

I: I love that.

R: Yeah, that's why we do every... every year, in December, we do graduation and we take the pictures and we allow them to take the pictures in the gowns and we hand them the certificate which will remind them always where I get the basics.

I: That when they succeed in school, they remember they learned to count at Children Care Centre.

R: Yeah I went also to some of the house, children they put on the wall or on the cupboard the certificate from this centre.

I: Oh, that makes me so happy. What three events in your life have influenced you the most? They could be from when you were in Rwanda, from when you were here, or a mix.

R: Come again?

I: What three events in your life, three things that happened – whether it was the war in Rwanda, or something like having a child – that made you who you are today?

R: Oh... wow... Yeah it's the war.

I: The war?

R: The first thing, the war. Yeah, cause I always miss my home. Yeah, the war it makes me leave the country and I miss my home. And I have my relatives there because I came with my husband only, so my brothers and sisters and my mom, and it's not easy to get to visit them. Since 1994 I never see them, I only see my mom, she came here once. But that was it, I don't see them, yeah...

I: Do you ever think you'll go back to Rwanda?

R: If there is a peace, then I can go back.

I: Do you have any goals for the future for yourself?

R: Oh, yes, my goal... I like to travel, so I wish I can have money, if I got money, I will wish to travel, visit friends because I have so many friends, and release myself... Yeah. Because I don't want to sit. And learning about other countries and the other cultures, and whatever, yeah... because I have so many friends, since working here I meet so many volunteers from Canada, from America, from whatever, yeah. So, I like to go to visit them. And that was on my side, and on my family side, I like to see my kids performing well and finish their studies, get a job, and buy the house, and yeah, and for now I am doing driving lessons, I want to have license, I will do exam on Saturday. I wish I can have, yeah. So, yeah. I want to have a good future, even if now I'm turning 46, I'm old, but I want my old age to be good, to be perfect.

I: Yes, just because you're a Mama doesn't mean you have to stop growing, I mean you're learning to drive!

R: Yeah I want to drive.

I: The last thing is I'm wondering if you would've done anything differently in your life if you could do it again. Would you still have moved to South Africa? Would you still come work at the crèche? Is there anything you would've done differently?

R: Hm... What I done differently... Yeah what I done differently it is, uh, is that after to get married, I get married to my husband, and we had a shop, and I was working in my shop, and then I flee from Rwanda I come here, then when we arrive here he get sick, but before he get sick he was providing everything for us. We have a happy family. He was doing a business and then we get money and then he take care of us nicely. So then he fall down with meningococcal meningitis, then he become blind. Then after becoming blind, I have to be, to stand in the place of the mother and the father because the father could not do anything. And then, yeah, I stood up and then I work hard and I manage to take care of my family and have my three kids. Two girls, one boy, and I have one grandson, and my husband, and I'm the one who provide everything. So I'm working here Monday through Friday, Saturday and Sunday I go to the flea market in the

rural area so that I can support my family. So what I say, I manage to do differently, it's I manage to take care of my family as a woman, alone, as a woman, yeah... And I feel proud that I managed to keep my family safe and providing for them. Yes I'm working very hard but when I see everything is okay, I feel proud.

I: That's incredible.

R: And I support my husband, he have meningococcal meningitis, and he get blind... And when he went to the hospital I found him positive, I tested myself for HIV, and I found myself negative, and then I say G-d deserve me so I can take care of him, so I tell him don't worry I will take care of you, I will look after you, yeah, and he is okay. And I feel proud, I feel proud of what I did and who I am, yeah.

I: Amazing, thank you for sharing that. Well, that's all my questions. Do you have any questions for me? About what I'm studying, about me personally, anything, feel free to ask me.

R: Uh, what I can, yeah it's not really a question but it's a wish or a suggestion that I wish you won't forget us, to be... to keep us in your mind as a friend and also if there is anything you can support whenever you finish your studies and then you think about Children Care Centre, then you support us because here where we are, as you can see, children... they don't have chances to go outside, but whenever we get support from people we can book to go to maybe to see the birds, to see the animals, to see whatever... Maybe to go to the museum to show the children, especially the Grade R, the one who is one year here and then they are going to primary school. So, we always wanted to have a great year with the Grade R so whenever we get support we take them, maybe to... there is a place called Mitchell Park, where there is different birds so we show them and sometimes we take them to the farm to see some animals, some farm animals, yeah... So whenever you succeed in your life if you help us to get these kids, we would be grateful.

I: Definitely! (*Talk about ways to advertise at home for fundraiser*) Don't worry, I won't forget.

R: We have your number, we'll be in touch. (*More about keeping in touch*)

I: Of course.

R: We like having people like you, people who come to do the volunteer, to do the volunteer work here because it's like another extra hand on our side, because they help us to help these kids.

I: There are so many kids.

R: So many kids and we are thinking to move from this place so we can go, we can maybe we can buy a house, maybe we can build another place so the children, they can be, they can have outdoor. Cause we don't have really enough space for the kids to run around, for the physical body, you see. Only Grade R, because they are bigger, every Friday they go to the beach and play around but other ones, they don't see the sun. They're under the roof at this school, under

the roof at home, cause the parents they work like seven days to seven days so children they are inside, they come from inside, they go to school inside also, you see.

I: That would be so great if it worked. Thank you so much for opening up to me.

R: Yes. And besides that I'm a Christian, I'm a Born Again, and yes I love G-d, I love Jesus, and I rely on his support.

I: Well you've been very blessed to be so strong.

R: Yeah, I've been blessed, I thank G-d, cause mostly when I talk to other ladies, when I talk to them they say how you manage that? And I say G-d help me. How you manage to stay with your husband, how you cope with it? G-d able me. And I'm very happy that G-d help me. So everything can be okay. And yeah my kids they grew up, the firstborn is doing second year university at Howard College, she's there, next year she's going to do the third year. And the second one, also, is doing second year education university, education. And the boy he is doing Grade 10 high school.

I: Very successful children!

R: They have the babies. This one is one year, seven months, and the other daughter is going to give birth in December, so I'll have two grandchildren. It's a blessing, somehow it's extra work but it's a blessing. (*More on blessing of fertility*)

I: It's great that you have a big family here in South Africa.

R: And what makes, also happy, some people they don't like it, but I'm happy it's the South African parents, fathers... So I get more integrate to the community. And I thank G-d for that because me too, when my husband was sick, I was... I fell down, I was sick also with the kidney and they remove... Since 2006 I have one kidney. They cut, they take it out. So I'm a survivor on one kidney since 2006, but I'm okay, I feel okay...

I: Everything you're telling me shows me how strong you are.

R: It's G-d, it's not me. When I see how I'm doing things, when everything is going okay, I say it's not me, it's G-d, because I should be sleeping on the street because I only make R3100 here but I'm renting a house of R3500 and my children they go to school, but what I'm doing as a business, going to the flea market... Whatever I sell, G-d bless them, and then I get money from my business. And I see life is going... Yes hardly, but in just two years my kids will be finished, and then I will be free. I told them I'm going to have license and they will buy me a car, I say you guys will buy me a car. So they tell me to go get my license.

I: Well good luck on Saturday! I'm excited to hear about how it goes!

R: Yes I wish I can have... (*More on driving exam*) Otherwise, thank you for coming here.

I: No thank you! I'm very happy that I could be here for these few weeks.

R: It's just because I am old otherwise I feel happy when I am with the kids. I like teaching, I like the children, I like to see my children performing well, passing well... yeah. I like that.

I: I know what you mean, they have so much love.

R: And I like to pray with the children, and, see this place is small, but I like to do the physical with the children, running around, jumping.

I: Yes! When we were dancing last week and playing musical chairs, that was so fun.

R: I liked that. I wish I can take this class out to the beach also so they can play, but we need more staff, it has to be at least six staff so everybody could take maybe five, five, five. Being under this roof whole year, it's not good. But unfortunately, when you came I was there with Grade R, but unfortunately I think this year is going to be my last year here cause I want to go do business in Mozambique, I want to go to open a shop.

I: In Mozambique? Would you go with just your husband or would your kids go with you?

R: Yes I want to open a shop. No my brother is already there in Mozambique so we will open the shop my brother will work, then I will go there two, three months and then I come here and my husband also can go there. He can't see properly but he's good in a business he can be adviser he can advise the person. He can sit there and ask you what you are doing and advise you; he can't see properly but he can advise you and then you can succeed. He's the one that pushed me to go and have a license. He said no, try try. So I will be in and out next, I think I will stop July for me I will stop, cause I want to improve life and to do something else. It's ten years I'm working here, ten years in this company.

I: Do you know what kind of shop you want to open?

R: A tuck shop. *(More on shops in Mozambique)* The money they pay me here... I can get it in two weeks. *(More on flea markets, wanting a car)*

*(Casual, off-topic conversation)*

R: Well nice to meet you.

I: Thank you again for doing this, I really appreciate it.

## Appendix D

Interview 3.

Location: Children Care Centre – Crèche; School Office

Time: 11:45pm-12:52pm 10/11/14

Transcribed: 10:20am 13/11/14

*Explain informed consent form, receive consent, begin.*

Interviewer: The first questions are about your personal background. Where were you born?

Respondent: I was born in Rwanda.

I: And what was your neighborhood like?

R: Come again?

I: What was your neighborhood like growing up? Were you in a city, were you in a suburb...?

R: I was born in a village.

I: Do you remember anything, while you were growing up, that was different in your life? Or was everyday sort of the same?

R: It was not the same, I grew up in a nice environment because my parents tried to help me with my education from primary school to high school and my father was a teacher, he had money, and he helped to support, and my childhood was perfect until 1994.

I: With the violence?

R: Yes the violence started.

I: Is that when you came to South Africa?

R: I came to South Africa from Congo because I met a Congolese in January 1993 and I became a Congolese by law.

I: So when did you leave...?

R: 1999 is when I left the Congo. I left Rwanda 1994 to Congo because I went to stay with my in-laws. My in-laws are Congolese and I became Congolese by law, my husband is a Congolese. But I'm born in Rwanda.

I: So why did you move to South Africa from the Congo?

R: From 1996 the war started in Congo, it was the first war; 1997 it was again the second war in Congo. After that we knew it was not safe, no one was safe in the Congo. My husband was working in an organization... human rights organization, and he was not safe because the rebels from Rwanda would come and ask him why are you writing about us, you are attacking Congo, what happened with your organization, you're talking about politics and our programs. And we choose to run out because it was not safe.

I: Right.

R: So me, I had no choice, I was supposed to come with my husband.

I: So that you could stay together as a family?

R: Yes.

I: Did you encounter any obstacles when you first arrived in South Africa?

R: Yeah many many, first of all our documentation and second was job opportunities and last one is money so that you can be able to go and finish my studies because when I left the Congo I was in my second year of university. When I came here I had no money, no assistance from government or from anyone so that I could go back to school. When you come to South Africa, the first problem you face, even now, as a refugee, is the documentation.

I: The documentation?

R: Yeah.

I: Do they give you anything when you first come?

R: Yeah they give me paper for two weeks, after two weeks I went they renew it for one month, after one month they renew they gave me paper for three months, from three months is when I started the process to apply for a refugee status. I get it after one year is when I get refugee status.

I: What do you wish you knew already when you first arrived?

R: You know when I came I had idea that life is very easy and nice in South Africa but what I saw was completely different. I find that people... we are not welcome in South Africa, the refugees. We find that the government doesn't care about the refugees, no church, no NGOs, you have to support yourself and think what you're gonna do, how you're gonna survive, where you're gonna stay. Also the language was a barrier because we speak French, we're supposed to learn the local languages and English so that we can be able to communicate with the South African people.

I: So how did you learn English?



R: By communicating... You have to work hard and just have to learn, you are forced to learn English first of all because wherever you go, to hospital, to office, to shop, wherever you go you are gonna use English.

I: And any business...

R: Wherever, yeah, so we are forced to learn the language as soon as possible, before we go out and see how we are gonna survive. But I had a small... I was speaking small English from school.

I: Oh so that was helpful.

R: Yes, I knew how to greet people, how to, if you ask a question, sometimes I was able to answer, but it was not enough.

I: Where you live now, is it mainly people from outside of South Africa or do you live with a lot of South Africans nearby?

R: My neighbors are South Africans.

I: Do you feel like you are a part of the South African community?

R: Yeah, as... as I told you, I went to school in South Africa, spent five years at school in South Africa, I'm a member at a South African church, my neighbors are South African, and we have many friends South African. Even if (*mumbled*) xenophobia issue, but me I feel safe. Not hundred percent cause when I move from, to... (*unclear*) ...not comfortable but at least I'm safe. Something else, I speak a local language, not fluent but I can express myself in the local language, in the Zulu, which help me to interact with South Africans. Wherever I go, if you are about to speak Zulu, especially Zulu, cause it is like a common language to all black South Africans. You can be welcomed by any South African because you can communicate with them, which is helping me to interact and to feel free with South Africans.

I: About the crèche... What year did you start here?

R: The crèche... I start with the other members at the same, it was 2002.

I: And how did you start working here?

R: Me, because I am a founding member of the crèche, we used to have a problems about how can put everything in order at the crèche as members, we used to leave the staff alone because we were busy looking for a job, just make a living outside. What happened, I... Once... By the time I finished my studies, I was feeling that I can come and do something to put everything in order and to support the staff. We called the staff... they used to be not qualified for that kind of job, that they were here to care for the children and feed them but we had no fees, we had no one to receive the visitors, we had no one to do the report to the donors, to fund us, all kind of work that was needed in the office. We needed someone to be here so that we can do that work. After

finish my studies I felt that I can come and do something here instead of go and apply for job, this house... I finish my studies in 2008, in January that I came and set up office, started talking to people, (*unclear*) and advertise our school, and just receive the visitors and explain to them what we do, and put order to the school and talk to the parents, organize the staff, and see... write what we need so that we are able to run the crèche accordingly.

I: So you knew that you would have the skills to help keep it going?

R: The skills were not enough but experience in SA, and experience as a founding member, and I knew the needs and I came and just started learning from other people; just sit here and observe, and see here there is a need, this is what I'm supposed to do. Because there was no one before me who I could come and ask show me what you have done so I can take over, it was myself to start from zero. It was very hard but slowly, step-by-step I try to make it.

I: Do use any skills from your past, either in Rwanda or Congo, to help you teach and help you run the crèche?

R: No because in Rwanda and Congo we don't have crèches, we're supposed to learn from South Africans, how they run the crèche and visiting other people who do have a crèche and asking question, asking... For example to go and call the people can we please come and see what you are doing and advise what you can do. Otherwise we had no idea about those kind of crèches.

I: I had no idea. What skills do you teach the children here at the crèche that you wish you had earlier in life?

R: For us all the skills are new because the system of this kind of early education in South Africa is different from home. At home, the education start only at seven years.

I: At seven?

R: Seven years, yes. The child is at home, from seven years the child goes to school. If you got money, you can pay the... the expensive school from two years to five years but it's a small number of people who got money who can pay those schools. So in South Africa, you see, teaching the kids from three years to six years was something new to us. What we... we... we did, we have to go and learn from other crèche. We see which kind of program they do have, how we gonna use that program, if there was a question to know, to have someone qualified, especially South African, because we are not aware about that kind of system in SA. And something else, we are supposed to train our staff so that they can be able to be... to use that program, that's why the first staff we used before we started, educational... South African qualified teacher... the one in Grade R. She was coming two hours a day, from 10-11, and teach four to five years because she was working at another crèche around. She would finish there and come, spend two hours here, after two hours she would go back. That time we started training the staff, we started with (*name omitted*) the one in the middle class, she spent six months for training in the South African company which trains the teacher for the crèche and the Grade R. After that (*name omitted*) came, she came from Uganda, where they do have the small kind of similar skills, the same that we do here, but she must come and also train, be trained in South

Africa so that she can be able to work with (*name omitted*). After that, in 2007, we had a qualified teacher from another crèche who come to work for us until 2011. She was here to train the rest of the staff. For me, I'm not a teacher I'm in the office but I learn from other teachers so that I can know how... Let's say one staff is not there, I need to go and replace, when I am not busy I go sit there and learn the way they do... I have also to know what they're teaching because when it comes to the reports I have to report what we are teaching and how we are doing it. So, I have to go and assist the teachers by learning and by doing so that I can be able to report those kinds of skills and how we use them so that we can help our children.

I: Who are you reporting to? The students' parents or the government?

R: No we report mostly to the donors, and to the people who support even once. You know sometimes, you see those box (*points at boxes of donations*) after that I have to... the company they donate those box they donate once a year, anyone who can donate and ask report to us what you are doing, what job you are doing, and when you find sometimes they ask you to explain what kind of job you are doing, which kind of skills you do have, so I have to know... to be aware of this kind of activities and skills so that I can report.

I: That makes sense. How do you feel the crèche promotes integration for the children?

R: By treating the kids equally, at the same level, which help us to integrate the children by... (*pause*) teaching the discipline and the... what can I say... let's say you see the way we group the kids, kids that most of them are refugee, we have South African, we have mixed family, when I'm talking about the mixed family maybe the father is a foreigner or a refugee and the mother is a South African... We do have those different kind of kids and different backgrounds. In order to help them to interact with each other, when a child is coming here, you try to treat them at the same level. Give them the same food, teach them the same language... Use the same language to communicate with them. We call them, children, by their name but we (*unclear*) they are the same and we try to love the children, to love them to help the parents at home. And we try to help them to know that everybody's a teacher, you are a cleaner, you are a cook, you are a principal, but you are a teacher for them. So that you see, even you, you are here for just more than two weeks, they call you teacher. After one day you are a teacher. All those kind of... The way we treat them, the way we care for them, the way we talk to them, communicate with them, it help us that children are interacting with each other, and we avoid the children to use their home language so they can use the same language and just... Once they are able to communicate using the same language, living the same environment, taken care by the same level, which is something which help us to make sure the children interact with each other and that they are not... they see themselves at the same level, there's no difference between one cause these refugees and South Africans, we avoid that so they don't know that me, I'm a refugee, this one is South African... Because they are in the same environment, at the same level. And when we communicate with them they don't know if we are foreigners, refugees, or South Africans, they know everybody is a teacher. So they grow up in the same environment where they feel that all of us are South African... Let's say in their mind they know that this is South Africa and they're South Africans. From baby group to Grade R, you find yourself not a child know they refugee, this is South African, only they know they are South African, they don't know who's a foreigner, who's a refugee, who's a South African... They know all of us as

South African. This is not something we create or teach, but the way we take care for them, the way we treat, is which creates that kind of... of... will bring idea that all of us, we are the same. And the way we take care of them, sometime when they find there's no difference between me, a caregiver, a teacher in the group, I go to Grade R, I talk they listen, I go there I talk they listen, another teacher can go and work wherever and the children they know each and all the teachers. Because in the morning when they come, anyone can come and sit with all the kids because we work in one space and we put them together before they go to their groups. And Saturdays all the teachers, the one who is free can come and look after the kids, any teacher, anyone from the baby group gonna go and be a teacher because Saturday we are one group, so they know everybody's a teacher, everybody's my teacher, even if you are a cook they know you are my teacher. Which helps the kids to see that in this environment everyone is a teacher, and even if I'm not teaching them they don't care about what they are teaching, if you are present here you are a teacher.

I: They respect you.

R: Yeah, so... I don't know how it happened but it's something you see, if you observe you can see. But it's because they are in the same environment, we don't put difference between the kids, that's why I avoid the kids to bring their own stuff from home, even the food, they must eat the same food. The toys, they use the same toys, the chair, the same chairs. They see the same groups. That's why they find that they integrate themselves among the groups and among the staff. According to the way we take care of them, this community here that kind of (*unclear*) provides them the same. But it's not something we can create, it happened.

I: It took time. What do you think are the most important or necessary things that the crèche provides for the children?

R: For this crèche, I used to say that it is different from other crèche, reason why you can see, most of the crèche here, if you see the... Most of the South African crèche they are expensive and most of them they don't provide food. And most of them they do have a small number of the staff, even if they are registered with the government, they are gonna have a nice place, divide the kids but it may be thirty children and one staff. What we do better than them, we do have a big number but... we do have a big number of the children but we also have a big number of the staff. Something else, we provide food, which is something special from other crèche. Because other crèche they have R800 or 900 per month and you bring your own food. But here can you imagine a child is paying R290 per month, from that money you can provide school material, food, two hot meal a day, breakfast and the lunch, and you pay the staff, and you pay the rent, and just whatever you need to provide you are providing. So this is special because school fees is just too low so that all the parents can be able to afford that per month. We can it school fees but for me it is not school fees, it is a contribution from the parents. We don't want to make the parents lazy, we want them to support the school with something, that's why they give that a month. But this school is like a free crèche, because if we say this is a business we can have fifty or thirty children, this is a non-profit, like a free school which supplies different services which you can't see in another crèche. That's why... the way we take care of the kids is different. We will try to replace their parents because we know the background of the kids. Some kids are from the family where they have no food at home, others they are from the family

where the mother and the father they are leaving in the morning and they come later when the children are sleeping, they don't have time with their children. So when they spend eight hours with us, they find that here they have mothers somewhere else, that's why you see always they are happy. What we do, we try to replace their parents, you see the way we talk to them it's like how we talk to own child. So, if we make sure the kids that don't have food at home, they're gonna get the breakfast and the lunch here and snacks at two o'clock, at least even if at night there's no food at home, they're gonna wake up in the morning and get food here. Which you can't see at another crèche. Something else, other crèche, most of them are business, they don't have the time to spend and talk with the kids, and treat them like they are their own, it's like a school where you go to university and lecture and talking and after that take a book and... Here we make sure that all the time we are with the kids, all the time we observe them and they feel that we are always around them, which I find is very, very good from other crèches. Also the way that we divide the kids according to the age is something special because another crèche you're gonna find they mix the kids. The babies and the older ones, you just find there is chaos when they are mixed together, and you find that they are not very well organized. This is a difference we have from other crèche.

I: Just to check, how much did you say the crèche costs per month?

R: R290.

I: And they get two meals a day...

R: Yeah two hot meals, breakfast and lunch, and a snack when they wake up. They go home full. Even if they don't have something on the table to eat at home they are gonna come back in the morning and get breakfast and they get strong, which is something special, not because we are strong enough to feed everybody but because people are willing to help when they see what we do. We are not benefiting as a members of staff, whatever we do is for the kids, not for ourselves. So people donate food, others donate money, others donate the school materials, and the money from the school fees is extra money we use when we need, but also to make sure that the parents are not lazy. (*Unclear*). So it's something I see is different from other crèche.

I: How do you feel about English being used at the crèche?

R: For me it's something very wonderful but the problem we have, we are refugees from countries where English is not even spoken or taught at school, but we try our best to use what we know so that we can help the kids to learn that language. But for the kids, because their minds are soft, they learn fast. They learn from their neighbors, other kids from school, and when they go to school it's in South Africa, the language is easy for them. For us, we struggle with our own accents from home. But for the kids, because English is used wherever they go, even at home now, they go home and communicate in English, they do have their neighbors and other kids who are South African and they learn faster than us. And we find the kids that are growing up in South Africa, speak English very, very well than their parents and their teachers from other African countries. And we choose to use English at school because we know it's the language of education, we don't want our children to go to start their school with their home language because those home languages are not even spoken in primary school. So they are

ready to communicate, and make sure that when they start the school they will make it, they will not have problems with their language.

I: What goals do you have for the children at the crèche?

R: The goals... For the kids first of all we want them to have the basic skills for them to study in school, that they do have a kind of discipline from home, and other goals, we make sure the children are... they are not xenophobic, because you know in South Africa we have that kind of xenophobic issues, xenophobia, and if you are a black from another country, you have problem in South Africa. But our children, they must grow up in a similar environment, knowing that they don't know who's a refugee or who's a South African, all of them are the same they are all South African. So this is a goal we set up for the children to grow up in an environment free of xenophobia, because they are the future of this country. Tomorrow I will not be there but them, they will be here in South Africa, that's why we always try to make sure the children know each other by name, know where they come from, which country their parents are coming from. It's for the children, these goals, but for the school, we have many goals. Caring, educating, and feeding... make sure that the children are taken care by us eight hours a day from Monday to Saturday, they get food at least two times a day, we have many goals like that but we do have extra goals like xenophobia, making sure that at least our children are free of things like xenophobia.

I: I remember another time you were saying that 60% of the kids here are refugees, does that mean that their parents are refugees and they were born here or that they were born somewhere else and they came here?

R: Some children here are born outside of South Africa, like let's say you come this year to South Africa in January with a child of two years, that child is born in Rwanda, Burundi, the DRC, or Mozambique and then comes to South Africa. Others they are born here in South Africa but even if they are born here in South Africa they are not South African. You know in the States, when someone is coming as a refugee and receives documentation, and their child is born in the States they are American, but in South Africa that is not the case. You get a baby, you go to Home Affairs to register the baby, they are gonna write a child is born in South Africa but is Congolese not South African, that's the problem that we have. So, you find that most of the kids that we have here are refugees, big numbers of refugees here, too many. And let's say 40% are South African, but those South Africans they are poor, they can't afford the other kind of crèches because they are expensive, they don't have a food to give to their kids for them to take to school, they don't have the money for school materials, because at those schools you have to buy the paper and the crayons yourself and send them to school. And also the objective of that crèche is not to take care of the refugee children, and the (*unclear*) South Africans around, they need support. We say no, South Africa is our host country, our neighbors are South African, we meet at the church, or at home, or at work, why can't you receive the kids and they say no go out, we say no let us support the South Africans, which gonna help us show the South Africans that we don't care about the xenophobia. If you got a crèche, bring your child but we have to assess if you are very poor, if you are not able to afford other crèche. And we say even among the job (*unclear*), at least a small number of South Africans, because we have to learn from other crèche the skills we don't have and also how we are going to integrate ourselves

within society, if we are going with South Africans... That's why you see we have South African children, refugee children, South African staff, refugee staff. Even if it's a small number, but at least we should take all the refugee kids and put them here. But anyone who comes we ask where are you working, where are you staying, that's why we give them those application forms – to know where they are working, where they stay, so that we can receive their kids. And if we give a job, let's say, the refugees that are not working, they can come and clean for the staff, we can go to school for this kind of education but (*unclear*) the same one that refugees can have. That's why we mix them, cause they have the skills we don't have, also we want to learn from them, and we want to integrate ourselves in that kind of society. That's why we do what we are doing.

I: What three events do you think have influenced your life the most?

R: Three events...

I: Different experiences. It doesn't have to be from living in South Africa, it could be from before you came here.

R: You know for me, being safe at home... Let's say, where I come from, in the Congo, even now since 1996 they are still fighting, people are still dying. Can you imagine, I left Rwanda, went to Congo, get married in Congo, have a family there, but since I get in Congo until now people are still dying because they are still fighting. I am from eastern Congo they are fighting even now. Now that I am safe here in South Africa, I can move, I can go to school, I can do whatever I want, something which I appreciate. Something else, working here at the crèche I learn something which touched my life, taking care of these kids, seeing them happy, getting food, going to school, I'm happy because they should be on the street sleeping outside (*unclear*) and robbing people and stealing, the people they are... I'm happy because these kids they can be able to go to school and they are safe, instead of seeing them on the road, which is something that really I'm proud of. And when I see some parents they can have a piece of mind when they wonder where am I gonna leave my child when I go out to struggle and make a living, when I see the parents they say no I'm free, at least they are safe where I leave them. This also make me proud. But I'm not 100% happy to be far from my country.

I: Do you ever think you'll go back? Either to Congo or Rwanda?

R: If there's peace in Congo I have to go, I wish I could go back, but for the moment I know it's not possible, they are still fighting.

I: What about Rwanda?

R: Rwanda... I'm married to a Congolese, now I'm a Congolese, I'm no longer... If I go back to Rwanda, where am I gonna leave my husband? So even Rwanda there's no peace, even if they say there's peace, people are dying, there's a lot of cultural issues there in Rwanda, it's not safe. If you are outside you can think it's safe and there is peace but there is none, no peace at all. There's racism issues, those who are poor see others killing those who are refugees, you can't even go outside... In South Africa you can wake up and see that the Rwanda sent some new

people to kill the refugees in South Africa. Rwandans are not safe at all, there's no peace. And for me it's not where I belong, I'm a Congolese... If I go back I have to go back to the Congo. If I go back I have to go visit my parents and my family members who stay there but I'm no longer a Rwandan.

I: What are your goals for the future? You talked about the goals for the children but what about your goals for yourself or for your family?

R: It's very hard. Let's say you come in South Africa you say I have to go to school, so I can get my degree, when I get my degree I'm gonna apply for a job, when I get that... You get your papers, you spend ten years without a job and you're qualified. And also the crime is at the high level, people are dying, killing each other, shooting, in poverty... You think where is my future in South Africa? We don't have a future here but we hope maybe one day we can have peace in our country and then we go back. But at least we are happy because we are able to go to school and have qualifications in this kind of work... Being far from home you miss your family members, you find out your family members are dying, you can't even go to bury them. Something really hard. Because now you need to go home, there's no way we're gonna go; they're still fighting, it doesn't matter if you have money and a passport, we are not able to go and visit your family. And also for me... Let's say you can come and work in South Africa as an American but you can't feel that you are South African. Whatever you're gonna do here you're gonna say I'm an American but I live in South Africa. But being a refugee, me I'm no longer a refugee I got my permit of residence now, but let's say for the other refugees, being a refugee is something you can't wish, because you don't know where you belong. You can't go back to your home country, even if there's peace, sometimes the documentation they give here don't allow you to go. We think about home. But because we don't have a choice, we're here.

I: Is there anything that you would have done differently in your life if you could do it again?

R: I wish I can support people, that's why I choose to be a community worker. When I see the people suffering, I see I can help support them, that's why I came to support the crèche member. I had no child at that time, even now, but I see the women have idea to start something like a crèche, like an organization, if I can help them, join them, support them... That's why you can see me more than six years sitting in this office, not because I applied for job, but because I wanted to support this project because they need someone who can be there to support the staff, the kids, the parents, working with the donors. All I need I can have the community, but my capacity is limited. Sometimes you find you are here in the crèche, don't have time, you're busy, don't have time for the rest of the community. At least at the church on Sunday you feel you can go and help them, sometimes there is an issue in your own community but you don't have the time because you are here so many hours a day. I wish I can support the community members.

I: Well that's it for the questions that I have, is there anything that you feel would be helpful for me to know that we didn't talk about?

R: Like what?

I: We covered most things about the crèche!



R: We covered... We still have a lot of problems in the crèche. The location is not comfortable for the kids, too small, you can see the office, you can see place is too small, and you can see the number of the children and the staff. If we can have a more comfortable place so that I can... We use this place because it's what we can afford, I'm concerned but I'm not sure how we're going to overcome this. I've been asking the local government since 2009 if they can provide at least a place for us because we are helping support the government, but the government doesn't care, what are we gonna do? Let us use what we do have and think about the kids. But we are still struggling, you can see, big number of kids, small kitchen, the toilets are not enough, there's no place to see visitors. Remember the time you came here to visit as a group we had to stand in the office. So I wish we can have a bigger place with an outside so the children can go spend time outside. Only once a month we are off, we are tired and sometimes me I don't even have that one day. I'm a bookkeeper, everything, sometimes I can't even have that one day per month. At least Saturdays I don't work. I need time to support my family and talk to my friends. People come to me with social issues and I don't have the time to even give them an idea about how they can overcome their problems. You come in the morning, sometimes parents come with social issues, you become social worker and you're not even qualified for that but you need to support and I need to help them. Sometimes a child is crying and they don't know why but you have to help them, they tell you... (*omitted for privacy*) We deal with different issues, at home I don't have a problem but it's my environment. At home I'm safe. Sometimes the kids are brought here even when they're sick, even when they're vomiting, because the parents are working. We have to take care of them. Then you open a computer and there's a report you have to submit. We are always stressed but when I see them it's worth it, once you love it you make it. You have to love it first so that you can be able to make it, but it's not an easy job.

I: I've noticed everybody here is incredibly dedicated, and committed, and passionate...

R: Yes it's very very hard, once you do that job and you like it you can make it through the stress. I come in the morning, have to fill forms for donors, a long form, then I get a request for another list (*omitted for privacy*) ...then a company calls to help. Where am I gonna start? I have to think of what they're gonna cook for the kids, I have to think step-by-step. If you come with the stress from home, where are you gonna start, what are you gonna do? This job is not easy, but you have to love it and then you can do it... And you avoid the stress because if you have stress you can't help others. A mother can come in and say my husband is beating me I'm gonna stay here... Like on Friday, (*omitted for privacy.*) Everybody brings their problems to you, that's why you have to be strong. You know what happened with Moses. It was a Friday around nine o'clock, the mother came and said teacher help me, it's only one day, I am going to apply for a job, they asked me to go fill out the application form for the job, it's only two hours I'm gonna pay for my baby when I come back. I told her no I can't take a baby, a three month old baby, especially without contact numbers of the parents. I gave her the paper for her to write her telephone number and her name. She gave me the wrong telephone number, she gave her the telephone number for her granny who lived in a township far away from Durban. She said there's everything in the bag but she was lying there was nothing inside. The baby started crying. Me, I was trying to help someone get a job but she was lying to me. It was nine o'clock, ten o'clock and the child was crying – no bottle, no milk. I had to go buy a bottle and milk for the baby, and the child was very sick with a fever and a chest problem. I was thinking his

mother was coming back. At ten o'clock I took that paper and phoned and heard the voice of a very old woman speaking strong Zulu. I called the cleaner here to help me tell the granny that the woman left her baby at the crèche but the granny knew the mother of Moses and the telephone and the name, she gave her the name but the wrong telephone number. What happened was she said please don't phone me again you must deal with it with Moses' mother and not with me, I'm in a township please don't call me anymore. Ten o'clock, one o'clock, three o'clock, four o'clock, five o'clock, no one came and the child was very sick. After work I took the baby, who came with no clothes, nothing... I went to the police station. Once I get there they told me you must come and report it after 24 hours, go home and come tomorrow, Saturday, at eight o'clock. Can you imagine, I'm here at the crèche, my husband is at home, he is phoning me asking why is it taking you so long to come back home, I say no I have a problem to solve at the crèche but I'm coming. I asked myself, am I gonna go home with the child, the child is gonna die at home... When I opened the plastic bag that she left with the child I found a clinic card. When I saw the clinic card I said maybe that mother went to kill herself and that's why she left her baby's document, clinic card... I was feeling sorry about the baby who was very sick but I said no it's too late I have to go home. I took the baby with me, the baby was crying in the blanket. In the office there were two police, one man and one lady, I said let's go to the woman maybe she will feel sorry and help me. When I went to the lady she said you refugee don't come with your problems, I'm sick and tired of you, why are you bringing this child now, why are you doing this. You know what I told her, I said please ma don't talk like this to me, this child is not a refugee he's a South African. When she heard that the child was South African she went into the office and told the man what happened. They told me go home, don't worry, sleep, and come back tomorrow at eight o'clock. When I get home the child was crying. I knocked, my husband opened, he saw me with a baby who was crying. He asked me if I stole a baby, I was crying myself, he saw me crying and I didn't talk to him I just entered the house with the baby crying. I said please go buy nappies and Pampers, it was around seven at night, no shop to buy clothes for the child. I warmed water and washed the child and then took my towel and covered the baby. I was sitting and crying and said G-d will take care of this sick child, this three-month-old baby boy. I went to call my South African neighbor, she came to me, she was an old woman, she said don't worry I will take this child and will give that child to my daughter. I told her no I have to go tomorrow, she told me don't worry I'm gonna go and take the child to the center, from the center my daughter will take the child. She was part of a kind of culture where they kill a small baby and use the body parts for medication, I don't know... My husband told me if you give her this baby and she kills that baby, what will you report? My husband told me leave this child here we will try our best, you have to find out if the mother will come back, and remember the child was left in the crèche, if a family member comes and asks where is the baby was are you going to say? Saturday in the morning I went to the police to report the case. I told the police that I'm going to try my best this week to find the mother, I told them if I don't find the mother I'll come back to you after one week. I took the baby to the clinic, they find that the child had a chest problem, he was breathing very bad and they said anytime he can die. The nurse told me this child can die any time. What was I gonna do? The mother left a three-month-old baby and gave me no milk or anything. They told me they were gonna add blood but I had to pray so that the child could survive. I said G-d please I don't want this child to die in my hands, please help save this child, maybe I can give the child back to his mother or at least to the government, please G-d I don't want the child to die. I was crying. The child spent one week at the hospital, after one week he was okay. I went to the shelter and asked do you know this lady, the mother of this

child, they told me we know this mother, she is a prostitute, she said she put her child at the crèche so they can take care of her baby. Now she's in the bar, unless you go to each bar in Durban can find her there, otherwise we don't know where she is now. I told them please, if you see her, tell her that the police are looking for her because she left her baby, and she must come and see me at the crèche otherwise she's gonna be arrested. I was lying to them because I wanted her to come so I could ask her why she left the baby. The following week on Monday she came at ten o'clock, I closed the door, the baby was sleeping, I closed the door and was sitting there and asked her please tell me why you... She started crying, I said don't cry, it's not a joke, more than one week you left a child with me – you don't know me, I don't know you, you don't know anyone in this crèche, tell me what pushed you to leave the child at this crèche. I told her please stop crying because you are not sorry about your baby, if you were sorry you would not leave your baby with someone you don't know. I told her I phoned the police, you're going to be arrested, tell me what happened. She told me don't think I don't love my child. She told me that the time she was pregnant she was taking drugs and smoking and drinking, and after six months she had a problem and was not able to breathe, you know when you are taking drugs while pregnant it affects the child. When she went to consult the doctor they told her she can die any time, they are going to do operation that would kill the baby and save her. At seven months they did operation and everything – when they took the baby out, the baby was alive. What she was supposed to do, she stayed one month with the baby, stayed one month in the hospital and was treated with medication, after she was okay she came out... She had to go and make money to buy things for child but for her it was very hard because with a child you can't have a client. She would leave the baby in a shelter and didn't have milk, no nothing, left only cold water. It was the wintertime, it was very cold, that's why the child had a problem with the chest. She told me I love my baby but the problem is I don't have family members, the granny you phoned is a cousin of my mother, my mother passed away two years ago. I'm in a bad state so I brought the child to you so that you can feel sorry about the child not because I don't love my child. She said you know in South Africa you can pay one hundred rand and they take out the baby, I could have put my baby in the bin, but I love my child I just don't have money and don't have a place to stay. She was crying, I felt her struggle. Can you imagine, I told her I'm going to help you for one month, I'm going to take care of your baby for one month but you must think about how you can get a job and find a place to stay that's not in the shelter, I'm gonna help you to get a job in this crèche or another crèche, you get a job, after that we get you a place to stay, you can share a house with other women. I really tried my best, I asked my friend can you give her a job, they gave her a job but the problem is she used to go to work in the morning, ten o'clock she would go to drink at the bar and was not going back. The owner of the crèche told me your sister is not coming back, your sister is not there, I don't know where to get her to come back. After one month the child was admitted again at hospital, this is how I started helping Moses when he was becoming my child. He was very sick and his mother was up and down the bars and drinking and not coming back. I said no if I give him back to this woman this child is gonna die. He was not even called Moses, I gave him the name Moses. He had a different name but I gave him the name Moses because you know Moses in the Bible, at three months his mother put him in the basket... So I gave him the name Moses. He became a beautiful child, he was very sick and we didn't know if he was gonna survive. And I'm happy to take care of him. This is something where you don't know what's gonna happen, this kind of environment... Maybe G-d used me to help Moses... He wanted me to be here so I can help Moses, G-d wanted me to be here so the

donors can come and donate their money to the crèche. The reason why I'm here is because G-d wants me to be here. I don't know if I covered the information you need...

I: More than that! Wow, thank you so much for sharing that with me.

R: Yeah, and something else... If this crèche is not here, I should not know you, we met because this crèche is here and you came to be here, now we're learning from one another. I've met people from different places, I make new friends, which makes me happy. Meeting different people makes me happy because you learn from all these people and I can feel that I am not alone. Something also that makes me happy is this crèche. Something else... Life is full of emotions and memories, if I leave here I can say I've done something to feel proud and happy. Sometimes we think money can solve the problems but it's not the case. Sometimes, yeah, you need money to survive but if you put money first, sometimes there is something you can't achieve because you like money. I should want money, and apply for a job, and want to work for someone who can pay me, but if these kids are suffering you think at least they are happy and are able to go to school and can have food. You can have money or not, money can't solve the problems, but you can do something good for these families.

I: That's true, thank you so much for everything.

## Appendix E

Interview 4.

Location: Children Care Centre – Crèche; School Office

Time: 1:00pm-1:10pm 10/11/14

*Expanded version of handwritten interview notes. This woman is from South Africa so the questions pertained to the crèche itself and her opinions on aspects of the crèche.*

*Explain informed consent form, receive consent, begin.*

Promoting integration in the crèche: It's more of a refugee center. Promote integration through language and everyone is treated the same, everyone is treated like a teacher's own child. The children have less problems adjusting and their language needs are met.

Best things the crèche provides: Food and shelter, sometimes clothes, are the most important things given to these children here. Also the basic skills they receive here that prepare them for later on. Small things that other people take for granted are given to the children here and help them learn and grow.

Feelings on English at the crèche: Has no problem with it being taught, as it is a good tool for school. It is the medium used in other schools so it is good that the children solidify it here at the crèche.

Goals for the children at the crèche: To have a good start in their life for school. She hopes she is doing enough for them and hopes that the skills she helps teach them are enough to help them in later schooling years.

## Appendix F

Interview 5.

Location: Children Care Centre – Crèche; School Office

Time: 12:30pm-12:56pm 11/11/14

Transcribed: 1:45pm 15/11/14

*Explain informed consent form, receive consent, begin.*

Interviewer: First of all, where were you born?

Respondent: Me, I was born in Uganda.

I: And, did you live in a city or a rural area?

R: It was a town.

I: A town. Were there any big events that happened while you were there or was every day sort of the same?

R: Sorry?

I: Were there any big events that happened while you were there or was every day sort of the same?

R: The big events which happened... like what, war?

I: Is there anything that you remember being different or would you do the same thing every day?

R: When I was young, it was the same, I used to wake up and go to my studies. Cause when I grew up I went to the cities, big cities.

I: At what age did you come to South Africa?

R: Oh, I came after I'm married I came after I've got two children, I was 35, I came in 2007 Christmastime... 2006, sorry, in December, Christmas Day.

I: Is there a reason why you left Uganda?

R: Yeah, me I'm a teacher, at home I went for two years college course for becoming a primary teacher and I finished... I went to primary teacher's college in 1996, in '98 I finished, then '99 I was trying to look for a job within my town where I was born. I couldn't get. '99 I got married to the man I'm staying with, and we had our first child in 2000, October. We went a little bit and stayed in Kenya. My firstborn I had in Kenya.

I: So is there a reason why you went to Kenya?

R: Yeah my husband went to Kenya because he was working there, he's a designer.

I: And then you left Kenya...

R: After having my son, because my husband went back to Uganda again, me I was left in Kenya; when he went to Uganda again he was sick, he was caught with Malaria, because you know our country is full with Malaria. I just had to sell some of the stuff in the house and then I went back in 2001, so we were together there. From 2001 I go to school in Uganda I was teaching but I was not getting salary after three years. Then my husband left Uganda in 2000-what, because my second born was born when we were not here, but when we come to South Africa. Then from there 2005 when I was teaching in the camp, I was a senior woman teacher there... That school was displaced, it was many schools inside, one school was hosting many other schools because of the war. So they can't go to their far schools so they have to put the schools in the center and help guide the people and the children. So it was (*unclear*) I saw a bad event which happened, it was a school holiday and then the following week we were supposed to open the school, that was the day, these people came on Sunday, they attacked the camp where we were teaching. They came at three o'clock, they got these people in the market, other children are playing in the field, they were shooting the guns, burning the houses, killing, ladies like this with the children, some ladies running back saying no I left my children, the moment you go back they arrest you. You say no I left my money in the house, they put you in a group in the same rooms, the other men were divided. So when I came, on my way, because where I used to stay it was far, I first stayed with my mother-in-law... Every time these men are fighting, six o'clock you have to take your stuff, you don't sleep on the mattress, you sleep on the mat, it's traditional; you have to hide in the bush, nearby bush; you have to go and sleep somewhere in the bush. So I told my mother-in-law I can't stay here, since I've got my cousin, at least he's in the center not in the real town, when it's bad you can go and sleep in hospital, outside, at least there's a fence. Then I went and stayed there, then now I was going the following morning, people they don't go that way, most people not going back to the school, they say the slaughters happen. Then we saw one of the fellow teachers, she came and she never saw that the child is dead on her back, cause when we saw her coming the child's head was upside down, I think she was unconscious. Then they tried to ask what happened, she was telling the camp leader, go see what has happened there, then the camp leader tried to come with some soldiers, and they bring a big truck, they got a lot of people who are scared (*skinned?*) and they brought the people, I see my relatives... I become sick after seeing those things, I was in the hospital. I couldn't because I went riding a bicycle, that was the means of transport we used to use there, I left my bicycle and took a transport where you pay someone, you sit on their bike behind, and they ride. I hired one to take me back. I went to hospital and spent the night, it was the things which I saw, made me say I can't stay in Uganda cause, me and my husband ran away also because of the reason he was also arrested, he was captured, taken, staying in the bush for a long time, for two years, he was in the meetings he was the person who takes the minutes. So when he came out, they tried to look for him, where is he... Even when we came here to South Africa he never told me, cause I was pregnant, I think one month, my brother-in-law and sister-in-law, they hide me. I say where is my husband, they say maybe he is taken to the Sudan. After six months, they told me he's right

now in South Africa, but from there he started sending us the money, so I said I can't stay because when these people come... Sometimes they write a letter and they dump it somewhere, people say hey they are going to attack this place here. So we have to prepare to hide, go very fast, go very fast, before six we are already out, we close the door. Then six o'clock we are back. I said this life, every day I don't sleep, I have a headache, if the dog barks you know something bad is coming. Sometimes I used to go to sleep at my aunty who was a bit old, because these rebels they respect old people, when they knock the door and see old woman they leave, but us they'll ask us where is your husband. Women tried to make their hair, maybe to plait their hair, they say you've got money, your husband's a soldier, and they say no. My husband sent me a little money, I went to follow him because myself, my life, was in danger.

I: So you left to escape?

R: Yes.

I: Wow. Did you encounter any obstacles when you first got here?

R: When I came here, my crossing the border was very... I was arrested at the border. When I came... Cause my husband sent for me a ticket and also his friends who were there they have their passes, they contributed money and they give me. I bought a pass up to Zambia, from Zambia up to Botswana, Botswana the money got finished. I had to stay with somebody I don't know, I think it was G-d who sent that woman to me. Just in the town, she was seeing the way I was standing with my children and pretending as if I didn't know the language. When I speak English they say no, this is not an English country, and I say no I don't know Tswana. The woman says come here with me to wash the dishes, I say to the woman, I tried to give phone number of my husband, I tried because the first night when I went to try to cross the border, they ask me for my passport, the passport has got no visa, so I can't cross. Then the good lady, the one that came in the morning, I sleep in the cell... The one that came in the morning says no you have to sympathize with this mother here. I see my kids laughing, they didn't know what was happening, I was crying and they took me back to Botswana. That woman tried to organize for me a way of crossing, talking to these people who always bring the trucks, the cars from South Africa to Botswana for selling. And also I communicate with my husband from that lady in Botswana, she helped me to cross, we crossed sitting in the front of... In the car, then we're hiding under the big chairs.

I: That's how you got across?

R: Yeah, when I crossed my husband was waiting for me in Jo'burg, we sleep in Jo'burg then the following day we came here. I got this work in 2007, October 2007. Cause when I brought my CV here I saw teacher (*name omitted*), she said no (*name omitted*) you are welcome here, you can help we need teachers. They used to call me to do part time, to come and clean, cause I was cleaning after the children, then from then they called me three days a week. Then, there used to be a white teacher who left for another school, when she was going to oversee, I used to come to help keep the class. One teacher worked in the morning so in the afternoon I have to take care. It was 2008 when we had this xenophobia also. I had a son that used to be here four years, he graduated from here, he is now in Grade 6. But the problem I find during that time I said there's



xenophobia, I couldn't work, like me I'm dark-face hey so they say she's a foreigner. I had a neighbor, that neighbor was a Zulu. My son used to go to that side of the school, so coming back from that school I find they beat my son, when I asked the police (?) they say no don't open your mouth it's not your country and I say but I've got rights, I'm working, I'm paying the rent, hey. I'm coming to ask what happened to my son. And another thing, did my washing, and when I put it on the line, I know the line is not for me but the line was empty, they woman, the neighbor, came out and moved my clothes. I say but you're not washing, she said no leave my line. So I put my clothes in the basket. Then I have to beg another woman who was from Zambia, a good lady, to help me buy my line.

I: But now things have gotten friendlier?

R: Yes. *Laughter*

I: Okay. Is there anything that you wish you knew when you arrived?

R: I wish I knew when I arrived, what my husband was working properly, if he was having enough money, and I would've come, but I came when the situation was not good. Another thing, I wish, before I come here, my husband would have tell me maybe to do what... To wait or to look for me to talk with other people, to say I have a wife who can do this and this or to prepare some money cause there is a course that I wanted to do but I couldn't get that 500... Hm.

I: What language did you grow up speaking at home?

R: At home obviously we speak Swahili; my parents, they're from northern Uganda near Sudan. So we speak Luo, we speak it at home. In Uganda there are many languages. Like us, we don't know a real language, we are speaking Swahili, but our Swahili is a bit different from other people. My mother and father talk their own language. And my two children, they don't know the language, they only know English.

I: So did you know English at all when you first moved here?

R: When I came here, yes I knew English, because the school I went to we were speaking English.

I: Oh so you did your education in English. Do you see yourself, now, as a member of South Africa or do you still see yourself as a foreigner?

R: I still see myself as a foreigner, cause since I came, I'm going into the ninth year, I haven't got a document. My document here is temporary, anytime they can say go back home. I'm seeing myself still as a foreigner.

I: How did you hear about the crèche? You told me you gave your CV, but how did you hear about it?

R: My husband... I told you my husband is a designer, he makes clothes. So there was a lady who was doing the sewing, and he would get the clothes from the lady, or the lady would order him to make some clothes... When he was bringing the clothes here he said hey I heard children in this building, when he came back he said to go to the building and check inside there, and I said check tomorrow. Then the next day he came and checked and got the form, then he asked the lady, I've got my wife there who is a primary teacher with experience with the children, can she come? And they said yes. I never knew this place was here.

I: Do you use any skills from your past to help you teach here everyday?

R: Yeah.

I: Do you feel like they're the skills from when you learned to teach primary schools or more like life skills?

R: It's almost the same, it's the same skills.

I: Do you teach these children anything that you wish you learned earlier in life?

R: To teach these children anything I had earlier in life?

I: Do you teach them anything that you wish you knew when you were younger?

R: I used to tell them if I can go back like you children I would put more mind in education, you have to respect and listen, education should be number one. That's what I tell them.

I: How do you think the crèche helps promote integration for these kids that come from different places?

R: When the children come here we always tell them to speak one language, that is English. Cause when I first came here most of the children were speaking Lingala, most of these children are from Congo, the DRC, they speak Lingala and French so we emphasize to speak English for easier communication among all of us.

I: What do you think are the most important or necessary things that the crèche gives to the children?

R: This crèche offers education to the children, and also is giving them food, and is offering them where they can stay during the daytime, giving them shelter, at least from morning up to five, then they go stay with their parents.

I: How do you feel about using English at the crèche? You mentioned it before as a means of integration.

R: Yeah, I'm saying it because it's an easy medium of communication.

I: What goals do you have for the children here at the crèche?

R: Goals, what do you mean?

I: When they grow up, or even when they leave the crèche, something that you hope they achieve or the type of person they become.

R: I want them to become someone more than me, I want them to become someone more than me because my education is not as good. And if I had money to go for further studies I would, that's something I'm missing.

I: So you want them to get the most education?

R: Yes, the most education so they can become a doctor, a lawyer, a teacher.

I: What three events do you think have influenced your life the most?

R: Among which three events?

I: Yeah, it could be something from back in Uganda or here, three things that happened to you that you feel made you who you are today.

R: You can skip that one. *(Each participant is allowed to skip a question that they would not like to answer)*

I: Do you have any goals for yourself and your family for the future?

R: For myself I want a happy future, and a bright future for my children.

I: If you did your life all over again, would you do anything differently? For example, do you think you'd still come to South Africa?

R: If I could go back?

I: If you did your life all over again, would you change anything?

R: I would still come to South Africa, *(unclear)* we are blessed. When you go to other places, you acquire new ways of living, new ways of doing things also, we learn a lot from each other.

I: Well that's all the questions I have to ask, is there anything you want to share that you feel we didn't talk about? Also if you have any questions for me, please ask!

R: I don't think there is anything more to add, I think it's enough. I wanted to ask you... You say you are training to become a teacher, for the smaller ones or high school?

I: For primary.

R: Oh for primary, that's good. You've already done the course?

I: I'm a bit over halfway done.

R: When are you going to finish?

I: May of 2016 I finish my university.

R: But you are so young! How old are you?

I: I'm 20... So then I will be able to teach primary school.

R: Welcome to the community.

I: Thank you!

R: My uncle, my mother's brother, used to be a primary teacher, used to be the head of the school... So, when I finished, because Uganda, after primary, which is one to seven, I stopped at four years because of the money problems... I wanted to become a nurse but I found out that they need a lot of things and my uncle said no go become a teacher, go do the training and become a teacher since you love children.

I: That makes sense! Do you like working at the crèche with these kids?

R: Yes, I like it, sometimes even in my dream I say hey keep quiet! I love it. How many are in your family?

I: I'm one of two.

R: Two only? You're the firstborn, hey?

I: Second born.

R: That's good. Me I'm one of six, four girls and two boys. My mother's side has three, my father's side has ten.

I: Big family!

R: When are you going back?

I: December.

R: Why don't you finish the year here?

I: The school year is broken up differently, so I'm spending half of my school year here, spend the holidays with my family, and then go back to my university. But I want to stay!

R: It's very soon. Hey you should stay, it's not enough! Eish, but what can you do, you need to go and finish your studies.

I: And maybe afterwards I can come back.

R: Yes you can come and visit us. Thank you so much.

I: Thank you, I really appreciate you opening up to me.

## Appendix G

Interview 6.

Location: Children Care Centre – Crèche; School Office

Time: 1:00-1:51pm 11/11/14

Transcribed: 10:10pm 16/11/14

*Explain informed consent form, receive consent, begin.*

Interviewer: To start off, where were you born?

Respondent: I was born in Burundi.

I: And what was your community, or neighborhood, like while growing up? Was a city, a suburb...?

R: A city.

I: A city. Were there any big events that happened while you were there or was everyday sort of the same?

R: Sorry?

I: Were there any big events that you remember happening when you were growing up or was everyday the same?

R: Let me call (*name omitted*) to help me.

*Goes to get teacher to help translate – this teacher had already been interviewed and was familiar with the situation at hand. (At some points she interjects with her answers as well.)*

I: Okay.

*Resume interview.*

I: Okay so I was just asking if there were any big events that happened when she was growing up or if everyday was the same.

*Translation.*

R: First of all I was born in a family of seven children, and had my mother and father. After that, my father passed away, and after that my sister passed away in the war in Burundi, there was a war. And I left with my mother and me, I'm the second born, I left with my mother and me, I was in Grade 11. I had to make a small business because it was only my father that was working, my mother was not working. And we struggled to get money for me to finish my

school. I start now myself to create some business and I finished my school, I finished Grade 12 and I start now to be a primary teacher in our country. And my sisters and brothers are starting now to make money to give my mother to make a business also so we can see how we can support my household. After father passed away and my sister passed away, the family of my father, they starting to fight with us, because, my father is from Congo and my mother is from Burundi. They wanted the house. So, you know, in the family of my father and the family of my mother they were fighting because the Congolese don't want to be married to a Burundian.

Translator: There was jealousy between the Congolese and the Burundian.

R: Yes. When my father passed away, they wanted to take that house.

T: They wanted to take advantage.

R: They wanted to take that house so that we suffer. But because I was clever, I was sharp I sold the house.

I: So that they wouldn't take it from you.

R: Yeah, and we take the money, and we run to Tanzania. When we arrive in Tanzania, we left my mother there and we came in South Africa. All the time that we were in South Africa I was thinking when we are gonna be fine in South Africa we are gonna take my mother to come and stay. After six months I'm here in South Africa they told me my mother passed away. Because I came with all my family, I stayed like a mother, I looked how to survive.

T: She became a mother to all of her siblings.

R: I get a job, someone who was a refugee was selling clothes on the road, and she took me to help her. It was paying 500, only 500, and the house there we were paying 900; I get 500 and I paid 500. But the RSS, before it was MCC, I went and explained to them what is going on and they helped me to pay the house for three months. And I found a car guard and then I said now I can take the children to the school.

T: Her small sisters.

I: Oh it was your siblings.

R: Yeah. They took them, my sisters, to the school and said you can't pay anything, and provided the school fees, transport, stationary, everything they do for them. My brother, they say no, because you can't manage to look after them yourself. After that you know, before I'm starting to do car guards, I met one of the members of this organization, it was (*name omitted*) who was doing car guards somewhere. And she said where are you from and I say I'm from Burundi; why are you so quiet she said, I said it's how I am. And then she says we create organization, you can be a part of the members of that organization. I asked, there is money? She said no, just be a volunteer – what were you doing at home? I said I was a teacher. I was starting now to explain to her everything. She said come, we can use the organization to look

after the children and maybe you can be part of it, soon – but we don't promise you – you can get a job with money for doing it. And I say yes I am coming because I love to be with the children. From when I was at home I was working with the children, it's my job I can do it, I'm not happy to do the car guard. And she said yes come. I came and I started to work with the organization. In a small room that side alone I was cooking for them, and I looked after them, I was everything. Cleaner, teacher, cook, security... Everything alone! The one who was coming sometimes was (*name omitted*) to help; she said how are you I said fine, I was not even speaking English. I was speaking to the parents like this with my hands. Most of them were speaking French.

T: But you knew some.

R: Small small.

I: Then how did you learn English?

R: I learned from this centre, from the staff, parents, children... Sometimes the children were talking only English and I'd learn from them. And it's how I am. My young sister they don't want to finish the school they just wanted to be married. After that I was married also, I have two children. The wedding was made by the organization, this organization.

I: Really? That's amazing.

R: Yes! It was 2008. It was very hard in this country.

T: Imagine a young mother looking after her sisters, parents are not there... Others are stubborn you tell them do this and they do not respect, they don't listen.

R: They did not listen, hey!

T: The small girl, four years, can you imagine?

R: My youngest sister was four years.

I: How old were you?

R: I was... it's been 14 years in South Africa, I was 23 when I came.

I: Yes you were too young to take care of everybody! Do you wish you knew English when you first got here?

R: Yes I wish. And the lawyer of the...

T: MCC?



R: Yes, human rights, was wishing to take me to the school, but they discussed how I would go to school with the young sister... The one who is the mother and father for those children have to look for a job. They were trying to see how to send me to learn English, it was impossible because I was the one who was supposed to do everything for the children, so it was very difficult. This organization already took me so they helped provide for me. And I learned English from the children and the staff.

I: So do you think it's good that the school teaches this kids English from the beginning?

R: Yeah, it's good to speak English here. Normally they are speaking Swahili... They are mainly refugees and are speaking languages from home. From Congo, from Burundi, from Rwanda... A lot of them are speaking Swahili, others are speaking Kirundi, and the parents also. Other South Africans are speaking Zulu, even now I don't understand Zulu, so I even now I have to talk with my hands.

I: How did you hear about the crèche and start working here?

R: They just told me about the organization.

T: It was like a house.

R: The organization, Union for Refugee Women, and they ask me to be a part of it because they said you know about the children and we want to create a crèche so you can look after the children.

I: So heard of it by being part of the Union. Do you think you use any skills from your past to help you teach the kids?

*Translation.*

R: It's different. Because I was in the primary school, the skills for the crèche and the primary school are different. Even primary school here and primary school there are different because it's a French school.

T: Which class were you teaching?

R: Grade 2, 4, 5.

T: Me I was teaching Grade 3, 4, 5. But when I travelled to Kenya I was in a crèche and Grade 1 and 2. When I travelled here I had the experience, a little bit, of the crèche. But for her it was different.

R: Yeah it was different, it was a program for French countries and this program is English countries. I can see it's different.

T: Yeah even the primary.

R: Even the Grade R that side is different.

T: What they are doing here, when I look at the books of my children, even the maths, and I want to help them, it's different here, the education. That's why when I applied, sorry to interrupt, I come, before I come here to this crèche me and my husband were walking, I took the CV to the head house and they said I have to compare it to Uganda, so I sent my CV to Pretoria. I never heard back. Then I came and got this one here.

R: I was here, alone. I saw her and said come, you must come and help me. I told the members to receive her.

I: I can't believe you were alone.

R: I was separating the kids, one on this side and one on that side.

I: How do you promote integration at the crèche with these children from all different countries?

T: It's tough to translate in Swahili, can you come again? Integration is the mixing of ideas?

I: Mixing of ideas, mixing of culture...

*Translation.*

R: Promote them?

I: To help them be together...

R: One language, you have to teach one language, that way they say... Other crèche they teach you Zulu but here they say only English, even if you come in here and you talk French you have to come here and talk English.

I: So that everyone can be friends.

R: Yeah.

I: What do you think are the best things that the crèche gives to these kids?

*Translation.*

R: Education, and, yeah... Love, care...

T: From morning up until five they are in our hands. Food! Other people don't give food. These children eat here and go sleep at home.

I: So giving two meals a day is very special to this crèche.

R: Yeah the other crèches are not giving food.

T: And it's cheap also.

R: We help the refugees because it's very hard, they got a hard job, and they get nothing. You can see, they're doing car guards, they come late, they go early in the morning and come late and get nothing.

T: They have no time to sit with their children.

R: They can't get money to prepare food. And even if they can get the food, that food they prepare in the night. When you put it in the lunch box it's gonna stay long in the bag. Come to eat it at lunchtime, it tastes spoiled. So that's why we provide two, and they help the parents to pay less, to pay small money, and to give them food. That helps the parents. (*Story about a specific parent omitted for privacy.*) This school is helping.

I: What do you hope that the kids here achieve when they're older? What goals do you have for them?

*Translation.*

I: Like what kind of people they become.

T: It also depends on the parents, hey?

R: Registering the child is hard for the poor parents, they are getting nothing, and they take the children to the government. It's very hard for them, the children, to come from school at twelve o'clock and stay alone in the house. The parents have to get aftercare and that money they can't get to pay.

I: So the best thing you think you can give to these kids is a place to be...?

R: After moving here, the best thing...

T: Encourage their parents to make them to study. Like for your baby, what do you want for her future?

R: To become someone; encourage the parents in the house situation they can help the child go to school, provide for them, force the children to go to school and to learn. Education at school, education at home.

I: The education at home is important, some people forget about that. What are your goals for the future, for yourself or for your kids?

*Translation.*

T: Can you explain the word goal?

I: Something you hope to do, or...

T: Can you give us an example with yourself?

I: Yes, my goal is to complete my education and then get a job as a primary school teacher. So once I do that I can take it off of my goals list. Later on I will have goals for my own children to get a good education, things like that.

R: My goal is... G-d must make me strong, my children must carry on and finish their school and be someone and must look after me also!

T: And have a bright future.

R: It's small money we get here, G-d must make me strong because it's very hard to raise up the children.

T: It's very hard. I wonder how people with five children can raise their children, it's hard for me with two children. Sometimes my child says mommy can I have one rand to buy chips on the way to school and you say no the money is fixed it's for the transport, and then they cry. And I keep on telling them without me going to school I wouldn't be what I am now. I'm coming to work because of you guys, so you have to study very hard.

R: G-d must help them to be strong for when we get old.

T: I ask my boys to take care of me and think of their family, I pray for them. I am tired. I say please study, make sure you buy for me the house, tomorrow you will be feeding me I will be old. They say mommy don't worry.

R: G-d must make me strong because I have two children, I don't want to get another one, hey. It's very hard, it's very expensive for rent, school fees... Stationary for primary school, Pampers, and the school fees, I'm thinking about the school fees for my younger one...

T: G-d should answer your prayers and make you strong.

R: When I am thinking about this, G-d is making me strong. I am everything...

T: Women are everything.

*Personal story about respondent's child (and parental commitment and sacrifice) omitted for privacy of child and parent.*

R: So I pray G-d must make me strong, and I'm praying that my child goes to school. I'm trying to get in touch with people to help support me with school fees.

I: Thank you for sharing all of that. If you have any questions for me you can ask me – I asked you so many questions so feel free to ask me anything.

R: Are you coming back?

I: I'm looking for a way to come back!

R: We pray for you to come back, and if you get any information or ways to help please let us know. Please tell people about the crèche and about our stories. I want my child to go to school. Here I am getting 3000, then the house is 1600, the one who is going to school is 300 per month, electricity, food, the money is finished... And I have another child that has to go to school. Maybe G-d will open doors for the school fees.

I: Of course, if I find any information I will send it over to you.

R: Thank you so much. Maybe it was G-d that was sending you here. It's G-d that was sending you... I was sitting there and explaining to you my situation and after that you say you know how to get information on that situation, and after two days you give me that information... It's G-d sending you to me. Not to everybody, to me!

I: I'm very happy I was able to help, and thank you for talking to me about your story, it really means a lot.

R: Yes it was very hard – to finish my school, it was... because we were just thinking to my father, and when he passed away, everything was fucked up. My mother was just sitting, and after that life was changing. I had to finish my school, my young sisters had to go to school, I had to do something and I asked what can I do. You know the jersey for the children? It's what I was learning to sew, I sold it in the market, I got the money and finished school. After that... G-d is great, I'm telling you, that's why I'm not worried about my child's situation. After this I get a job without writing a letter or writing a CV. One of the principals was coming and asked me to look for a teacher, the teacher left. I say I'm here. He said you finished the school? I said yeah I finished the school. He said come fast, come fast. The same day I went and started teaching at the school. When I started to teach, the family of my father started to come to fight with us. I said I must leave my father's house to go after this, I was asking my younger brother what do you think, he said leave them to take the house. I said leave them, why? I'm selling the house, I'm telling you I'm selling the house. My mother was crying. I found the papers, I found the customs and I run away. My mother was in Tanzania, I left Burundi and went to Tanzania. I stayed in Tanzania two months; people told me that in South Africa people get the jobs so we came with the family and come to South Africa. We had to find a job, had to pay the rent, but G-d was helping us get the job, the house...

I: Is your husband South African?

R: No he's from Congo but I met him here. This is the problem again! I'm from Burundi, he's from Congo, so you see now the problem.

I: It runs in the family!

R: But G-d is with me. Well thank you so much.

I: Thank you so very much.

R: We are lucky to have you here, thank you. When are you done with school?

I: I finish university in May 2016.

R: But G-d will help you, after that you will get a nice job...

I: As a teacher!

R: You want to be a teacher? Then you're going to be a teacher.

I: Yes! I want to be a primary school teacher.

R: Hey, you're going to be a teacher. G-d will bless you, don't worry. Thank you.

I: Thank you.