Proceedings of the *UNHCR/OUR* 3C Forum, held at Bricksfield Asia College, Kuala Lumpur, 5-6 August 2016.

1.   Introduction

1.1   Foreword

The joint UNHCR/Open Universities for Refugees Initiative (OUR) *3C* (Collaborate, Create, Change) *Forum* was held on 5-6 August 2016, in Bricksfield Asia College (BAC), Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. Its stated aim was to bring together those concerned with secondary and tertiary level education and refugee related issues in the region to explore how access to higher education opportunities for refugees in Kuala Lumpur might be improved. Its focus was on forming active consortia and projects that, together, could work towards practical goals to this end.

These proceedings are a record of the *3C Forum* and comprise:

- A summary and links to the briefing materials;
- A list of all those who participated;
- An outline of the *3C Forum* methodology, characteristics and timetable;
- A list of items identified for discussion;
- Summaries of the workshop session discussions;
- The action plans of two potential projects implementation.

These proceedings are not intended as a verbatim account of everything that happened during the course of our two days together. Our discussions were too many, too varied and too wide to be captured comprehensively. Instead, they are intended to illustrate the nature of the *3C Forum*, the mechanisms through which the themes and issues were identified, the extent to which they were explored and the practical actions that were agreed. By no means did all our deliberations lead to practical results. However, in all instances, knowledge was shared, relationships built and the seeds of potential future collaborations sown. As such they represent not one end, but rather, several beginnings.

1.2   Acknowledgements

The *3C Forum* was facilitated primarily by representatives from OUR, Drs Gul Inanc and Neil Sparnon, but was also dependent on the support and skills of many of those present - in particular, Dr Brian Lariche and the staff and students of BAC who provided the venue and conference support, colleagues at UNHCR who offered their networks and detailed knowledge and organisations such as Fugee School, which supported the initial assessment visit and administered the survey. Its success was also dependent on the willingness and ability of those who facilitated sessions and, of course, the individual and collective skills and expertise of all those who attended.

2.   Briefing Materials

Several items of briefing material were made available to participants prior (and subsequent) to the *3C Forum*. Specifically:

- An OUR Site Report. Between 9-13 May 2016, OUR representatives visited Kuala Lumpur to meet the key actors in the field of higher education provision to refugees. The focus was on the level and nature of current provision, the views of key stakeholders such as UNHCR, local universities, current and potential refugee students as well as current providers of secondary education. The visit sought to understand the

principal issues and the potential to develop new initiatives and projects to address them. The report of its principal findings can be found here.

- Potential Refugee Student Survey. Between May and July 2016, with the assistance of colleagues in Fugee School, an on-line survey of potential refugee students was conducted. The survey comprised 27 questions exploring the nature of current demand for tertiary education amongst refugees in Kuala Lumpur and issues around tertiary level access, secondary education provision, certification, travel, work and other commitments. In total, 123 students responded. The results of the survey can be viewed here.

- Details of the UNHCR Refugee Education and Development Programme.

3. Participants

Name	Email	Organization
Amanda Cheong	archeong@princeton.edu	Princeton University
Analysis Watley	analysiawatley@gmail.com	N/A
Andrew Ng	andrewng.teongsiew@gmail.com	MMK / Elshaddai Centre Bhd
Ann Lee Chii Yuann	ann.lee@ytl.com.my	54C YTL Learning Space
Asmae Sekkat	asmae@innovative.edu.my	Innovative International College
Bilai Aftat Usma	bilal@dignityfoundation.org	Dignity for Children Foundation
Brian Lariche	lariche@gmail.com	Make It Right Movement
Cherry Beadsworth	cbeadsworth@hotmail.com	MRB Educational Consultants
Chika Kumashiro-Wilms	cwilms@iskl.edu.my	International School of Kuala Lumpur
Chong Yin Wei	chongy@unhcr.org	UNHCR
Deborah Henry	deborahenry@gmail.com	Fugee School
Deborah Tapscott	debra.tapscott@ideasacademy.org.my	IDEAS Academy
Evan Jones	evan@aprrn.info	Asia Pacific Refugee Rights Network (APRRN)
Eve Morse		
Fong Mun Toh	muntohfong@gmail.com	Elshaddai Centre Berhad
Gül İnanç	gul.inanc@initiativeour.org	Open Universities for Refugees Initiative
James Wong	jamesconsult@gmail.com	Myanmar Refugee Community Learning Center /Vocational Schools
Jessica Chapman	jessica.fugee@gmail.com	Fugee School
Jody Majanil	mahanil@unhcr.org	UNHCR
Kate Millest		Frog Asia
Kathryn Anne Rivai	kathryn_rivai@yahoo.com	Etania Schools, Sabah

Kimberly Copeland	kimberly.rose.copeland@msri.org.my	Malaysian Social Research Institute
Latiffah Pawehteh	latiffahpawanteh@iumw.edu.my	International University Malaysia Wales
Louise Perrodin	louise.perrodin@sciencespo.fr	Sciences Po
Lucy Bailey	lucybaileyamkp@gmail.com	University of Nottingham Malaysia Campus
Metilda	metilda@ideasacademy.org.my	IDEAS Academy
Mohammed Farouque Bin Lal Mohammed	mohdfaruk45@gmail.com	UNHCR
Muhammad Anas	anas@innovative.edu.my	Innovative International College
Natalie Tan	natalie@dignityforchildren.org	Dignity for Children Foundation
Neil Sparnon	neil.sparnon@initiativeour.org	Open Universities for Refugees Initiative
Ng Oi Leng	drngol@hotmail.com	Elshaddai Centre Berhad
Nur Aziz	naziz@ashoka.org	Ashoka
Nurziehan Baharuddin	milleyez@gmail.com	Universiti Teknologi MARA
Oleksii Zemlioniy	Alex.V.Earth@outlook.com	Elshaddai Centre Berhad
Pauline Crawford		
Phuspa	phuspa@ideasacademy.org.my	IDEAS Academy
Pilar Palma	pilar@berjaya.edu.my	BERJAYA University College of Hospitality
Prof. Moses Samuel	alieza@um.edu.my	University Malaya
Raeesah Khan	raeesah.khan@initiative.our	Open Universities for Refugees Initiative
Richard Gascoigne	gascoigne.richardn@gmail.com	Myanmar Refugee Community Learning Center
Robin Bush	robinlbush@gmail.com	RTI International
Robin Duncan	rcduncan@samford.edu	Elshaddai Centre Berhad
Shahawati binti Umar	shahawati@innovative.edu.my	Innovative International College
Steve Griffiths	steve.griffiths@iumw.edu.my	International University Malaysia Wales
Suhaimi Juhan	suhaimijuhan@gmail.com	Film & Animation
Terene Too	tyytoo@unicef.org	UNICEF
Tony Beadswirth	a_beadsworth@hotmail.com	Volunteer
Yuliia Dmytzyk	Julia.earth@outlook.com	Elshaddai Centre Berhad

4. *3C Forum:* **Methodology, Characteristics and Timetable**

4.1 Methodology

The *3C Forum* used open space technology methodology, the principal characteristics of which were that the agenda and themes were not defined in advance but rather emerged from participants during the course of the forum. As such, they were dependent on participants' own priorities and aspirations.

These themes were discussed in open-ended discussion sessions to which any and all participants were invited to attend and speak. The aims of such sessions could vary. For example, they might simply be an exchange of information, a discussion, the development of a potential collaboration, and/or the formulation of specific actions towards a specified end.

4.2 Characteristics

The overriding characteristics of the *3C Forum*, as set out to participants in the opening plenary session, were:

- Anyone looking to solve a problem will have the opportunity to tackle it with others who are interested in finding solutions.

- Attendees learn, share, and exchange ideas dynamically. Complex problems can be explored, relationships built, and new collaborations formed.

- 'there is no agenda until ... the attendees make one up.'

- What do you want to do? What do you bring? How can you help?

- Format creates space for peer-to-peer learning, collaboration and creativity.

- At the start, the whole group will gather together to create an agenda using open space technology.

- The process will become clear as it happens BUT the important part is everyone has the opportunity to put conference sessions on the agenda.

- No session will be voted off or 'won't happen' for some other reason. All sessions are welcome.

4.3 Timetable

With these imperatives in mind, the *3C Forum* followed the following timetable:

Friday 5 August 2016

- 9.30-10.00 - Registration;

- 10.00-11.00 - Welcome and introductions;

- 11.00- 11.30 - Setting the Agenda;

- 11.30- 16.00 - Open space sessions;

- 16.00-17.00 - Reflection.

Saturday 6 August 2016

- 9.30-10.00 - Registration;

- 10.00- 11.00 - Sharing the proceedings;

- 11.00- 14.00 - Action Plans;

- 14.00-15-30 - Reflection/ Closing remarks

5.   Issues for Discussion as Identified by Participants

The initial plenary session invited all participants to write and post on a board the issues they wished to discuss. These posts were reviewed by the *3C Forum* facilitators and grouped into various themes. These themes formed the basis of workshop sessions that followed. The issues and the themes identified (copied directly from the posts) were:

5.1   On-line Education

- On-line (distance) education opportunities;
- From e-learning to open university.

5.2   The Legal Status of Refugee Students

- Recognition of education (issue of certification of education);
- Improving access to education for stateless children;
- Documentary hurdles to registering for schools (ie. what if students lack birth certificates, transcripts, UNHCR cards?);
- Examples of how Malaysian universities overcome the issues of students not having visas;
- Legalization of refugees to seek higher education in Malaysia;
- Issue of bridging courses-those with lost documents;
- How do refugees prove their previous education and qualifications?;
- University access for students without UNHCR cards (UNHCR card application backlog);
- Getting a legal document allowing stateless children to have the right to move freely with no fear of arrest;
- Myanmar's Rohingya refugees in Malaysia: education and the way forward;
- What are the criteria for entry and how to assess students?;
- The skill sets the refugees need;
- Best practices on education processes;
- Work/education balance?;
- Women and encouraging them to get access to tertiary education;
- Recognition of learning centres as schools in order to offer external examinations;
- Establish partnerships with home countries of stateless children so the home country supports their own children too.

5.3   Bridge Course and Connectivity between Secondary Education and Universities

- Discuss and undertake bridging courses for potential university graduates;
- On-line bridging courses;
- How can we bridge their existing competencies with their target programme?;
- Is there a common syllabus for refugee schools?;

- A coordination centre/ go to place for students preparing for tertiary education eg: interview skills, building cv's and personal development;
- Provide vocational training for junior high school levels so stateless children have opportunities to acquire skills (outside of formal curriculum);
- High school competencies as a pathway to university.
- Certified learning;
- Core skills (ie language, IT Admin);
- Improving the quality of schools (informal and formal curriculum) for stateless children;
- Work as part of study programme;
- What goals do the refugee participants have for higher education?

5.4 Funding

- What opportunity for future education local communities, individuals, organizations, corporate- getting them involved in refugee causes and taking ownership for looking after their various needs?;
- Potential benefits to the institution and to refugees;
- How do you bring more people into this work;
- Improving skills in English scholarships for refugees that are available
- Availability of funding and family support (donations, sponsorships, etc);
- Scholarships;
- Financial support/maintenance scholarships for students in Higher Education;
- Individual contribution of expertise- provide skills and knowledge facilities.

5.5 Language Barriers and Vocational Education

- Language and the barriers to tertiary education it creates;
- How animation can help them to survive;
- Offering short courses for animation/creative industries;
- Early childhood education;
- Training student interest and creating network for communication about availability of opportunities;
- How to deal with the challenge of providing tertiary level courses to refugees in English, in a country where no tertiary education is provided in English (ie Indonesia);
- Skill enhancement through short courses;
- Mechanism of offering the short courses;
- IT skills training, eg: coding, graphic design, programming;
- Skill based tertiary education;

6. Workshop Sessions

6.1 On-line Education

Facilitated by Dr. Ng Oi Leng

Existing Position

On-line education is used increasingly to offer higher education to refugees, for example *Borderless Higher Education for Refugees*, *JC:HEM*, *The University of the People* etc.

Several platforms (Virtual Learning Environments (VLE)) exist to host academic content and curricula that can be downloaded by teachers, and with which students can interact - e.g *Frog Asia*, *Moodle*, *Blackboard* etc.

Increasingly, refugees have access to mobile phones, laptops and internet connectivity. The survey suggested that these are often available at home or in schools or workplaces.

There is potential to offer refugees existing higher education courses on-line either through Malaysian or international universities.

Those refugee students accepted to date often find it difficult to transition from secondary to tertiary education and need additional support. A bridging course, possibly delivered on-line, has the potential to alleviate this.

Issues

Drop-out rates amongst secondary school students are high as refugees are unable to meet both their study and work commitments. This significantly reduces the pool of potential university students and means that they are also more likely to drop-out than non-refugee students.

The survey suggested that many students are required to work long, unsociable hours, often involving considerable travel time.

Any new courses developed require accreditation by a Malaysian University No Malaysian university currently offers on-line courses to refugees and, as far as we are aware, has plans to do so.

Should on-line courses be offered to refugee students, there are significant unknowns around:

- funding;
- fees;
- curriculum design;
- accreditation;
- pedagogy and the provision of teachers.

Possible Solutions and Potential Actions

Review existing on-line provision for potential admission to their courses.

Consider the development of an on-line bridging course.

Consider the development of on-line courses for refugees in partnership with a Malaysian or international university.

6.2   The Legal Status of Refugee Students

Facilitated by Chong Yin Wei

Existing Position

Malaysia is not a signatory to the 1951 UN Refugee Convention. As such, refugees and migrants in Malaysia do not have legal status and are not entitled to attend public schools or universities. Obviously this creates a number of practical issues.

Issues

Refugees have only very limited access to student visas to enable them to study as international students.

Students cannot transfer automatically between institutions, but rather must apply for a new visa.

The community-based and UNHCR supported schools that provide secondary education to refugees in Kuala Lumpur are not recognised or supported by the Malaysian state. As such, while some choose to follow the Malaysian state curriculum (accredited by the MQA), very few refugee qualifications are formally recognised by the majority of Malaysian institutions and/or employers.

Private and/or international institutions that have tried to provide greater access to refugees have been unable to provide full certification for courses successfully completed. Others have expressed concern about, and been deterred by, the potential to infringe state law and policies.

Possible Solutions and Potential Actions

Despite these limitations, several universities in Kuala Lumpur were offering funded places to refugee students. Details can be found here.

Several institutions were exploring the potential of accrediting programmes undertaken by refugees through their international partners. This would allow students to receive both the academic credit and the accredited award.

The group recognised that ultimately, progress on these issues is dependent on the understanding and support of the Malaysian state. As such its focus would be on advocacy to stress the social and economic benefits of educating refugees. Its priorities would be:

- the legal status of refugees;
- the accreditation of refugee schools and their curricula;
- the access of refugees to student visas and work permits;
- the reduction of legal obstacles for those institutions wishing to offer greater access to refugees.

6.3 Bridging Course and Connectivity between Secondary Education and Universities

Facilitated by Jessica Chapman and Lucy Bailey

Existing Position

Since 2014, UNHCR has signed Memoranda of Understanding with several universities based in Kuala Lumpur. These enable a limited number of university places to be offered to refugees, often with scholarships or fee waivers. These places are notified through the office of the UNHCR but are otherwise not advertised.

There are short courses available for refugees. If they complete sufficient numbers of short courses it amounts to an equal number of credits as a full course. Course credit can be transferred.

Not all refugee students are ready to undertake tertiary level education and a bridging course would be welcomed. An arrangement through which potential students were mentored prior to their application and admission to university was also a possibility.

Issues

While on-line courses to assist skills development exist, not all are appropriate for refugee students in terms of content and context.

There is a need help to refugees improve their hard and soft skills such as social networking and financial management in order to be more effective students.

The development of on-line courses would require the provision of relevant academic and IT skills. Refugees students would also need training and support in their use

The scheme to offer university places appears to be little known amongst secondary education providers. There is a need to disseminate details more effectively.

Universities currently have no formal or consistent way to vet application from refugees. Usually an initial enquiry leads to the submission of a written application and interview - but practice varies across the sector.

Possible Solutions and Potential Actions
Idea 1 (Bridge Course)

Develop an on-line bridge course to enable potential students to develop appropriate academic and study skills. The course should be relatively short.

Encourage input from universities to identify common university admission criteria and therefore guide the content of the bridge course.

Work with existing providers of on-line platforms (VLE) such as Frog Asia to host the course.

Encourage collaboration amongst the providers of secondary education to identify potential applicants for university places. These applicants could take the bridging course as a cohort.

Idea 2(Mentoring Programme)

Complement the on-line courses with on-line mentors who would support students through the bridging course.

Encourage collaboration amongst secondary providers to share resources ie mentors, information, emailing system, etc.

6.4   Funding
Facilitated by: Gul Inanc

Existing Position
The legal status of refugees and migrants in Malaysia (see above) is a barrier to funding projects and initiatives that support them directly and explicitly. Support for refugees projects in Malaysia is also muted. Not only is support for projects that prioritise Malaysians preferred, but the general understanding of issues faced by refugees and migrants is relatively limited. There is also a need to tackle the stigma that refugees are criminals and a source of problems in Malaysian society.

Possible Short term Solutions and Potential Actions
Potential activities:

- Create direct funding for scholarships (supporting individual education) via formation of new foundations/ charity bodies.

- Encourage in-kind donations- Access the 'computer graveyard' through which organisations regularly replace computers every two years despite their continuing to function.

- Organize a refugee film festival partnering with embassies/universities - for funding scholarships and creating awareness in the society

- Host a marathon; for funding scholarships and creating awareness in the society

- Support a mobile school in which a bus equipped with computers and Wi-Fi is driven around where the refugee communities are located for them to attend on-line classes or pre-recorded lectures few times in a week. This is to solve transport problem where the refugees do not have enough money for transport to go to a physical location to study.

- Arrange free transportation (inkind support) to the universities with private bus companies.

- Universities offering in-campus part time jobs for the refugee students to support their education/funding

Potential funders and partners

- Big/small businesses
- International NGO funds (project funding)
- Banks
- Embassies
- World Islamic Economic Forum (WIEF)
- Diaspora communities of the refugees who live in the other third countries
- Neighbouring countries NGOs
- Local Universities (offering scholarship funding if not access)
- DAFI

6.5 Language Barriers and Vocational Education

Facilitated by Raeesah Khan

Existing Position

English is often a prerequisite demanded of students who want to enrol in tertiary education. This poses a problem to refugees as most of them have limited English language skills. Learning English would not only help them access tertiary education, but would enable them to communicate better and help in interacting with locals.

Popular vocational skills

- Farming
- Jewellery making
- Sewing
- Crochet

Issues

Most courses to which refugees students are likely to have access in Kuala Lumpur are delivered in English and have admission standards – oral, writing and reading - that many would consider demanding. Indeed, many of those with English skill are deterred by interview requirements.

Many refugees are unwilling to commit long term to developing vocation skills or learning a language;

Some refugees are reluctant to enrol in vocational or language courses as this creates an official record which might be traced by authorities.

Possible Solutions and Potential Actions

The use of simple, easily understandable textbooks to assist those refugees who wish to learn English. These textbooks could be translated to the native languages of the refugees.

The inclusion of English skills into a potential bridge course between secondary and tertiary education.

7   Action Plans (6th August)

The final sessions of the *3C Forum* were devoted to the development of specific actions plans. After consideration the group decided to focus on the development of a specific project, an on-line bridging course that would enable potential refugee student to transition more easily between secondary and tertiary education providers in Kuala Lumpur and a mechanism to access funding sources for this, and potential future projects. The facilitators took the opportunity to stress two points in particular to participants, specifically:

- Participants should look to be pro-active and draw upon the expertise within the group and those most likely to join it. The Malaysian government and UNHCR would provide a framework, but specific developments and projects would be reliant on participants;

- Potential funders are most likely to support coherent, comprehensive and costed projects which address specific issues that it time can be sustainable and independent. A support for one-off donations towards general activities are more difficult to support.

The two groups drew up the following actions plans, identifying a series of actions that would pursued in the short term (within the next few weeks), medium (within the next six months) and long (more than six months, years) terms.

7.1   Bridge Course Creation and Connectivity between Secondary Education and Universities

Short	Medium	Long
Share information on current scholarships amongst providers of secondary education		
Share information on current scholarships amongst providers of HE places in KL		
Create a framework for project delivery. Local, group, external	Agree criteria and competencies for university admission	
	Establish mentor network	
	Establish mechanism for potential applicant application and possible cohort approach	
		Course development:

		• Content
		• Delivery mechanism
		• Management and support
		• Funding

Jessica Chapman of Fugee School and Lucy Bailey of The University of Nottingham Malaysia Campus agreed to convene the groups and lead the action plan.

7.2 Funding

Short	Medium	Long
Form a coalition among NGOs, currently functioning as learning centres for refugees which will act as the advocacy group (to bring the issues regarding refugee education to the attention of government and other official circles) in the future (first meeting 15-30 September) - Create standard template for the newly formed initiatives and ngos -set up plans for supporting the funding of the bridging course and scholarships for refugee students		
	Co-hosting an intercultural bazaar/event bringing refugees and Malaysian youth together	
Participate in higher education fairs – create awareness within the higher education institutions		
		Working closely with by creating projects (in-kind/ fund raising events) • Individual donors • Big/small companies • Islamic capital • Embassies • Diaspora

Brian Lariche of Bricksfield Asia College agreed to convene the group and lead the action plan.