

PRIORITIZING REFUGEES' VOICES: RECONCEPTUALIZING REFUGEE ETHICS PROTOCOLS IN REFUGEE RESEARCH

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Background: It seems appropriate that standard research ethics protocols, designed for those facilitating research in refugee camps, be decolonized. Refugee researchers from the Global North generally abide by research ethics principles formulated and structured in the Global North, when conducting research with refugees in the Global South. As such, there inherently exist notions of colonial and hegemonic powers within the research relationship. **Objectives:** Minimal research examines the underpinnings of research ethics protocols such as “do no harm” and “respect” from the perspectives of refugee research participants. Without such information, are Global North researchers able to claim that they are participating in respectful research practices? This presentation prioritizes the voices and perspectives of “research ethics” with refugees in Kakuma refugee camp, Kenya. **Methods:** This qualitative research study includes 31 “refugee young people (RYP)” (i.e. 18-30 years old) who have previously participated in research. It focuses on (a) how RYP make sense of research participation and (b) RYP-inspired recommendations for future researchers working in refugee camps/displaced contexts. **Results:** RYP participants generally felt that the research relationship was not “respectful” and, therefore, offered a number of advices for researchers. The four most commonly cited RYP research ethics recommendations advise researchers working with forcibly displaced populations to: (1) provide feedback to participants, (2) exercise direct and transparent communication, (3) follow up with research recommendations and (4) reflect on research and researchers’ personal objectives in their work. **Discussion:** By prioritizing the perspectives of research participants, researchers may take an initial step towards decolonizing contemporary Eurocentric research agendas with forcibly displaced participants. Furthermore, data suggests that researchers initiate a collaborative process, with research participants, towards redressing research ethical principles with those most impacted by them, refugee participants.

Learning Objectives

At the conclusion of this presentation, participants will be able to:

1. Identify four research recommendations that RYP recognize as pertinent to assuage the power hierarchy in the researcher/participant dyad in Kakuma refugee camp.
2. Evaluate the ways in which researchers, working in refugee camps or similar contexts, may implement RYP-inspired recommendations into their personal research endeavors.

References

1. Block, K., Riggs, E., & Haslam, N. (Eds.). (2013). *Values and vulnerabilities: the ethics of research with refugees and asylum seekers*. Toowong: Australian Academic Press.
2. Krause, U. (2017). *Researching forced migration: critical reflections on research ethics during fieldwork*. Refugee Studies Centre, Oxford Department of International Development, University of Oxford.