

Socio-Economic Challenges Facing Ivorian Refugees in Ampain and Fetentaa Camps in Ghana

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Abstract

This research investigates the socio-economic status of Ivorian living in the Ghanaian refugee camps at Ampain, and Fetentaa. The analysis provides an outlook into aspects such as the food, housing and accommodation, health, education, and employment opportunities available for the Ivorian refugees in Ghana. Furthermore, the report also looks at the political and social activities and partnerships designed to support the refugees. Based on this analysis, the problems with which the Ivorian refugees in Ghana deal are delineated. The identification of their problems allows a clear and rational recommendation of solutions to address them. The report finds that the socio-economic issues of the Ivorian refugees in the Ghanaian refugee camps at Ampain, and Fetentaa are very complex, and the existent programs created to address their nutrition, health, housing, education or employment are currently unsustainable. To effectively solve them and provide better life prospects for the refugees, the programs designed for various social and economic aspects should be approached interdependently.

Keywords

Refugees, Ghana, Ivorian, Refugee Camps, Ampain, Fetentaa, Socio-Economic, Food, Housing and Accommodation, Health, Education, Employment, Programs

1. Introduction

1.1. Background of the Study

Life in Africa is fraught with a plethora of socio-economic problems. The entire continent—with very few exceptions—is beset with economic difficulty and other

related problems. Although Ghana needs to grapple with soaring inflation, sagging currency and a rapidly ballooning public deficit, it is nonetheless considered to be one of the more stable nations in sub-Saharan Africa. On the other hand, however, Ghana is tucked between the less stable nations such as Ivory Coast, Burkina Faso and Togo. People from these three economically precarious states commonly flock to Ghana in the hope of better life. Many see life in refugee camps as salvation. While that may be the truth for some, life in refugee camps is not necessarily easy, as these fields also face significant socio-economic challenges. The proposed research paper will seek to ascertain the exact socio-economic challenges facing the Ampain, Egyeikrom and Fetentaa refugee camps in Ghana—both sheltering fugitives of the post-election armed conflict in Ivory Coast.

The first country in sub-Saharan Africa to fulfill its claims to independence in 1957, Ghana promptly plunged into tyranny and autocracy. For the rest of the 20th century, it was ruled by a succession of corrupt civilian government and military juntas (Asanoah, 2014). During this time, Ghana's economy was in the doldrums. However, towards the end of the 20th century, the situation began to change dramatically, as the new constitution embodied in democratic rule restored the plurality of political powers and set the country on the path of economic development. Since that time and until the early 2010s, the state had taken comfort from its vast gold deposits, cocoa plantations, and oilfields—primarily, the backbone of economic growth in Ghana (Asanoah, 2014). Political freedoms have developed in parallel to economic growth. But still, the greatest achievement of Ghana, from the standpoint of foreign observers, is that power in the country is handed over peacefully from the president to a president—a remarkable accomplishment in a region scourged by coups and despots. It is because Ghana has acquitted itself rather well economically that it is often cited as a model for the development of other regional states. Currently, Ghana is facing economic troubles, but it is still far ahead of many other regional nations.

Ghana's neighboring states, on the other hand, have fared worse recently. Ivory Coast, for instance, fell into the hands of a dictator following its independence in 1960. However, unlike Ghana, Ivory Coast failed to install a democratic regime in the 1990s, although not for want of trying. A democratic president was toppled in a military coup in 1999, precipitating chaos and mayhem in the country (Tucker, 2017). Between 2002 and 2007, Ivory Coast, the French-speaking nation went through the painful throes of a civil war—the war that split the country into a government-controlled Christian south and a Muslim north held by insurgents. Before long, in 2011, another civil war erupted in Ivory Coast, this time along political lines, pitting supporters of Laurent Gbagbo against those of Alasane Ouattara (Tucker, 2017). It is, therefore, unsurprising that in these circumstances the country's economy foundered, and its democratic freedoms were trampled. In fact, Ivory Coast has not still recovered from these devastating experiences of its recent past.

BBC journalists estimate that the violence that engulfed Ivory Coast in 2011 and lingered into 2012 had left some 3000 people dead and over 500,000 displaced (*BBC, 2011*). The UN was quick to ascribe blame for the wholesale slaughter of the Ivory Coast citizens to both contestants in the presidential election. Regardless of who was to blame for systemic massacres of the population, many survivors bestirred themselves to flee for the safety of the neighboring states. Initially, refugees from Ivory Coast fled to Liberia in the west, where the UN deployed emergency aids programs and opened a camp at a safe distance from the jittery borders with Ivory Coast. Before long, however, Ivorian refugees began to look for asylum in other countries, including Ghana, Guinea and Togo. Of the 500,000 displaced Ivorian nationals, the UN estimates, some 300,000 settled in Liberia, Ghana, Guinea and Togo (*UNdata, 2015*). And of these 300,000 Ivorian refugees, more than 11,000 found shelter in the two major camps in Ghana—the Ampain and the Fetentaa camps.

To alleviate the plight of the Ivorian refugees, a host of organizations have united their efforts with the government of Ghana. Notable among these organizations were UN agencies: UNICEF, UNHCR, UNDP, UNFPA, UNIDO, UNAIDS, FAO, the World Food Program and other organizations have collaborated to prevent the makeshift Ampain and Fetentaa camps from degenerating into two cesspools of despair. Initially, there were three pillars to the efforts of this joint task group: food distribution, education and employment of the refugees. The organizations both fought illiteracy and taught refugees such important basics of self-reliance as dressmaking, tailoring, hairdressing, and small-scale entrepreneurship (*Mehler, Melber & Van Walraven, 2012*). Likewise, to prevent refugees from moldering away, these organizations have organised cultural events for them. As a result of excellent handling of the Ampain and Fetentaa camps, many Ivorian refugees settled in urban areas of Ghana eventually resettled in these two refugee camps.

Today, however, the situation is starkly different. Both camps still operate, and both are teeming with Ivorian refugees. Other than that, however, the conditions have changed. Now that the political situation in Ivory Coast has stabilized, the UN and, for that matter, other concerned organizations are more willing to support the transition in that country than to keep financing refugee camps in Ghana. However, despite the curtailed financing on the part of the UN and peace achieved in their home country, these Ivorian refugees still do not want to leave their camps. Because many are opponents of the incumbent president, they commonly express this opinion: “We would prefer to die of hunger rather than go back” (*GNA, 2016*). In fact, the threat of hunger is not illusory, as the UN and Ghana’s government have reduced their support of the refugee camps. But this is not the only threat looming ominously above the Ampain and Fetentaa refugee camps.

1.2. Problem Statement

Fearing oppression at home and used to reasonably good living conditions at the

Ampain and Fetentaa camps, Ivorian refugees balk at the idea of being repatriated to Ivory Coast. However, because the situation in Ivory Coast has passed the emergency state, the UN and other organizations that took care of the Ampain and Fetentaa camps now focus their attention on other more destabilized areas of the world. As a corollary of this, the financing of the two camps has dwindled and, commensurately, the socio-economic challenges facing them have amplified.

1.3. Research Objectives

The objectives of this research are:

- To understand the socio-economic challenges facing Ivorian refugees in these camps.
- To pursue the objective of finding potential solutions to these socio-economic challenges. In other words, it will try to determine how the plight of Ivorian refugees in the two concerned camps in Ghana can be alleviated.

The overarching research objective is, therefore, to delineate the socio-economic challenges facing Ivorian refugees in the Ampain and Fetentaa camps and suggest potential resolutions to the unfolding crisis.

1.4. Research Questions

Given the objectives of the study as outlined above, the research project seeks to answer the following issues:

- 1) What are the exact socio-economic challenges facing Ivorian refugees at the Ampain and Fetentaa camps in Ghana?
- 2) Why has the socio-economic situation at the two camps degenerated to the present level?
- 3) How can the situation in the two camps be improved?

1.5. Study Significance

The importance of this research cannot be overstated. First, the area chosen for this research project has received scant academic interest. In fact, there is not a single study that would provide a comprehensive analysis of the socio-economic challenges facing Ivorian refugees in the camps of Ghana. Those limited articles that do exist are too shallow. Second, by establishing the reasons underlying the socio-economic plight of people in the Ampain and Fetentaa refugee camps in Ghana, the study will likely suggest potential resolutions to this vexatious problem. In other words, the study will have both academic and practical significance. Also, this study and its contrasting elements may provide us beyond satisfying mere curiosity; with a broader perspective and a deeper insight into the problem of contemporary socio-economic challenges and the reasons for some of the successes and failures of refugees seeking political asylum. It could be viewed as assisting in the clarification and reconceptualization of the subject area of interest to the general body of knowledge—thus, assisting us to understand

the social foundations of refugee problems in Ghana.

1.6. Research Organization

This study is divided into five chapters. Chapter one, sets forth the introduction, covering the research problem, stating the purpose of the study and research questions that the project seeks to answer, highlighting the significance of the study etc.

Also, the chapter two consists of the literature review which deals with reviewing the work of others in the respective field by gathering books, journals, publications and among others. Chapter three (3) opens up to the methodology that is used in gathering data for the study, the sources of data (both primary and secondary), the data collection methods, the sample frame and size and population. Data analysis and evaluation is observed in chapter four as the study is analyzed based on the interviews conducted and the necessary tools to assess response to questions and finally, summary, conclusions, and recommendations for further study and for policy development by governments and other stakeholders are observed in chapter five.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Introduction

In the context of local conflicts within African countries, more people are fleeing to neighbouring countries to seek refugee status or asylum. This is also the case for Cote d'Ivoire. Thousands of Ivorians have migrated to other nations and became refugees, invoking the political tensions at home, or fear of living in their origin countries due to the civil war or various social or military outbursts. Most of them, around 11,000, have chosen Ghana as their country of destination, both because of the geographical proximity, but also due to the openness of Ghanaian government to recognize refugees and provide them with this status. These Refugees have found shelter in Ghana with many of them living in Ampain, Egyeikrom or Fetentaa refugee camps for years (UNHCR, 2016a). As the situation in their home countries continues to complicate, refugees keep on arriving in Ghana. In these conditions, the refugee camps require increased consideration for food, shelter, health, and decent living conditions. Most of the refugees in the Ghanaian refugee camps are from Cote d'Ivoire, and they insist on remaining there because they are circumspect about returning to their home country, claiming that they would receive an oppressive treatment if they would return (AFP, 2016).

The data about the approximate numbers of Ivorian refugees in Ghana differs, depending on the year of publication but also influenced by the fact that there are refugees who do not have this status in Ghana (Awuku, 2013). However, a more recent The Ampain refugee camp, localized in Ghana's Western region was established in 2011, hosts around 5080 refugees, mostly from Cote d'Ivoire, on a surface of 32 acres; in Egyeikrom, 2112 refugees from Cote d'Ivoire find

shelter in this refugee camp, localized in the country's central region, on an area of 50 acres; situated in the Brong Ahafo Region and hosting also refugees from Cote d'Ivoire, the Fetentaa refugee camp stretches on an area of 25 acres, having a population of 2001 refugees (UNHCR, 2016b).

2.2. Food

The economic situation of the refugees in Ghana camps is difficult, as they receive very low payment for their mostly informal work, which also implies that the food that they can afford is not enough to cover their needs (World Food Program, 2014). Around 7778 Ivorian refugees are reported to be living in the Ghanaian refugee camps, and for this total number of people, UN, and Ghana Government, along with other voluntary organizations or sponsors provide humanitarian assistance to cover the food and nutritional needs (WFP, 2014).

The refugees in the three leading Ghanaian refugees camp that host Ivoirians mainly receive maize as the primary ailment, but they have protested, asking that this nourishment to be replaced with rice, arguing that this is their staple food (WFP, 2013). Nevertheless, Ghana's domestic production is mainly based on white maize, which covers 90 percent of the food needs of the local population, whereas the production of rice only covers 40 percent of the domestic needs, while the rest of 60 percent of rice consumption is based on import (WFP, 2014).

However, since November 2015 the food distribution for the Ivorian refugees has stopped, and the donors that promised to aid the refugees mostly prefer to help re-establish the situation in Ivory Coast rather than supporting the refugees (AFP, 2016). As a result, the refugees in the Ampain camp complained that they are starving, requesting the assistance of the Ghana government to address the hunger situation (The Finder, 2016). Nevertheless, the host country's government, alongside United Nations have stopped providing food assistance to the Ivorian refugees because the situation in their countries of origin has been stabilized and they are invited to return home (The Finder, 2016).

However, as the elected President is Alassane Ouattara, the Ivorian refugees do not want to return home, fearing that they will be imprisoned (AFP, 2016). Furthermore, the efforts to helping vulnerable groups with food have moved to areas such as Syria, Burundi or North Africa, wherein the situation is much more dangerous, and since Ivoirians are now able to return home, their status is no longer considered an emergency and it is not treated as a priority (PeaceFM, 2015).

This situation, nevertheless, leaves around 11,000 Ivorian refugees in Ghana vulnerable to not enough food and hunger (PeaceFM, 2015). 80% of them are situated in the refugee camps from Ampain, Fetentaa and Egyeikrom, out of which 5000 reside in Ampain, 2000 in Fetentaa and the rest in Egyeikrom (Wabern, 2015). For most of the Ivorian refugees, the World Food Program that ended in 2015 was the sole source of alimentation, and once it has ended, vulnerable individuals, especially children are at risk of starvation. Furthermore, the Ivorian refugees also need to purchase their water. Before being distributed, the

water is treated and held in tanks for water storage, then dispatched in sachet water (Kadogbe, 2013).

The Ivorian refugees have demanded assistance from Ghana government or donors, in particular for these categories mostly exposed to the risk of starvation. The organization Cooperation and Research of the Nations ECOWAS Europe/Africa were created in February 2015, with the purpose of providing nutrition for children aged 4 - 13 in the refugee camps in Ampain, Egyeikrom and Fetentaa (Wabern, 2015).

2.3. Housing and Accommodation

At the end of 2015, around 65% of the Ivorian refugees in Ghana (from approximately 11,000) were living in plastic tents. The UNHCR Ghana Assistant Public Information Officer, Ms Patience Folley, indicated that about 1200 semi-permanent housing units would be needed to cover the housing requirements of the Ivorian refugees, although only 364 have been provided in 2013 (GNA, 2014).

The refugee camps wherein the Ivorians are hosted have a particular organization and structure, comprising a camp manager (in charge of arbitration, discipline, health, sanitation, education, etc.), an estate official, units officers and screened Ivorians (Awuku, 2013).

While the employment possibility of the Ivorian refugees is being addressed through special training programs, the reality of the Ghanaian labor market still presents limited income earning opportunities for these refugees, mostly in construction or farm lands (WFP, 2014). This fact implies that there are significant difficulties for these refugees to be able to provide for themselves.

Despite the efforts of WFP and other agencies to support the refugees through training and skills development, not all refugees benefit from them and also, these advantages have not translated into income opportunities. As such, only 10% of the Ivorian refugees are reported as self-employed or self-reliant, mostly those who have assimilated the skills of hairdressing, sewing, and 11% are employed in fields such as construction or teaching (Awuku, 2013).

The refugees in Ghana face the risk of remaining stateless, as their countries of origin organize protests against their reintegration, and the host country invokes the clause of the cessation of the refugee status (UNHCR, 2015; Omata, 2011). Despite this complicated situation, efforts are being organized to assure the refugees with sufficient resources to live decent lives in the refugee's camps in Ampain, Egyeikroom or Fetentaa. Still, most of them live in tents and abnormal housing conditions (Wabern, 2015).

2.4. Health

Some of the refugee camps wherein the Ivorians are hosted are equipped with a nursing house and a nurse, but the refugees must procure on their own most of the medicine prescribed by the nurse because the pharmacies at the refugee

camps are empty (Wabern, 2015). Furthermore, the Ampain refugee camp, which hosts most of the Ivorian refugees, does not have a sanitary centre, and the ones in need of medical assistance need to travel to other refugee camps or the Saint Martin De Porres Hospital if the situations are more serious (Wabern, 2015).

As such, social programs designed to assist the refugees with the health issues are being organized, such as the “Free Eye Care for Refugees” (UNHCR, 2015). This program is supported by the Catholic Diocese of Sunyani, and it partners with Eye surgeons and Opticians from St. Jandal Hospital in Holland (UNHCR, 2015). A similar program was conducted in Ghana in the past, through the volunteering work themed “Unite for Sight, which invoked the principle that sight is a fundamental human right for treating the refugees with visual impairments (Staple, 2007). In 2013, Japan offered funds for supporting the health issues of 1000 refugees from Egyekrom, Ampain and Fetentaa, by providing them with a National Health Insurance Scheme, giving priority to people suffering from chronic diseases or seropositive refugees (Wabern, 2015).

Also regarding health, the refugee women of childbearing age benefit of hygiene kits and soap, while the water supply and sanitation systems represent benefits for all the refugees (UNHCR, 2016a). In 2016, in the Ampain refugee camp, there was implemented a free kidney screening for over 800 Ivorian refugees, a program supported by the Firm Heath Ghana Foundation, as part of World Kidney Day Celebration (Ashitey, 2016).

Nevertheless, the health, sanitation and hygiene conditions in the refugee camps have been criticized as “inadequate transitional shelter” for the immigrants, for which international organizations, such as the Japanese government, which supported the refugee camps financially, yet were not pleased with how the budgets were, handled (GNA, 2014). Furthermore, these programs dedicated to supporting the refugees in Ghanaian camps or promoting health among them lack a sustainable character, as they are episodic and do not contribute to a regular health routine.

2.5. Political and Social Partnership

Moreover, these are programs designed and supported by private entities and not by the public, governmental bodies. Nevertheless, considering that Ghana is itself a country that requires economic assistance, providing better assistance for the immigrants is difficult, which is why it needs the support and assistance of international donors to provide better life conditions for immigrants in the Ghanaian refugee camps (UNHCR, 2015). Local Ghanaian people face the food shortage, as many of them can barely assure the regular three daily meals (Kadogbe, 2013).

On the other hand, the Ghanaian public organizations take the matter of the refugees from the three camps seriously, assuring a legal framework for guaranteeing the fundamental rights and avoiding the statelessness status. As such, the people at risk of reaching the statelessness status, the recognized refugees and

the ones seeking asylum, are considered the population of concern (POC), for which Ghana's government delineates a legal background to manage their problems (UNHCR, 2016a). Through the existent legal and political frameworks, the refugees are entitled to social protection, which refers to the issuance of individual protection documentation, under recognizance the national authorities (UNHCR, 2016b). Furthermore, Ghana Refugee Board (GRB) protects the refugees against the forced expulsion or return to their countries of origin, where their lives would be at risk, seeking to provide appropriate protection to asylum seekers and refugees (United States Department of State, 2013).

2.6. Education

Classrooms are organized in the refugee camps of Ampain, Egeikrom and Fentataa, regardless of the social and economic limitations of their parents, in collaboration with national organizations, volunteer or wider programs such as the one supported by UNICEF, to avoid educational breakage in turbulent times (Schmidt, 2016).

The educational resources offered by the Ghanaian government, in collaboration with voluntary groups and sponsors, comprise a school group that offers free elementary level courses for the refugee's children, but the school materials need to be supported by the parents (Wabern, 2015). The educational quality in the refugee camps is often perceived as rudimentary (Abandoned Children's Fund, 2015).

Furthermore, the refugee children or the children coming from refugee families wherein the family members are separated receive the right to equal education, assured within the camps through school material provision for children aged 6 - 13 and even scholarships for the brilliant refugee children, starting 2015 (UNHCR, 2016b). Another example of volunteer work to support the education of the refugees in the Ghana camps is the case of the Zakat Foundation of America, a Muslim non-governmental organization that supports children with school materials (Obour, 2013).

Through national educational programs, it is desired to integrate the refugee students' education in the Ghanaian educational system (Schmidt, 2016). The Japanese government sponsored refugee programs in Ghana, of which education is a top priority for making them self-reliant (GNA, 2014). Besides, spiritual or religious non-governmental organizations, such as the Christian Council of Ghana (CCG), or the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) invest in basic education, respectively skills training, apprenticeship, agriculture or English proficiency classes (UNHCR, 2016c).

Learning the local language, the Fante, was a significant benefit provided by the agencies in charge of the adult education of the refugees in Ghana, which contributed to their adaptation process in Ghana (Awuku, 2013). In fact, learning the language spoken in the West of Ghana helped the Ivorian refugees from this region to integrate better socially and culturally, making friends among the

Ghanaian locals, and, through them, finding further employment opportunities (Awuku, 2013).

UNICEF, together with UNHCR Ghana and the Ghanaian authorities are the main actors that manage the education of the Ivorian children, and youth refugees arrived in Ghana, facing challenges such as language transition and curriculum development (Schmidt, 2016). Another significant challenge for the education of Ghanaian children consists in the fact that there are insufficient funds for providing school feeding for primary school children in the refugee camps, which does not help in maintaining the enrolment (UNHCR, 2016a). The different educational system in Ghana is another limitation, which, along with the language barrier, spurs the anti-social behaviour among the refugees, as a mechanism of surviving (WFP, 2013).

These educational programs are not solely designed for the refugee children, but also for the adult's refugees, as the thematic of the training focuses on agriculture or practical skills development. Furthermore, these programs encourage the sustainability. As such, training programs sponsored by UNHCR and the Assemblies of God Relief and Development Services (AGREDS), were focused on training 200 Ivorian refugees the skills of farming, sewing, hairdressing, soap making, baking, electricity or construction (News Ghana, 2013). At the end of the training, they received the start-up kits for establishing their business at the camp, hence, investing both in the development of the direct beneficiaries (the trainees), but also in the development of the entire refugee camp, which can indirectly benefit of services such as hairdressing, electric installation, etc. (News Ghana, 2013).

2.7. Employment

Furthermore, the Ivorian refugees also receive employability skills, to encourage their integration in the local labour market (News Ghana, 2013). These types of programs have their challenges and social barriers, but also potential benefits that improve the well-being of the refugees. Primarily, the main challenge is the language barrier, which limits the access of the Ivorian refugees on the Ghanaian labor market (WFP, 2013). Secondly, refugees are perceived with reluctance by the local Ghanaian population, as individuals who came to their native country, competing for the same jobs (Wabern, 2015).

On the other hand, there is also the opportunity that the employability skills, among which local language courses are included, to improve the living conditions of the Ivorian refugees (News Ghana, 2013). This opportunity strengthens the refugees' decision to remain in Ghana and not return to their home countries, where they claim that they would face imprisonment for fleeing the country in the first place (IRIN News, 2013).

As any other foreigner in Ghana, Ivorian refugees can demand for work permits, but they need to go through the same procedures as other job seekers; in most cases the permits are granted only to the formal sector, which is difficult

for the Ivorian refugees to reach. Hence most of them work in the informal sector (Wabern, 2015).

WFP (2013) notes that for coming in support of the Ivorian refugees in Ghana, a joint strategy between UNHCR and WFP was designed to provide intensive skills and language training program targeting the bread winners, out of which 85% benefited from this support. Furthermore, the local language training is provided at the same time with English language training and other skills training, such as agriculture for self-reliance (WFP, 2013).

WFP, UNHCR, GRB and other stakeholders, conducted a Joint Assessment Mission (JAM) in 2014, which found that the skills training at the three refugee camps in Ghana resulted in social progress for the refugees, as they engage in agricultural activities, cultivating vegetables and other crops in the camps.

Other employability and self-reliance skills development include a six-month Information Communication and Technology training, also supported by UNHCR and AGREDS, provided in 2013 (News Ghana, 2013). Not only do such skills increase the employability of the Ivorian refugees in Ghana, but they contribute to the overall sustainable professional development of these individuals, which can help them in their future progress.

General refugee insights indicate that although they start up from a lower employment level and develop in time, most refugees integrate slowly in the labour market of the host countries; the main reasons are the fact that the local policies are not encouraging for refugee integration and also refugees' ineffective adaptation to the host country's needs (Bevelander, 2016). Ivorian refugees in Ghana face social challenges, such as imprisonment due to their anti-social behaviour, such as conflicts or narcotics involvement, which is an effect of their ineffective adaptation to the local Ghanaian labour market, but also to the lack of supportive integrative policies (Ghana Web, 2015).

However, there are mixed considerations about the local policies designed for the refugees. As such, Ghana Refugee Board states that the Ghanaian government supports the adaptation of the refugees in the local society, although there cannot be traced clear and precise policies that promote the adaptation process (Awuku, 2013). With a missing framework on their local adaptation, any attempt to access the local social and environmental resources would lack legitimacy and is perceived with resistance by the local population.

A UNHCR report, on the other hand, speaks about the effective collaboration with several agencies. The Ghana Refugee Board (GRB) is responsible for implementing UNHCRs protection and solutions programming, the National Catholic Secretariat responsible for health, nutrition, water, sanitation or shelter, and the Christian Council of Ghana, in charge with the basic education, while the Adventist Development and Relief Agency is responsible for adult training and development (UNHCR, 2016c). Based on this responsibility sharing, there seems to be a well-established organization and coordination of the Ivorian refugees within the Ghanaian camps. Nevertheless, the efforts of each of these agencies are

not transparent, as there are few if any, reports describing how they handled their responsibilities and how they impacted the refugees' lives at the camps through their activities.

On the contrary, the Human Rights Advocacy Centre (HRAC) reported that in the Ampain Refugee Camp there are inadequate health and sanitation conditions, but also improper housing for the Ivorian refugees (Puddington et al., 2014). Furthermore, the food shortage is an issue that has been largely disputed in media after the food budgets for the Ivorian refugees in the Ghanaian refugee camps have been cut (AFP, 2016; The Finder, 2016).

In these circumstances, there raises the issue of who is responsible for the refugees' social and economic situation. Kadogbe (2013) indicates that the development of the strategy for the wellbeing of the refugees falls in the responsibility of the host country, but also in the hands of UNHCR, which must collaborate with the host country for protecting the refugees' rights.

3. Research Methodology: Content Analysis

3.1. Introduction

This chapter deals with the research methods that were applied in gathering the data for this study. It highlights how the questionnaire was designed and administered, the method of data collection, the sample frame and size and the population.

3.2. Primary Data

3.2.1. Data Collection Procedures

The data collection method involved eliciting primary data from expert consultations through semi-structured interview conducted in English consisting of open-ended questions that helped earn the trust and confidence of the experts to feel free and safe to cough off every of their experiences in the humanitarian field. The same interview process was used to learn the experience of the refugees in the Ghana refugee camps. Specifically, data collection involved conducting telephone interviews and in some cases interview questions were sent via email to respondents to answer. Notes were taken by the interviewer while on the interview, but all calls were recorded with an audio device, which were processed and handled by the researcher. To protect anonymity, the data has been stored in a locked drawer, and the interviewer is the only one who has the key to unlock the drawer.

3.2.2. Questionnaire and Interview Techniques

The interviewers followed certain techniques to yield meaningful data for this study using the open-ended interviewing techniques. First and foremost, questions were clearly stated and only contained one question at a time. The interviewee was given ample time to answer fully and gave them room to air their opinion. Closed-ended questions that require a yes or no answer were in most instances avoided. Questions asking participants to elaborate on their experience

were first asked over emotional questions. Necessary follow-up questions were utilized, to gain further understanding of the utterances of the participants and to clear up any potential unclear communications. The techniques used to procure follow-up materials include faked confusion, time allowance to fully express opinions, asking follow-up questions, and asking participants to provide follow-up details. These techniques were followed for this study to gain knowledge of the experience and expertise of workers who work with the Ivorian refugees as well as the refugees' experience in the refugee camps in Ghana. In mining this valuable information with these interviewing techniques, the researcher hoped that the rendered useful data will help the world understand how to best help the Ivorian refugees in Ghana.

3.2.3. Sample Description

The sample consisted of refugees from Ivory Coast residing in the two camps of Ghana and some of the Ivorian Refugees living in New York who had spent time in the Ghana refugee camps. The participants consist of eight males and seven females of age set 15 - 65 years. The length of interviews for both groups of participants was between 30 - 40 minutes each, and the interviews were completed in three weeks.

The research also involved interviews with UNHCR officials and other government officials in Ghana. Both the open-ended and closed-ended questions form of interviews were employed for the officials to respond to.

Also, camp workers and the inhabitants of the community (host community), who are cognizant of the situation in both refugee camps were interviewed.

3.3. Secondary Data

The researcher also relied on existing, published literature on the subject, mostly that relating to statistics and trends of the dynamics of the subject matter. A careful consideration of articles in both peer-reviewed journals, textbooks, protocols and mainstream online publications provided profound insights into the study of this concept. This contributed to the core understanding of the research problem.

4. Data Analysis and Evaluation

4.1. Research Analysis and Interpretation of Interviews

The purpose of the interview structure in this analysis is based on a series of surveys implemented with a focus on the utilization of open-ended interviewing techniques. Because of the unique needs of the population surveyed, it was important to develop a comfortable rapport with the individuals who participated in the study; each of the surveys reflects a different set of experiences—the sample consists of refugees from Ivory Coast residing in the two camps of Ghana and some of the Ivorian Refugees living in New York who had spent time in the Ghana refugee camps.

Of the five individuals surveyed for the research, there were clear trends asso-

ciated with each question, as can be seen in this analysis and discussion. The analysis is done based on the general trends of the research and the responses of the participants. The responses from the relief workers were considered separately from those who are refugees; however, generally, both groups report similar trends associated with the realities of camp living.

4.2. Ivorian Refugees in Ghana

The Ivorian refugees who were interviewed for this study came from both the Ampain and the Fetenaa Refugee Camp in Ghana. They reported different backgrounds—some came to the refugee camp with their families, for instance, while others came alone. All reported making friends, however, which seems to indicate that there is a level of familiarity and community-building between the individuals who have become refugees and who live at these camps.

However, despite the fact that there is camaraderie between the people who are living at these camps, nearly all of the respondents noted that there are fundamental problems with the internal structure of the camps. They noted that the facilities provided for the people living at the camps were weak at best; one respondent suggests, “It is very difficult, hard to live in the camp because distribution of foods (rice, beans, CSB, etc.) and some items (soap, charcoal, salt, oil, etc.) have been stopped. Now no assistance for instance, if somebody is sick, he/she must have the insurance card up to date and money so that he/she can receive the treatment.” This seems to suggest that all but subsistence-level services are nearly nonexistent in the camp, and the people of the camp are both aware of the lack of services and struggling as a result.

The respondents all reported that there is a definite feeling of being trapped between two worlds at the Ghana refugee camp; they suggested that when they left their lives in the Ivory Coast, they were seeking freedom and safety, but that their experiences in Ghana have not been integrative at all. There are few opportunities for these individuals to really begin their lives in Ghana, although there are some programs that different respondents suggested that they have been able to complete. One respondent, however, suggests that he or she has been able to further his or her education; however, this respondent was already an Anglophone Ivorian, which means that they were able to integrate into the local educational system with greater ease than Francophone counterparts.

4.3. Humanitarian Aid and UNHCR Workers in Ghana

In the **Appendix A**, the full responses for the humanitarian aid workers surveyed can be found. First and foremost, however, these workers suggested that while they might have many different cultures that they could work with—of course, there are refugees and refugee camps around the world—they specifically chose to work with the Ivorian refugees in Ghana. This is interesting, because it seems that there are many different refugee groups that are experiencing particularly extensive media coverage right now, and many aid workers are drawn to

the people who seem to need the most help. However, one humanitarian aid worker suggests that he or she has worked with Ghana and the Ivorian refugees a number of times—most of the time, this seems to suggest, aid workers become enmeshed in the development of a solution for a certain situation.

Although the problems in Ghana for Ivorian refugees are not as bad as other places, the solutions that have been developed in Ghana lack permanence. An aid worker suggests, “Additionally [*sic*] due to the weather condition and pace of UNHCR constructed semi-permanent structures and individuals constructed permanent structures in the various camps put pressure on some adults trying to secure shelter by self-construction to protect them from heavy rains. Refugees still received some non-food items which are sanitary pads and soap, however water storage containers coal pots and cooking utensil [*sic*] have been damage [*sic*] since it’s over 4 years that these items were given to them.” This seems to suggest that while there are stopgap solutions in place, there is a distinct lack of long-term solution-building and infrastructure for the refugee camps in Ghana.

However, it also seems that the problems that plague the refugee camps in Ghana are markedly typical of refugee camps in general. There are problems associated with supply, according to respondents, and non-food items are particularly difficult to come by. In addition, the respondents noted that the lack of permanent infrastructure has grown into a larger problem as the camp has become more permanent. Infrastructure designed to give individuals living in the camps an opportunity to be a more effective part of the community as a whole are still severely lacking, as are real and lasting solutions for the people currently living in the camp. One solution that is suggested is the development of a market analysis to better understand the specific needs of the individual camps for Ivorian refugees. The humanitarian aid respondents generally tend to focus on the development of business-based solutions to solve the problems associated with the refugee camps in Ghana. This is distinctly different from the framework used by the individuals who live or have lived in the camps themselves.

4.4. Research Analysis

Both groups of respondents note that there are problems with the refugee camps in Ghana. The most common complaint among both groups is that the fundamental services needed for the refugees to thrive do not exist in the camps; one refugee even suggests that people from outside the camp—that is, non-refugees—are guilty of utilizing the services that should be reserved for the refugees and their needs. However, the lack of resources is the responsibility of the leadership within the camp. The lack of resources reflects a general disorganization associated with the internal structure of the camp; the people cannot possibly begin to thrive if they cannot get access to the basic necessities that should be provided to them by the camp and the local community.

The refugees also report a sense of alienation from the local culture, particularly those who do not speak the local language or languages. This keeps the refugees effectively closed out of society as a whole; they cannot get jobs, open busi-

nesses, or participate in local education because of the language barrier, which is immensely difficult when attempting to integrate a refugee culture into an existing, hegemonic culture. This becomes even more problematic when factoring in issues like the food shortage that nearly all the respondents report regarding the current refugee camp. Interestingly, many of the respondents also suggest that they want to work; many have volunteered their time to make living at the camps better. If this workforce could be educated and mobilized, it seems that there is immense potential for the general betterment of the situation in the refugee camps in Ghana as a whole.

5. Solutions, Recommendations and Conclusion

5.1. Solutions

In any case, for identifying solutions to better the socio-economic situation of the Ivorian refugees in the two Ghanaian camps, identifying the responsible agencies for improving their condition is important, but it is not the sole requirement for reaching solutions. Strategic approaches need to be applied, and the responsible agencies must collaborate. As such, there would be unsupportive to provide technical or skill development training to refugees when they cannot afford food. UNHCR, along with other agencies, donors and the Ghanaian public institutions should design a sponsorship program for sustaining the nutritional needs of the Ivorian refugees, until more of them can become self-reliant.

During this time, the Christian Council of Ghana, in charge of the basic education, should design a better customized educational program to suit the Ivorian children. The local language should be made compulsory, and there should be provided social or cultural incentives for parents to send their children to school (UNHCR, 2016d). Adventist Development and Relief Agency, in charge of the adult refugee training and skills development, should primarily focus on creating language programs, through which the Ivorian refugees to learn the local dialects, which will permit them to better integrate locally (Awuku, 2013).

Even with these two main directions of socio-economic conditions covered (food and education), the situation of the Ivorian refugees cannot be solved in a sustainable manner, without political involvement. An approach in this sense would be for the Ghanaian government to design clear policies that would allow the Ivorian refugees the right to work, with formal work permits recognized.

Nevertheless, considering that the host country is underdeveloped, finding employment opportunities would still be challenging for the Ivorian refugees, and would even lead to clashes among the local population and the Ivorian refugees, competing for the same available positions. In this case, a more sustainable approach would be to orient the refugees' work efforts into global production, such as designing clothes, electronics or other items for big firms that need the unskilled workforce that can be easily trained (KDVR, 2014). In these conditions, in time, the refugees could be able to provide for themselves, and they could become self-sufficient and improve their living conditions. As such, they

will be able to afford their subsistence and to invest in better housing, replacing their tents with more solid places to live in.

Regarding the health of the refugees in the Ghanaian refugee camps, a sustainable health problem needs to be implemented from within the school level, teaching pupil's health and hygiene basics, while also creating the conditions for improving the hygiene conditions in the camps (UNHCR, 2016d). More health assistance for the Ivorian refugees in Ghana should be provided through international programs or by sponsoring partners, as the local Ghanaian medical system lacks sufficient medical professionals, as more than half of the trained doctors have migrated from Ghana (Awumbila et al., 2008).

Furthermore, the support of the voluntary return to Cote d'Ivoire is another solution for solving the socio-economic condition of the Ivorian refugees in Ghana (UNHCR, 2016b). Although they claimed that they are afraid to go back to their home countries because of the oppression that they might face there, the returning of several groups of Ivorian refugees did not leave any negative echoes (AFP, 2016). Like this, without forcing them, the UNHCR should demonstrate to the Ivorian refugees that returning to their home countries would give them better-living prospects.

5.2. Conclusion

The socio-economic situation of the Ivorian refugees in Ghana is very complex and concerning. While the Ivorian refugees hosted in the refugee camps in Ampain and Fetentaa benefited initially from a food assistance program, after it ended, in 2015, they faced serious challenges in surviving in Ghana without being able to afford food. The programs carried on by UNHCR and partner agencies to train adults and develop their skills were effective for a small group of Ivorian refugees, who were able to become self-reliant in activities such as farming, sewing or hairdressing (Awuku, 2013).

Most of the Ivorian refugees, however, are unable to support themselves and the employment opportunities are unrealistic, considering that there is no local policy to regulate the formal recognizance of the refugees as individuals with work permits (Bevelander, 2016; Ghana Web, 2015). Also, the language is another barrier that impedes them from integrating into the local labour market, and so is the lack of employment opportunities in the Ghanaian market. Furthermore, the lack of actual places to work in Ghana, a country with modest economic potential, makes the local people reluctant to the refugee market and advances their isolation in the refugee camps. The sanitation within the refugee camps in Ghana is also problematic, as the refugees must procure their own medicine and the hygiene conditions are improper. Regarding education, basic general school is provided to refugee children, but they face the challenge of adjusting to the local curricula and learning. Furthermore, the teaching in the camps is considered rudimentary, and there is the risk of school interruption because parents are not interested to send their children to school.

Based on a thorough analysis that this report conducted, the above issues were identified as the main socio-economic problems that the Ivorian refugees face in the three Ghanaian refugee camps. Furthermore, an assessment of the nature of the identified problems contributed to generating potential solutions for addressing the socio-economic issues of the Ivorian refugees in Ghana. There were traced solutions for each main socio-economic problem.

As such, for the most stringent issue that the Ivorian refugees face in Ghana, namely the nutrition, the recommended solution was a partnership with international sponsors and the local Ghanaian government for a determined period. These programs, as well as all the other identified problems, need to be approached together, interdependently. In the meantime, the adults need to be trained in the local language and the political sphere, the Ghanaian government, needs to create policies for the integration of the refugees in the local labour market. If there are no available employment opportunities local, programs should be designed in collaboration with major international companies to engage the refugees in garment creation or electronics production. Like this, they could become self-reliant and improve their living, including housing conditions and sanitation. A program designed to convince the Ivorian to return to their home country is also recommended, but this would imply the political and social involvement of both countries.

The proposed solutions should be approached interdependently and implemented at the same time. The available funds, logistics and resources are challenges that should be addressed before commencing the implementation of these solutions.

Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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Appendix A: Interview Questions for Expert Humanitarian Relief Workers

- 1) What is your experience with the refugee camps in Ghana?
- 2) What is your experience in your dealings with the Ivorian refugees in Ghana?
- 3) Why do you think the Ivorian refugees are afraid to return to Ghana even though the state of emergency has been lifted and they are welcome back into the country?
- 4) What are the most important issues facing children in the Ghana refugee camps at this time?
- 5) What other issues can you think of, that children in the Ghana refugee camps are facing?
- 6) What do you think is the most important issue facing Ivorian refugee adults at this present time?
- 7) What other issues can you think of that are facing Ivorian adult refugees at this time?
- 8) What steps do you think need to be taken right now in order to best help the refugees in meeting their needs?
- 9) What long-term strategies do you think need to be implemented in order to help the Ivorian refugees in Ghana?
- 10) What do you think would be the most effective short-term strategies that could be implemented right away to alleviate the conditions in the refugee camps in Ghana?
- 11) What do you think would be the most effective short-term strategies that could be implemented right away that will enable the Ivorian refugees to become acculturated into Ghana society?
- 12) What do you think are the biggest barriers for Ivorian refugees to becoming acculturated into Ghanaian society?
- 13) What do you think are the biggest barriers for Ivorian refugees to becoming self-sufficient?
- 14) How do you think the world can help the refugees now?

Appendix B: Definition of Terms and Abbreviations

A refugee is someone who has been forced to flee his or her country because of persecution, war, or violence. A refugee has a well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, political opinion, or membership in a particular social group whereas an asylum-seeker on the other hand is someone whose request for sanctuary has yet to be processed (UNHCR). Cote d'Ivoire and Ivory Coast according to the United Nations charter and law refers to one country. The writer therefore employed to use the names interchangeably when and wherever it fits in the context of this research work. The "Finder" as quoted as a source of reference in this passage refers to a local print media found in Ghana. Other abbreviations are expounded as follows:

UN—United Nations

UNHCR—United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
IDPs—Internally Displaced Persons
UNDP—United Nations Development Programme
FAO—Food and Agriculture Organization
UNICEF—United Nations Children’s Fund
UNFPA—United Nations Population Fund
UNIDO—United Nations Industrial Development Organization
UNAIDS—Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS
IPS—Implementing Partners
BBC—British Broadcasting Corporation
WFP—World Food Programme
AFP—Agence France-Presse (French press agency)
ECOWAS—Economic Community of West African States
GNA—Ghana News Agency
POC—Population/People of Concern
GRB—Ghana Refugee Board
NADMO—National Disaster Management Organization
CCG—Christian Council of Ghana
ADRA—Adventist Development and Relief Agency
AGREDS—Assemblies of God Relief and Development Services
JAM—Joint Assessment Mission
HRAC—Human Rights Advocacy Centre