

**Borderless Higher Education for Refugees  
Feasibility Study Report (FSR) Validation Workshop**

**Executive Summary**

May 14-15<sup>th</sup> 2012  
McLaughlin College Room 157A,  
York University, Toronto

Prepared by Negin Dahya

**The purpose of this two-day workshop** was to validate the draft Feasibility Study Report (FSR) across all partners of the Borderless Higher Education for Refugees project. The FSR document is one of the outcomes of the MasterCard Foundation grant, that will be delivered to the funder to report on the findings of research and partnership development completed over the course of the MCF funding. A BHER Advisory Committee meeting was also held and those minutes are attached.

**List of Participants and their affiliations:**

York University

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Following the two partnership workshops in Kampala and Nairobi, several months of intensive research on the ground in Dadaab, and other prior extensive research, team members from BHER partner institutions met in Toronto, at York University, to validate research findings and proposed development of programs. The two day workshop on May 14-15, 2012, was designed with the four BHER Phases in mind, carefully working through the details of each phase to come to some agreement on each of the following areas: admissions, program and curriculum development, incorporation of learning technologies, space/time (location, hours of operation, etc.), personnel, monitoring and evaluation, cost-benefit of proposed models, additional funding (where needed), volunteer support/mentoring (where applicable), challenges. As a group, the 25-30 people in attendance each day responded to each aforementioned area pertaining to each of the four phases of the project, and addressed ways in which the feasibility study research supported or challenged previously established hypotheses about how to proceed with this project.

Based on the research from Dadaab and the combined expertise of BHER team members, the following summary points were discussed for each phase of the project. Please see the attached Validation Chart for more detail.

### Space/Time

BHER programs are to be held at a BHER-ODEL Learning Centre, which will be located in renovated buildings in Dadaab, just outside the camps, offered to the project by the Kenyan Government. The space will include a minimum of 4 classrooms to accommodate 40 students each, four computer labs with 40 workstations each, an office, accommodations, kitchen and cafeteria for 10 staff members. Instruction will take place for Phases 1-3 during the Kenyan holidays in April, August and December, though the facility will be open for use to BHER students all year. The facility will be solar powered. A wall and laser-wire fence and guard will provide security.

Transportation has been an important part of this discussion relating to location, hours of operation, and security, especially for women.

### Incorporation of Learning Technologies

The question of incorporating learning technologies throughout the BHER program is still under discussion. What has been decided is that all courses should be designed with the idea of moving from some face-to-face instruction in the earlier parts of the program to primarily (or completely) online programs by Phases 3 and 4. A survey of possible technologies to use for BHER was conducted by UBC and is also being researched by YU. Based on this information, and considering the challenging conditions in Dadaab, such as insecurity, heat and limited access to electricity, one recommendation is to base online course development around the use of portable MP3 players. Other options are also being considered. York University Professor Jennifer Jenson, working in Technology Enhanced Learning, has been commissioned to write a short paper outlining innovative uses of technology under conditions such as those in the Dadaab camps. Final decisions about what technology to purchase, in addition to the development of computer labs, are therefore still under review.

### Monitoring and Evaluation

External monitoring and evaluation will follow the procedures outlined by granting agencies. , In addition, internal monitoring and evaluation will be carried out by the project management and

faculty who are delivering courses. An M and E Committee will support both the external and internal monitoring and evaluation processes.

### Cost-Benefit of Model

It has been determined that the options presented are less costly overall than the cost of sending students abroad to university by way of scholarships; much cheaper than the cost to Canadian students of attending a university in Canada; and slightly cheaper than the cost to Kenyan students of attending a university in Kenya.

### Phase I: InSTEP (formerly known as “Bridging Program”)

It was agreed that different standards of admission would be in place for men and women for the InSTEP, with the aim of increasing gender parity in BHER enrolment and improving gender equity throughout the region overall. Specifically, men will require High School graduation with a minimum C plain or its equivalent and be involved in incentive teaching to be eligible for the program. For women, multiple options will apply: 1) High School graduation with a minimum C- or its equivalent and involved in incentive teaching; 2) High School graduation with a minimum C- and doing incentive work outside of teaching; or, 3) High School graduation with a minimum C- and not working at all. The admissions breakdown should include 20-25% of students to come from Dadaab and Fafi districts, 30% of students to be female in Year 1 (i.e. 60 women to go into Year 1 InSTEP), 40% of students to be female in Year 2, 50% of students to be female in Year 3. There is some ongoing concern, about, but also determination to do our very best to achieve our admission levels with regard to gender, due to the current inequities around both education and work for women in the camps. These inequities are acknowledged as having deep roots in the sociocultural and economic structure of the region, where early marriage and expectations of domestic labour are the norm, among other inequitable practices. Poverty in the camps but also in the town is also a major concern for ensuring equitable enrolment across local communities.

Some discussion continues regarding how to evaluate students in the program to ensure they are ready for the accredited university certificate, diploma and degree programs. WUSC-WTK, who are running InSTEP, have suggested a formative evaluation after each InSTEP module and a summative evaluation at the end of the InSTEP program, designed in collaboration with the university partners offering the elementary certificate and secondary diploma.

Program and curriculum development for InSTEP will focus on English for Academic Purposes, Information and Communications Technologies and Research Skills. Each module will be specifically geared to the skills needed for BHER programs, include locally relevant content, and consider substantive and programmatic needs of women and people with special needs. These courses are to be offered in high schools in the town and camps and taught by 7 Kenyan certified teachers on 2-3 month contracts. New Scholars Network of the RRN and the Canadian WUSC Students Network will act as volunteer support networks for students in the program.

**It is our aim to provide all students with some form of compensation for their time in the InSTEP and subsequent BHER programs, to offset the cost of lost wages otherwise earned working over periods of study. Specifications around amount and form of compensation (in-cash or “in-kind”) are still underway, with special consideration for the implications of this initiative for women.**

### Phase 2A & 3A: Teacher Education Certificate and Diploma (Elementary)

Admissions to Phase 2A & 3A of the program will follow the successful admissions and evaluation/completion procedures outlined in InSTEP. YU is developing a 30 credit Certificate of Completion in Education Studies (Elementary) and KU is going to work on a 30 credit (10 unit) program that, when taken after the certificate, will qualify for a KU Diploma in Early Childhood Education (K-8).

York tenure stream, seconded or contract Faculty will be hired on contract to teach York University courses. Faculty from collaborating Universities could also be hired and KU would be in charge of hiring for KU portion of courses in Phase 3A (as outlined above). Refugees from the camps and local community members from Dadaab will be hired to assist with the implementation of locally relevant content, consideration for local context and cultural support for students in the program.

### Phase 2B & 3B: Teacher Education Diploma (Secondary)

Admissions to Phase 2B & 3B of the program will follow the successful admissions and evaluation/completion procedures outlined in InSTEP. UBC and Moi University have completed the design of the Secondary Diploma program. Programs will also run in the BHER Learning Centre on a schedule to be determined based on the needed hours of instructional time, and that will also align with the larger structure of the BHER program (running in April, August and December). Considerations for safety, equity, etc. follow Phase 1 and 2A & 3A standards outlined above.

### Phase 4: Bachelor's Degree Program

To move from either Phase 2A/3A or Phase 2B/3B into the full degree program, students must have successfully completed 60 credits/20 units from their elementary or secondary stream. Partner Universities will take the lead on developing particular programs, or at least exploring the possibility of developing particular programs to start. Suggested degree programs include the following:

- Bachelor of Education – KU and Moi
- Bachelor of Community Development and Extension – KU and YU -IDS
- Bachelor of Public Administration – KU and YU -PPA
- Bachelor of Administrative Studies (Business) – YU
- Bachelor of Health Studies – YU, UBC and Moi
- Bachelor of Science – YU-FES or FSE

These potential offerings will also work on the premise that all partner institutions may offer online courses to support degrees being offered at other institutions.

### Other

The update BHER website and social media spaces were presented to the group and feedback for further revisions received.

Committees were established to advise on particular aspects of the project:

- Gender Committee

- Security Committee
- Monitoring and Evaluation Committee
- Partnership Committee
- Knowledge Mobilization Committee (includes the Publication Guidelines Sub-Committee)
- Student Mentorship Committee (includes Toronto WUSC Student Committee, RRN New Scholars Network)