A Qualitative Study of an Indigenous Faith-Based Distributive Justice Program in Kakuma Refugee Camp in Kenya

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Abstract

Justice takes many forms, such as social justice (equitable human rights), procedural justice (fair process, particularly in resolution of disputes), distributive justice (equitable distribution), and more. Distributive justice is an important theme in international community psychology, overlapping with concepts of peace, equity, compassion, and more. Refugees, who often experience pervasive injustice, offer insights into justice when they create a just community. The United Refugee and Host Churches (URHC) is a network of churches in Kakuma Refugee Camp (Kenya) and the surrounding Turkana community founded in 1996 by refugees and people from the local Turkana community. The URHC addressed ongoing conflict and distrust in the camp by establishing procedural and distributive justice. This qualitative study described the methods used by the URHC to restore justice and reduce conflict in the camp and build sustainable capacity. The project team interviewed 23 URHC members and leaders and identified eight themes describing URHC strategies. We discuss each theme and the network's work as examples of applied distributive and procedural justice. We conclude by highlighting several implications, program impact, and recommendations for future research.

Key words: refugee, justice, faith, distributive justice, Kenya

Introduction

Justice is an important research topic in community psychology and health as it overlaps with multiple important issues, such as peace, trauma, health, well-being, and conflict resolution. [1-5.] While justice is a universal issue, people from different cultures view justice from their own cultural perspective.[6,7] For example, people from Somalia see conflict and justice from a social and political rather than a personal perspective.[8] Examining justice in a diverse environment could shed a cross-cultural light on how justice develops and changes the community. One of the unique cultural perspectives addressed in this paper is religious culture that brought about distributive justice and community change through a network of churches.

In 2012, the International Association for Refugees (IAFR) contacted a group of graduate students and faculty in psychology at Wheaton College in Illinois to request an objective assessment of a refugee founded and operated church network in the Kakuma refugee camp. It was reported that this network was having a significant positive impact on the stability of the camp. If accurate, this project represented an opportunity to study the development of distributive justice practices in a culturally diverse environment known for a community wide perception of injustice and frequent conflict. Further, it could demonstrate the contributions of a network of churches to community peace. The aim was to verify whether there were established processes for community peace that might be shared with other networks and validate the work of the network to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

Literature Review

The concept of procedural and distributive justice goes back to Thibaut and Walker's work on procedural fairness.[9] Procedural justice is one type of justice, along with distributive justice or the just distribution of goods, that are traditionally seen as expressions of a basic self-interest motive (people are mainly motivated by self-interest and getting what they are due).[10] Lerner and Clayton challenged this self-interest approach to justice by suggesting that justice is a basic human drive along with self-interest rather than just an expression of self-interest.[10] In this view, people are highly motivated to see the world as a just place, and not only motivated by self-interest. Thus, while there are cultural differences in the application of justice, justice is a basic human imperative with significant consequences for human relations and mental health. Lerner and Clayton see people as developing "prepared solutions" in response to injustice that include violent retaliation (p. 192). This helps us to understand the conditions in the refugee camp where people very quickly align into their "moral community" when injustice is perceived and seek to correct the offence through vengeance (p. 192). In this context, the faith network in the camp established a system for ensuring just distribution, followed by procedures for the fair and non-violent resolution of conflict over perceived injustice.

In the refugee camp, the subject network (United Refugee and Host Churches, hereinafter URHC) developed without guidance or implementation support from the non-government organizations (NGOs) in the camp. This means the methods they developed arose from within the local groups rather than being imported from an international NGO. In practice, although several of the camp contractors are faith-based, the NGO contractors in the camp are prohibited by UNHCR from working with any one faith group as it would be perceived as discriminatory and potentially lead to conflict. Faith based communities play an important mediating role in their communities, including promoting justice, although there are significant differences in how groups carry this out depending on theological orientation and culture.[11,12] Building a social network of faith organizations has shown positive impacts on the community.[13] For example, in a study on refugees in Australia, Humpage and Martin noted three impacts from faith community networks: 1) They build a shared identity

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that fosters positive relationships; 2) the network fosters relationships with the larger community, and 3) it fosters relationships with people in positions of power.[14] Overall, the links between religion, community development, and justice are well established even if the mechanism is less than clear.[15] The subject network in this paper reflects those three impacts, allowing us to gain insights into how it develops. Since most of the people involved in starting the network were available, there was an opportunity to uncover the process of development, an area in need of further research. For example, a commitment to justice is reportedly linked to exposure to injustice, mentoring, and education, but this work needs to be extended to different cultures and faith traditions.[16,17] Indigenous networks are also known to be more sustainable over time and have a positive influence on development, but questions remain concerning the mechanisms of sustainability.[18] How do justice initiatives develop over time, how are they implemented, are there development stages, and how are they sustained? This paper adds to the current literature by describing how the network developed the ability to create and maintain those impacts.

The Setting

Kakuma Refugee Camp is in the Turkana District in northwestern Kenya. The camp serves refugees who were forcibly displaced from their home countries due to war or persecution. Established in 1992 to serve a maximum of 60,000 Sudanese refugees, the camp has expanded to serve refugees from Somalia, Ethiopia, Burundi, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Eritrea, Uganda, and Rwanda. According to the most current United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) statistics, the camp population is close to 180,000 refugees. In 2007, Kakuma Refugee Camp hosted 21% of the total refugee population in Kenya.[19]

The UNHCR provides administration while direct services, such as housing, health, and mental health, are provided by contracting non-government organizations (NGOs). Multiple tribal groups from nine different countries live in the camp where they have formed an estimated 55 protestant denominational groups (Appendix A). Due to the potential for the team's presence to increase tensions between the Christian groups and other faith groups, the team was directed by UNHCR to limit contacts to the members of the URHC network.

URHC began in 1997 when a refugee pastor formed the United Refugee Churches (URC) to promote cooperation and eliminate conflict between the churches in the Kakuma Camp. The camp situation at that time was one of continuing conflict between tribes and denominations wherein a donation to a group from outside the camp triggered conflict between groups. The distrust and perceived injustice among refugees was so high that donations immediately triggered suspicion and charges of corruption, often leading to open violence.

Adding to the complexity and conflict of the refugee camp was the refugee's sense of justice denied. Refugees do not see themselves as having access to protections under the law and often develop a strong sense of injustice and chronic insecurity.[20] This is compounded by the complexity of camp life and sets the stage for refugees to resort to theories of corruption to explain events in the camp.[21] There is an assumption of injustice among refugees, which may be adaptive in that it makes camp life more understandable. It was in this system of entrenched belief in injustice that the URHC set about to change the justice dynamic in the camp. The URHC addressed this environment of distrust by forming a central committee to be the recipient and distributor of outside donations and take responsibility for fair distribution (distributive justice). This provided a single point of contact that simplified the donation process for outside agencies and reduced conflict, which in turn increased donations. The central committee committed itself to transparency, to ensuring equitable distribution, and to deferring its own interests to those of group members. Other churches in the camp were attracted to the group when they saw that donors preferred to deal with a single and central point of contact and by the group's

success in reducing conflict and building trust. Building on this success, and to build sustainable capacity, the URHC later created the Kakuma Interdenominational School of Missions (KISOM) within the camp to train church leaders. KISOM courses included teaching the Biblical basis for justice and the connection between religious belief, fair treatment, and distributive justice.

URHC's success in reducing conflict contrasts with what would be predicted from the literature and local culture. When local constituents engage in peace building and conflict resolution, they often face the challenge of convincing their own supporters, who represent different tribes and nationalities, to accept the agreement.[22] This is particularly true in Northern Kenya, a traditional pastoral community with a high rate of conflict over access to grazing and ownership of livestock and a high rate of theft.[23] Convincing people to set aside traditional and aggressive ways of protecting their interests is an extraordinarily difficult task. Aukot reported on the long-standing conflict between the refugees in Kakuma and local Turkana people exacerbated by support given to refugees without consideration for the impact on the local tribes.[24] His opinion was that, "local integration, while needed, is simply not possible."(79) The success of URHC stands in contrast to these reports. As noted, URHC is an integrated organization, expanding its presence in the surrounding community and reaching out to other faith groups. It is their success in a challenging setting that makes them particularly interesting for study. Their success appears to be based upon a fundamental sense of procedural and distributive justice as the starting point for restoring basic trust. This study identified the system, methods, and strategies used by URHC.

Methods

Project Team

A project team was formed at a U.S.-based graduate school (Wheaton College) with several faculty and graduate students in psychology. From this group, four team members (one faculty and three students) traveled to Kakuma to plan the project together with URHC. None of the team members spoke Swahili or had any prior experience with the refugee camp or the network, although all had prior experience in East Africa. All interviews were conducted through local interpreters who lived either in the camp or the local community. An expanded team with additional students analyzed the interviews.

Procedures

URHC members were co-implementers of the project. During a planning trip to the camp, and prior to starting any interviews, the project team explained the methods to the URHC leadership team so they could make an informed decision about participating in the project and communicate the project to potential participants. During a week of planning, the URHC leadership contributed to the design, the survey questions, and selection of the participants.

The participants were interviewed by a team member together with an interpreter. Participants were provided with a verbal and written overview of the study, as well as their rights as participants (including confidentiality). After their questions and concerns were addressed, the interviewer obtained written informed consent from the participant. There were no monetary rewards for participation.

Interviews were conducted in churches in various locations in the camp. Travel in the camp was very difficult, especially during rain, so the team went to the closest location for the participants to limit their need to travel. The team was assisted by the National Council of Churches - Kenya which provided transportation across the camp. On average, interviews took 45 to 60 minutes. An initial interview was done by the faculty member of the team with other team members observing. This interview was then discussed by the team. Second interviews were done by team members with faculty observing and helping if needed. At the end of each day of interviews, the team met and debriefed about the process and the need for any adjustments.

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Participants

Participants were selected using purposive sampling. The selection criteria started with the identification of key demographic and role groups within the URHC population, such as students, local community leaders, non-leaders, teachers, women in leadership, and non-leadership roles, as well as recent URHC participants and long-term URHC participants. All participants were adult members of the camp and members of URHC churches. The aim of the selection process was to have a diversity of viewpoints and avoid having network leaders dominate the interviews. As described earlier, for camp policy reasons, it was not possible to interview refugees who were not part of the URHC network.

Participants were not compensated but were motivated by a desire to share their story with others. Refugees often have a sense of being forgotten by the world, so attention from an external group was a strong motivator.

Twenty-three individual clergy and church members living in the Kakuma Refugee Camp were selected for interviews, 13 male and 10 female participants from various Christian faith traditions (e.g., Pentecostal, Episcopal, Anglican), ranging in age from 25 to 65 (ages were estimated as not everyone knew their age or birthdate). The interviews were recorded and the English translation transcribed. Participant characteristics are listed in Table 1. URHC membership characteristics are in Appendix A.

Table 1. Participant Characteristics

Partici-pant	Interviewer	Nationality	Age	Church	Denomination	Role	Years with URHC
M1	Faculty	Burundian	40	International Pentecost Holiness Church Kakuma	Pentecostal	Pastor, Board Member	15
M2	Faculty	Ethiopian		Oromo Evangelical Church	Adonai Evangelical	Pastor; Board Member	12
M3	Student	Sudanese (Nuba Mountains)		Episcopal Church of Sudan	Episcopal	Treasurer, Pastor, and Board member	8
M4	Student	Ethiopian	47	Adonai Evangelical	Adonai Evangelical	Zone leader	9
M5	Student	Congolese	45	IPHC	Pentecostal	Zone leader	5
M6	Student	Sudanese (Nuba Mountains)	26		Anglican/Episcopal	Zone Leader	7
M7	Student	Kenyan	24	Congolese Pentecostal Church of Kenya	Pentecostal	Zone leader	2
M8	Student	Kenyan (Turkana)	27	Release Pentecostal Church	Pentecostal	Chairman in Host Community	1
M9	Student	Kenyan (Ludwar County)	41	Fountain of Life Church	Pentecostal	Pastor	4
M10	Faculty					Unknown	
M11	Faculty	Sudanese (Northern)				Unknown	
M12	Student	Congolese		International Pentecostal Holiness Church	Pentecostal	Pastor	2
M13	Student	Congolese	27	Ebenezer Fellowship Center	Pentecostal	Youth camp coordinator	5
W1	Faculty			International Pentecost Holiness Church Kakuma	Pentecostal	None	

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W2	Student	Kenyan (Turkana)	28	Oromo Evangelical Church	Living Faith (Pentecostal?)	None	4
W3	Student	Kenyan (Turkana)	30	Release Pentecostal Church	Pentecostal	None	10
W4	Student	Kenyan (Turkana)	27	Release Pentecostal Church	Pentecostal	None	4
W5	Student	Kenyan (Turkana)	33	Kenya Church of Christ	Church of Christ	None	4
W6	Student	Sudanese (Nuba Mountains)	38	Episcopal Church of Sudan	Episcopal	Ministry Leader	
W7	Student	Sudanese (Nuba Mountains)	30	Episcopal Church of Sudan	Episcopal	Ministry Leader	2
W8	Student	Sudanese (Nuba Mountains)	37	Episcopal Church of Sudan	Episcopal	Executive Committee	
W9	Student	Sudanese	36	The Good Shepherd	African Inland Church	Ministry Leader	8
W10	Student	Sudanese	32	Episcopal Church of Sudan	Episcopal	Student, Ministry Leader	8
M14	Student	???	???	???	???	Unknown	
M15	Student	Sudanese	?			Student, Ministry Leader	4

Measures

There was no theoretical model or existing protocol used in the development of the interviews. A variation on the standard protocol was created for interviews with women to explore whether women experienced benefits from the URHC programs. Examples of questions from the interview protocol included: "How has the URHC been good for the camp and the host community?," "Can you describe an example of a conflict, either within the URHC or between a URHC member and another person or group, and how this was settled?," and "What do you hope the URHC will do in the future?" (See Appendix B). Basic demographic questions (e.g., age, gender, education) were asked of all participants.

Analysis

Using NVivo, the data analysis used the constant comparative method, which consists of three types or stages of data analysis: (a) open coding, (b) axial coding, and (c) selective coding. Open coding is the process of examining the data, naming elements in the data, and categorizing the data. Axial coding consists of further developing, expanding, and organizing the categories.[25] Selective coding is the "process of selecting one category (core), systematically relating it to other categories, validating relationships, and fitting in categories that need refinement."[26] The coding team categorized the data individually, then met to discuss and align the categories. This process continued until the researchers reached conceptual redundancy (i.e., when no new concepts or information emerge from the data) at which point the analysis was deemed complete.[27,25] All reported themes reported met the following criteria: (a) were formal and replicable tactics conducted by URHC to achieve its goals; (b) involved specific actions that were defined and taught by URHC and not independent or ad hoc actions by an individual; and (c) were observed and reported by at least two individuals in separate interviews.

Eight strategies were identified from the data. Four strategies were described as developmentally foundational, meaning they made other strategies possible. This helped to clarify the developmental nature of the work of URHC wherein later strategies were enabled by earlier strategies.

Following the initial analysis, the team provided a draft report to the URHC leadership team for review. This review involved two steps: First, an interpreter read the report to the leadership group

while the team noted areas of question or clarification. Simple corrections or clarifications were addressed in the meeting. The leadership team then met privately to discuss the report and to ensure comprehension among people for whom English was not their first language. A joint meeting was held after the private discussion where the report was reviewed and discussed again. Following the debrief meeting with the leadership, the project team interviewed the leaders as a group regarding any additional specific activities related to any of the themes.

Results

The analysis identified eight strategies that represent formal strategic actions by URHC to create distributive justice. "Formal" means the strategy was linked to a formal structure such as the school (KISOM), or a community structure (the zone structure), or tied to a specific method that was taught to and implemented by multiple people. Several of the strategies have two or more components. A component is defined by a variation in strategy created to address a specific sub-group or setting. For example, there are different approaches to conflict resolution depending on whether the focus is on a family conflict or a community-wide conflict.

Community Building

Several participants noted the lack of community in the camp at the time URHC began, in contrast to the current state: *"First, the greatest obstacle [URHC] faced in the camp was that everyone had their own church. The Burundi had a church, the Somalis had church, and everyone was off to themselves. Each church just focused on their own tribal background and culture. Time after time the leadership of URHC came with a problem of bringing the people together, and then in time, they became one thing. They have given up their traditional ways of worship;"* and, *"In the past the churches had no bonding together, there was no coming together, we were independent. The Bible Baptist were independent. We present our own denomination, we were not a single church."*

Interviewees described how people were grouped by tribe and denomination and would, before URHC, fear crossing group boundaries. Community building refers to developing a community where people can safely move between groups without fear. One participant said, *[Now]* *"[The pastors] preach together so there are no longer national boundaries between the preachers. Because they are together: the Congolese, the Somalis, Burundi, all the divided countries come together because of URHC."*

Cooperation with the Turkana community churches is part of community building. Initially suspicious of the association, several area churches filed suit to prevent the association from being incorporated. Today, several Turkana community churches are members of the URHC, participating equally in all URHC resources. People no longer fear moving between camp and host community churches since they have become one community.

Participants reported that successful community building is based on principles of justice in managing resources, together with faith in the integrity of the URHC. The leadership spoke of ensuring that when distributing resources, the leadership receive a share of resources only after members have received theirs. Other methods included: (a) teaching a shared sense of purpose through service, (b) teaching a concept of one church that units local churches, (c) reducing barriers between churches, (d) creating a common purpose and mission, (e) transparent resource management to promote trust and ensure justice, and (f) providing leadership support to member churches**.**

Community Organization

"Every community is organized according to the way they came [to the camp]. An example is my community, the Burundi community, we have a Council of Elders, and there is a Council of Elders in every community. So, what they do now they elect a community Council of Elders, and they put a pastor on the Council so the pastor can help them. Like me and my community, I was just appointed to the

chairman of the Council of Elders. So, whenever they sit down, they consult me and ask if they are handling it the right way or not."

The community building required developing structures and roles. URHC has a formal structure with zonal leaders elected by the pastors within a zone that report to the council of elders who attend to the specific needs of the respective zones and facilitate accurate communication. They also have an executive committee and faculty for the school (KISOM) and are incorporated as a not-for-profit organization. These organizational structures lend formality and sustainability to the work of URHC.

URHC is further organized into six zones that plan the training and services for their local community and bring those needs to URHC. URHC then coordinates local needs and develops programs in response.

Conflict Resolution

Containing, preventing, and resolving conflict was a major focus of URHC described by many interviewees, such as *"a person from one side and another side wanted revenge, but now the pastors from URHC community came together with the pastors from the refugee camp and discuss the issue so the situation would not build with them fighting."*

URHC teaches conflict resolution methods that emphasize an accountability for beliefs (setting an example, modeling faith), standards for behavior in families and for leaders, communication (countering rumors with accurate information), and the authority of the URHC to intervene as a trusted arbitrator. We grouped the conflict resolution work of URHC into three sub-categories.

Church Conflict

Participants described the active intervention in church conflicts by URHC leadership. For example, *"Sometimes in the church . . . there is a disagreement to the level whereby the church, they want maybe to cut the church into two, or division. So, when it reaches that level, most of time we go to the URHC to come in so that they may just bring*

them together . . . (this has) been happening in several occasions."

Conflict between and within churches might involve a conflict between a pastor and church members, between church leaders, or between churches. In these cases, the URHC leadership may directly intervene in the problem and guide people to some resolution**.**

Community Conflict

Participants described intervention in community conflict as different from church conflict within the camp because it is between refugees and local host community members or refugees not from a network church. For example, *"So, a pastor was killed [who] was a Congolese man from the Nazareth, and the reason he was killed was not clear, but some people say that it was maybe he had a conflict with somebody who revenged against him. A person from one side and another side wanted revenge, but now the pastors from URHC community came together with the pastors from the refugee camp and discuss the issue so the situation would not build with them fighting."*

URHC would manage conflict using its communication system to contain rumors that could lead to an explosive escalation of the conflict, and then exercising its role as a trusted broker to intervene.

Family Conflict

Family conflict, including marital conflict, represents one of the most common areas for serious conflict. Participants described URHC as actively confronting family conflict and that their role was supported by camp NGOs, such as *"URHC also is involved in matters concerning families. When sometimes the wife and husband have conflict, when we know that, and even if they go to [an NGO], they [the NGO] may refer the cases to us. We asked them if they have a pastor, and they say yes to have their pastor should help."*

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Conflict between parents and children and between couples is most often addressed at the local level by the elder or community advisor. The advisor both responds to requests to assist with conflict but can also intervene without a request when he or she becomes aware of a conflict.

Education

Education, one of the fundamental strategies of URHC, began as a means for equipping refugees to become missionaries and pastors. It expanded to becoming the means through which URHC creates unity, teaches standards for behavior, and advances the role of women. The attention to women stands out among their educational strategies and is addressed as a separate strategy.

"They teach us about staying together and teach us about thinking about your wife and supporting one another . . . They talk about counseling and psychology. They teach us many different things."

Education included practical lessons about relationships, roles, and the importance of compassion and traditional rituals. For example, *"There was a time they teach us a lesson about comfort. Sometimes they organize big occasions, such as when someone is getting married, and they teach us [during these events]."*

Education was also the means for creating and strengthening leaders. *"(From URHC) I learned how a leader should be, and also how a leader should help others to come up as leaders also. That is the main thing I learned, the way I can be, the leader should be."*

Trust Building and Transparency

Keeping community actions hidden contributes to distrust and a belief in conspiracy theories. Therefore, transparency was widely recognized as an essential condition to counteract distrust. As one participant put it …*"That is a trust that they have built. It is transparency. There is no evidence that there is anything that is hidden [from the community by URHC]."*

"You cannot command people to trust you or obey you, you need to earn it. You have to earn trust; you have to earn respect. You can only earn trust and respect through what you are doing. So, from there, then the people decide to respect you. Then they decide to involve you in their matters but first they need to see who you are, they need to see you have compassion, you have a heart, before they can come to you for help."

Trust is the foundation for the credibility of URHC and the source of its authority to manage the distribution of resources, confront and prevent conflict, and advance the interests of vulnerable people. As one participants said, *"Without transparency, the ministry will not grow . . . it is the basis of ministry."*

URHC leadership emphasizes that trust is the foundation of their ministry; transparency is one of the main strategies for building trust. Meetings are open and regularly communicated across the camp, with SMS messaging via cell phones as the main means of communicating. Resources are managed in an open way, with leaders attending to their own interests last.

Care for the Vulnerable

Building on the belief in serving the vulnerable, even in a community of vulnerable people, URHC prioritized care for the most vulnerable in the camp. *"we are looking at ministry for widows and for orphaned children, street children, and also for the disability children. We are putting things better as we go."*

Care for the vulnerable is a fundamental area of service for URHC. It links to their effort to establish trust and demonstrates a core tenet of their faith. Vulnerable people are served simply based on being disadvantaged or at high risk for harm, without respect for any external factors, such as faith or tribe. Currently, service to the vulnerable focuses on widows and single mothers (distinct from women in general, who are also served), children, and youth (adolescents and young adults). The resources for serving those in need come mainly from URHC

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member tithes and, when available, outside donations. People are asked to tithe from their bi-weekly food allocation. This required a basic change in attitude for people to give from their limited supplies of food. One participant described this as . . ." *because sometime I may say, "Ah, if I give this, where am I going to get it?" Yeah. no. For us, we should live freed, free, knowing our God is our provider; our God is our God who is rich. Help our peoples in the church to know all these sides. No matter of fear again. Our home, the right home is in heaven, whereby we live a peaceful life there. And that is how we help the pupils in the churches how to live. And that is now how we have seen there is a great change."*

Communication

While technology (cell phones) has enabled communication, the essential quality described by participants was a proactive effort to be inclusive concerning community information and proactive about ensuring that people are informed. For example, *"We have phones, and with those phones, they can call me, so when there is something we need to do, we can call one another. We can be together and plan what to do. Even the people outside the camp, they can communicate; they can have access to what's going on."*

Communication is fundamental to an effective program and is one of the foundational areas of programming. Conflict often erupts when rumor replaces fact and people take sides based on geography and tribe. A communication system is essential to distribute accurate information to counter rumors and to communicate when URHC leadership is addressing a dispute. When rumors threaten to escalate a conflict, URHC gathers and disseminates the facts, stressing that this information can be trusted because you know URHC, and you know you can trust us; therefore, leave it to us to settle this fairly**.**

Women's Roles

The discussion of women's roles stood out to the project team as an area where the URHC was actively changing a culture that traditional kept women subservient and oppressed. This was expressed by one participant who said, "*In the URHC, women, they are treated well because they do get some services like education in terms of giving them, teaching about their families, educating the ways of getting something, like maybe they can even teach some good things of living with other people in that area.*"

Participants also described the proactive nature of supporting women . . . *"They encourage women to go to school because for women to go to school is very hard. Some refuse because they say they don't have time. But URHC encourages them to go to school then they go, and they finish, and they get a certificate. . . . URHC encourages them and tells us to encourage them. They say, 'We will help. You can also do the work of God.'"*

The work by URHC was contrasted by participants with the traditional women's roles, as in, *"Yes, before we came to the church, we are treated different women. They were saying that a woman doesn't have voice to stand in front of people or to talk, but when we become a Christian now, we are equal. There is no women in the church, and there is no men. We are all the same. If you can stand in front of people, you can — if you are able to preach the Bible, you can stand and preach the Bible. And now, there are some women that become pastors now. So, I have seen no difference in the church now. We are the same."*

URHC leaders recognize they are competing with cultures and traditions that discriminate against women, either explicitly or implicitly, by emphasizing the traditional domestic role of women. Such cultural expectations limit the time women have available to serve in other roles. The URHC does not restrict from membership churches that deny women leadership opportunities. Instead, they see this as an opportunity to teach and influence

these churches to adopt views more respectful of women.

In addition to education concerning theology and roles, women are taught business survival skills. As one participant noted, *"We can teach them about business. In that business, it can continue having many, many skills so that it can develop a business that can run."*

Thus, women report finding themselves in a different relationship to the community because of support and education from URHC. Women report feeling empowered to take care of themselves and to be more active in the community and in their homes. They are taught that they are equal to men, at least in the church, and encouraged to create support groups to help and support one another.

Discussion

The research team, along with the URHC, identified clear and specific strategies used by the URHC that aided in providing necessary services to refugees, aide to the vulnerable, education for those without, resources for those in need, and hope and a sense of purpose to many in Kakuma. These strategies developed without outside intervention. There were no external organizations, programs, or advisors involved in the development of these strategies; they arose entirely from the study, beliefs, and values of the members.

Justice Strategies

The work of URHC demonstrates the application of principles of procedural and distributive justice in a complex setting characterized by distrust and violence and a pervasive sense of injustice. The development of justice began with four key strategies that appear to have created the climate necessary for the development of the subsequent strategies. These four are: 1) Trust Building / Transparency; 2) Communication; 3) Serving the Vulnerable; and 4) Education. These strategies are linked to establishing justice by emphasizing transparency and fairness in distribution, justice in serving all people

in accordance with their need (serving the vulnerable), open communication, and using education to explain and gain acceptance of their procedures.

These four strategies established the reputation of URHC in the community as a just and trustworthy institution and enabled the later strategies. These strategies focus on the community culture and environment and are based on a set of values that include respect, openness, service, and empowerment. These values are also linked to the faith of the URHC members, creating a basis for shared commitment to the strategies.

Impact

Our interviews also revealed the basic impact of the program on quality of life. People spoke of a reduction in fear, a restored sense of community, and a renewed sense of purpose. Several people spoke of having a purpose in their lives related to carrying out the mission of URHC, even if their path in life does not lead to being resettled in their home country. Our impression is that this reveals a link between trauma and justice, raising the possibility that when the community environment addresses issues of injustice, there is potential for greater healing on the part of the survivors of trauma. This alignment of faith, values, justice, and community raises the question of whether these strategies can be transferred to communities and cultures of different faiths.

Certainly, there are examples of Christian communities that do not teach these same values and life practices, as well as of non-Christian communities that do share these values. We suggest that the core values are not unique to Christian theology, but the formal and grassroots effort to link values, faith, and behavior is a unique effort of the URHC. The four fundamentals of trust, communication, service, and education (empowerment) are even more engaging because URHC has a well-developed supporting theology. This supporting theology makes these fundamentals even more influential and engaging because it emphasizes connection to basic personal values.

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While the quantitative assessment of impact within the refugee and host communities was not within the scope of this project, participants noted numerous examples of positive outcomes from the work of the URHC. These include:

Peace and Purpose. This is the most striking example of impact. Numerous URHC members reported having a greater sense of peace and purpose since joining the URHC. In one church meeting, when calling for donations from the members, the pastor asked the congregation how many people felt "poor." Not one person raised a hand. Though this may have been the result of feeling the need to conform, it is still an interesting occurrence. This same church has used a considerable amount of their resources to provide meals for hungry children and other resources for those in need. Thus, it seems reasonable to link at least one aspect of increased peace in the camp to the work of the URHC.

Security. Several participants reported the ability to attend other churches without fear, greater cooperation between churches where previously there was conflict and an overall decrease of fear and conflict in the camp, as well as between the camp and community. While such improvements cannot be attributed solely to the URHC, some aspects of this sense of safety appear to be an outcome of the community building efforts of the URHC.

Care for the vulnerable. The quality of life for the most vulnerable among the refugees may also be attributed, in part, to the URHC. Single mothers and children are sought out by URHC members for assistance and have benefited from the work of the URHC. Overall, many people at the camp expressed surprise that URCH was equipping refugees to care for those with unmet needs both within and outside the camp, rather than taking resources from the surrounding community.

Reduced conflict. URHC programs directly aimed to intervene in family conflict as a means of reducing larger community conflicts. We also note that some of the URHC members helping with conflict benefited from training programs, such as the Jesuit Refugee Services (JRS) community counselor program, which has trained several URHC members. The JRS program is open to all people in the camp and does not specifically align with the URHC program, nor did it play a role in the formation of URHC. The URHC programs have worked to extend the impact of such services.

Education. Many of our participants expressed developing a greater sense of purpose and hope in their lives because of receiving education. URHC members are trained for specific roles in the church and community. As a result, many participants reported that their lives in the camp have a new purpose.

Implications and Significance

These findings add support to the Lerner and Clayton model that describes people as striving to see the world as a just place and resorting to violence if necessary to counter a perceived injustice.[10] URHC established itself as a trusted broker for the community, which allowed it to intervene at several levels. First, it shapes perceptions driven by rumor by providing accurate and trusted information. Conflict is contained when perceptions of injustice are contained. Second, they relieve individuals and tribes of the burden of entering a conflict by acting as a trusted representative. This prevents one group from seeing themselves as being further victimized by the original party. Finally, they contain conflict by teaching peaceful methods of resolution that are based on their spiritual beliefs. URHC taught that avoiding conflict is not only good for its own sake, but necessary to have the type of witness God expects of His followers, such as in "Blessed are the peacemakers" (Matthew 5:9) and demonstrating humility, mercy, and justice (Micah 6:8).

From these interviews and discussions, we drew the following implications:

1. Building a system on a foundation of procedural and distributive justice allowed for basic change in the pattern of conflict in a refugee population with deeply entrenched distrust.

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2. URHC has clear and specific strategies that they are applying both in the camp and in the larger community.

3. While we cannot yet document the full extent of impact, nor quantify that impact, URHC has had an impact on many people in the camp. The URHC programs have clear and specific targets and observable impacts, many of which are noted in this report.

4. The URHC program is a classic example of a grassroots, community-based effort at peace and reconciliation. As such, it is an example of how grassroots efforts in other areas might be promoted, as well as illustrating how NGOs might align with the work.

5. Given the trust and reputation established by URHC, there is a significant opportunity to serve the camp through equipping the URHC to train people in community-based trauma care. Developing a training program in this area, in cooperation with the NGOs focusing on mental health (such as JRS), would likely be of benefit.

6. The impact of giving and demonstrating generosity is a counter-intuitive finding that nonetheless has much support in the social science literature. This could be another area of study to quantify how such a ministry has benefitted the members of the camp as well as the churches themselves.

7. Our emphasis on the success of URHC should not be taken as discounting the work of the UNHCR and the contracting NGOs working in the camp. URHC operates in an environment that made their work possible. They received training from NGOs and find the NGOs open to supporting them, training them, and generally working together. This is a collaborative approach to community work that warrants further documentation.

Finally, it is also important to note the relationship between this group and other faith groups in the camp, most notably the Muslim community. The work to date by this group has been across refugee and host community churches that share a common theological view. The group recognizes its responsibility to serve across faith, tribal, or geographic boundaries. Currently, the group is exploring the possibility of cooperating with Muslim community groups. However, in an area where Al Shabab is active, such contacts are very risky and must move with great caution.

Conclusion

It is our hope that this research will help bring greater attention and insight into faith-based grass-root peace and reconciliation efforts. Moreover, we hope that this article will lead to more research in this understudied focus of investigation — and ultimately — greater care for refugees.

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Appendix A: The Churches, Nationalities and Languages of URHC (as of 2014)

Table 1. URHC Member Churches as of 2014 and Location

URHC Member Churches	Location	URHC Zone
Presbyterian Church of Sudan	Kakuma 1	
Episcopal Church of Sudan		Zone 1
Winners Chapel Church		
Calvary Pentecostal Church		
Kenya Assemblies of God		
African Inland Church		
Family Pentecostal Ministry		
Worldwide Church of God		
Episcopal Church of Sudan	Kakuma 3	
Cornerstone Church		
Baptist Church of Sudan	Kakuma 1	
Sudanese Church of Christ	Kakuma 1	
Sudanese Church of Christ	Kakuma 3	
Episcopal Church	Kakuma 1	Zone 3
Episcopal Church	Kakuma 3	
PEFA		
Adonai Oromo Evangelical Church		
Methodist Church of Sudan		
International Pentecostal Holiness Church	Kakuma 1	Zone 1
International Pentecostal Holiness Church	Kakuma 1	Zone 2
International Pentecostal Holiness Church	Kakuma 1	Zone 3
International Pentecostal Holiness Church	Kakuma 2	
International Pentecostal Holiness Church	Kakuma 3	
Evangelical Lutheran Church	Kakuma 1	
Ethiopian Evangelical Church		
Bethel Gospel Church		
Friends Church		
United Christian Church	Kakuma 1	
United Christian Church	Kakuma 2	
Kenya Christ Gospel Ministry	Kakuma Town	
Kenya Christ Gospel Ministry	Nadayal Town	
Release Pentecostal Church of Kenya	Kakuma Town	
Release Pentecostal Church of Kenya	Native 1 Town	
Ebenezer Fellowship Center	Kakuma 1	
Bible Baptist Church	Laorunp'ove Town	
Grace Revival Center	Kakuma 3	
Bible Baptist Church	Kakuma Town	

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Anglican Church of Sudan	Kakuma 1	Zone 3
Fountain of Life International	Kakuma Town	
Evangelical Free Church of Sudan	Kakuma 1	
Christ United Church	Kakuma Town	
Episcopal Church of Sudan	Kakuma 1	
Presbyterian Church of Sudan	Kakuma 2	
Release Pentecostal Church	Nadapal Town	
Fountain of Life Church International	Nakwangat Town	
Full Gospel Church of Kenya	Town	
Grace Communion International	Kakuma 1	
Evangelical Lutheran Church	Kakuma 3	
Baptist Church	Kakuma Town	
Baptist Church	Kakuma 2	Phase 2
New Apostolic Church	Kakuma 2	
Free Methodist Church	Kakuma 2	
Redeemed Christian Church	Kakuma 1	Zone 4
Pentecostal Church	Kakuma 2	Phase 2
Faith Home Church	Kakuma Town	
Presbyterian Church of Sudan	Kakuma 1	
Episcopal Church of Sudan		Zone 1
Winners Chapel Church		
Calvary Pentecostal Church		
Kenya Assemblies of God		
African Inland Church		
Family Pentecostal Ministry		
Worldwide Church of God		
Episcopal Church of Sudan	Kakuma 3	
Cornerstone Church		
Baptist Church of Sudan	Kakuma 1	
Sudanese Church of Christ	Kakuma 1	
Sudanese Church of Christ	Kakuma 3	
Episcopal Church	Kakuma 1	Zone 3
Episcopal Church	Kakuma 3	
PEFA		
Adonai Oromo Evangelical Church		
Methodist Church of Sudan		
International Pentecostal Holiness Church	Kakuma 1	Zone 1
International Pentecostal Holiness Church	Kakuma 1	Zone 2
International Pentecostal Holiness Church	Kakuma 1	Zone 3
International Pentecostal Holiness Church	Kakuma 2	
International Pentecostal Holiness Church	Kakuma 3	
Evangelical Lutheran Church	Kakuma 1	
Ethiopian Evangelical Church		
Bethel Gospel Church		
Friends Church		
United Christian Church	Kakuma 1	
United Christian Church	Kakuma 2	
Kenya Christ Gospel Ministry	Kakuma Town	
Kenya Christ Gospel Ministry	Nadayal Town	
Release Pentecostal Church of Kenya	Kakuma Town	
Release Pentecostal Church of Kenya	Native 1 Town	
Ebenezer Fellowship Center	Kakuma 1	
Bible Baptist Church	Laorunp'ove Town	
Grace Revival Center	Kakuma 3	
Bible Baptist Church	Kakuma Town	
Anglican Church of Sudan	Kakuma 1	Zone 3

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Fountain of Life International	Kakuma Town	
Evangelical Free Church of Sudan	Kakuma 1	
Christ United Church	Kakuma Town	
Episcopal Church of Sudan	Kakuma 1	
Presbyterian Church of Sudan	Kakuma 2	
Release Pentecostal Church	Nadapal Town	
Fountain of Life Church International	Nakwangat Town	
Full Gospel Church of Kenya	Town	
Grace Communion International	Kakuma 1	
Evangelical Lutheran Church	Kakuma 3	
Baptist Church	Kakuma Town	
Baptist Church	Kakuma 2	Phase 2
New Apostolic Church	Kakuma 2	
Free Methodist Church	Kakuma 2	
Redeemed Christian Church	Kakuma 1	Zone 4
Pentecostal Church	Kakuma 2	Phase 2
Faith Home Church	Kakuma Town	
International Pentecostal Holiness Church	Kakuma 1	Zone 3
International Pentecostal Holiness Church	Kakuma 2	
International Pentecostal Holiness Church	Kakuma 3	
Evangelical Lutheran Church	Kakuma 1	
Ethiopian Evangelical Church		
Bethel Gospel Church		
Friends Church		
United Christian Church	Kakuma 1	
United Christian Church	Kakuma 2	
Kenya Christ Gospel Ministry	Kakuma Town	
Kenya Christ Gospel Ministry	Nadayal Town	
Release Pentecostal Church of Kenya	Kakuma Town	
Release Pentecostal Church of Kenya	Native 1 Town	
Ebenezer Fellowship Center	Kakuma 1	
Bible Baptist Church	Laorunp'ove Town	
Grace Revival Center	Kakuma 3	
Bible Baptist Church	Kakuma Town	
Anglican Church of Sudan	Kakuma 1	Zone 3
Fountain of Life International	Kakuma Town	
Evangelical Free Church of Sudan	Kakuma 1	
Christ United Church	Kakuma Town	
Episcopal Church of Sudan	Kakuma 1	
Presbyterian Church of Sudan	Kakuma 2	
Release Pentecostal Church	Nadapal Town	
Fountain of Life Church International	Nakwangat Town	
Full Gospel Church of Kenya	Town	
Grace Communion International	Kakuma 1	
Evangelical Lutheran Church	Kakuma 3	
Baptist Church	Kakuma Town	
Baptist Church	Kakuma 2	Phase 2
New Apostolic Church	Kakuma 2	
Free Methodist Church	Kakuma 2	
Redeemed Christian Church	Kakuma 1	Zone 4
Pentecostal Church	Kakuma 2	Phase 2
Faith Home Church	Kakuma Town	

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Table 2. Nationalities and Major Languages Represented Within URHC

Nationalities	Major Languages
Burundi	Kiwyarwanda & Kirunadi
Rwanda	English
Congo	Swahili
Ethiopia	Arabic
Somali	Dinka
South Sudan	Nuev
Eritrea	Kiganda
Uganda	Somali
Kenya	Amava (Ethiopia)
Burundi	Oromo
	Moro (Nuba)
	Turkana
	Bari (Equatoria)
	Kiwyarwanda & Kirunadi

Appendix B: Interview Protocol

1. Peace and conflict resolution
   o Please describe an example of a conflict, either within URHC or between a URHC member and another person or group, and how this was settled.
   o What role did URHC play in settling this conflict? For example, did it teach a way to settle conflict, or manage the conflict, or something else?
   o If there was some way URHC helped with the conflict, how did it learn to do this or how did this help come about?
   o Did you personally learn anything about peace or resolving conflict?
2. General Insights and lessons
   o What about URHC and its people have made it a success?
   o How has URHC been good for the camp and the host community?
   o What have the people of URHC learned about running a successful association in a refugee camp?
   o Can you tell us a story about how URHC has helped other people?
3. Community service and impact
   o Who has URHC helped and how have they helped?
   o What improvements have you observed in the camp or community that might be due to the work of URHC, even if in part?
   o What do you hope URHC will do in the future?
   o If you wanted to tell the world a story of how URHC has helped the camp and/or community, what story would you tell them?
4. Women's roles
   o What is life like for women within the camp who are members of churches?
   o Does URHC take any action regarding treatment of women?
   o How has it come about that women have, in some cases, leadership roles within churches in the camp? Does URHC have any part in supporting these leadership roles? If so, can you tell us a story about that?

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