

**UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA**

**RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN FORMER LIBERIAN REFUGEES AND  
THE HOST COMMUNITY IN BUDUBURAM AFTER THE END OF  
HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE**



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**MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY**

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**UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA**

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HOST COMMUNITY IN BUDUBURAM AFTER THE END OF  
HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE**

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**of the requirements for the award of the degree of  
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**AUGUST, 2023**

## DECLARATION

### STUDENT'S DECLARATION

I, Anastasia Millicent Turkson, hereby declare that this thesis is my own work and all secondary data employed in the study are acknowledged accordingly. No part of this thesis has therefore been presented in any form to any institution for the award of any other degree.

Signature: .....

Date: .....

### SUPERVISOR'S DECLARATION

I certify that, the preparation and presentation of this thesis was supervised in accordance with the guidelines on supervision of thesis as laid down by the School of Graduate Studies, University of Education, Winneba.

Name of Supervisor: Rev. Fr. Dr. Linus Nangwele

Signature: .....

Date: .....

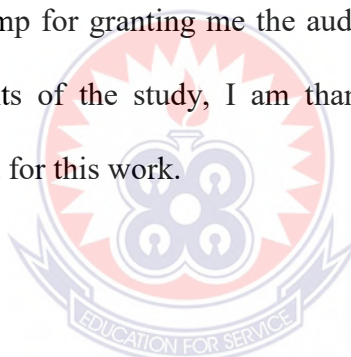
## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this work to my family.



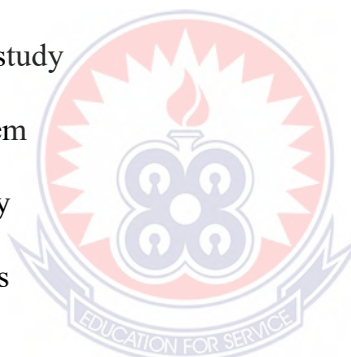
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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women
CRC	Convention on the Right of Children
HNT	Human Needs Theory
HURIDOCS	Human Right Information and Document Systems
ICCPR	International Covenant on Civil and Political Right
ICESCR	International Covenant on Economic Social and Cultural Right
MCH	Mother and Child Health
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
UN	United Nations
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UDHR	Universal Declaration on Human Right



## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to understand the relationship between former Liberian Refugees in Buduburam camp and the host community during and after humanitarian aid by exploring their lived experiences, challenges and coping strategies. The study adopted a qualitative research approach through a case study design. A total of 12 refugees were purposively selected in the study. Data was collected through interviews and observation and the analysis of the data was done through thematic analysis. The findings reveal that the former Liberian refugees' relationship with the host community during the aid era was cordial but turned sour after the assistance to the refugees ceased. The study discovered that the former Liberian refugees are faced with challenges ranging from financial difficulties, discrimination, to malnutrition and denial of social services. The former Liberian refugees strive to survive by doing menial jobs, receiving support from social networks and by having faith and relying on God. The former Liberian refugees have hope of things taking a positive turn someday. The findings show that in order to have a cordial relationship between the former Liberian refugees and the host community there should be cooperation to attain common goals and the introduction of livelihood support programs. It is recommended that government should take immediate action to address the issues surrounding the former Liberian refugees' identity documents, employment opportunities, and housing settlement.



## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.0 Background of the study

When conflicts end the expectation is that the refugees generated by the conflict would repatriate home to be part of the post conflict peace building and redevelopment of the country. This does not necessarily happen with all refugee situations. The host country's chances and challenges rely on a number of factors. The political economy of the host countries, linkages between urban and rural areas, and the dynamics of host-refugee relationships are some of the elements that affect how refugees affect their host countries. Additionally, when certain economic projects are put into action to help both refugees and hosts, there are individuals from both groups who stand to gain or lose from the project's operations (World Development Report, 2011). Long-term economic, social, political, and environmental effects result from refugees residing in developing nations for extended periods of time. Hosts and refugees struggle for scarce resources like water, food, housing, and medical care. Additionally, refugee-host country's need for infrastructure including transportation, sewage, and water supply, as well as education and health services, are growing.

Several refugee hosting nations' economies were weak or have significantly worsened, and they are now characterized by a sharp fall in agricultural productivity, significant issues with social services, an increase in the price of necessities, a rise in unemployment, and competition over natural resources that results in conflict (Getachew, 2006). Host governments tend to set up camps to house the refugees when a large number of migrants enter the nation. Living, farming, grazing livestock, hunting, and other activities are all permitted in the host community. Due to the disruption caused by refugee camp's establishment in local communities, host

communities must first adjust to the problems and changes brought about by the camp's and the refugees' presence. Also, refugee camp has a variety of effects on the livelihoods of the host community (Chambers, 1986).

This study looks at the situation of former Liberian refugees who have 'refused' to repatriate from Ghana since the conflict in their country ended. There has been United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees-led repatriation efforts which have not succeeded in getting all the former Liberian refugees to repatriate. Some of the former refugees have however rejected local integration and rather prefer resettlement in a third country of asylum in North America or Europe. Despite the fact that neither voluntary migration nor forced migration is a new phenomenon, in the past few years, the latter has become a matter of increasing interest (Omata, 2012).

One of the most complex and daunting humanitarian problems facing the international community today is the increasing scale and frequency of 'protracted refugee situations' – meaning refugees have spent more than five years in exile without any immediate prospect of a solution (Crisp, 2003). Currently, over two-thirds of refugees in the world are trapped in prolonged exile in the poor developing regions where host states and communities have scarce resources. Further, the average duration of exile is now approaching twenty years, nearly doubled over the past decade (Milner & Loescher, 2011). The former Liberian refugee population in Ghana is certainly one of these protracted refugee cases for which there are struggles to find a solution to end their exile. It has been a conundrum for the UN refugee agency to understand why a considerable number of former Liberian refugees have not returned to their country of origin despite the restored peace in Liberia and the unfavorable living conditions in Ghana. The Liberian civil war which was the root cause of displacement for many Liberians ended with the final ceasefire agreement in 2003.

The levels of humanitarian aid for these refugees have been continually reduced over the last decade and have been entirely cut off in the last years. Refugees' economic activities in the country have been constrained due to various impediments. The general relationship with the local host community appears to have deteriorated as their exile extended. The increasing number of refugees has become an issue for policy debates and dialogues (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (Agblorti, 2011). By the end of 2012, about 45.2 million persons worldwide were regarded as forcibly displaced due to persecution, conflict, violence, and human rights violations (UNHCR, 2012). Within the same period, the number of refugees in Africa was about 2,774,500 (UNHCR, 2013). As of 2011, there were about 11,000 Liberian refugees at the Buduburam refugee settlement in Ghana (Omata, 2012). Regardless of the efforts of host countries and the international humanitarian community to ease the burden of refugees, the number of protracted refugee situations has increased (Agblorti, 2011; Jacobsen, 2002).

Over the last decade, the humanitarian assistance from the Ghanaian government and that of the United Nations has stopped yet refugee decisions are divided. Whereas some refugees are finally repatriating to Liberia after their protracted exile, a considerable number of them intend to remain in exile and some have not yet made a decision. Protracted refugees are those who have spent more than five years in exile without any immediate solution in view (Crisp, 2003). For the past 30 years, some countries in Africa have experienced recurring and continued mass influx of refugees as many developed countries have restricted the entry of refugees into their countries (Jacobsen, 2002). Responding to the needs of the rising number of refugees in Africa, several countries on the continent ratified the 1951 United Nations Refugee

Convention and its 1967 Protocol, including the 1969 Organization of African Unity convention governing refugee situations in Africa (Liwanga, 2010).

Stakeholders participating in the global refugee crisis are concerned about establishing refugee camps in communities that are primarily rural. This worry stems from the fact that some of these places have such subpar living circumstances that the local populace depends on numerous interventions just to survive. As a result, communities that take in refugees can feel jealous of humanitarian aid that focuses primarily on helping refugees. It has been stated that in order to provide help to refugees, host communities' needs must be taken into account given the costs involved in hosting refugees (Jacobsen, 2001). This argument could be based on the idea that a content local populace would be more willing to accept refugees in some capacity, facilitating peaceful coexistence between refugees and them until any long-term solutions are implemented.

This study compares the relationships between former Liberian refugees and the host community in the Buduburam camp in Ghana during and after humanitarian assistance. It does so by combining recent livelihoods methods to refugee studies with a social resilience framework. Additionally, given the dearth of research on the experiences of refugees after repatriation exercises, this study, which is a component of a broader project, examined the lived experiences and relationship between remaining former Liberian refugees in the Buduburam camp and host community in Ghana in terms of how they lived during and after humanitarian assistance and their coping mechanisms.



## 1.1 Statement of Problem

Security concerns restrict or discourage refugees from mingling with the host community in many host communities, where they are frequently confined in camps (Finnstrom, 2003). But in Buduburam, where some former Liberian refugees have wed locals and even acquired real estate like land in the hamlet, it appears that this is not the case. The vast majority of former Liberian refugees in Ghana are still hesitant to go home. This can be due to their extended stay, relatively steady lifestyle in Buduburam, and, to some extent, their skewed or overly pessimistic impressions of the situation in Liberia. Despite the official termination of significant resettlement programs, many former Liberian refugees still hope for their eventual resettlement in a third country. Concerns regarding the ongoing refugee situation in Buduburam have grown over time in Ghana's public opinion, especially in light of the suspension of humanitarian aid.

Although refugee research in Ghana has grown, they are deficient in providing data that would enable an understanding of the lived experiences of the former Liberian refugees in Buduburam after the humanitarian assistance by the UNHCR ended. The UNHCR does more than just the provision of shelter, food, clothes, and education for refugees around the world. The expansion of local markets has led to an increase in business and trade between the host population and the refugees, which has made many locals to switch from farming to trading. Many emerging host communities encounter many types of sociocultural impact and economic hurdles in their efforts to welcome long-term refugees (Boamah-Gyau, 2008).

Studies (such as Tanle, 2013; Macedo, 2012; Omata, 2012; Dauda, 2012; Sarfo-Mensah, 2009; Bortu, 2009; Rumbach, 2007) have documented the experiences and situation of the Liberian refugees in the Buduburam camp in Ghana over the years.

However, these studies could not provide an analysis of the relationship between the former Liberian refugees and the host community (Buduburam) from the perspective of the refugees. There is thus, limited understanding of the relationship between the Liberian refugees in Buduburam and the host community after the humanitarian assistance from the UNHCR stopped. In July 2006, a joint UNHCR-WFP assessment trip to the Buduburam camp made recommendations for the elimination of food assistance and subsidized services like education and healthcare. It was recommended that humanitarian activities be refocused on self-reliance and that the infrastructure be turned over to the authorities. Additionally, a verification exercise carried out in June 2006 by UNHCR and its collaborators revealed that half of the refugees who landed in Ghana in May 2005 have returned on their own though a chunk still remained. This exercise also reinforced that the way to ensuring harmonious coexistence with host communities is to gradually decrease dependency on direct support while increasing self-sufficiency (UNHCR Global Appeal, 2007).

However, since the end of the humanitarian aid programme to the refugees by the United Nations and the government of Ghana, little is known about the lived experiences of the former Liberian refugees who continue to stay in the Buduburam Camp in terms of their relationship with the host community, challenges and how they are coping. In other words, the views and experiences of the former Liberian refugees who remain in the Buduburam camp appear unexplored or minimally captured in the Ghanaian refugee research. Therefore, the experiences of former Liberian refugees in Buduburam after the end of the humanitarian assistance from the United Nations appear unexplored or missing in the Ghanaian refugee research. This study seeks to fill that knowledge gap by seeking to explore the relationship between former Liberian refugees at Buduburam and the host community after the humanitarian

assistance from the United Nations and Government of Ghana ended, the challenges they face and the coping strategies or mechanisms they adopt to cope in the camp.

### **1.2 Purpose of the study**

The study was aimed to explore the relationship that exist between former Liberian refugees at Buduburam in the Central Region of Ghana and the host community after humanitarian aid from the United Nations and Government of Ghana ended, the challenges the refugees face and the strategies they have adopted to cope.

### **1.3 Research Objectives**

The study sought to achieve the following objectives:

1. To explore the nature of the relationship that exists between former Liberian refugees in Buduburam and the host community after the end of the humanitarian assistance from the United Nations and Government of Ghana;
2. To analyze the challenges former Liberian refugees in Buduburam face in their relationship with the host community after the end of the humanitarian assistance from the United Nations and Government of Ghana, and
3. To explore the mechanisms adopted by former Liberian refugees in the Buduburam camp to cope in their relationship with the host community after the end of the humanitarian assistance from the United Nations and government of Ghana.

#### **1.4 Research Questions**

The study was guided by the following research questions:

1. What is the nature of the relationship between former Liberian refugees in Buduburam and the host community after the humanitarian assistance from the United Nations and government of Ghana ended?
2. What challenges are faced by former Liberian refugees at the Buduburam in their relationship with the host community after the humanitarian assistance from the United Nations and government of Ghana ended?
3. How do former Liberian refugees in Buduburam camp cope in their relationship with the host community after the humanitarian assistance from the United Nations and government of Ghana ended?

#### **1.5 Scope of the Study**

The study was confined to solely formal refugees of Liberian extraction living in Buduburam camp in the Central Region of Ghana. The study was interested in exploring three issues. Firstly, the study explored the relationship between the former Liberian refugees in the Buduburam camp and the host community after the humanitarian assistance from the UN and the government of Ghana ended. Second, the study was interested in the challenges faced by the former Liberian refugees in their interaction with the host community in the post-humanitarian era. Finally, the study explored the strategies adopted by the former Liberian refugees to cope in their interaction in the post-humanitarian era.

## **1.6 Significance of the Study**

The study contributes to policy, practice and theory.

### ***1.6.1 Practice***

In terms of practice, the outcome of the study would enable the Ghana Refugee Board and international non-governmental organizations that are focused on refugee welfare to develop appropriate support services that would help the former Liberian refugees at the Buduburam camp to cope effectively with their situation and challenges. The findings of the study provide insights that could inform the kind and form of assistance that refugee organizations and the Ghana Refugee Board could provide to support the former Liberian refugees to live dignified lives and successfully reintegrate into the Ghanaian community.

### ***1.6.2 Theory***

The study helps to deepen the understanding of refugee-host interaction. The study contributes to the understanding of how the interaction between refugees and the host community under an appropriate condition such as a humanitarian assistance regime can promote tolerance and cohesion and reduce prejudices and tensions between them, and how their interaction under an inappropriate condition such as no humanitarian assistance can breed hostility, intolerance, prejudice and stereotypes. The outcome of the study provides insights to understand how interaction between refugees and host community under inappropriate condition(s) can breed intolerance and hostile environment. Therefore, outcome of this study contribute to the strengthening of the Gordon Allport's Contact Theory that interaction between minority and majority group under inappropriate condition can breed intolerance, hostility, prejudices and stereotypes and vice versa. In addition, the study adds to the refugee literature by providing insights into how refugees cope after humanitarian

assistance from the UNHCR and host country cease. The findings of the study also help us to understand that the manner in which refugee-host communities interact with refugees can decide on the challenges that refugees are faced with. Overall, the outcome of the study indicates that intergroup contact can affect intergroup relationship.

### **1.6.3 Policy**

In terms of policy, the outcome of the study suggests that refugee-host countries' understanding of the implications of disrupted refugee community on vulnerabilities in the host communities is important in developing priority and policy actions towards addressing refugee problems and ensuring cohesion between the refugees and host communities.

### **1.7 Organization of the Study**

The thesis is organized into five chapters. The first chapter is an introduction section, which consists of problem statement, purpose of study, research objective, research questions, significance of the study, the scope of the study and the organization of the study. The second chapter deals with literature review that includes definition of terms and concept and the livelihoods framework. The third chapter deals with the methodology. It encompasses the philosophical paradigm of the study, the research design, research approach, setting, population, sample, sampling technique, research methods, sources of data, data collection instrument, data collection method, data analysis procedure, ethical consideration and positionality and limitation of the study. The fourth chapter presents the findings of the study. Finally, the fifth chapter contains the summary, conclusion and recommendation of the study.

## 1.9 Definition of Terms

**Refugee:** This refers to someone who is seeking asylum in a different country or outside his or her home nation due to a conflict or a disaster in the home country.

**Liberian Refugees at Buduburam:** They include Liberians who fled to Ghana as a result of the civil war that erupted in Liberia around the 1990s.

**Humanitarian Assistance:** This refers to the extension of food, shelter, clothing, water, medicine and psychological support among others to vulnerable people or people experiencing or who have experienced a disaster etc. to enable them live dignified lives.



## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.0 Introduction**

This chapter reviews literature relevant to the study. The chapter examines previous research in the area of refugee and host community relationships and other relevant refugee research. The review discussed the literature and highlights the gaps that this study was designed to fill. Also, the chapter discusses the theory that underpins the study.

#### **2.1 Theoretical Framework**

This section discusses the theory that was drawn to inform the study. From account of literature, I found that Gordon Allport's (1954) Intergroup Contact Theory was significant and appropriate to understanding the relationship that exist between the Liberian refugees at the Buduburam camp and the host community.

##### **Intergroup Contact Theory**

The Contact Theory is credited to Gordon Allport in 1954 (Allport, 1955). The theory indicates that intergroup interaction or contact under appropriate conditions can effectively reduce prejudice and tensions and promote tolerance between majority and minority group members, and vice versa under inappropriate conditions. That is, social contact can reduce intergroup prejudice and vice versa depending on the conditions. In refugee situation, the argument of the theory is that when refugees and host community interact or are in contact with each other under appropriate conditions, it can help reduce stereotypes and hostility, and vice versa when such contact is under inappropriate conditions. In the Liberian refugee camp's early years, full humanitarian food help was provided. According to the contact theory, when such appropriate or positive conditions exist in the interaction between the refugees and



host community, prejudices, stereotypes and intolerance can be reduced. However, as the Liberian refugee situation at Buduburam changed into a long-term or protracted one, aid levels gradually decreased resulting in reduction in cordial interaction between the refugees and the host community. For example, if the host community holds negative stereotypes about Liberians, according to the contact theory, those stereotypes would reduce when the refugees' interaction with the host community is under a conducive, supportive and friendly environment. If the former Liberian refugees have the opportunity to communicate with the host community, they will be able to understand and appreciate varied viewpoints about the way of life of the host. The theory indicates that this appreciation and understanding will reduce prejudice, stereotypes and discrimination that tend to occur between majority and minority group members. The argument of the theory is that if the contact between the former Liberian refugees and the members of the host community is properly managed it will lead to good interactions and diminish such problems as hostility, prejudice, discrimination and stereotyping. As long as groups use contact with each other to discriminate, insult and be hostile towards each other conflict may likely occur.

The contact theory suggests that interpersonal contact between groups can reduce prejudice when conditions present are favourable. According to Gordon Allport, who first proposed the theory, some conditions are necessary to reduce prejudice in intergroup interaction: equal status, common goals, cooperation, institutional support, personal interaction (Mcleod, 2023). The funding of initiatives that support both hosts and refugees in a manner that is sensitive to conflicts such as increasing employability was suggested by Ferguson, N. T. N., Wolfe, R. J., Amine, L., Ramadi, E., and Shahin, L., (2022), as a way to ease tensions and lessen the likelihood of violence. It makes sense that in the situation of former Liberian refugee and host community, as

well as others where there is a sizable influx of refugees, focus would shift to understanding the policy interventions that can ease tensions between host and refugee populations. Examining a variety of selected manifestations of social cohesiveness, such as community perceptions of safety, the presence of formal and informal social networks, and trust between the host community and refugees, is important given the complexity of the Buduburam community's social life.

For contact between former Liberian refugees and members of the host community to reduce tensions and breed cohesion, the contact must be positive. According to the contact theory, a cordial relationship between the refugees and their host will prevail if their interaction is characterized by equal engagement, common goals, cooperation, support of authorities, law or customs and informal personal interaction. The theory notes that inequality in wealth, skills, academic backgrounds or experiences will make it difficult for the groups to interact better. Also, both the refugees and the host community must harness their efforts and work together to achieve their common goal – one that can only be achieved when they work together. Again, better interaction will occur when the refugees and members of the host community do not compete but rather cooperate or work together in pursuit of their common goal. As would be shown in the chapter four of the study, when there was cooperation between former Liberian refugees and the host during the humanitarian aid period they interacted better and reduced conflicts between themselves. However, as the two groups began to perceive the other as their competitor in the pursuit of their goals after the end of humanitarian assistance, tensions, prejudice and discrimination began to occur.

In addition, for contact between the former refugees and the host to lead to better relationship or interaction both must acknowledge an authority that supports their contact and interaction. As revealed in chapter four, when the UNHCR and

government of Ghana were still present and involved in the affairs of former Liberian refugees, there was better interaction between the host and refugees due to the fact that both acknowledge that these authorities support their contact. However, when the UNHCR and the government of Ghana ended their humanitarian assistance to the refugees and triggered the policy of repatriation, the host community no longer acknowledges the support of these authorities. This has led to them exhibiting unfriendly, unhelpful attitudes and engagement in comparisons with the refugee community. Finally, for better interaction between the former Liberian refugees and the host, members of both groups must mingle with one another and build cross-group friendships. As shown in the findings, interaction between former Liberian refugees and members of the host community has strained because members of both groups do not mingle, bond or build friendships with one another since the end of humanitarian aid.

## **2.2 Experiences of Refugees in Host Communities**

Under the 1951 United Nations (UN) Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, Article 1, and 1967 Protocol to the Convention, a refugee is every person who escapes from his own country and crosses into a foreign country because of fears of persecution, racial problems, and political affiliation or because of membership in a particular social group (UNHCR, 2001). Sarfo- Mensah (2009) discovered that some factors were putting stress on former Liberian refugees in Buduburam and may be traumatizing to negotiating a stay in the camp. Some of these factors included repatriation issues, discriminations and lack of income (Sarfo-Mensah, 2009). As such, former refugees adopted certain measures to cope with the situation and conditions in the camp. Many refugees resorted to religion, supporting each other and spirituality to cope with conditions that present themselves in the camp.

Many studies (such as Ellis, B. H., Winer, J. P., Murray, K., Gaucher, D. (2019) ; Tribe, 2002) have confirmed the importance of social support networks in preserving mental health. Many refugees are compelled to leave important facets of their social support networks when they fled their home countries. They thus depend on the refugee community in their host nations for social support due to a lack of it from relatives and neighbors in their native country (Sarfo- Mensah, 2009). Sarfo-Mensah's research examined the impact of pre-migration trauma, post-migration living challenges, and social support on the mental health of Sudanese refugees living in Australia and New Zealand.

Tanle (2013) used the Buduburam refugee camp as a case study to study the experiences of refugees in host communities. His study shows that refugees had difficulties in their interactions with host communities and access to services. Tanle indicated that some refugees find it difficult to sustain themselves and have to rely on support from their social networks. He lists certain institutional and structural limitations. Refugees are eligible to apply for and receive work permits under the 1992 Ghana Refugee Law. However, in order to obtain a work permit, refugees must submit an application to the Ghana Immigration Service through the Ghana Refugee Board/Ministry of Interior. They must also submit a national passport or Convention Travel Document, a job offer from a reputable organization, a resume, and a letter outlining their request because they have limited freedom of movement outside the camp. As a result, even if the process is time-consuming, refugees with specialized knowledge and skills are rare individuals who may easily take advantage of chances provided by institutions within the camp (Tanle, 2013).

The refugees formerly relied on handouts for their basic essentials for survival since the humanitarian aid ended they have become responsible for fending for their entire human needs. Some of the challenges refugees in the Liberian camp encounter in their quest to survive are lack of land for agriculture or, in certain circumstances, prohibitive rivalry for jobs with the locals and even for residential purposes, as well. Refugees are unable to live in peace, fulfill their aspirations and ambitions, or reach their full potential due to issues at work, unemployment, and economic and financial issues (Waruta & Kinoti, 2000). In such circumstances, trauma becomes a way of life as people struggle to live with poverty.

### **2.3 Conflict, Refugees and Humanitarian Aid**

Every time a disaster strikes or a violent conflict results in forcible relocation, local actors including neighbors, civil society organizations, and local authorities, community volunteer groups, are the first to respond before national or international actors show up. Human beings, when faced with life-threatening situations, flee their homes and seek protection within and outside the borders of their countries. This, among many other cases, has led to the emergence of the issue of refugees. Indeed, the refugee challenge has been a global phenomenon, affecting populations in Africa, Asia, Latin America, Europe, and North America. Among others, a major challenge that faces the world in the 21st century is the increasing number of refugees around the world. The rise in this phenomenon, according to the UNHCR, has been the result of conflicts, violence, persecution, and human rights abuses in different parts of the world (UNHCR, 2013).

The vast majority of studies that have been done on refugees, aid, and conflict offer foreboding forecasts and contend that both refugees and aid to refugees make conflicts worse. The literature frequently makes stern claims regarding the dangers of

refugee activation and the possibility that aiding refugees could ignite insurgencies. This risk is increased by a number of elements, such as refugee camps, aid that can be looted, transnational insurgent groups running among refugee populations and camps, sluggish host states, longstanding ethnic rivalries that mirror the divisions causing the civil war in the country of origin and unfavorable attitudes among refugees toward their home governments. The likelihood that refugees may join armed groups is predicted to rise as a result of all of these reasons. Conflict-promoting ideology, weapons, and soldiers may spread internationally more easily as a result of refugee crises (Lischer, 2006; Salehyan, 2007).

Research suggests that refugee camps are especially good for recruiting insurgents because they offer a rare chance for combatants to seize humanitarian aid and for combatants to receive help by disguising themselves among refugee populations (Adelman, 1998). Despite the fact that it seems logical to assume that most refugees depart their home countries to avoid conflict and are unlikely to return to fight, these arguments imply or declare that refugees are potential recruits for armed groups. According to Omata (2017), the refugee influx in any community has a potential impact in terms of productivity. The refugees can be more beneficial to the host community if the host government allowed the refugees to work without hindrances. For example, the Palestinian refugees who migrated to Egypt have been seamlessly integrated with the Egyptians and they are no longer distinguishable (Dzeamesi, 2008). In this case, then Palestinian refugees in Egypt are no longer considered or perceived as a security threat by the local community in Egypt.

Additionally, the UNHCR has provided a lot of support in terms of security packages to the Egyptian (host) government. However, Antwi-Boateng and Braimah (2020) argued that the humanitarian and security aid from the UNHCR to the Egyptian host

is never adequate to elevate the additional criminal pressure that the refugees are thought to inflict on the communities. Furthermore, the presence of refugees in many of the developing host states can be further compounded by a percentage of armed militias or hostile groups in exile. It is important to note that not all refugees are law-abiding (Owusu, 2000). Some refugees may be actively engaged in local and international political objectives such that they pose a threat to the political and social stability of the host country (Woldeghebriel, Hromi- Fiedler, Lartey, Gallrgo-Perez, Sandow & Escamilla, 2016).

While the conflicts between the refugees and the host government has been associated with negative host community perception, there are other cases in which the conflicts between the refugees and the inhabitants of the host country also affected the overall stability of the host country (Borrelli, 2023). In most of the refugees affected and hosting areas, it is highly likely to be inequalities between the refugees and the natives. These inequalities can lead to social tensions (Atiyat, 2018). According to Porter et al. (2008), internal peace and security can be threatened by the increase in the series of criminal activities associated with non-law-abiding refugees. For example, murder, armed robbery, and illegal firearms and ammunition posed by non-law-abiding citizens. Refugee host-nations may not be adequately prepared to respond effectively to the security threats posed by the hostilities (Siriwardena, 2023). When the Boko haram started to endanger the individual national territories or states, the government was ill-equipped to handle Boko Haram which comprises both local hostiles and the hostile refugees (Carvalho & Haybano, 2023). Therefore, Borrelli (2023) argues that the concept of human security in the context of international security lacks adequate utilization whenever there is a security crisis. The correct application of human security should be given priority within the international



security literature and international security policy (Gammeltoft-Hansen & Tan, 2017).

Whenever there is a population increase as a result of the refugee influx, there is increased pressure on local resources. The effect of such refugee influx is mostly felt hardest by the poorest groups in the host communities, since they are the ones that mostly depend on the property in the host community (Kälin & Chapuisat, 2018). Refugee influx affect livelihoods in host communities as common goods such as water are overexploited (Grant, 2020). Remediating such situation involves the construction of the water resources and infrastructures by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and other humanitarian organizations. The spillover of such projects or investment enhances benefits to the local communities. A study by Doctors Without Borders (2022) revealed that efforts of communities and the investment from organization such as the UNHCR has improved the overall access to the basic facilities and amenities in refugee host communities. For example, in Tanzania, water facilities were improved especially in regions where refugees were located (Whitaker, 2002). Whitaker noted that 60% and 65% of the communities in Ngara and Kibondo in Tanzania have access to clean and safe water which the government could not previously provide. Additionally, Fu (2006) reported that in some of the Tanzania's regions, water sources were already polluted and this affected the water supply in most of the villages. This means that if there was no support from humanitarian organization and the UNHRC, most of the local communities in Tanzania would have been facing serious water scarcity.

Also, according to Asasira (2012), there is always an increase in competition for scarce natural resources such as water whenever there is a refugee influx. The water resources that are expected to benefit the camps may be depleted and most of the



rivers may be diverted to refugee camps thereby denying host communities ability to have access to adequate water. Additionally, Berry (2008) explores the impact of the influx of refugees on the host community's water supply. He concluded that the refugee influx can seriously compromise the host community's water supply.

#### **2.4 Localizing Humanitarian Aid**

The humanitarian sector underwent a transformation to become more organized and internationalized on the premise of care ethics as a result of the western wave of the global governance movement (Barnett, 2013). Olwa (2022) claimed that before national or international players come, local actors including neighbors, neighborhood volunteer groups, civil society organizations, and local government are always the first to respond to the needs of refugees. However, these initiatives receive little public notice and are in marked contrast to the images and information that are made available to the general public on a worldwide scale by the media. The majority of the focus is placed on a select group of well-known and reputable humanitarian players in the reporting and fundraising appeals that surface in the wake of humanitarian catastrophes. A few of significant international non-governmental organizations (NGO) outside of the UN such as World Vision International, Doctors Without Borders (MSF), Save the Children, or Oxfam appear on television. Local initiatives are often sidelined within the humanitarian sector, in addition to being frequently ignored in media reporting.

In order to more effectively address the needs of affected populations and to get national actors ready for future humanitarian responses, localization can be defined as "a process of recognizing, respecting, and strengthening the leadership by local authorities and the capacity of local civil society in humanitarian action" (Fabre, 2017: 6). When local humanitarian responders are involved in all phases of a

program, including needs assessments, program design, implementation and delivery, and final review and evaluation, the program is said to be localized. It should be noted that improving "localization" entails creating a long-term process to build or share capacities on both management and the significant issue at hand and also assists in understanding the links between various issue areas and actors, leading to mutual understanding and true partnership of the actors in the aid chain (Dijkzeul, 2021). The method of improving localization must promote confidence among the many help actors in order for mutual understanding and partnership to be realized (Dijkzeul, 2021; Roepstorff, 2021), and direct funding or aid should be supplied as directly as feasible to local responders (Fabre, 2017).

There are also worries that localization in instances of armed conflict may diminish protective features of a response and may be utilized to prevent international actors from intervening, particularly in situations where there have been rights breaches. Additionally, it is believed that local power struggles, corruption, and affiliations with certain religions and ethnic groups would negatively affect the humanitarian response, calling into doubt the effectiveness, efficiency, and transparency of local humanitarian activity (Fast & Sutton, 2018; Schenkenberg, 2016).

### **2.5 Role of Local Actors in the Provision of Humanitarian Assistance to Refugees**

While the relationship between the refugees and their host community is sometimes very complex, it is important for the refugees to successfully be integrated into the community. Integration is also crucial for social cohesion (Boateng, 2009). Based on the social capital theory, it is important to note that the resources available to groups or individuals in social networks should be for the benefit of everyone in society (Zongolowicz, 2003). Community and social network participation are important for the formation of trust as well as reciprocity and shared norms. All these are important

to foster a positive relationship between the refugees and their host communities. The local actors have an important role to play when it comes to establishing positive relationships between the refugees and the host communities. Over the time that humanitarian assistance is active, the local actors are the ones who direct the programs and leadership in the refugee integration programs (Crisp, 2003).

Refugees Studies Centre located at the Oxford University found that the local actors are known for providing the support and services that the refugees need to settle in the refugee camps. The support is particularly important in mitigating the tension between the host community and the refugees (Crawford, 2015). The local non-governmental organizations and the civil society organizations are charged with providing the services needed and shared by both the local community and the refugees. It is also important to note that it is the local actors who are charged with organizing ways for which healthcare, education, and legal aid are accessed by the refugees (Omata, 2016). The provision of these services is therefore important in improving the living conditions of the community and reducing the burden of the refugees on the host community (Porter, Hampshire, Kyei, Adjaloo, Rapoo & Kilpatrick, 2008).

Additionally, the local actors are responsive to facilitating communication and dialogue between the refugees and their host communities (Codjoe et al., 2012). The local actors can also promote understanding and collaboration between the refugees and the host community (Fransen & Kuschminder, 2014). For example, in a study of the community relationships between the refugees and the host community in Uganda, the researcher found that the local community leaders were instrumental in mediating conflicts and promoting refugee-host community cooperation (Cohen & Green, 2012). The local leaders, therefore, were the intermediaries because they provided the

refugees and the host community with a platform to express their concerns for faster conflicts resolutions.

On the other hand, according to Apollo and Mbah (2022), local actors can also play a critical role after the humanitarian assistance. For example, the local actors can foster a positive relationship between the refugees and their host communities after the humanitarian assistance is terminated (Byrne, 2013). The refugees would want to benefit from the economic opportunism in their new locality (Crawley & Bruey, 2022). Therefore, the local actors can be involved in establishing much-needed economic opportunities. It is these economic opportunities that will also promote social cohesion and integration. Additionally, Asgary and Price (2018) who studied refugee integration in Tanzania also reported that the employment opportunities for the refugees contribute significantly to refugee integration into the local community and the economy as a whole. The local actors also have social networks and community resources to which only they have access. If the local actors can be engaged in refugee integration into the host community, they can access and use their influence to provide access to these social networks. They can also influence community resource allocation to favor the refugees in a way that benefits both groups (Bradley, 2019). This way the local actors play a central role in refugee integration and empowerment after the humanitarian Aid is terminated (Deshingkar, Awumbile, & Kofi Teye, 2019).

## **2.6 Refugee-Host Relationship**

The refugee crisis is prevalent in the world today. While there has been very little research on the impact of the refugees on the host communities, there are a lot of concerns about the impact of host communities on the refugees and vice versa. The influx of refugees in a new setting such as in a refugee camp, or another host

community or country, can have both positive and negative impacts (Esses, Hamilton & Gaucher, 2017). In most developing countries where the refugee camps are located, refugee integration is a major problem for the local citizens, the host governments, and the economy as a whole. This is because of the high population growth rate in the host countries and poverty, thus, there is always tension between the refugees and the host communities which sometimes leads to conflict (Chatterji, 2012). For example, according to the World Bank (2022), Ghana has experienced a high population growth rate (2.0% annual change).

A recent study by Daah, Nangwele and Kuupiel (2023) of the prolong Liberian refugee situation in Buduburam revealed that the host community had cordial trade and social relations with refugees providing a source market to the host community and bonding in marriage with the host. Oxfam (2023) also reports that around 24.2% of the national population lives below the poverty line. Most of the Liberian refugees experience hostilities in Ghana and this stagnates the refugee integration efforts (Oxfam, 2020). The tension between the two communities usually undo the progress made over the years as a negative perception of the host towards the refugees and the refugee perception of being unwelcomed by the host leads to occasional but constant conflict in some pockets despite the positive reviews by the media (Holzer, 2013; Ludwig, 2013). The UNHCR and the government of Ghana have always had to quell the conflicts (Omata, 2017). The conflicts are justified because the host is facing social and economic problems and the refugee situation either aggravates their problems or lessens their problems depending on how the humanitarian agencies and the government handles the refugee integration programs to avoid social exclusion, stigmatization, and strife (Fomekong, 2022; Fransen & Kuschminder, 2014; Ludwig, 2013).

According to Martin (2005), in order to maintain livelihoods, he contends that a growing scarcity of renewable natural resources is necessary, but this could also lead to more competition between user groups. Migratory patterns, cooperative efforts, technological advancements and violent conflict are examples of social responses to increased competition. It is important to take into account Martin's (2005) conceptual framework for the topic of environmental conflict between host communities and refugees. He begins by defining limited renewable resources and then goes on to illustrate an instance in which the demand for renewable resources, such as forests, rangelands, and croplands and water, cannot be met by the supply. His research showed how refugee inflows can significantly strain local natural resources, having an effect on both the environment and society. As he points out, there is growing concern that insecurity brought on by shortage may amplify the perceived importance of racial differences and inequality, fostering unproductive conflict.

Many studies on how refugees affect their host nations generally focus on the opportunities, challenges, and competition for employment. In most situations, the relationship between hosts and refugees is primarily impacted by livelihood (Porter, et al, 2008). As long as host country policies vary depending on whether refugees reside in camps, are incorporated into rural areas, or want to live in metropolitan centers, both refugees and host communities must adhere to varied policies. There are certain works stating that integrating refugees into local communities can benefit both the host community and the refugee community in certain situations. For example, if there is a labor shortage but the population density is low, integration can fill the labor gap. Since the effects of a large number of refugees in one location are obvious on the ground, large camps may be particularly unsuccessful in terms of their effects on hosts, refugees, and refugee-host relations (Porter et al., 2008). The host communities'

way of life is harmed by the removal of vegetation and firewood by refugees from large camps (Martin, 2005). Because NGOs hire qualified professionals from government offices with better salaries and other alluring benefits than the host government, one of the direct social effects of large refugee camps in Africa may be a weakening of local welfare services in the host country (Porter et al., 2008). The underprivileged host populations may also be jealous of the refugees because they may obtain food and other necessities from the camp, but the hosts may not have such possibilities.

According to the majority of refugee experiences, refugees are increasingly seen as a burden, which makes for a poor refugee-host relationship. Undoubtedly, if they needed energy or building materials, refugees would rely on the forest. This ultimately results in significant deforestation, which affects the host community both directly and indirectly. According to her conceptualization, the local host people had to directly adapt to and deal with fuel and building wood limitations. The presence of many refugees puts a strain on the already-fragile local resources in the receiving regions, which leads to an overuse of resources like wood, charcoal, and water, to name a few. This is why many case studies make this argument (Assefaw, 2006).

First, because immigrants supply both a consumer market and a source of inexpensive labor, agricultural productivity and economic activity both significantly expanded after the arrival of the refugees. Second, individuals in host communities who had higher levels of education and financial security ultimately fared better than those who are least educated. In fact, this tendency was also evident at the district level, as the most economically developed districts fared significantly better than the least developed ones in adapting to the refugee influx (Whitaker, 2002). The other risk associated with refugees is that they may not have access to official jobs and may thus



transition into the informal economy or engage in illicit activities, such as selling drugs or engaging in sex. The host community may view refugees negatively if they develop livelihood methods rather than develop reliance syndrome. To put it another way, social interaction can affect refugee-host relationship.

According to Felleson (2003), keeping refugees in camps and forbidding them from interacting with their hosts can cause conflict between the two groups. Felleson's remarks on the impact that the presence of refugees has had on the neighboring areas are most pertinent to my research because they sound so familiar: "In terms of the environment, many of the camps' immediate surroundings are completely devoid of any trees or plants. Along with altering the environment, the widespread deforestation has also raised the risk of flooding, increased soil erosion, and threatened declines in agricultural production for the local communities affected Felleson (2003).

## **2.7 Impact of Humanitarian Assistance on Refugee-Host Community Relationship**

The impact of the refugees on the host community depends on how well the refugees are integrated. According to Fajth et al. (2019), refugee influx can have a significant positive or negative impact if the international community offers much-needed assistance and the host community has a positive perception of the refugee. On the other hand like Whitaker (2002) as well as Maystadt and Verwimp (2014), argued that the presence of refugees in another community can lead to conflict between the refugees and the host community if the host community is made to think that the refugees are better taken care off than the host community. The problems start when there is competition for scarce resources. Based on participatory field research conducted by Hardgrove (2009), it was found that there is a positive relationship between the relief operations and the host community's perception toward the



refugees (Fee, 2021). The sudden presence of the refugees, the aid workers, and the relief resources can significantly alter all the aspects of life for the local community which the community has previously neglected. In most cases, the community benefits from the neglected resources, and other aspects of life. The host can also benefit from the resources as the refugees provide cheaper labor to the producers in the host community (Fomekong, 2022; Fransen & Kuschminder, 2014; Ludwig, 2013). The refugees, with financial aid, can expand the consumer markets for the goods produced locally. Such symbiotic interaction tends to justify the increased foreign aid.

Peterson (2014) argues that the influx of refugees can create a new context as the host community will try to devise strategies to access the aid resources. Additionally, the host community would also benefit from the refugees as they maintain access to their resources by availing their products (Holzer, 2013; Ludwig, 2013). Some different strategies and structures allow some of the refugees and hosts to benefit from each other. In some cases, the host community can become worse off (Maystadt & Verwimp, 2014; Moore, Musell & Hammet, 2014; Ludwig, 2013). In some other cases, less attention is given to the effect of the refugees in a new community. For example, the impact of the refugees in Tanzania was found to be significant because Tanzania is a poorly resourced country. If the local community is poor, their perception of the refugees will be negative as their poor country is forced to shoulder the burden of the refugees whether the burden is a social burden, political burden, or economic burden (Ludwig, 2013). Most of the African countries are developing countries with a large portion of poor communities and if these countries are made to shoulder the burden of refugees without international assistance, the refugees would threaten and reverse the gains made by the country. The hosting refugees become an

overwhelming liability without any benefits to the host community. Fomekong (2022) also argued that the international community should consider other ways to extend their assistance to the host community and country. This way, the country will be able to maintain both internal and external security.

Butel (2013), analyzed the humanitarian resources of the sudden increase in the number of refugees from Chad in eastern Cameroon. The researcher found out that professional international refugee regimes respond to these refugee crises using the best practices based on their experiences. This suggests that there has been a cultural shift towards evidence-based approaches in humanitarian interventions. Secondly, the integration of refugees into any local community may have a lot of benefits that extend beyond the humanitarian spaces where the refugees services are delivered and administered. The benefits and burdens impact the country's process of nation-building. The third finding is that nation-building can reinforce the country's position as a state that stands and is recognized as a state within the international community. Nation building makes the country fit into the national order of things such that the refugee community in a new country would mean that the refugees must fit into the host country's national order of things. Nevertheless, the researcher has not brought out the benefits that extend beyond the country's humanitarian space where refugee services are delivered (Olatuyi, 2021). The impact of the refugee groups influx on the local education in the refugees host community has attracted mixed feelings. A study by Boamah-Gyau (2010), analyzed the impact of refugee camps in the Buduburam communities in Ghana and noted the local community benefitted from the influx of refugees in their country in terms of infrastructure. For example, as the refugees come to a country, the locals benefit from the construction of classrooms, new schools, and access to education. Most of the refugee camps are built in underdeveloped areas and

the development of infrastructures also signals other developments. For example, the locals will construct shops and start businesses targeting the refugees (Crea, Klein, Okunoren, Jimenez, Arnold, Kirior, Velandria & Bruni, 2022).

After the refugees are relocated back to their countries or integrated into the local communities, the local communities remain with the infrastructures such as schools, clean water infrastructures, and roads and houses (Turner, 2015; Zongolowicz, 2003). All these capital assets passed to the local community benefit the communities (Hardgrove, 2009). For example, in 1995, the UNHCR gave all the equipment and infrastructure to the host community in Malawi when their refugee programs were terminated (Fajth, Bilgil, Loschmann, & Siegel, 2019; Morgan, 2011). According to Altindag, Bakis, & Roso. (2018), refugees are also a blessing to the local community when non-governmental organization through their aid supports the local community. For example, the UNHCR once paid school fees for children from disadvantaged backgrounds or minority groups and this included native children. The non-governmental organizations and the wells wishers who support the refugee programs also provide improvement in the living conditions of host. They also provide schools transport, teaching environments, books, and teachers to the local schools (Aiken et al., 2022). In most cases, the local students and the refugees are integrated into the same schools, therefore, benefiting from the refugee aid and programs (Bjørkhaug, 2020; Antwi-Boateng & Braimah, 2020; Altindag et al., 2018).

Additionally, Berke and Larsen (2022) reported that refugee programs also support the local communities by improving learning and living environments for both teachers and parents. By constructing educational facilities in local areas such as Kakuma (Kenya), and Kigoma (Tanzania), the local communities benefit from the refugee programs and aid. One of the key findings is that in camps such as Kakuma,

the refugees and the locals have more opportunities to get education than the locals had before the construction of the refugee camps in the locations. It is also important to note that while the schools are conducted in the refugee camps, the refugee children will be forced to attend the schools in either the refugee camps or outside the refugee camps. Crea et al. (2022) added that most refugees are known to initiate educational activities before even the host governments provide educational opportunities. The key concern of most refugees is to ensure that their children get the best education (Sulastyawati, 2020; Tanle & Tettey, 2017). For example, in Honduras, the refugees-initiated learning activities before the government and the humanitarian agencies provided the much-needed education. The refugees themselves gathered their children under trees and started to teach their children as the government and the humanitarian agencies organized their children's education. For example, the adult refugees initiated preschool educational programs, adult literacy programs as well as vocational training programs for the children. The researcher also added that the refugees themselves believed their children would not overcome the economic and social disadvantages in the future if their children do not get the education they need (Codjoe, Quartey, Tagoe & Reed ., 2012).

Concerning health, the refugees initially faced health and sanitation problems in the areas. The local communities also faced the same problems with the influx of refugees. As humanitarian agencies entered refugee camps in the local areas, the benefits become clearer. The overcrowded health centers were depopulated when more health facilities were constructed by humanitarian agencies (Fynn & Bruey, 2016). Tanle and Tettey (2017) argued that local communities benefit from the refugee influx in their areas in terms of improvements in the supply of health personnel. The influx of refugees is also associated with the deployment of well-

equipped refugee hospitals offering a wide range of free services to the local communities. For example, after schools are constructed, rehabilitation centers are also constructed. Most of the local and district health facilities are also improved or rehabilitated and stocked. The local facilities benefit from the donation of equipment, medicines, and direct support to the health services providers to the local communities. As a result, the local hospitals become more developed compared to the national average on health indicators. One of the key indicators is also at least 26% of the local communities live within five kilometers of the more equipped health centers compared to the national average of 30%.

Additionally, Sulastyawati (2020) and Tanle and Tettey (2017), reported that in some of the refugee camps, the locals could access and utilize the health services in the refugee camps. There are some cases in which the refugees exhibited better health indicators than their surrounding villages (Porter et al., 2008; Pudjiati, Reksodipotro & Purwono., 2021; Sulastyawati, 2020). One of the key implications of this disparity is that the local people would start fighting the refugees because the refugees have better facilities than them in their community. Such tension would outdo the overall gains.

Tatah, Delbiso, Rodriquez-Llans, Cuesta, & Guha- Sapir (2016) investigated the impact of refugees on mother and child health services (MCH) in the local community. Tatah et al.'s study compared data from Cameroon's 2004 and 2011 demographics and health surveys and evaluated the changes in the MCH indicators in the host community. The study found that the variables were more favorable in cases where the antenatal care coverage was better. Other variables such as cesarean delivery rates, place of delivery, as well as children vaccination coverage, also indicated that better MCH services lead to better outcomes (Wang, 2023). The fact

that the refugees were provided with better MCH than the natives contributed to better health outcomes. The study used the different-in-difference analyses to properly compare the indicators of the refugees and the hosting community to the controlled group. Comparing the two groups propensity scores to the rest of the community (Dores, 2009). It was then realized that none of the evaluated mother and child health services indicators deteriorate when the refugees arrived (Teye & Yebleh, 2014). Boateng (2010) found that antenatal care attendance and the number of cesarean deliveries had no significant changes. However, there was an increase in delivery in most of the health facilities. Refugee presence also leads to improvements in vaccination (Easton-Calabria, 2022).

The food factor as the social economic situation of the host community before the refugee influx was poorly considered to the social economic situation after the refugee influx. The reason is that most of the refugee camps are in remote areas where there were very few developments. The refugee influx, therefore, leads to significant improvement in the social infrastructure in most of the host communities where the refugees were located. These social infrastructure also positively impacted the well-being of the host communities. By comparing the impact of the refugee influx on all the social economic sectors, the researcher concluded that the most affected social infrastructure is water. Most of the conflicts between the refugees and the hosts were concerning water and the agro pastoral. The Safe drinking-water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) program provided and supervised by UNICEF was destined to reduce the conflicts between the refugees and the host over water. Nevertheless, it is important to note that the water points are never enough for the population. Additionally, the water points are not regularly maintained and this adds the stress to

the palliation because of the content overcrowding at these water points (Tanle & Tettey, 2017).

Other concerns about the refugees in Cameroon include problems of conflicts between the farmers and the grazers. Many refugees went to Cameroon with their cattle. The problem is that the Mbororo have caused conflicts with the local population as their animals destroy the Cameroonian crops. The government authorities also stated that the Mbororo cattle herders were given permission to graze their animals and the government did not give them any legal restrictions. In most cases, the local authorities provided the Mbororo herders with pastoral plots. However, their cattle still encroach into the large farms destroying the crops. These events impact the costs of living directly and indirectly (Byrne, 2013). The food scarcity occasioned by the destruction of crops and increased pressure on food resources, and food prices lead to more conflicts. Nevertheless, despite the negative impact of the Central African Republic refugee conflict in Cameroon, it should be noted that the host community in Cameroon also benefited from all the positive improvements in terms of social economic well-being.

## **2.8 Socio and Cultural Experiences of Refugees**

Ghanaians are known to be communalistic and participatory in nature. Although infiltration of western cultures has corrupted these traits in some of the people, not every Ghanaian has lost these values. Some continue to be hospitable and interactive as possible. The strategic location of Buduburam camp in the community encourages interactions with the host community. Tanle (2013) indicated that as there is the ability to obstruct acculturation, cultural differences between Ghanaians and Liberians might be considered as limitations of the dualistic framework. His study found that children of refugees born in Ghana and those who were taken to Ghana as children



can speak the local language well and eat a variety of native meals from Ghana, including banku and fufu, although some adults claimed they were not used to these popular local dishes. The most popular food among all Liberians, young and old, is rice, which is the country's main staple diet. This demonstrates that younger refugees have a higher propensity than older ones to assimilate into Ghanaian culture (Tanle, 2013). There are constant exchanges between the locals and the refugees because the camp has practically melded with the nearby settlements. Second, the arrangement described above makes it less difficult for refugees to leave the camp. One of the guidelines in the camp, for instance, states that a refugee is permitted to leave the area without the consent of any official.

## **2.9 Food and Refugee Survival**

The influx of refugees is often followed by constant food aid. Berggreen-Clausen et al. (2021), found that the refugee food aid would not lead to a significant increase in the voices of foods in the local community. They indicated that refugee food aid is sourced from distant locations as opposed to that for the local community. The local community does not have the privilege of seeing their produce in the refugee camps. If food distribution to the refugees is effectively handled, the food aid does not spill to the community members nor do the refugee management programs buy the local produce. Therefore, the net effect of the refugees on the community may be negligible in terms of food resources. However, Alix-Garcia and Saah (2008) reported that there is evidence that refugee inflow into western Tanzania resulted in increases in the prices of maize, bananas, plantains, milk, and all agricultural goods which are both consumed and produced by local populations in Tanzania. In another study by Alix-Garcia et al. (2018), they noted that food prices increase in host community in the event of refugee camps development. Refugee host-community tends to suffer



whenever there is an increase in food prices (Grant, 2020; Owusu, 2000). Grants' (2020) study also showed that refugees negatively affect food situation in the locality where they are situated.

Additionally, inflation can result in the locals being cut out of the market by most of the international organization's staff who tend to have the higher purchasing power. The local community may not have the purchasing power to compete for the same food products as the humanitarian organization staff. This might lead to a negative perception and tension on the part of the local community. Whenever refugees cannot acquire materials they need for either food or shelter, they go to the local community leading to a negative impact on forest, farms, and environment (Berke & Larses, 2022). Dev (2003) found that activities done in order to produce enough food items because of the influx of refugees usually end up degrading the environment. This is because refugees tend to compete with the host communities over the scarce resources in the community. A study by Moore et al., (2014), found that refugees were more inclined to undertake practices that could meet their basic needs. Morore et al., (2014), found that the agroforestry practices in the Cameroonian refugee settings related to a greater extent to social class and experiences and not gender or ethnicity. More et al., (2014) also found similarities between the host and the refugees in terms of sharing preferences. They noted that each of the host communities had a different perception regarding the refugee habitation in the community. Further, they discovered that the effect of refugees on host community tend to start the day the refugees arrive at the host community. More et al., (2014), realized that refugee impact was felt throughout their stay in the host community.

According to Deshingkar et al., (2019), there are trends related to the influx of refugees in host community. For example, Anomat, Imana, & Ocha (2017) explored the dynamics or changing opportunities that refugee host community faces. They discovered that the influx of refugees tend to create a new context, different from the normal context forcing the host communities to develop strategies to access the incoming resources as well as maintain access to their resources. On the other hand, Sulastyawati (2020) and Pudjiati et al., (2021), noted that different strategies and structures helped host communities to benefit from refugees while maintaining their access to their resources. They indicated that same strategies and structures also made some members of the host community worse off. They also argue that outcomes of refugee presence in the host community depend on the strategies adopted by the host community to cope with the negative and positive aspects of the refugee presence (Dako-Gyeke & Adu, 2016). Vulnerable members of the host community especially the elderly, the disabled and the poor tend to be the most affected with refugee presence. Most of the locals who lived closer to the refugee camp in Buduburam benefited from the refugee infrastructures and facilities such as health and water. However, the elderly locals were neglected because the local youths were employed to work in the refugee camp (Ross, Gallego-Perez, Lartey, Sandow, Perez-Escamilla, & Hromi- Fiedler 2017).

### **2.10 International Human Right Instruments Protecting the Rights of Refugees**

According to the UNHCR (2019), refugees are protected by several international human rights instruments. These human rights instruments refer to the set of legal frameworks, conventions and declarations that protect and promote human rights globally (Regilme, 2020). The major international human rights instruments protecting the rights of refugees include the Universal Declaration of Human Rights

(1948); the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966); the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966); Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (1948); Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (1984); Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989); International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (1965); and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (1979). These documents proclaim the protection and promotion of the rights everyone including refugees.

Other international human rights documents protecting the rights of refugees include the Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief (1981); Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (1955); Body of Principles for the Protection of All Persons under Any Form of Detention or Imprisonment (1988); United Nations Rules for the Protection of Juveniles Deprived of their Liberty (1990); Declaration on the Rights of Disabled Persons (1975); Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities (1992) and the Principles on the Effective Prevention and Investigation of Extra-legal, Arbitrary and Summary Executions (1989).

Although these human rights documents mentioned protect the rights of refugees, there are other instrument that directly relate to the protection of refugee rights. These include the Convention relating to the Status of Refugees (1951) and Protocol (1967); the Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons (1954); the the Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness (1961); International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families (1990); Declaration on Territorial Asylum (1967); and Declaration on the Protection of All

Persons from Enforced Disappearance (1992). The 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and the 1967 Protocols is a significant agreement that addresses the rights of refugee children to an education. Article 22 of this document guarantees the right to elementary education and states that refugees should be accorded the same opportunities as nationals from the host country. The same document states that refugees should not be treated less favorable than nationals. In most instances, beyond primary school, refugee children are treated as other aliens, allowing for the recognition of foreign school certificates and the awarding of scholarships before they are accepted in countries where they are seeking refuge (UNHCHR, 1951).

The International Justice Resource Center (2011) reported that international human rights instruments have been developed over the years under the oversight of the United Nations (UN) and many other international organizations. Under international human rights instruments, everyone including refugees has a right to life, liberty, and security of person, and the enjoyment of basic human rights without discrimination (United Nations, 1990). According to Rahman (2020), the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) is the most comprehensive international human rights instrument. UDHR protects the rights of refugees. The UDHR was originally adopted by the UN general assembly in 1948 after World War II (Rahman, 2020; Viloría-Briones, 2015; Welch, 2002). The UDHR has articles enumerating basic human rights and freedoms. Viloría-Briones (2015) argued that while the UDHR is not a legally binding document, it has impacted international human rights laws and influenced the content of several human rights instruments. Matos (2008) stated that the UDHR strongly prohibits any form of discrimination irrespective of race, color, sex, language, religion as well as political opinions, ethnic social or national origin, or birth.

Caparas (2005) reported that the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights is a legally binding international treaty that has been recognized as an important crusader of human rights. Kretzmer (1994) noted that the ICCPR was initially adopted in the year 1966 before it was later ratified and put into force in the year 1976. Over ten years, the ICCPR was improved to increase the number of articles to 53 (Hernandez, 2010). The ICCPR covers many rights such as including the right to life, liberty, and security of person, freedom of thought, conscience, and religion, freedom of expression, and the right to participate in government. With its strong stand on discrimination, it is illegal to discriminate against anybody based on race, color, sex language, or religion. The Human Rights Committee was formed to oversee the implementation of the interpretation of the ICCPR.

Also, in 1966, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) as an international treaty to protect and promote social rights and cultural rights worldwide including those of refugees (United Nations, 1987). According to Kansra and Ramachandran (2020), the ICESCR has been instrumental in preventing human rights abuse. Within its 31 articles, the ICESCR spells the rights such as the rights to workers' rights to a reasonable standard of living, education, and health. Van Ho (2019) reported that states have an obligation under ICESCR. The ICESCR has also recognized the rights to unions such as the right to form a trade union or join an existing trade union and the right to health (Manukyan, 2013). Through the committee on economic, social, and cultural rights, the ICESCR promotes the implementation of the interpretation of its statutes (Rahman, 2020; Manukyan, 2013).

All the past frameworks may have been comprehensive. However, Tinker (1981) argued that the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in 1979. The instruments state that every party must ensure that they have in place appropriate measures and legislation to prevent or suppress all forms of the trafficking of women and the exploitation of the prostitution of women (Merry, 2011). Being a legally binding document, the 30 articles in the CEDAW support many rights including, the right to vote, education work, and health (Hoornick, 2020). The instruments also recognized women's right to participate in political and public life. The CEDAW also supports women's right to equal work and pay and the right to freedom from any form of violence. The CEDAW is overseen and implemented by the CEDAW Committee consisting of 23 experts on women's rights from around the world (Hoornick, 2020; Merry, 2011; Tinker, 1981).

The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) was adopted by the United Nations in 1989 to protect the civil, political, economic, social, health, and cultural rights of children (Spronk, 2011). The instrument was established under the international human rights treaty as a legally binding international treaty. The four core principles of the Convention are non-discrimination, devotion to the best interests of the child, the right to life, survival and development, and respect for the views of the child (Rizky et al., 2022; Masabo, 2021; Khadka, 2013; Spronk, 2011). The CRC sets the standards in healthcare, education, legal service, and social services of all children including refugee children. According to Article 28 of the 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child, states must make primary education compulsory and free for all students and promote the growth of accessible secondary and other educational opportunities. The Convention on the Rights of the Child was amended in 1989 to

increase children's and adolescents' rights to education. This Convention mandates that nations are accountable for the education of all children on their territories, regardless of status, which includes minor refugees and asylum seekers. The Convention emphasizes psychosocial support and enriched curriculum for conflict-affected children.

Also, both the UDHR and the 1924 Declaration of the Rights of the Child, the 1959 UN Declaration of the Rights of the Child balances protection and provides rights for children with an emphasis on their freedom and dignity as well as their physical, mental, moral, spiritual, and social development. Additionally, it introduces concepts like non-discrimination and best interests as guiding principles for children's rights. It positions the child at the intersection of the state, the parents, and society at large. Article 31 protects a child's right to recreation and culture (UNCRC, 1989). In some cases, the right to basic education for refugees has been recognized, but the right to secondary education has been rejected or reduced. The international community is obligated by the Convention on the Rights of the Child to support those nations that fall short of this obligation in achieving this objective. This is extremely important in times of crisis and when reconstruction is taking place. This procedure also indicates that states, if they are unable to address the educational requirements of children and adolescents affected by emergencies on their own, must be open to receive assistance or aid in doing so. Emergency educational assistance should be provided quickly, so that simple education activities can begin as soon as basic shelter, health, and food supply mechanisms are in place (UNESCO, 2003).

There are additional instruments that are just documentation. For example, the HURIDOCS (Human Rights Information and Documentation Systems) was founded as an NGO to help human rights groups gather data, organize, analyze, and use the



information to create positive change in the world (Aronson, 2014). Since it was established in 1982, the HURIDOCS has been instrumental in the improvements of accessibility, accuracy, and effectiveness of the documentation of human rights (Sukmaningsih, 2018; Jensena, S., Kelly, T., Andersen, M.K., Christiansen, C., & Sharma, J. R., 2017; Aronson, 2014; Tobin, 1987). The HURIDOCS assembly also spearheaded the development of the relevant documentation methodologies as well as standards for human rights reporting that most organizations and institutions have adopted (Jensena et al., 2017).

The World Organization Against Torture (OMCT) adopted the SOS-Torture Convention in 1983 to create a global network of organizations charged with documenting and reporting on cases of ill-treatment including torture (OMCT, 2023; Fleck, 2012). The SOS-Torture Convention provides the most comprehensive framework for documenting tortures and coordinating national and regional organizations (Vreeland, 2008). The success of the SOS-Torture Convention in raising awareness about the prevalence of tortures proves that the SOS-Torture Convention was a worthy framework. According to Seas and Gaer (2022), the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (1984), the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families (1990) have helped to prevent tortures and to handle torture related cases in courts. Burgers and Danelius (1990) also reported that most of the refugee situations have been addressed based on these conventions. The International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance (2006) and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006) have all been instrumental in the protection of human rights irrespective of their backgrounds (Milic, 2010; Mégret, 2008). Different countries



have ratified these conventions enabling them to successfully raise awareness of the right of people of all backgrounds stature and class.

In Africa, refugee rights are protected by human rights instruments such as the OAU Convention Governing the specific aspects of Refugee problems in Africa (1969); African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (1981) and its Protocol on the Rights of Women in Africa; African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (1990); Great Lakes Protocol on Property Rights of Returning Persons and the African Union Convention for the protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa (Kampala Convention) (2009). In Ghana, the Refugee Law, 1992 (PNDCL 305D) was passed to protect the rights of refugees in Ghana. The Law provides for the prohibition of expulsion of refugees, establishment of the refugee board, procedure for application and grant of refugee status, appeals, etc. and rights and duties of refugees.

### **2.11 Protracted Refugee Situation**

Numerous refugees reside in camps, which serve as both a shelter and a place to safeguard the fleeing population. Refugee camps are temporary residential agreements. This is because refugees are expected to return home when circumstances permit or if they are able to find another, more sustainable living arrangement. However, many refugees have spent their whole lives inside the confines of a camp, with no possibility of ever leaving. The term "protracted refugee crisis" describes the above illustration. With no genuine chance to return home or begin a new life in safety, refugees tend to be in a challenging predicament. Africa is where most of these refugees are found (World Development Report 2011; Crisp, 2002). Long-term refugee situations are a reality and a concern across the entire continent, not just in Africa. An overabundance of long-term stay by refugees might exacerbate issues in

already impoverished, underdeveloped, or uncared-for regions, given the myriad additional issues that most African states already face (UNHCR, 2004; Crisp, 2002).

According to UNHCR (2006), the number of people involved in protracted refugee situations doubled over the 1980s and 1990s. The majority of refugees in the world today fall into this category. UNHCR (2006) indicates that 48% of the 16.3 million refugees around the world in 1993 were stuck in extended circumstances. The number of refugees had decreased to 9.2 million by the end of 2004, although more than 61% of them were still displaced. As the number of refugees was being reduced through the process of repatriation, there were new intra-state conflicts that led to new massive refugee flows, causing more protracted refugee situations (UNHCR, 2006). In 1993, there were 7.9 million refugees, which constituted about 27 long-term refugee situations at the time. For instance, the deterioration of law and order in Somalia, the conflict in the Great Lakes region of Africa, and conflicts in Liberia and Sierra Leone in the 1990s generated millions of refugees (UNHCR, 2006). The hostility in the former Yugoslavia, the Balkans, and Caucasus contributed to the displacement of millions of people under the same ideology. UNHCR (2006) stated that as the number of refugees increased globally in the early 1990s, there was a need for a supportive government and local, national, and international relief organizations to be steadfast in tackling these concerns. There was an increase in the number of extended refugee situations by 2004. Compared to 27 occurrences in 1997, there were 33 cases of ongoing refugee crises. Despite having 5.5 million people involved, the relative numbers of the two cases are drastically different, with 2004 causing longer refugee situations (UNHCR, 2006). Refugees frequently remain in host countries for lengthier periods of time due to retaliation or the persistence of issues back home. The average

major refugee situations protracted or not has since increased from the number of nine years in 1993 to seventeen years at the end of 2003 (UNHCR, 2006).

The long-term refugee population comes from nations or regions where unrest has been on the increase for a while. Examples include the situations in Somalia, Sudan, Iraq, Afghanistan, and Liberia (UNHCR, 2006). Political activity and inaction in both the nation of origin and the place of asylum contribute to protracted refugee situations. Another scenario is when peace and security negotiators fail to address conflict brought on by violations of human rights in the nation of origin (UNHCR, 2006). The former Liberian refugee population living at Buduburam can be considered a protracted refugee situation since they had lived at the camp from 1990 till now. While some people still reside at the camp in Gomoa Buduburam despite the difficult living conditions there, others have returned to their homes. This may prove counterproductive to the already devastating refugee population (UNHCR, 2006).

## **2.12 Dealing with Refugee Problems**

UNHCR literature suggests that there are three (3) recommendations for the solution to the global problem of refugees; integration to the country the refugee has fled, repatriation to the refugee's country of origin and/or resettlement in a third country. Repatriation seems to be one of the easiest ways out for refugees in a host country by donors. It is the process or act of returning something or someone to their nation of citizenship, allegiance, or origin. Voluntary repatriation is the free and willful return of refugees to their country of origin in safety and dignity and besides it is the solution of choice for a vast majority of Refugees (UNHCR, 2004). Once the circumstances that forced refugees to flee are no longer present, they may consent to return to their country of origin. Many African refugees have successfully returned to their home

nations. Refugees who repatriate tend to help in the building process of their home nation.

The UNHCR's voluntary repatriation for former Liberian refugees in Ghana ended in June 2007 with approximately 3,800 Liberians repatriating back to their country of origin. According to Dick (2002), many of the estimated 42,000 Liberian refugees in Ghana refused repatriation to Liberia because they felt that the country was unsafe for them, and the difficult task of raising capital to start living a new life in Liberia since they were already en-route to a different kind of life in Ghana.

Another reason why refugees might want to stay abroad and oppose repatriation has less to do with whether returning home is possible and more to do with the challenges of finding work and resuming daily life after returning (Green, 2000). If refugees continue to live in exile, they can at least keep things as they are but going back home necessitates gathering working cash to re-establish their homes and businesses, a process that is out of reach for many refugees who are already struggling to meet their basic necessities. As a result, returning home is sometimes a protracted process as refugees weigh the advantages and disadvantages of leaving the camp and moving into their own homes. Crises like war are ingrained in people's collective social memory and become part of their ingrained culture. Despite the community's material plight, economic disadvantage, and marginalization, most refugees are able to maintain their cultural customs and values and establish a successful neighborhood life. In a similar way, Liberian refugees in Ghana have not been rendered helpless by their wartime experiences; instead, they continue to move forward, continually adjusting to meet new problems in the same manners they have done in the past.

People go in various directions during a battle in the hopes of finding safety for their life. Sometimes, some relocate within their own country as Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in the hopes that the crisis will soon come to an end, while others choose to leave the country as a refugee and promise to return once hostilities have ended. The integration of refugees is a dynamic, two-way process that demands work from all parties involved. This includes preparation on the part of refugees to adapt to the host society without having to give up their own cultural identity, and corresponding readiness on the part of host communities and public institutions to welcome refugees and meet the needs of a diverse population UNHCR (2014). The integration process is intricate and gradual, with separate but interconnected legal, economic, social, and cultural components. Each of these aspects is crucial to refugees' ability to successfully integrate as contributing members of the host society. When everything is normal, there is never a chance that someone will suddenly lose track of their life during a war or other natural calamity. It becomes difficult to leave behind a history of a culture that is rich and diverse and a setting that has served as a source of inspiration for one's own life. The memories of life at home cannot be ignored, notwithstanding the possibility of starting a new life in a nation of exile. Stress and other negative perceptions that refugees may have experienced can be greatly reduced by actively participating in the civil and cultural life of the host country (Fajth et al., 2019).

UNHCR noted that when refugees are provided assistance at the rightful time, they are able to overcome phobia and able to restore their sense and dignity (UNHCR, 2002). Integration of refugees into society is only made possible when they are given the tools they need to achieve their objectives, access to society's essential services, and are permitted to contribute to society to the fullest of their abilities. It is important

to recognize that refugees are a diverse population with a wide range of interests. They are a conglomeration of individuals consisting of different backgrounds in terms of education, attitude, and culture. The majority of persons who flee their native countries because of a crisis have personal experience living in nations that are taking them in as refugees. It is intolerable to observe a group of individuals traveling across a foreign border from their own nation because of hostilities. When they cannot maintain themselves with food, shelter, and education, it is far more terrible. In some circumstances, refugees are denied the right to relocate to a third nation while also being unable to live legally in their host countries. However, for the many African refugees that manage to reside in host communities, there are series of integration models that helps them carry on their daily lives. When a receiving nation offers refugees complete asylum status, it ensures that the refugees are safeguarded by the host country on all fronts, (economically, socially and legally).

According to Bortu (2009), the term "encampment" refers to the situation of refugees who are housed in camps created or run by host countries, the UNHCR, or other humanitarian organizations. Refugees are not expected to be self-sufficient, and these humanitarian organizations coordinate the provision of food, healthcare, educational opportunities, and security for them. Considering that it aids in the coordination of refugees when it comes to receiving basic services, this option is by far the most chosen by host countries and the majority of relief organizations. To Bortu, this is due to the fact that it permits repatriation simply and controls the time of humanitarian assistance. Yet, despite the efforts of refugees to overcome the numerous difficulties that arise, life continues to be challenging in refugee camps across Africa. If conditions in their home country continue to be unstable for a long time and/or if governments of host nations are willing to include refugees in activities like

employment, civil life, and cultural diversities where they can socialize with the local population of host nation, some refugees are optimistic about resettlement or local integration in host country (Bortu, 2009). If these options are not available to refugees in host nations, they may view repatriation or resettlement in a third country as viable alternatives, as is the case with the Liberian refugees currently residing in Ghana's Buduburam refugee camp (Jacobsen, 2003).



## CHAPTER THREE

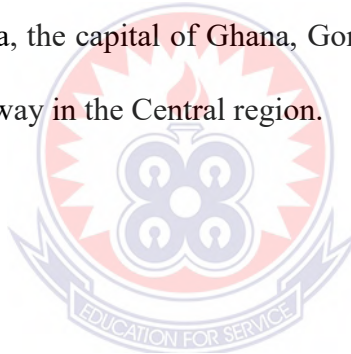
### METHODOLOGY

#### 3.0 Introduction

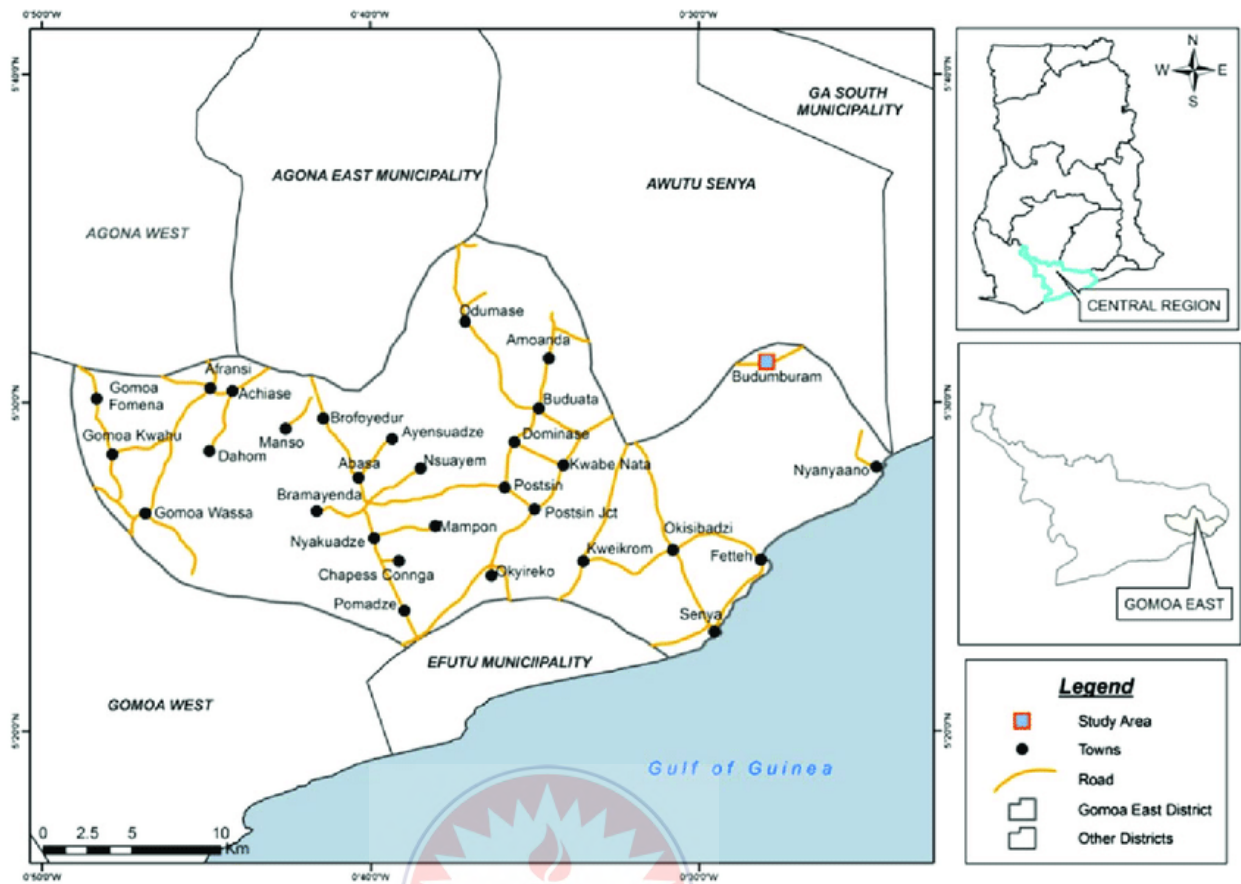
This chapter discusses the research method used for this study. In this chapter, the research philosophical paradigm, research design, and research approach, as well as the study's population, setting, sample and sampling technique, sources of data, data collection instrument and analysis process are presented. The chapter also covers the study's positionality and ethical issues and limitation of the study.

#### 3.1 Setting

The study was done in the Buduburam community in the Gomoa East district. About 42 kilometers from Accra, the capital of Ghana, Gomoa-Bububuram is situated along the Accra-Winneba highway in the Central region.







**Figure 3.1: Map of Gomoa East District showing Buduburam**

**Source: GIS Unit, DGRP, University of Cape Coast, cited in Tanle (2013)**

The town is a portion of Fetteh territory that is governed by the Gomoa-Fetteh traditional authority. The bulk of the Buduburam population who speak Fante are farmers. The inhabitants of Buduburam regard Gomoa-Fetteh to be their ancestral home; it is where they initially made their home in the Gomoa area. The town is named after a man from Fetteh by the name of Budu. Budu farmed the area. When he was there, he dug a well that was so popular and valuable to the locals that they named the village Buduburam, which translates to "Budu Well."

The Gomoa East District in Ghana's Central region is where the Buduburam village is situated. On the Accra-Cape Coast highway, it is the next exit after Kasoa. More than 5000 refugees were initially intended to live in the camp, which was built on a 140-

acre plot of ground, but as time has gone on, the population has risen quickly. In order to satisfy their needs, some Liberians have even purchased or rent additional plots of land or acres, making the camp crowded with more than 5,000 residential units which later increased to over 25 000 by the mid-nineties and to 38 000 in July 2006. With assistance from the Liberian Refugee Welfare Council, the camp is run by a Ghanaian Camp Manager and is split into 12 zones. Children make up roughly 36% of the total population at the camp and are served as a negotiating tool by the Liberian Welfare Refugee Council between the refugees and the government of Ghana through the camp manager (Self Help Initiative For Sustainable Development, 2005).

More than 12,000 Liberian refugees who left their nation during the First Liberian Civil War (1989–1996) and the Second Liberian Civil War (1999–2003) reside in the camp, together with refugees from Sierra Leone who fled their civil war (1991-2002). NGO and volunteer groups from Liberia and other countries support the camp. The Carolyn A. Miller Elementary School offers free instruction to close to 500 camp residents. The Liberia camp is the common name for the Buduburam refugee camp. When their period of stay was up, many of these Liberian refugees turned down being sent back home. The UN determined that Liberia's 1997 elections were fair enough to permit secure conditions for repatriation. The settlement lost a large portion of its income as a result of the UNHCR ceasing to provide refugee aid to Liberians in Ghana. However, shortly after the 1997 elections, the political climate in Liberia deteriorated, and new waves of Liberian refugees began to arrive in Ghana, forcing the UNHCR to redeploy to Buduburam. Although the UNHCR restricts its efforts to provide human assistance to unaccompanied adolescents, the elderly, and the disabled in the settlement, the agency did sponsor infrastructure work inside the neighborhood by providing financing for initiatives like construction and education. Less than 4000

of the estimated 25000 refugees who were living in Ghana at the time the repatriation effort ended in December 1999 chose to return. All aid to Liberian refugees was cut off in June 2000 in accordance with a regional policy decision. Thus, it was believed that the refugees living in the Buduburam camp would provide for themselves. While the majority of the refugees who stayed in the camp traveled to Accra to look for work on construction sites, others engaged in small commerce, farming, and apprenticeships as their own local income-generating activities.

The refugees were given a market to trade in by the Ghanaian government in front of the camp. Even though trading activities existed prior to the arrival of the refugees, they have increased as a result of the larger local market. This has led to an increase in business and trade conducted by both the host community and the refugees, which has caused many people to switch from farming to trading. Although this market is the biggest in the Gomoa District, Liberian refugees predominate. On Sundays, Gomoa Buduburam holds its weekly market. These markets' growth and transformation into modern marketplaces, together with those of its satellite markets, will increase trading space and discourage street hawking while also enforcing bylaws. According to Owusu (2000), there are no longer any tents used to house refugees now; instead, everyone resides in permanent homes made of cement blocks, wood, and aluminum roofing. Over 60% of the community's residents are refugees, who are not only present in the camp but also integrated into the host community. The Liberian refugees' in Buduburam in the Gomoa District of the Central region of Ghana found themselves in a different ethnic and socio-cultural environment but their numerical strength has helped them to cope easily.

However, ample evidence suggests that, in addition to legal limitations, local host populations' informal regulations limit refugees' access to economic resources including land, rivers, lakes, and forests (Bakewell, 2014). New waves of Liberian refugees from Liberia and Cote d'Ivoire arrived and settled in the camp in 2001 as a result of resurgent violence in Liberia. A greater influx of refugees put more strain on the camp's amenities and food supplies for the families taking in these new arrivals. When UNHCR renewed its involvement in the camp in the middle of 2002, the situation there began to improve. Through support for the local police force, a neighborhood watch program, and a variety of community-based assistance programs in health, sanitation, education, skills-training, and microcredit programs, the UNHCR office has thus far worked to improve the protection of refugees. Up to 10,000 newly arrived, food insecure refugees, including starving children, terminally ill people, unaccompanied minors, refugees with impairments, and elderly people over 60 years of age, were given food aid once more in 2004 by World Food Programme. In April 2007, the UNHCR steadily withdrew all services that were under its administration from the camp. The refugees in the community officially lost their refugee status in June 2010.

The Buduburam Refugee Settlement in Ghana provided a long-term refugee environment that was suitable for comprehending how exposure to the host culture might alter refugees' new feeding patterns. Numerous Liberians who fled their nation during the 1990 Liberian civil war and sought asylum in Ghana now reside in the Buduburam Refugee Settlement (Tanle, 2013). The camp for refugees established in the Gomoa Eastern District of the Central Region in 1990 by the Ghanaian government and the UNHCR, accommodated more than 7,000 Liberians who moved into the camp and the nearby Ghanaian community of Buduburam by the 1990s. More

Liberians were compelled to evacuate as a result of the second Liberian civil war in 1999, and the population of the Buduburam camp kept growing, reaching 18,713 refugees in 2000 and exceeding 40,000 in 2008 (Tanle, 2013; Omata, 2012).

However, Buduburam was no longer recognized as a refugee camp by the year 2012; instead, it was designated as a refugee settlement, where the refugees reside in a protracted circumstance (Tanle, 2013). The lack of help for food, water, education, and medicine meant that Liberian refugees in Buduburam had fewer opportunities to find employment in the local economy and were therefore more likely to live in poverty (UNHCR, 2005; Ntow, 2004). The settlement's infrastructure deteriorated to levels below international standards due to a lack of UNHCR help and a rapidly increasing refugee population (UNHCR, 2005). In order to provide education and nutrition support to refugees, the Supplementary Feeding Program was launched in 2005 along with a larger nutrition program (UNHCR, 2005). Despite these initiatives, a 2012 assessment of Liberian refugees in Buduburam Refugee Settlement revealed that 57% of them were experiencing moderate food insecurity (Sandow, 2012). Today's host community in and around Buduburam is leading a different lifestyle than it did before the refugee inflow. Today, considerably more individuals lead more modern lives than the previous generation of pastoralists, who struggled to provide for their families and other essentials of life.

### **3.2 Philosophical Underpinning of the Study**

The philosophical assumption that underpins this research is Interpretivism or the interpretive research paradigm. Interpretivism is an approach to social science that asserts that understanding the beliefs, motivations, and reasoning of individuals in a social situation is essential to decoding the meaning of the data that can be collected around a phenomenon. This study was underpinned on the interpretive research

paradigm since the ultimate goal is to understand from the refugee stand point on host communities experiences especially in post-humanitarian aid era as well as their coping strategies. Observation and interpretation serve as the foundation for interpretive rhetoric; observation is gathering information about an occurrence, while interpretation entails giving that information meaning by forming conclusions or determining whether it fits with some abstract pattern (Creswell, 2014). According to Creswell (2014), interpretive paradigm is preferable for comprehending the richness and plurality of participants' ideas or perspectives. The method relies on a subjective interaction between the researcher and participants and uses interviewing or participant observation. Instead of focusing on the complete complexity of human sense-making as the situation develops, predefinable dependent and independent variables are not permitted. The interpretive paradigm was used in this study because it enabled the researcher to understand the meaning that the Buduburam residents and refugees place on their experiences during and after receiving humanitarian aid from the United Nations and the Government of Ghana.

### **3.3 Research Design**

The study adopted a descriptive case study posture in conducting the research. According to Tuli (2010), case study design typically serves as the primary engine for the qualitative research approach since it enables researchers to gather more verifiable data. In addition, he contends that a case study entails a close examination of a study subject's context-related position and doing an in-depth, extensive assessment of it. Case study design focuses on having in-depth information of a phenomenon. In the case study, the focus is on providing a full description and understanding of the phenomenon (Ary, Jacobs, Sorensen & Razavieh, 2010). Case study research is criticized by some as being merely useful as an exploratory tool (Soy, 1997). Case



studies infuse events with knowledge and information, allowing us to experience and widen our perspective on them as they occur. A case study explores the phenomenon within that context when the boundaries between a modern phenomenon and its real-world environment are not immediately clear (Yin, 1984). Detractors of the case study technique argue that there is no reason for proving the validity or generalizability of findings from the analysis of a small sample of cases. I chose a case study approach for my research because it gave me the chance to learn in-depth details about the interactions between the residents of Buduburam and the Liberian refugees before, during, and after humanitarian intervention.

### **3.4 Research Approach**

Qualitative research approach was used to carry out this investigation. The goal of a qualitative research approach is to discover the interpretations that people have on a specific phenomenon (Creswell, 2014). This style of research studies the world in its natural environment, evaluating circumstances to understand the meanings that individuals make from day-to-day existence. It captures a picture of people's perceptions in a natural environment and makes observations and interpretations of how they see certain occurrences (Gentles, Charles, Ploeg & McKibbin, 2015). In agreement with Patton (2002), qualitative research design enables the researcher to get closer to the respondents and their surroundings to obtain their first-hand experiences. Kothari (2004) explains that the qualitative research approach focuses on people's lived experiences, behaviors and emotions and involves a subjective evaluation of a social problem or behavior through the use of flexible non-numerical data techniques such as in-depth one-on-one interviews, focus group interviews, observations, review of documents, etc. Being aware that the research was stepping into uncharted territory, I decided to use a qualitative methodology to enable me to

get information from the participants by capturing their thoughts and getting a glimpse into their sentiments, emotions, and ideas regarding the case being investigated (Bryman 2004; Patton 2002). It looks at people's experiences, meanings, and relationships, as well as social processes and environmental variables that marginalize a certain set of people. It also looks into local knowledge and understanding of a certain program. The method is a methodical and subjective way to emphasize and clarify everyday experiences and further give them appropriate meaning (Burns & Grove, 2009).

As a setting representative of actual life, the Buduburam camp offered the chance for an open discussion between the researcher and the participants. The research can be conducted in the actual world with a qualitative approach, and the phenomenon of interest develops spontaneously without the researcher manipulating the results (Patton, 2002). In contrast to the quantitative method, which simplifies phenomena into numerical data and places more emphasis on quantity, the qualitative approach is more concerned with the breadth and quality of knowledge about a phenomenon. In order to allow my research report to be influenced by the viewpoints and lived experiences of the people of Buduburam, I used a qualitative technique, be with the study participants in their natural environment, ask open-ended questions, and be present when they complete the research. While using this method, I was able to establish a connection with the research participants, and it also gave me the opportunity to gather detailed information regarding the interaction between the Liberian refugees and the host community in Buduburam before and after the humanitarian help was withdrawn.



### **3.5 Population of the Study**

Yogesh (2007) explained that, population is any group of individuals who have one or more characteristic in common that are of interest to the researcher. The population can either be broad or narrow as defined by the researcher. The population of the study were the former Liberian refugees in the Buduburam camp. Adult residents of the Buduburam settlement who have resided there for at least ten years made up the study's population. In 2021, 316,106 people were anticipated to live there, with 52.5 percent of them being women and 47.5 percent being men. In the Gomoa East District, just over half (52.4%) of the population live in cities. Data from the 2021 Population Census show that there are 97,631 people living in Buduburam overall. Out of this total, 55,593 are minors, and Buduburam has 42038 adults (those who are over the age of 19). Three categories made up the target audience. Leaders from the Buduburam camp, other opinion leaders in Buduburam camp and other former Liberian refugees who are resident in the Buduburam camp.

### **3.6 Sample and Sampling Techniques**

Sampling involves taking a part of a whole to represent a group. Since the full target population for a study may not always be easily accessible, we can only study the available portion of the study population or sample (Kazerooni, 2001). The researcher used purposive sampling technique which allowed for the selection of participants that were both accessible and amenable to the research enquiry (Kazerooni, 2001). A total of 12 research participants comprising of 3 elders in the camp, 4 camp leaders, 5 women and men were selected for the study. A total of 6 men and 6 women were participants selected for the study. Purposive sampling was used to select the participants. I selected participants using the purposive sampling technique. This enables me to select participants who could give the study the information it

required. Through the assistance of a gatekeeper in the community who introduced me to the potential participants, I was able to recruit people who could provide the study with important information about the relationship between Liberian refugees at the Buduburam camp and the host community during and after humanitarian aid. The selection criteria include; the participant must be an adult; must have lived or stayed in the camp during and after the period of humanitarian assistance and the participant must be willing to participate in the study.

### **3.7 Source of Data**

Data for the study was from primary and secondary sources. Interviews with key informants, including the elders, camp leaders, and a few men and women in the Buduburam camp were the source of data.

### **3.8 Data Collection Technique and Instrument**

A semi-structured interview guide served as the instrument for data collection in this study. According to Osuale (2007), using such instrumentation is ideal for a qualitative study since it gives participants some latitude in how they react to questions and lets them express their opinions freely and however they are most comfortable with the subject of the study. During data collection process efforts were made to acquire data on the relationship experiences of refugees with the host community, challenges faced by refugees and coping strategies adopted by refugees in Buduburam camp. According to Blandford (2013), semi-structured interviews necessitate that many questions, or at the very least themes, be planned in advance, and that avenues of research be pursued during the interview to follow up on fascinating and unexpected routes that emerge. The key research questions were reflected in the interviews' principal themes. To ensure that participants' experiences are fully examined, follow-up questions were asked after the primary questions. The

interviews were mostly guided by the questions from the sample interview, which served as a guide. The technique was applied to improve the data's quality and richness. As previously mentioned, the interviews and discussions tended to gather data on the nature of the natural influencers of relationships, such as resource conflicts, local dispute resolution procedures, people's perceptions and feelings regarding the dispute, and the function of camp leaders. Through modest levels of personal observation throughout the weeks spent in the field, the researcher was able to supplement data collection and create fresh case studies.

### **3.9 Data Collection Procedure**

In-depth interviews were used to gather data for the study. The participant's natural environment served as the interview location. I was given a letter of introduction by the Centre for Conflict, Human Rights and Peace Studies when I first entered the field. I first introduced myself and my mission in their community to a gatekeeper of the Buduburam community who was contacted by the study. The gatekeeper introduced me to potential participants after I showed him the introductory letter I had received from the centre and had gone through the letter with him. Suitable participants were contacted for the study and those who were qualified and open to take part were chosen to participate. Interview times were set up for the study's chosen participants. The participants' personal locations were used for all interviews. The length of each interview was between 10 and 20 minutes. I probed the interviewees during the interviews to get clarification on a few comments or conclusions they made. I used a digital device to record the interviews by first seeking the consent of participants. This made sure that the data for the study were not destroyed.

### **3.10 Data Analysis Procedure**

The study analyzed data by using thematic analysis. Data was grouped under major themes which covered the research questions and research objectives set for the study as well as other emerging themes in the course of interviews. The in-depth interviews were audio-taped, transcribed, coded, and analyzed thematically based on the objectives of the study. Data gathering was the first step in the data analysis. I tried to make sense of the participants' viewpoints while I listened to interviews and then I asked follow-up questions. By doing so, I was able to make sure that the data I was gathering did not have any gaps that could seriously skew the outcomes. I read through the transcripts once the data had been transcribed and gave the transcripts' statements codes. Themes were then formed based on the emerging patterns from the coded data. In a sensible and practical way, the themes were arranged. The codes were first found using the study questions. The data were then read and read again in order to find overarching themes that were based on the research questions. After that, it was decided which concepts were more specialized and seemed to relate to the overarching themes. The study's findings were presented and discussed in accordance with the themes that emerged from the data.

### **3.11 Ethical Considerations**

The study was guided by the ethical considerations of voluntary participation, informed consent, confidentiality, anonymity, respect for participants and plagiarism. All norms and procedures pertaining to the research were upheld. The study upheld the participants anonymity and confidentiality since building trust with study sources and participants is inevitable. This was accomplished by guaranteeing the confidentiality and anonymity of all participants, and by thoroughly outlining the research procedure and goals without inducing any bias in their responses. I behaved

in a way on the field that did not affect any other participants or the community. Participants in the study received guarantees that the data they gave would only be used for only academic purposes. Pseudonyms were used to present the study's findings in order to meet concerns about participant confidentiality and anonymity. During the data collection, I did not ask individuals for their names before starting the interviews and I also got the research participants' permission. Therefore, those who agreed to participate in the study were contacted, and their opinions were merged for this purpose.

### **3.12 Trustworthiness**

I ensured that the findings were trustworthy. Lincoln and Guba (1985) noted that trustworthiness in research focus on ensuring the credibility, dependability, confirmability and transferability of the research findings. I ensured the trustworthiness of my research instrument by engaging my supervisor throughout the development and application of the interview guide. My supervisor and I discussed the questions on the interview guide in our preliminary interactions during the research process and this enabled me to develop an interview guide that sought the needed data. Thus, my engagement with my thesis supervisor throughout the research process helped me to develop a research instrument that answers the research questions of the study. I also ensured that the data I obtained from the field was trustworthy. I took a number of measures to ensure that my study's findings were credible and dependable including asking all the research participants the same questions on the interview guide. Also, I used purposive sampling as a way to select only those who lived in the refugee camp during and after the humanitarian assistance. This ensured that I obtained information from refugees who have significant experiences about relationship with the host community after the

humanitarian assistance ceased. I also engaged in comprehensive description of the findings of the study by using direct quotations of participants' responses in the presentation and discussions of the data. This ensured that the voices of the refugees reflected in the work and the credibility of the study.

### **3.13 Positionality**

Positionality has a significant impact on the research's overall credibility. In this investigation, I disclosed my position and the power dynamics surrounding the phenomenon being investigated. I come from the Central region of Ghana. However, I have never lived in Buduburam and I am not from there either. For that matter I do not have any ties to the Buduburam population. Thus, I participated in this study thoroughly as an outsider. While carrying out the study, I was very particular of my status as a security person of the Ghana Immigration Service.

### **3.14 Qualitative Validity**

I ensured that the findings of the study were valid. Qualitative validity concerns with accuracy of description, accuracy of data interpretation and appropriateness of the theory used. In doing so, I ensured descriptive, theoretical and interpretive validity of the study.

I ensured descriptive validity of the study. Descriptive validity focuses on the accuracy of the description of the methodology that researchers employ to conduct their studies. In addressing the descriptive validity of the study, I made sure that the methodology was accurately and adequately described. I clearly explained the approach and design used to conduct the study. Also, the context of the study and the process of participants' selection, data collection and analysis were described accurately and clearly. I had a pre-data collection discussion with my supervisor. During the discussion my supervisor vetted the description of the methodology I

adopted to conduct the study and this helped me to shape it in a manner that accurately sought the requisite data. All these ensured the descriptive validity of the study and made it possible for other researchers to subject my research methodology to test in other situations.

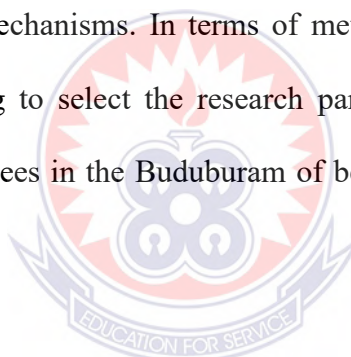
Also, I ensured interpretive validity of the study. Interpretive validity concerns with the accuracy of the interpretation of the qualitative data. I ensured that the data collected was accurately interpreted and devoid of my personal biases and views about refugees. In doing so, I coded the data twice. After the first coding I left the transcripts for one week and then recoded it the second time. I also engaged a colleague graduate student to code the data. I compared the themes that I generated to those generated by my colleague. The themes were further reviewed. After generating the themes, I used direct or verbatim quotations from the participants. This ensured accurate report of the meaning the Liberian refugees in Buduburam make of their relationship with the host community since the end of the humanitarian assistance from the United Nations and government of Ghana.

In addition, I ensured the theoretical validity of the study. Theoretical validity focuses on the appropriateness of the constructed theory. I made sure that the theory adopted to inform the study was appropriate and helped to explain to relationship between the Liberian refugees at Buduburam and the host community. I adopted the Contact Theory developed by Gordon Allport in 1954. The theory examines how intergroup relationship under inappropriate condition can lead to prejudice, intolerance, hostility, stereotypes and tensions, and under appropriate condition can reduce tensions, prejudices and intolerance. The contact theory is therefore appropriate because it would help to examine how the interaction between the refugees and the host community since the end of humanitarian assistance (inappropriate condition) turned

the once cordial relationship between the two groups during the humanitarian assistance period into a sour one. Also, I discussed the theory with my supervisor and after careful examination of the theory he found it very appropriate and relevant to explaining the findings of the study.

### **3.15 Limitations of the Study**

The study used a qualitative approach, so a small number of research participants were chosen, and as a result, the findings may not be generalized to represent the views of the entire Liberian refugee population in Ghana. The study focused on only the perspectives of the Liberian refugees in Buduburam camp about their relationship with the host community after the humanitarian assistance ended, the difficulties they face and their coping mechanisms. In terms of methodological is limited because I used purposive sampling to select the research participants. This this did not give equal chance to all refugees in the Buduburam of being selected to participate in the study.





## CHAPTER FOUR

### FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

#### 4.0 Introduction

The findings of the study were presented and discussed in this chapter. This study was aimed at exploring the relationship that exists between former Liberian refugees at Buduburam in the Central Region of Ghana and the host community after humanitarian aid to them ended. Three research questions were set for this study: What is the nature of relationship between former Liberian refugees in Buduburam and the host community after the period of humanitarian assistance from the United Nations and government of Ghana? What are the challenges faced by former Liberian refugees in Buduburam camp in their relationship with the host community after the humanitarian assistance from the United Nations and government of Ghana ended? What are the strategies adopted by former Liberian refugees in Buduburam camp to cope in their relationship with the host community after the humanitarian assistance from the United Nations and government of Ghana ended?

#### 4.1 Nature of Relationship between Liberian Refugees at Buduburam and the Host Community

This section explored the nature of relationship that exists between former Liberian refugees at the Buduburam camp after the end of the provision of humanitarian assistance from the UNHCR and the Ghanaian government. I engaged the participants with open-ended questions that elicited their relational experiences with the host community after the humanitarian assistance from UNHCR and government of Ghana ceased. All the participants shared their experiences on how they relate with the host community since the end of the extension of humanitarian assistance to them. The analysis of the data revealed that the nature of relationship between former Liberian

refugees and the host community since humanitarian aid ceased exists at economic, social, local politics, religious and cultural levels. The findings indicate a drift from cordial to sour relationships between the Liberian refugees and the host community.

#### **4.1.1 Economic Relationship**

The data reveal that during the humanitarian assistance era, the refugees basic needs such as food, shelter and clothing were provided to them. Participants indicated that they were given training under the UNHCR career development programs to acquire livelihood support skills. The data showed that refugee children were provided with educational opportunities to develop their potentials. One of participants interviewed indicated the following response:

*“When UN was assisting, they did monthly rationing of food, blanket, a clinic to attend to ill people and free education. If your tent or your mud house got damaged you were given tarpaulin or money for roof sheets. These were some of the privileges we enjoyed. They had other programs for travel, they had educational packages for qualified students but had age barriers because some parents needed some education to earn reasonable leaving to cater for their family but the age limit from 18 to 25 years was a big challenge and so parents who were yearning to improve their education and even some students who were already in the university before they came into exile were denied these opportunities because of age limit”. (Field interview with participant 7, 2023)*

The data reveal that due to the assistance refugees were given, there was cordial refugee-host economic relationship. Participants stated that there was no competition over host community’s scarce resources since they were dependent on the UNHCR for their wellbeing and survival, thereby reducing tension and intolerance between them and the host community. Some of the participants stated during the interview that:

*“Back then we use to trade among ourselves peacefully. Those were the times the camp was a camp. We bought things from them and they also bought things from us. When we came first and did not bring along things we had to buy things from the community members sometimes. Since the UN was assisting us, we sometime buy few things*

*from the community, especially when we run out of food and the assistance from the UN is delaying.” (Field interview with participant 4, 2023)*

*...”We did not depend much on the resources in the community so there was no competition. We were depending mostly on the support of the UNHCR. We were not depending on the community resources. Rather, because we were here, the UN had to put up social amenities such as water, health facilities and others to support our survival. And due to this the community members were even benefitting from such facilities. So you realized that there was peaceful coexistence between us. We came only for refuge and were not interested in the community’s resources. They gave us their land to settle and we cherished that and our presence also brought them economic benefit.” (Field interview with participant 8, 2023).*

From the responses above, it appears that during the aid period the former Liberian refugees were not in competition with the host community for the resources needed for their survival and this ensured cordial economic relationship. Participants mentioned taking advantage of the skills empowerment opportunities made available by the UNHCR and the Ghanaian Government to make money to support their livelihoods. They stated that they were allowed to use the skills acquired to work in the community. One participant stated:

*“Oh we were allowed to do business and sell petty things. We traded among ourselves and with the community members. Even because some of us had some skills we were engaged sometimes by the community members to do a job for them. Some of us are electricians, mason, hairdressers, dressmakers and carpenters. As I am standing here I can fix AC and others. The UNHCR training programs equipped many of us with livelihood skills and we were using them to make small, small money to support ourselves. Things were going quite well during that time.” (Field interview with participant 3, 2023).*

However, the data revealed that since the end of humanitarian assistance to the refugees, their economic relationship with the host community turned sour. Participants indicated that the indigenes have infiltrated their camp and have almost taken over the businesses the refugees did to support themselves. This came out during the interview with some participant:

*“Years back the United Nations brought skills training and our ladies who took advantage have been plaiting hair as a means of survival but how long will that carry you? Now you find most of the natives into the businesses at the camp. Now the natives have also gotten skills in hair dressing and others and are setting up their shops at the camp. So you would see most of the natives patronizing their fellow native hair dressing saloon. Because of their prejudices, they want to kick us out of every business we are doing to support ourselves.”* (Field interview with participant 9, 2023)

Another stated:

*“...Now the indigenes are into those businesses and there’s nothing else to sell. All the containers you see at the camp are all owned by Ghanaians. But then in the early 90s to the 2000s, after me and my family moved here to the camp in 1990, it wasn’t so!.”* (Field interview with participant 11, 2023)

These comments from participants suggest that when the humanitarian assistance ended, all other support and consideration from the host community ended. There is now competition between the refugees and the natives over the already scarce resources available despite the growing numbers of both the refugee and host population. The competition between the refugees and the host tend to generate conflict in the community. Participants indicated that members of the host community treat them as people who are no more welcomed in the community. They claimed that community members are encroaching and taking portions of the land designated for the camp and its activities.

*“Look, let me tell you something that is increasingly happening nowadays here. This land was given to the camp and was allocated for every refugee to settle. During the period the UN was still assisting us, there was no quarrel over the land. We know that it is not our land. That one we know. But since the UN stopped the assistance and started the repatriation process and we decided to stay back, they have been threatening to take back their land. Just over there where the container shop is, the entire land there is for the camp. But just few months ago we were there and one woman came and started putting up a shop. When we confronted her she said the place is hers and that she bought it from the chief. Even now you will be there and this person will come and say this chief said the land is his and another time some people will come and say the land is for that chief. So we don’t even know who owns the land. Even they now want to destroy the camp and take their land. So where should we go? Most of us were born and raised here. I*

*don't know anywhere apart from here". (Field interview with participant 12, 2023)*

From the response, it could be noted that there is tension between the refugees and the host community over land and threats to close down the camp. Participants perceive the community members as becoming intolerant to their continuous stay in the camp. They indicated that community members feel their continuous stay is denying them the piece of land the camp is located. Another participant shared how their continuous stay at the camp after the end of the UNHCR assistance makes it difficult for community members to engage their services:

*"Now that no one seems to be responsible for our welfare here, life is very difficult because the community members will allow us to do jobs that we have skills in. When they seek your services and get to know that you are a Liberian they tend to decline the giving you the job. The other time one man wanted to install fans and AC and he was directed to me. But due to the language barrier the man got to know that I was a Liberian refugee and said he can no longer give me the job. Even the church that I worship, the pastor wanted to install AC in it and I offered to do it but he said he cannot allow me because when they find out he will be in trouble. So it's been difficult to make some money to feed, send the children to school and buy medicine when you are sick. My sister and brothers, our live here is not easy at all." (Field interview with participant 5, 2023)*

The response suggests that exchange of services between the refugees and the host community has strained since the humanitarian assistance stopped. The data revealed that members of the host community seem to be intolerant towards the refugee community in the informal working space. The refugee-participants noted that they are not allowed to freely practise their skills in the informal work space in the host community thereby making it difficult for them to earn income. As such, they indicated that they struggle to sustain their lives and meet their daily basic needs.

#### 4.1.2 Social Relationship

The data revealed that there was good social interaction between the former Liberian refugees at Buduburam and the host community while they were still receiving assistance from the UNHCR and the Ghanaian government. Participants disclosed that there was a good rapport between the Buduburam community and them, which encouraged constructive interactions that benefited both groups. The data indicate that the host community used to allow the refugees to participate in their social programs and events during the period the UNHCR was still extending humanitarian assistance to the refugees. Participants indicated that intermarriage and friendship ties were built between them and the host community throughout the period of humanitarian assistance. The finding thus affirms Daah, Nangwele and Kuupiel's (2023) study which indicated that the former Liberian refugees at Buduburam and the people of the host community had a cordial social relationship including dating and intermarriage. Some participants stated during the interviews:

*“The period that we were still being supported by the UN and others was nice. We were associating with the people here and they too were associating with us. When they have their celebrations they will invite you to come and celebrate with them and we too also invite them when we are doing our celebrations. So, we having friends among them and they too have friend among our people. Some of the members of the host community dated our ladies and got married to some of them. The men in this community liked our ladies. They know that our presence brought them some benefits so they did not see us people who were threat to their land or community. So we related really very well during the period the UN was here supporting us. But all these changed since the UN assistance ended and we decided to still stay here. They are now mean towards us.”* (Field interview with participant 9, 2023)

*“Oh I know some of our people who married some of the people here during that time we were still under the UN support. Their men loved our ladies when we came first. I dated one guy who is from here but unfortunately we couldn't get married. We were cool with them and they too were cool with us. We were friends and brothers and sisters. I cannot say that is still the case in present times. Hmmm! If I want to*



*say everything that is now happening between us I will grow angry now.” (Field interview with participant 6, 2023)*

From the responses above, it could be realized that the cordial social interaction between the refugees and the host community during the humanitarian aid period has strained since the extension of aid to the refugees was stopped. The data revealed that the former Liberian refugees at Buduburam view the end of the UNHCR humanitarian assistance as unfavourable condition that has caused the change in the cordial way members of the host community interacted with them at the social level. The data revealed that the end of the humanitarian support from the UN has made the refugees to be seen as burden by the host community. Having labeled the refugees as burden, the next thing was to become intolerant and hostile towards them. The contact theory argues that when there is an interaction between two groups especially a minority group and majority group under an unfavourable or inappropriate condition, it can cause intolerance, hostility and stereotypes. One of the leaders of the refugee community at the Buduburam camp stated during the interview that:

*“From the early days of the camp we had a peaceful coexistence with the people who accommodated us. We were doing things in common whatever affected us affected them. They use to have family reunion program and others. They had other programs formed so when Liberians get involved we also allowed members from the host community to bring members to be part of the process and to also benefit when the UN was assisting us. But since the UN assistance stopped, they just changed. The way some of us used to roam around with the people here and talk has changed. Now we just get up and sit at the camp in our tents wondering where the next meal will come from. They don’t want to associate with us like they used to. They are now threatening to remove us from here.” (Field interview with participant 1, 2023)*

Thus, during the time of humanitarian assistance, the relationship between the refugees and the host community was cordial. The refugees and the host community lived cordially because humanitarian assistance promoted social cohesion and integration, such as community-based projects and initiatives. These initiatives

mitigated the tensions that could arise. Also, during the humanitarian aid period the government of Ghana was protecting the refugees by providing security and ensuring that the International Organizations and NGOs operated efficiently. The social impact of the refugees stems from their engagements with both the formal and informal social networks once they settle into the host community. However, the data revealed that the post humanitarian assistance era is characterized by a cold treatment from the host community, causing the former refugees to fall on friends in developed countries for assistance. The informal network can reflect the refugee's access to social support. Since their relationship with the host community has strained, the data revealed that the former Liberian refugees now rely on themselves and their social networks outside Ghana for support when they are in need.

#### **4.1.3 Local Politics**

I realized that there is a change in the local political relationship between the former Liberian refugees in Buduburam and the host community after the end of the humanitarian assistance. The factors that influenced the political relationship between the former refugees and host changed over time. Factors such as access to citizenship, political representation, and legal protections changed for the worst after the humanitarian assistance. The police station, fire station, and market among other structures were erected in preparation to integrate these refugees during the aid era. I discovered from the participants that during the humanitarian assistance era, both the host community and refugees benefited from these facilities without any friction. A participant stated that;

*“There are some rooms in the camp that if you want to rent then you will have to see the people from the community. Liberians who traveled have their rooms rented out to other Liberians by people from the community but before they had no business here in the camp.”* (Field interview with participant 7, 2023)



It is evident from the response that the refugee-host relationship during the aid days was less competitive. Participants claimed that during the time they were still being assisted by the UN, they were able to take decisions on their regarding their stay and welfare in the camp without having to seek the consent or approval of the host community. They indicated that since the area designated for the camp was given to them, they could erect any structure on it for business or shelter. However, they stated that after the UN stopped the extension of humanitarian assistance to them, the host community no longer allows them to have the power to use the camp land for their welfare. According to participants, the chiefs and leaders of the host community now control the camp land and take decisions on it without recourse to them including selling it to third parties. For instance, one of the participants indicated that:

*“Unlike when the UN was still here and assisting us, now we don’t have any power over the camp and things that happen here. Previously, we could on our own decide to use any portion of the camp land to put up a shop for business. We were allowed to function and take our own decisions regarding our lives and stay here and the people here didn’t have any problem with us. We didn’t have to go to the chief to ask for permission before we could use any portion of the camp land for anything we want. But since the UN left and we decided to stay back, that has changed. Now, the chiefs and community members have taken control of the camp land and even threatening to remove us from it. We cannot do anything on the land again without the permission of the chiefs. The chiefs are now selling and giving out the land to the community people to set up their businesses.”* (Field interview with participant 11, 2023)

Another participant had this to say:

*“We don’t decide on our lives again. Other people now decide our life and fate here. Since we are no longer under the UN assistance, the community wants to take back their land and have the power of control over it so that they can sell it. Before the UN left us, the community didn’t have a problem with us. But the moment the UN is no more here they now want to be the ones who have the power over the land. We know the land is not ours but they didn’t have problems with us doing anything on it for our welfare. But now we cannot even take any decision or do anything on the land again. They even want to remove us from the land and I don’t know where they want us to go.”* (Field interview with participant 10, 2023)

The findings revealed that the former refugees no longer have power of control over the camp land and to take decisions regarding how they want to use it. The findings indicated that chiefs and leaders of the host community have taken back the power of control of the camp land from the refugee and tend to take decisions on it including sale to third parties without recourse to the camp leaders. There are uncertainties among the former refugee community regarding their stay in the camp as a result of persistent threats of demolishing of the camp by authorities and members of the host community. Thus, the local political relationship between the former Liberian refugees and the host community seem to be negatively affected as the former refugees feel unprotected after the humanitarian assistance period. The data revealed that the former refugees were promised citizenship and participation in local elections and other political processes. However, participants indicated that such promises were never fulfilled. One of the participants indicated:

*“They told us that those of us who will stay will be granted Ghanaian citizenship and integrated into the Ghanaian community. They said they will give us ID cards and we can even participate in elections and all that. But now it is not easy to get the ID card meant for refugees. You apply for the card and it is very difficult to get it after paying all kinds of monies.”* (Field interview with participant 9, 2023)

Other participants bemoaned their local political relationship with the host community in the following responses:

*“When you look around there is the police and fire service station because it was agreed upon that refugees who would stay in Ghana would be given housing facility with access to these amenities, including, schools and hospital facilities. But now we are being asked to move so the question now is; where are we to move to? We came out to tell them that these were your promises, we are still looking forward to the housing facilities so where the houses promised these questions remain unanswered and so they know the lapses on the side of the government and the agencies responsible at the end of the day they saw reason to halt the demolition of the camp till the proper thing is done.”* (Field interview with participant 8, 2023)

Other participant reported that:

*“...Sometimes it is tedious. They think we have occupied their place and even claim that we are selling lands. We don’t get land, how will we sell the place? ...we are just squatting. Then somebody will just accuse us saying, you are on our land and selling the place, no! And so they have been thinking that we have been making money on their land.”* (Field interview with participant 4, 2023)

*“It is rather their own people who are selling the camp lands. This one says I’m a chief, that one says I’m a chief. You know how many people claim to be chief on a particular piece of land? About ten and yet we don’t even know who is one and who is not. So how can you say a Liberian man would go sell land? These are all lies. These are things held against us falsely because they keep wondering how we survive.”* (Field interview with participant 12, 2023)

Eight participants claimed that the community members are putting pressure on government to demolish the camp as a strategy to get them out of the community. According to them, members of the host community feel they are no longer benefitting from their continuous stay at the camp because humanitarian assistance is no longer coming to them. One of them stated:

*“They want us to move but they don’t have the power to actually pull us out from the land and they rely on the government to actually do so and they feel that the government is delaying so they have to put pressure on us so we in turn put pressure on the government. We feel that they are right because when you stay in somebodies community for quite long and they see that you have reached certain stage and they are not enjoying certain facilities they feel that you are depriving them of that freedom and that’s how we see the whole thing to look like, that’s my perception.”* (Field interview with participant 2, 2023)

The host community is fighting for business opportunities with the refugees inside and near the refugee camps using their position as owners of the land as basis. The refugees acknowledged that their prolonged stay may have brought some inconvenience to the host. Nonetheless, the refugees are complaining about limited business opportunities because the integration and engagement between the host community and them are decided by the government of Ghana and authorities at higher levels. Six participants indicated that because the chiefs of the community have

taken control of the camp land that they now resort to negotiating with some members of the host community outside the camp to use their land to farm vegetables and sell.

*“Liberians deal in vegetables and sell vegetables so they talk to some of the Ghanaians outside the camp who have lands and are not ready to use those lands so they allow some of them to plant vegetables and bring to the market to sell. Even though the market was purposely built for the refugees, the host community has taken the major portion of the market.”* (Field interview with participant 6, 2023)

From the response, it could be noted that the market which was built due to the presence of the former refugees have now been taken over and dominated by the indigenes. The finding thus indicates that refugees at the Buduburam camp are struggling to negotiate their stay with the host community who are now unwelcoming and intolerant towards them.

#### **4.1.5 Cultural Relationship**

The findings of the study revealed that culturally, the host community was welcoming and accepting towards the former refugees since their entry into the Buduburam community and throughout the period they were still being assisted by the UN. Participants stated that though there were differences between them and the host community in terms of language, customs, and values, the host community was tolerant of their divergence or differences. They indicated that language was not a consideration in their interaction with the people of host community.

*“When we came here first things were cool even though there was language barrier and some differences in the norms that we hold. They were tolerant and they will not say because you are a Liberian or because you cannot speak Twi they will not help you or work with you. Our presence was bringing some benefits to them so we were very fine with each other. But now it is no more like that.”* (Field interview with participant 1, 2023)

Also, participants indicated that when the host community is celebrating their festivals and other programs they do not prevent them from witnessing such cultural events.

*“Oh when they are doing their festivals and cultural events some of us go and watch and no one stops you. We go and watch and see how they celebrate their cultural events.”* (Field interview with participant 5, 2023).

The findings indicated that cultural relationship between the refugees and the host community before the end of the aid period was not strained despite the cultural differences such as language, norms, and values. However culture appears to be a barrier now that aid is no more extended towards the former Liberian refugees. Other participants stated:

*“Now if you are a Liberian and you cannot speak the Twi, it will be difficult to get a job to work. When they interact with you and you tell them you cannot speak their language they will ask whether you are a Liberian and when you say yes, that is all, you will not get the job. As I told you, the other time I went to work on one man house wiring and because I couldn't speak Twi he said he can no longer give me the contract. The only way you can be able to get some work to do is to speak the Twi very well. For them anyone who speaks Twi is a Ghanaian but I don't know whether everyone in Ghana speaks Twi.”* (Field interview with participant 9, 2023)

*“Most of us have skills to work and earn income to support ourselves but now because of our inability to speak the language of the people here we are sometimes denied jobs or work to do. I know how to install AC but the only way I can get a job is to hide my identity. But even that, if they get to find out you are a refugee they will not engage your services again.”* (Field interview with participant 6, 2023)

From the responses, it could be noted that language barrier has been weaponized by the host community to treat the refugee population improperly and discriminate against them. Discrimination is one of the challenges that the refugee population at the Buduburam face since the UN stopped extending humanitarian assistance to them. Also, the data revealed that language barrier is causing prejudices against the former refugees. One of the participants stated the following:

*“Everywhere you go the first thing is “how are you in the local dialect” and if you cannot reply in their dialect they know that you are*

*a refugee and tend to discriminate against you. They just have it in their minds that anyone who is not able to communicate in Twi with them in the community is a Liberian refugee. Not all of them are bad but majority of them use the language barrier to treat us badly and this tend to cause problems and suffering on us.” (Field interview with participant 8, 2023)*

The data revealed that interaction between the refugee population and host community at the cultural level is characterized by prejudices and intolerance since the end of the humanitarian assistance from the UN. The end of the humanitarian assistance puts the refugees in unfavourable conditions which is affecting their relationship with host community negatively. This finding is affirmed by the contact theory which indicates that interaction between two groups (majority and minority group) under inappropriate condition can breed prejudices and tensions. The findings showed the need to promote cultural exchange between refugees and host communities in order to reduce tensions and promote social cohesion.

Overall, the findings are affirmed by Hardgrove (2009) and Fee's (2021) works that stated that there is positive association between relief activities and host community's perception of refugees. The study's findings lend weight to the literature that humanitarian aid has a favorable impact on the relationships between refugees and their host communities. The findings affirm that livelihood of hosts and refugees can affect the nature of their relationship significantly (Porter et al., 2008). The findings show that refugees in the Buduburam camp are worried of not having access to official occupations and that they might go into the informal economy or engage in unlawful activities, such as selling drugs or having sex (Kampshire et al., 2008). The study's findings also support Tanle and Tettey (2017) and Bruey's (2016) studies that argue that when aid organizations help refugees, local populations unquestionably



benefit greatly in terms of social amenities. The study showed that although the arrival of the refugees may have put additional strain on the community of Buduburam's resources, humanitarian intervention helped to prevent host-refugee conflict. However, after the aid ended, conflicts began to emerge between the refugees and host with threats of demolishing of the camp. The host country's social and economic issues are what give rise to the conflicts, and depending on how the government and aid organizations handle their integration policies, refugee situation either makes those issues worse or makes them go away (Fomekong, 2022; Fransen & Kuschminder, 2014; Ludwig, 2013). Interestingly, though the findings indicate that conditions in the host community are unfavourable for the refugee population since the end of humanitarian assistance, they are uninterested in repatriating home or to a third country.

The findings lend support to the intergroup contact theory of Gordon Allport. The finding is that for interaction between the Liberian refugees and members of the host community to reduce tensions and breed cohesion, the contact must be positive. A cordial relationship between the refugees and their host will prevail if their interaction is characterized by equal engagement, common goals, cooperation, support of authorities, law or customs and informal personal interaction. Inequality in wealth, skills, academic backgrounds or experiences will make it difficult for the refugees and members of the host community to interact better. Also, the findings support the argument of the contact theory that both the refugees and the host community must harness their efforts and work together to achieve their common goal for better interaction to be achieved between them. Again, better interaction will occur when the refugees and members of the host community do not compete but rather cooperate or work together in pursuit of their common goal(s). As the findings of the study

demonstrate, there was cooperation between the Liberian refugees and the host community during the humanitarian aid period the two groups interacted better and conflicts between them reduced. However, as the two groups began to perceive the other as their competitor in the pursuit of their goals after the end of humanitarian assistance, tensions, prejudice and discrimination began to occur.

In addition, the findings affirmed the contact theory that for contact between the refugees and the host to lead to better relationship or interaction both must acknowledge an authority that supports their contact and interaction. As the data revealed, when the UNHCR and government of Ghana were still present and involved in the affairs of the Liberian refugees, there was better interaction between the host and refugees due to the fact that both acknowledge that these authorities support their contact. However, when the UNHCR and the government of Ghana ended their humanitarian assistance to the refugees and triggered the policy of repatriation, the host community no longer acknowledges the support of these authorities. This has led to the host exhibiting unfriendly, unhelpful attitudes and engagement in comparisons with the refugee community. The findings revealed that for better interaction between the Liberian refugees and the host, members of both groups must mingle with one another and build cross-group friendships. As the findings show, interaction between the former Liberian refugees and members of the host community has become strained because members of both groups no longer mingle, bond or build friendships with one another since the end of humanitarian aid.

#### **4.2 Challenges the Former Liberian Refugees at Buduburam Face after the End of Humanitarian Aid**

The study also sought to analyze the difficulties that the Liberian refugees at the Buduburam camp face since the extension of humanitarian aid to them ended. All the



refugee-participants in the study stated the challenges that they face since the end of the extension of humanitarian aid to them. The data revealed that the former Liberian refugees at the Buduburam camp are face with many challenges since the provision of humanitarian assistance to them ended including financial or economic hardships, discrimination, unemployment, inadequate feeding, bad shelter, difficulty obtaining services and uncertainty surrounding their stay.

#### 4.2.1 Financial Difficulties

The interviews revealed that after the end of the humanitarian assistance, the former Liberian refugees in the Buduburam camp battle financially which makes them unable to afford some basic necessities such as food, education and health care services. Although some participants indicated that they take up jobs to support themselves, they noted that what they earn is insufficient to meet their needs and to save towards the future. Some participants stated:

*“Our major problem is money. We don’t have money to take care of ourselves. Things are hard so if we get money we support ourselves and start up something.”* (Field interview with participant 1, 2023)

*“Hmmm! As you can see me I don’t have money. See where we are living in. so money, yes money is our issue.”* (Field interview with participant 11, 2023)

*What we need is money. I can make furniture and things but as you can see I don’t even have the wood to do it. If I had money I would be making furniture and selling.”* (Field interview with participant 4, 2023)

Other participants shared similar responses of how they are suffering due to lack of money to take care of their needs:

*“We are suffering. No money. As I sit I don’t know where my next meal will come from. It is just the grace of God if not hmmm! No money to buy food and eat. Even when I am sick and I don’t go to the hospital because I cannot pay even 5ghc if they ask me to pay that.”* (Field interview with participant 7, 2023)

*“As you can see this is what I do. I stake lottery and I can come and sit here the whole day and nobody will come and stake so where will I get the commission to do something with it. I will not. So I cannot even*

*give my child good food to eat. I cannot buy meat so once a while I buy egg for her. There is no money so I don't mind always going hunger. Since morning I have not eaten not because I don't want but because I don't have the money. If no one stakes lottery today then there will not be food today at home.”* (Field interview with participant 6, 2023)

The findings indicated that lack of financial resources is a major challenge facing the Liberian refugees since the end of the provision of humanitarian assistance to them. The findings indicated that refugees struggle to feed, seek healthcare and take care of their children's needs because they do not have money. The data further revealed that financial difficulties make participants who have learned a trade unable to get startup capital to set-up or run their own business. As such, they bemoaned that the talents and skills they learn tend to go waste since they are unable to put them to practice. One of them stated:

*“Even when you learn a trade and you don't have money to empower you that training become dormant. I can sew very well but where is the money for me to start up my own shop and work. There is no money. The UN that was supporting us stooped long ago and since then it has been hardship and it is only the grace of God that is keeping us.”* (Field interview with participant 11, 2023)

The response indicates that former Liberian refugees at the Buduburam camp lack the financial resources or capital to start up a business that they have skill in. This has pushed them into poverty. Five participants indicated that due to the financial hardship they face, their children tend to work at construction sites to earn some income to support the family. One of them stated the following:

*“...Now it is left to us alone. That is to say you will have to in one way or the other, not by way of criminally, find kind of a means of you making your family to survive. Those of us with children of age will go and do some hard labour, that is go to construction sites, make bricks, do motor or lay blocks for people. When they return they say “papa, this is what I got today” sometimes when this is given it enables them to buy sachet water for their mama to sell ice water.”* (Field interview with participant 2, 2023)

The comments from the participants showed that some of the former Liberian refugees have acquired some level of skills in certain trade in order to earn some income to sustain themselves and their families. The data revealed that they tend to take up menial jobs that do not require financial capital such as labourers at construction sites. Participants with male children old enough to work are sent out to also try and make money for the home by engaging in manual labour which earns them very little. On the other hand, the data revealed that adult female children who have learned a trade but do not have capital to start up their own business tend to go from place to place to braid hair, wash other peoples' clothes and take up cleaning jobs in order to support the family. A participant stated:

*“Because there is no money, some ladies what they do is to go and wash clothes for people in the community to get something small for their upkeep. The young ladies also go to Malata and Nima to plait hair by the time they return, they say “mama this is what I got”. (Field interview with participant 5, 2023)*

The response reveals that most of the former Liberian refugees engaged in menial and temporary jobs outside of the refugee camp to make money to support their lives. The resort to menial jobs enabled the former refugees to cope with their financial difficulties. Some of the participants indicated how they struggle to support their children's education as a result of financial hardship. This was illustrated by a participant in the following response:

*“I sell small, small provision items as you can see. That is how I feed myself and my children and I do alterations of clothes for survival too but as we speak my sewing machine has broken down for some time now. I don't have money to even repair it so I am not able to raise money to take care of my child's education. This my child did not go to school because I have no money to give her.” (Field interview with participant 10, 2023)*

According to the participant, families including hers, only make money to survive through the sale of groceries in small stalls in front of their residence in the camp. The data also revealed how financial hardship or poverty has made it difficult for the

participant to raise money to repair her broken-down tailoring machine. Due to financial difficulties that the former refugees face since the end of humanitarian assistance, they are struggling to meet their daily needs and live dignified lives.

#### 4.2.2 Discrimination

The study also revealed that the former Liberian refugees at the Buduburam camp face discrimination in their relationship with the host community since the end of the humanitarian support to them. Atiyat (2018) indicated that there are likely to be disparities between natives and refugees in the majority of the refugee-affected and hosting locations and that such disparities can lead to conflicts. All the participants in the study acknowledged encountering some form of prejudice or unequal treatment from members of the host community since the humanitarian assistance to them stopped. This finding supports the argument of the contact theory that prejudices occur when inter group interaction happen under an inappropriate condition. They stated that many people in the host community think that because they are refugees they are not entitled to the same resources and opportunities as Ghanaians. Participants shared that they are discriminated against in the exchange of goods and services by the host community.

*“Some of your people here treat us as though we are not humans. I say your people because you are also a Ghanaian although you are not from this community. When they have a job and go for it and they get to know that you are a refugee they will not give it to you. As I told you when I started talking I know how to do wiring. So, one day someone connected me to a man who wants to wire his building. When I went and we started to negotiate about the cost and how much he will pay me he realized I couldn’t speak the Twi language and asked where I am from and I told him I am a Liberian. Then his face quickly changed. I was still there and then he pretended to be receiving a call with someone and after the call he said he is going somewhere and that he will call me when is back. That was the end of the matter. He never called and the house was wire by someone else. So you see what I am talking about.”* (Field interview with participant 9, 2023).

Some participants stated being discriminated against in terms of employment. A participant stated:

*“The problem we are facing is that the people do not want to employ us because we don’t speak their language.”* (Field interview with participant 3, 2023)

*“When you go they say that you don’t speak the twi and so you don’t fit into the society. My own teacher who taught me how to install CCTV cameras told me even if you could speak small of the local dialect I will put you somewhere.”* (Field interview with participant 7, 2023)

Participants reported being discriminated against in the sharing of educational opportunities. Some of the participants claimed that educational scholarships that were only created for the refugees were rather given to Ghanaians under the guise of being refugees. One of the women I interviewed during the data collection process narrated how educational scholarship meant for her was given to a Ghanaian:

*“Since the UN left us our relationship with the people here has been full of discrimination. I have a story to tell you and I don’t know whether you have time. But I will cut it short for you since you have other people to interview. As part of the assistance to us, educational scholarship scheme was instituted for qualified refugees who want to study abroad to do so. There was a time I was selected but I was not told about it. The Ghanaian people decided to give it to one lady who used my name. The scholarship was to Canada and as I am speaking to you I am still looking for that lady. When I heard that my scholarship was given to another person who is not even a refugee I was mad and went to Accra and gave it to them. The people in charge of refugees in Ghana were rather giving the scholarship meant for the refugees to Ghanaians. They say I make trouble but if you don’t step on my toes I will not come after you. I went to the office at Accra several times and they said there was nothing they could do since the lady was already in Canada studying.”* (Field interview with participant 5, 2023)

According to the participant, she felt discriminated against when her scholarship opportunity was given to a Ghanaian. She continued to state the following:

*“The thing that made me very mad is how the lady got my information to go for the scholarship. The people at the refugee office in Accra have all our details and so if someone who is not a refugee was able to use my data to get the scholarship it means they aided her. As for that lady who used my data to collect the scholarship I am still looking for her. If I get her only God knows what I will do to her, ...”* (Field interview with participant 5, 2023)

Also, participants shared how some of them are sometimes falsely accused and sent to prison without proper investigations to determine the truth. They mentioned how armed men tend to invade the camp and shoot sporadically without regard for UN conventions protecting refugees. A participant stated:

*“This is a country where always UN rules are violated. This is a refugee camp and no armed men are allowed to enter with arms but they will come and do shoots here and yet from government down to the bishop no one will speak up and say what you are doing is wrong. This is the country that takes refugees to court, put then in prison accuse them falsely up to now.”* (Field interview with participant 8, 2023)

The participant remarks showed that discrimination is being perpetrated against them by state authorities and the community they are in. From the stories of the former refugee-participants it seems nobody wants to take a stand against maltreatment of the refugees. The data indicate that the refugees face hostilities from the host community. Participants bemoaned that Ghanaians do not honor the identity documents issued by the government and the UNHCR leading to unfair treatment whenever they try to access services in the country. A participant illustrated this claim in the following response:

*“A friend of my work at Dzorwulu with a Whiteman and she had registered with an insurance group and she needed her money because she was returning to Liberia. When she went there to the insurance group they were playing on her so she decided to bring the ambassador in. The ambassador went there on three occasions before they meet him they were able to meet him. Then they requested for her*



*resident permit and when she took it out they then said this is not the real permit issued in Ghana and so in order to get your money you need to change it to the real permit. Why treat someone like that. There is no respect for us. When my friend abroad feels sorry for me and sends me \$50 or \$100 and I take the refugee ID issued by the Ghana Government and UNHCR they reject it but if I take the same ID to Ivory Coast and Togo they honor it.” (Field interview with participant 11, 2023)*

The response suggests that public institutions have very little consideration for the refugees when it comes to factoring the conditions of their stay in the policies used to run their establishments. Participants indicated that they face discrimination in their daily interactions with the host community and this has turned their once healthy relationship during the humanitarian aid period into a sour one since the end of the provision of relief items to them. One of the participants stated that:

*“We use to live in peace and tranquility but not anymore. See this one, I was just invited by the sanitation office, a place that I have been using, they are not forcing me to pay money for it. A septic tank that has been completely left that no one is using a person closer me took me to the sanitation office. These are some of the things that the host community is doing to us. They don’t even want to see the face of any refugee and the first thing they say after they get to know you are Liberian is what are you doing here? This is not your country. Everything with the host now is different. Probably you may be lucky to be closer to a Ghanaian who is nice but the majority of them when they get know you are a refugee it’s different.” (Field interview with participant 1, 2023)*

Another participant shared how he is discriminated against by a member of the host community:

*“If anything happens to his house he jumps to accuse me. Even when a natural event occurs and something touch his house and destroy anything he will say it is my fault and I should repair it. He will never go after his fellow Ghanaians but me. ...Because he wants to take over the land that is the reason for his actions. So, tell me is the host doing well? Is it fair? If storm struck something from my house and destroy something at your house you say I should repair it and then I said I can’t do it.” (Field interview with participant 7, 2023)*

The data suggests that discrimination against former Liberian refugees is used as a tactic by the host community to force them to leave the camp on their own because they perceive no action from the government demolishing the camp. From the responses, the reception from community members towards the refugees tend to change immediately they become aware of their identity. During the interviews, I came across an elderly man who initially did not want to do the interview because according to him people come frequently to interview them but yet nothing good comes out of it. After explaining the purpose of the study to him he later participated and recounted his experience in the following response:

*“A Ghanaian lady came to me that I should help her and that she wants to do her business just two weeks ago so I just gave her a little spot to put her container. When she first came to me, as Ghanaians typically do when they want favors from strangers, acting sorrowful and we Liberians always feeling sorry for people, I gave her the spot and she was paying three hundred cedis a year. Just two weeks ago she called me and when I went she said the chief called her and said she shouldn’t pay money to me anymore because I am a Liberian and I asked her did you tell them you pay me? Can three hundred cedis make up for a year? I decided to help you so you couldn’t tell the people that I am not renting from him it is just something I give him as compensation at the end of the year? Then they told her that she should pay to them one hundred cedis every month, beginning with one year advance payment before she could continue with the business. Somebody whom I’ve helped by giving you the place for a number of years she never stood by me to say he is not renting the place but just decided to help me. She was even so brave to tell me that, you have to find someone to occupy the other spot in front of your house or they will come and take it from you.” (Field interview with participant 12, 2023)*

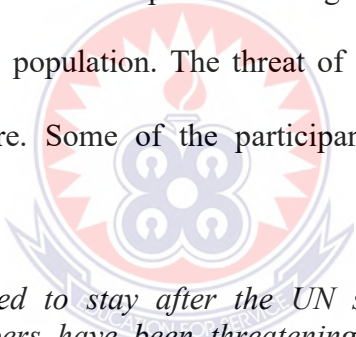
It could be inferred from the response that the participant attempted to help the community member out of his own free will because he found no reason to refuse her the space to do her business. However, the lady on the other hand, appears to have turned her back on the participant when the local leaders approached her to collect money from her as they do to all business owners in the community. The discrimination against former Liberian refugees in Buduburam can be attributed to the



prolonged presence of refugees and the withdrawal of humanitarian aid. It was realized that discrimination further strained the relationship between the host community and the refugees. This supports the discovery by Sarfo-Mensah (2009), that factors creating discomfort for Liberian refugees in Buduburam include discrimination and lack of income.

#### 4.2.3 Insecurity

The data revealed that formal Liberian refugees are concerned about their security and safety in the camp. They raised concerns about increasing threats from the host community members to remove them from the camp. Participants indicated that threats of demolishing of their camp tend to heighten tensions and cause fear and panic among the refugee population. The threat of demolishing of the camp makes refugees to feel unsecure. Some of the participants illustrated this claim in the following responses:



*“Since we decided to stay after the UN stopped assisting us the community members have been threatening to remove us from the camp. Whenever the issue of the camp demolishing comes up there is always serious tension, fear and uncertainty in the community. We will not just sit and watch them demolish the camp. So there is always resistance and push back. So you normally see that tension is high. As we are here we feel unsecure. I don’t know when they will get up and come and start destroying the camp.” (Field interview with participant 7, 2023)*

*“Since I grew up this is the only place I know and I cannot just sit down and allow them to demolish it. They have been threatening to demolish the camp. They always demonstrate trying to force the government to do so but we are always prepared to clash with them anytime they bring it up. Because of that the place will be full with security people causing fear.” (Field interview with participant 2, 2023)*

The data indicate that camp demolishing threats and the resistance from the refugees tend to cause insecurity issues in the community. This is because participants believe that:

*“When you push someone to the wall too much and if the person bounce back is it will be bad. Is it right to tell to go ahead and tell someone that if you decide to be integrated into my country this is what I will give you and by the end of the day you tell them that there is nothing for them and that they should leave the camp, where are they going?”* (Field interview with participant 9, 2023)

Again, the refugee-participants reported sudden swoops and arbitrary arrest in the camp by the security personnel in Ghana. They explained that when such sudden arbitrary arrests occur they tend to feel insecure and uncertain about their lives. One of them indicated that:

*“You can just be there and the police will swoop in and start arresting our young men. They will arrest them and send them to court under false accusation. So you will see that everyone is always living in fear.”* (Field interview with participant 8, 2023)

The study discovered from the participants that they also face insecurity because criminals from other parts of the country use the refugee camp as a hideout after committing criminal acts. One of the participants stated:

*“We live in fear sometime because when people commit crimes they run to this place and hide and when they are arrested the news people will report that it is Liberian refugees. You will see security men coming in here plenty and causing panic. Sometimes they end up arresting us the refugees and accusing us falsely.”* (Field interview with participant 11, 2023)

This finding is affirmed by Daah et al. (2023) study which discovered that criminals from other parts of Ghana have turned the community into their hiding ground. Also, participants noted that hardship and lack of economic opportunities to refugees have forces some of them to engage in illegal activities that put the security of the camp under threat. Some of the refugee-participants indicated:

*“I cannot be here all this while wasting my life. Most of the girls going through all these are destroying themselves, because they are traumatized. There are no jobs so they are forced to engage in prostitution.”* (Field interview with participant 5, 2023)

*“Some of our youth engage in illegal things just to survive because they are not getting jobs. You cannot blame them.”* (Field interview with participant 4, 2023)

When I asked the participants to mention some of the illegal activities that their youth engage in they declined. I observed from the participants’ facial expression that they were not ready to tell me the specific illegal activities because of fear of being targeted by the security through my study. They explained that the constant frustration and hardship they face tend to compel some of them to engage in acts that have security implications. Further, the refugees reported being harassed by criminal gangs. They also expressed concerns of such gangs recruiting and influencing their youth to join them in their criminal activities and this puts the security of the camp at risk. One of them stated:

*“But then there are some bad guys who we use to call land guards but have changed their name to zongo guys. They have been constantly harassing us. They establish ghettos where they smoke and take in drugs and harass people at the night time. That cartel is negatively influencing our youth here because as we know, if a man is not doing anything he’s obliged to get into things that would not benefit him and that makes them indulge in that kind of behavior.”* (Field interview with participant 8, 2023)

Participants indicated that they live in fear because any time members of the criminal gangs in the area are arrested by the police upon their report they tend to see them walking free the next day. One of them indicated the following:

*“As we speak now we have ten of the zones hosting those ghettos here where we have those guys dwelling and they have their own government therefore they do whatever they like and so if they feel that you are against them, they will arrange you to their tribunal and discipline you. We have always reported to the police but the worst part is that when they are arrested, the next day you see them walking in town. Other criminals have taken advantage of that and this same group of people harbors the criminals and are some of the reasons why people say the camp is bad, partly that would be correct because of the*

*activities of these zongo guys.”* (Field interview with participant 12, 2023)

It is significant to note that in a foreign nation where refugees frequently have few opportunities, are less mobile, and engage in fewer connections, they are likely to do everything to participate in social and economic activities, whether or not it is legal. I noticed from the responses of the participants that some deviants have taken over certain areas inside the camp and have recruited some of the refugee youth to join in their criminal operations. The former Liberian refugees agree that their youth are at a high risk of engaging in social vices that threatens the safety of the refugee camp and the host community as well. The finding affirms Porter et al.’s (2008) study which noted that rise in criminal acts linked to non-law-abiding refugees may pose a threat to internal peace and security.

#### **4.2.4 Unemployment**

The majority of the participants indicated that they are unemployed because they lack the credentials and paperwork that businesses in Ghana required. Others indicated that although they have educational qualifications that they can use to work, they often denied employment opportunities because they are refugees and not citizens. Some of the participants stated:

*“Look many businesses are always demanding for the papers that we don’t have whenever you go seeking for job. You go here and they ask for your papers and you don’t have it so they don’t give you the job. To work here that you need a permit and we don’t have...”* (Field interview with participant 2, 2023)

*“I have university degree and I can work in the formal sector. I can teach but because I am a refugee it is difficult to get a job in Ghana. Even Ghanaians themselves are not getting jobs how will I get. When we were running to this place due to the war, I could pick my certificates and others but it is difficult to get job. Since then I have been unemployed. Most of us in the camp are unemployed and that is one of our problems.”* (Field interview with participant 7, 2023)

The findings also revealed that due to the high unemployment rate, many former refugees engaged in petty businesses to support themselves and families. A participant shared:

*“It is very tedious. There is no one to say I do this and I have got something coming in at the end of the month. You have to turn your own small things around, prepare your own small food and it is just from hand to mouth. That’s how we sustain the whole family and should trouble befall you, especially when it comes to health.”* (Field interview with participant 3, 2023)

The response from the participant suggests that having lucrative formal employment where one may anticipate receiving a regular income is difficult for refugees to secure. Refugees make very little money from their petty businesses. This makes it challenging to save for future and emergencies. Some participants shared:

*“One of the biggest challenges affecting a lot of the residents here is unemployment. Even when you learn a trade and you don’t have money to empower you that training become dormant.”* (Field interview with participant 1, 2023)

*“For me I live on this lottery business. I have two children at seventh and eighth grade in government school. The problem we are facing is that the people do not want to employ us because we don’t speak their language. Therefore the small, small skills we have acquired it is difficult to apply.”* (Field interview with participant 10, 2023)

*“When you go they say that you don’t speak the twi and so you don’t fit into the society. My own teacher who taught me how to install CCTV cameras told me even if you could speak small of the local dialect I will put you somewhere. I had to come back and be in my booth. So maybe someday when I leave this country then I will be able to apply what I have learnt. I have all the tools and materials for the job which is worth five thousand cedis parked in my house because there is nowhere to apply it.”* (Field interview with participant 7, 2023)

Although 8 out of the 12 participants have acquired some useful skills that put them in the position to support their livelihood they struggle to get job or employment opportunities. One of the participants shared that:

*“There are very educated people here but they cannot find jobs. Some are even sleeping in the streets as refugees. Everywhere you go the first thing is “how are in the local dialect” if you can’t respond they*

*say leave. How can you get a job?"* (Field interview with participant 5, 2023)

Overall, the data revealed that some participants are denied employment opportunities based on their inability to express themselves in the local language. Also, they lack capital to startup businesses that they have acquired skills in.

#### **4.2.5 Inadequate Feeding**

A study by Alix-Garcia et al. (2018) found that wherever refugee camps are present, food prices rise in the host towns. The data revealed that refugees have difficulty in getting food to feed themselves due to financial challenges. Thus, refugees are worried about the potential health implications on their younger ones due to their inability to obtain regular meals and balanced diets. Some of the participant stated how they struggle to feed their families in the following responses:

*"Our children are our concern now. I am not able to buy fish so we live on eggs every day. I am just fighting for the children to be strong. If somebody can come in and help us with our children by supporting them that would be good because as for me my life is already finished. The life here is tough for us. Now I cannot come from home to my kiosk and sit here, when I am hungry and they are selling food, you are not expecting me that when I get seven cedis, I am hungry then I buy food, then my children will be hungry."* (Field interview with participant 4, 2023)

*"Every day, I buy egg, just to fry for the children to eat with rice, the whole week we been eating that till Saturday, then I go buy like potatoes to cook two day food. For Sunday and Monday, Tuesday it is finished again then we start again to fry egg because I'm not able to go to the market and buy fish, sixteen cedis, thirteen cedis? And we cannot join the other people on the streets to do armed robbery and I don't want my children to go that way and I pray every day that they should go the right path."* (Field interview with participant 10, 2023)

The participant's comment that "we cannot join the other people on the streets to do armed robbery and I don't want my children to go that way" confirms the earlier claims that some refugees engage in criminal activities. The data reveal that although refugees are unable to feed well due to their lack of finance.



#### 4.2.6 Difficulty in Accessing Services

Participants indicated that their refugee status barred them from equal access to resources and opportunities afforded to Ghanaian citizens. The former Liberian refugees' status in the nation is unclear and as such access to social services in the Buduburam camp has been one of the challenges they reported in the study. The host community is compelled to share with the refugees social facilities, and this tends to cause tension and conflicts. Participants noted that the identity documents issued by the Ghanaian government and UNHCR to them are not honored, and they are often denied basic services such as healthcare and financial transactions. A participant stated that:

*“On the issue of integration, no man will accept integration if it does not have the package so they made it look fine and well-polished with lots of promises that would entice you to opt for it. They only brought two conditions, you go back home we give you \$150 to settle yourself in your country. You stay in Ghana, your children will go to school for free, you have medical care, scholarship, provide housing and several things. In weighing the options given us and knowing that life is not secured in Liberia, the best offer was integration. Based on these promises many of us opted for integration. They offered to give us passports and any identity used by Ghanaians and so forth when the time comes. Of the hundreds of promises they made, they only gave us the passport and residence permit that is not useful for gaining employment and health insurance which lasted for a year and these were the only three things they fulfilled out of the hundreds of promises.”* (Field interview with participant 9, 2023)

The response revealed that the inability to provide refugees with the requisite documents for work in Ghana is making it difficult for them to access services in the host community. Other participants indicated being denied space to sell in the market as well as difficulty in getting the services of the police. A participant stated:

*“When you fall sick they won't acknowledge we are refugees. They will take the same requirement and not even think we are refugees. There is a big police station yet when you go there for help they ask for transportation or when it is late in the night they say there is only one person on duty so they cannot abandon their post.”* (Field interview with participant 7, 2023)

During the interview with one of the elderly men who was part of the first group of refugees to arrive at the Buduburam camp in 1990, he stated how the lack of the necessary documentation is making it challenging for them to access services in the country. Elderly man stated:

*“There are other Liberians who opted for exemption, meaning they don’t want to go back home, they do not want to be integrated so when immigration assessed they only took five hundred and twenty out of three thousand plus and the rest have been denied as we speak they don’t have documentation with no identification apart from the 2003 refugee card which has no effect and it is also a major challenge.”*  
(Field interview with participant 8, 2023)

From the comments, it could be noted that participants think that their choice to remain seemed to be the best option at the time the offer of repatriation was presented. The police station, fire station and some financial institutions in the Buduburam community are developments in the community that came up upon the arrival of the refugees. However, participants indicated that most of these institutions, including the health facilities are not considerate of their status as refugees. This treatment extends to the market that was opened for these refugees as mentioned by one participant:

*“Even though the market was purposely built for the refugees, the host community has taken the major portion of the market and it’s also a challenge in the market there too. The government collects taxes and the chiefs also take compensation on monthly bases.”* (Field interview with participant 11, 2023)

The findings of the study highlight that the former Liberian refugees at Buduburam face myriad of challenges since the provision of aid to them stopped. This is because the relationship between them and the host community has become strained after the aid ceased. In general, the findings of the study support the literature that problems at work, unemployment, and economic and financial challenges make it difficult for refugees to live in peace, achieve their goals, or realize their full potential (Waruta & Kinoti 2000). As people struggle to survive in poverty, trauma becomes a way of life



in such situations. Sarfo-Mensah (2009) noted that some of these challenges refugees face strain their lives and make it difficult for them to negotiate a stay in the camp. Due to the challenging situation Liberian refugees in Ghana's Buduburam camp face Jacobsen (2003) is of the view that repatriation or resettlement in a third country may be seen as viable alternatives by refugees if options are not available to them in host nation. However, during the interview with participants, they seemed uninterested in repatriation.

### **4.3 Coping Mechanisms**

After exploring the nature of the refugee relationship with the host community and analyzing the challenges they face after the end of humanitarian assistance to them by the UNHCR and government of Ghana, I sought to understand how the refugees have been coping with their situation. All the refugees interviewed stated the mechanisms they adopt to cope with their situation since the UN stopped providing aid to them. The data reveal that refugees rely on their social networks, the Divine Being, and petty businesses to cope.

#### **4.3.1 Support from Social Networks**

The data revealed that the former Liberian refugees at the Buduburam camp rely on support from their friends and family members within and outside Ghana to cope with their challenges and stay. When refugees flee their homes, they tend to experience significant loss of their home social support system. Those who are able to access economic resources through their social networks (such as family members, friends, etc.) are able to cope with the challenges of displacement. Social networks can help to provide refugees with emotional support. Social networks help refugees to find shelter and petty jobs or employment. The data revealed that social networks help to provide refugees with a sense of belonging and community. One of the participant stated that:

*“Those who don’t do anything at all depend on friends. Some also have relatives abroad and receive remittances and one good thing about Liberians is that we try to help one another no matter the situation to make life better. We also rely on some NGO’s around here, some from the Ghanaian community and some are within. They offer some form of partial scholarships where they ask parents to provide certain amount and they take on the rest and so some parents rely on that to ensure that their kids are in school.”* (Field interview with participant 8, 2023)

*“Some friends who came here to Ghana with us have traveled overseas from here, from time to time they will call then and they will ask, are you are still at the camp? When you tell them that you are here then they send you something little for yourself.”* (Field interview with participant 6, 2023)

*“Sometimes some of our friends give us money and other provisions to sustain ourselves because we don’t have any work. This phone I have was given to me by a friend. When he came to Ghana and we met he asked about how I was doing and told him my struggles. He asked for my phone number so that we can keep in touch but I told him I don’t have a phone and he was shocked. So he decided to give me one of his phones. It is an expensive phone so when people see they will think I am rich and pretending to be poor but someone gave it to me. He gave me some money before he left and once a while he sends me money. So that is how I manage to survive here.”* (Field interview with participant 2, 2023)

These comments suggested that financial remittance or support from social network is one of the ways through which refugees cope since the end of humanitarian aid. Many participants expressed that talking to friends and family members about their concerns as well as sharing their limited resources among themselves enable them to survive the harsh treatment from the host community. Others stated that they found consolation in spending time with their loved ones as it enables them to forget about their daily concerns. These former Liberian refugees need resources from their social networks helped them to fulfill various needs. Social networks became more valuable to the participants at their time of need, especially after the humanitarian assistance stopped. Social networks provide participants with an informal support system against the backdrop of discrimination and isolation. Social networks provide the needed

sense of belonging and emotional support. It is also important to note that social networks helped the former Liberian refugees to maintain a connection to their cultures of origin. In most cases, refugees value social networks because they provide them with a sense of continuity and familiarity to the post-humanitarian environment. Tribe (2002) and Ellis, et al. (2019) both argued that support from social networks is significant in maintaining mental health.

#### **4.3.2 Engaging in Petty Businesses or Jobs**

The study revealed that the former Liberian refugees engage in petty business, jobs or trade in order to cope with since the humanitarian assistance from the UN stopped. Refugees need jobs to cope in a foreign land after the humanitarian assistance stopped. Employment can provide the refugees with a sense of autonomy and control over their lives and those of their dependents in Ghana. Employment can also provide the refugees with opportunities for social and economic integration into the host Ghanaian communities. Refugees need sustainable means of livelihood. However, the study revealed that many of the participants find it difficult to get employment. As such, they resort to menial jobs when the humanitarian assistance stopped to support their livelihood. Former Liberian refugees in Buduburam look for menial jobs such as labourer at construction sites in Buduburam and in nearby communities, selling of sachet water and washing of people's clothes. A participant indicated:

*“Our young boys look for labourer works at where they are doing construction in Buduburam or around the nearby communities to make some money to support themselves and their families. Our ladies sell pure water on the streets and the small, small they make they use it to feed. Some of them go around and wash people's clothes for them and clean their houses just to get some money.”* (Field interview with participant 1, 2023)

Throughout the data collection in the refugee camp, I observed that many of them set up small table shops where they sell provisions such as matches, salt, toffee, groundnuts, gari, sugar, blade, among others. When I asked one of the women in the study that how she has been coping since the provision of humanitarian assistance to them stopped, she stated:

*“Hmmm! It is not easy but we are there. As you can see I sell these small things here. How much can these bring me? Just few toffee, matches, and groundnut that I sell so life has been difficult but that is what I use to support myself. I also sew clothes but the machine spoiled long ago and I couldn’t repair it because I don’t have the money. So this man came here today and I asked him to look at it and see what he can do about it. So that is what he trying to fix. If he is able to fix it I will be able to sew things for people and make small money.”* (Field interview with participant 6, 2023)

Another participant stated how he copes in the following response:

*I am a carpenter so I work on people’s chairs and things to make small money for myself. If no one ask me to make a chair or table for him or her it means I will not eat. So that is what I have been relying on to survive all this while.* (Field interview with participant 3, 2023)

The study showed that participants resort to petty jobs or businesses because they lack the required educational qualifications to secure better jobs. Others claimed that even though they have some educational qualifications they tend not to get jobs because they do not have work permit. One of them stated:

*“When you go to their office for visa, they say you have been here for so many years you must find jobs to do. Where are we to find jobs? You are supposed to recognize the refugee somewhere to take care of himself. How can we get a job?”* (Field interview with participant 8, 2023)

The data revealed that humanitarian assistance used to cover things such as food, shelter, and medical aid. Jobs not only provide sources of livelihood but also give the refugees a sense of purpose and dignity, which is pertinent for the refugees’ psychological well-being. Therefore, petty jobs have been important in helping the refugees to adapt and cope after the humanitarian assistance ended.

### 4.3.3 Reliance on Faith and God

Also, the data revealed that the former Liberian refugees at Buduburam relied on God and faith in his divine intervention in their lives to cope with their challenges since the humanitarian assistance from the UNHCR stopped. It is often said that religion is the opium of the masses. Refugees consider faith as their first and last option as they battle with their challenges at the Buduburam camp. The findings indicate that refugees turn to their faith and religion as their coping mechanism. Religion provides them with a sense of comfort, hope, and community support from their church members. Participants mentioned that in some cases, faith becomes the only thing that they have left after leaving their homes, families, and communities in Liberia. Religious practices and beliefs also help refugees to find meaning and purpose in their lives, and this helps them to cope during difficult times. Religion serves as their source of moral guidance and values. Most of the refugees interviewed in the study noted that they rely on religion for decision-making as they navigate the challenges they face in the post-humanitarian assistance period. According to one participant, they turn to God to provide their needs. The participant indicated:

*“We look up to God until they can come with a final decision of closing the camp and send us back home. There is nothing else what we can do. We have stayed long here and lost contact. Some of us came in very young and we don’t even know where our parents are. We are just here. Last year September they wanted to demolish the camp just like that. And now they are still troubling us that they want their land. Where are we supposed to go if you do not implement what you should have done?”* (Field interview with participant 8, 2023)

The response suggests that by turning to God and religion, refugees find the strength and resilience they need to cope with the challenges associated with displacement and integration into the Ghanaian community. As refugees experience stress when faced with challenges, they learn that hope is all they have, and thus continue to manage

stress and adapt to the new environment of self-sustenance. While their coping mechanisms may be problem-focused, religion provides hope and a sense of purpose. They rely on religion to guide them as they actively try to solve their problems. Participants expressed how coping mechanisms may also be emotion-focused, which means that they have to actively manage their emotional distress associated with post-humanitarian challenges. For refugees, displacement can present overwhelming stress. The lack of access to necessary resources and support systems to cope can be frustrating. In such circumstances, they find religion as a source of comfort. One of the participants, said:

*“Since I came to the refugee camp I would say it is the grace of God that is keeping me up. The kind of love I demonstrated in Liberia, sorry to say I have not seen it in Ghanaians but I guess we are all different in many ways. The good old Book says train up a child the way he should go and when he grows he will not depart from it but our children are going wayward. It is our belief in God and our faith in him that comforts us and makes us to have hope. Sometimes you can be disturbed but the word of God helps to relieve you of such stress or distress. Sometimes I got to places to preach the word of God and they give me some money and it helps me. I go from churches to churches to preach sometimes as well as in the street. Let me preach the word of God to you small...”* (Field interview with participant 5, 2023)

The response revealed that religion provides refugees with a sense of meaning and hope, and the religious communities are inclusive and supportive, enhancing their coping abilities. The resilience of any individual can be influenced by factors such as personal characteristics, social support, and environmental factors. Other participants shared how their reliance on God helps them to cope:

*“By the grace of God we have come this far by faith and we know that God who said it will bring it to fulfillment that is what we are still here for. With all this hardship God is still sustaining us and because of God grace upon my life I am eating every day. By the grace of God we are surviving in Buduburam camp.”* (Field interview with participant 4, 2023)



*“ We are looking up to God until the authorities can either come up with a final decision of closing the camp and send us back home or any good solution. There’s nothing else, what we can do?”* (Field interview with participant 6, 2023)

Participants spoke about how the church in their own small ways has made efforts to support the refugees:

*... I for one the church sponsored me to go through CCTV camera installation training but how will I work?* (Field interview with participant 7, 2023)

Generally, Liberian refugees in the Buduburam camp professed that even though they are faced with hardships, they have hope and look forward to a better future especially for their younger ones because of the strong faith that they have in God.

#### **4.3.4 Illegal Activities**

A study by Moore et al. (2014) discovered that refugees were more likely to engage in behaviors that could satisfy their basic requirements. According to participants the former refugees without a job or business to generate money to support themselves resorted to illegal activities to cope. The findings showed limited economic opportunities for refugees in Ghana and this makes illegal activities the easy option. Additionally, limited access to legal means of livelihoods such as jobs and financial instability has compelled some of the refugees to look for illegal alternatives such as stealing, prostitution and running of illegal businesses (selling of drugs) to support themselves. This finding is affirmed by Daah et al. (2023) that some refugees at the Liberia camp in Buduburam engage in the selling of narcotics and prostitution. Some of the participants stated the following:

*“Some of our girls enter into bad behaviours just to survive. You know what I am talking about? I mean prostitution.”* (Field interview with participant 5, 2023)

*“Our young boys sit idle doing nothing. And as you know the devil will get work for anyone who doesn’t have one. So they end up engage in stealing and selling drugs.”* (Field interview with participant 9, 2023)



*“As we speak now we have ten of the zones hosting those ghettos here where have those guys dwelling and they have their own government and so if they feel that you are against them, they will arrange you to their tribunal and discipline you. We have always reported to the police but the worst part is that when they are arrested, the next day you see them walking in town.”* (Field interview with participant 8, 2023)

The study unearthed that refugees usually face legal barriers and restrictions when it comes to obtaining work permits. Therefore, some engage in prostitution, selling of drugs, and other illegal activities. Liberian refugees at the Budunuram camp have become vulnerable to exploitation and influence. One participant reported that they fear their children might pick up illegal activities if not monitored carefully. She said:

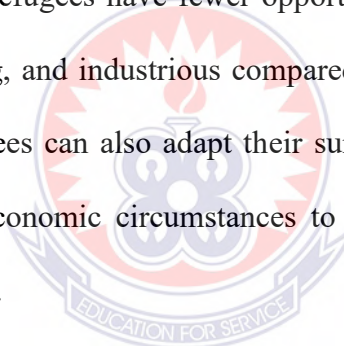
*“Even at their ages I always keep my children around me. When they close from school they come to my booth till I close at five in the evening then we all go home because as soon as you let them slip from your watch they will pick up other behaviors so when we get home I cook for them, they eat watch TV do their homework and sleep. In the morning I see them off to school.”* (Field interview with participant 11, 2023)

It is important to note that refugees' engagement in illegal activities does not reflect their characters, nor is illegal activities an adequate justification for negative stereotypes. They attribute their engagement in illegal activities to the systemic barriers and the lack of opportunities and support for them in Ghana. This implies that if refugees are provided with legal means of livelihoods it will prevent them from resorting to illegal activities.

#### **4.4 Summary**

Even though the theoretical argument points to a negative relationship between the refugee influx and the host community, there is evidence that there is a positive social impact. The impact of the refugees on a host community is context-specific and depends on a number of factors including the local actors, the IOs and NGO management of the refugee situation, and the government's effort in ensuring that the

refugees are integrated into the community and the community does not feel neglected. The fact that the effect of the refugees on the host communities is context specific means that the effects are more conditional on the policies of the host communities towards the refugees and their cultural similarities and dissimilarities. The formal and informal networks within the community can be instrumental in creating a feeling of safety, and trust among the refugees, the host community, the international organizations, and the non-governmental organizations. However, the perception-based indicators such as cohesion, inclusion, and peace alone may not be enough for assessing the actual social life in refugee camps and the surrounding areas. The Buduburam community in Ghana feels threatened by the Liberian refugees. This is because the Liberian refugees have fewer opportunities, and as such they become more daring, enterprising, and industrious compared to the host community who are more relaxed. The refugees can also adapt their survival strategies and adjust to the changes in social and economic circumstances to maximize the opportunities they find or presented to them.



## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION**

#### **5.0 Introduction**

This chapter presents summary of the study, conclusions from the findings of the study and recommendations made based on the conclusions drawn.

#### **5.1 Summary of Study**

The purpose of the study was to examine the relationship between the formal Liberian refugees in Buduburam and the host community after the end of humanitarian assistance.

##### **5.1.1 Research procedure**

The study adopted a qualitative research approach using a case study design. A total of twelve (12) research participants were selected for the study. Participants were purposively sampled. Data was collected through semi-structured interviews and observation. The analysis of the data was qualitative through thematic analysis. Interviews sessions were recorded and transcribed. After transcription, the data were coded and patterns that emerged were drawn to form the themes based on which the discussions in chapter four were made.

#### **5.2 Summary of Key Findings**

The following are the key findings of the study:

The nature of relationship of the former Liberian refugees with the host community exists at economic, social, religious, cultural and political levels. The study showed that the former refugees' interactions with the host community were friendly throughout the humanitarian aid period. This was because community-based projects and initiatives that are part of humanitarian aid help to promote social cohesion and

integration and the refugees and the host were able to coexist peacefully. These initiatives reduced any potential conflict. It was revealed that due to the warm relationship between the host community and the former Liberian refugees at the camp, the former refugees extended privileges given them to some members of the Buduburam community to also benefit from aid. However, after the provision of humanitarian aid was stopped, the study revealed that the Buduburam community began to discriminate against and engage in hostilities against the former Liberian refugees. After the cessation of the humanitarian assistance, the host began to have strain relations with the refugees with threats of demolition of the camp and eviction growing in the community.

Secondly, the findings revealed that the former Liberian refugees at the Buduburam camp faced financial difficulties, discrimination, insecurity, unemployment, inadequate feeding and has difficulties in accessing services. Following the end of humanitarian aid, issues such as citizenship eligibility, political representation, and legal protections deteriorated. Though there are options for education and work, the government's reluctance to provide these former refugees with access to those opportunities made life difficult for the refugees. They are frequently refused access to basic services like healthcare and banking transactions because the identity documents issued by the Ghanaian government and UNHCR are not honored. There is a lack of trust and honesty between the host community and the refugees as the latter is now required to pay for services that were previously provided free of charge.

Finally, the former Liberian refugees adopt varying coping mechanisms to navigate and negotiate their stay in the camp. The study realized that relying on God and participating in religious activities gives refugees the fortitude and resiliency they need to face their difficulties. After the cessation of the humanitarian aid, refugees in

Buduburam also engage in petty business or trade or job to make ends meet. The enormous obstacles refugees face while trying to attain official work are the main reason they launch small companies. Again, support from social networks such as friends and family members in terms of food, clothes and financial resources enabled former Liberian refugees at the Buduburam camp to cope with the difficulties they face as a result of the end of humanitarian assistance to them. Social networks also served as emotional support systems. Refugees' lack of employment opportunities and unstable financial situations has forced some of them to seek out unlawful alternatives including theft and operating illegal companies in order to cope.

### **5.3 Implications**

#### **Theoretical Implications**

The findings demonstrate that for better interaction and cordial relationship to be achieved between the former Liberian refugees and the host community, both groups must engage equally, work together and cooperate in pursuit of their common goals, acknowledge authority, law or custom that supports their contact and interaction and mingle and build friendships with one another. The findings indicate that interaction between the refugees and host community would remain strained as long as conditions in the community are unfavourable and does not allow for reduction of tension, prejudices and stereotypes. According to Allport's contact theory, our stereotyped associations and biases diminish as we learn about and comprehend the experiences of others through genuine, collaborative contact with people of equal rank. Thus, recalling a satisfying interaction stimulates associations with fruitful interactions, increasing feelings of comfort and decreasing anxiety about subsequent interactions. The early days of refugees stay appears to experience less friction between the former Liberian refugees and the Buduburam community due to the

presence of humanitarian support. According to Gronau and Ruesink (2021), there are a variety of interventions that might be made in a host-refugee society, such as cooperative engagement in economic support initiatives like gardening, small livestock, and fishing, as well as shared trainings to address risks to shared livelihoods. Additionally, equitable benefit distributions and shared objectives that encourage communication, exchange, and trust may reduce social tensions. Also, workshops are a way to educate the implicit and unwritten aspects of a host community, such as values, customs, and practical advice for daily life. The study revealed that although the Buduburam camp is within the community, there is some degree of discrimination against the former Liberian refugees. However, host community's attitudes towards refugees can be positively impacted by refugees' open mindedness toward contact, language, skills, education, age and cultural adaptation.

### **Practical Implication**

Humanitarian organizations that would provide basic life necessities such as food, water, clothes, decent shelter to the Liberian refugees in Buduburam would significantly support them to live dignified lives. The provision of financial capital to refugees with entrepreneurial and livelihood support skills would enable them to startup businesses that would enable them to take care of their needs and those of their families. Intergroup tolerance is necessary for cohesion between the refugees and the host community. The study discovered from the research subjects that the Buduburam community has been used as a haven for criminals from all regions of Ghana. According to the study, criminals would commit crimes in various regions and then flee into Buduburam to hide. As a result, Buduburam has earned a reputation for being connected to crime in Ghanaian society, requiring screening by the security to flush out criminal elements. The study showed that livelihood support programs that

could be developed to help refugees grow skills capable of earning a living would enable them live in dignity. Refugees, especially the women, find small businesses and informal work more accessible as sources of livelihood and support for their families. Therefore, the provision of these services is crucial to enhancing community living standards and minimizing the impact of refugees on the host community (Porter et al., 2008). In order to minimize the conflicts, it is important to improve infrastructure, education possibilities, and access to sufficient food. This would help to secure a good relationship between the refugees and the host community.

### **Policy Implications**

The findings of the study reveal the need for the Government of Ghana to work with the UNHCR and the Ghana refugee Board to revisit the policy of reintegration in order to ensure the proper integration of the Liberian refugees who opted for the integration rather than repatriation. The provision of documentations necessary for refugees to be integrated into the host community and to secure sustainable source of livelihoods in Ghana is significant in ensuring that Liberian refugees in Buduburam live in dignity and realized their potentials. The Government of Ghana's understanding of the implications of disrupted the Liberian refugee community at Buduburam on vulnerabilities in the host community is important in developing priority and policy actions towards addressing with refugee problems and ensuring cohesion between the refugees and host.

### **5.3 Conclusion**

The first research sought to explore the nature of relationship that exists between the former Liberian refugees in Buduburam and the host community after humanitarian assistance from the UNHCR and government of Ghana ended. The findings reveal that their relationship exists at economic, social, cultural and local politics levels. The



study showed that the former refugee and host relationship has been transformed from a once cordial one during the humanitarian period into a strained one after the extension of aid to the refugees ceased.

The second research objective of the study sought to analyze the challenges former Liberian refugees at the Buduburam camp face since the end of the provision of humanitarian support to them. The findings reveal that former Liberian refugees at the Buduburam camp experience financial difficulties/poverty, discrimination, unemployment, insecurity and inadequate feeding since the UNHCR and government of Ghana stopped providing aid to them. Despite these challenges faced by the former Liberian refugees since the provision of humanitarian support to them ceased and the unfavourable economic conditions in Ghana, they remain more interested in being integrated into the Ghanaian society rather repatriating to a third country or back home.

The third research objective sought to explore the mechanisms Liberian refugees adopt to cope with their situation since humanitarian assistance from the UNHCR and government of Ghana ceased. The findings revealed that former Liberian refugees at the Buduburam cope with situation and challenges through the assistance of social networks such as friends and family members, petty businesses, reliance on God and engagement in illegal activities such stealing, selling of drugs and prostitution. A cordial relationship between former Liberian refugees and their host will prevail if their interaction is characterized by equal engagement, common goals, cooperation, support of authorities, law or customs and informal personal interaction. Inequality in qualities, backgrounds or characteristics will continue to make it difficult for the refugees and members of the host community to interact better. Again, better interaction will occur when the refugees and members of the host community do not

compete but rather cooperate or work together in pursuit of their common goal(s). In addition, for contact between the former refugees and the host to lead to better relationship or interaction both must acknowledge an authority (such as the UNHCR and Government of Ghana) that supports their contact and interaction. The study revealed that for better interaction between former Liberian refugees and the host, members of both groups must mingle with one another and build cross-group friendships.

#### **5.4 Recommendations**

The following recommendations were made based on the research findings:

- i. The needs of former Liberian refugees and host communities should be addressed simultaneously by the government and refugee agencies. There should be opportunities or platforms for the community residents and the refugee population to sometimes interact. These channels will guarantee that miscommunication problems between former Liberian refugees and the locals could be resolved.
- ii. Local and international humanitarian organizations interested in refugee welfare should assist former Liberians refugees with livelihood support and entrepreneurial skills with startup capitals and more skills training to enable them operate their own businesses and livelihood systems which will help them to live dignified lives and realize their potentials.
- iii. The four primary human capital factors, education, health, knowledge and skills, as well as their potential to work, that serve as coping strategies for people in Ghana should be adequately provided for refugees by the government of Ghana in collaboration with international humanitarian organizations interested in refugees welfare.

- iv. The Government of Ghana should provide enough protection for both the host population and former Liberian refugees in light of the emerging instability in the camp in order to alleviate tension and conflicts.

#### **5.4.1 Recommendation for further studies**

- i. The study was approached qualitatively. In essence, the views and experiences of a small number of research participants were drawn to understand the relationship between former Liberian refugees at the Buduburam camp and the host community after humanitarian aid to them ended. As such, a research could use the findings of my study to do a wide survey of a larger population of refugees through a quantitative and qualitative approach.
- ii. This study only used the Buduburam community as a case study to understand refugee-host relationship. As such, the study is limited as it cannot be used to understand refugee-host relationship in other refugee hosting communities in Ghana. In order to have a comprehensive picture of the refugee-host relationship from the perspective of refugees, research might also examine the types of relationships that exist between refugees in and their hosts in different refugee host communities in Ghana.
- iii. The study did not look into reasons why for Liberian refugees after all these years of stay do not have an accepted identity document by the government of Ghana. This appeared to be the major issue holding former Liberian refugees back from pursuing higher prospects in Ghana. Therefore, further studies can delve into that area.

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## **APPENDIX**

**UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA  
FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES EDUCATION  
CENTRE FOR CONFLICT, HUMAN RIGHTS AND PEACE STUDIES**

### **INTERVIEW GUIDE**

#### **Introduction**

My name is Anastasia Millicent Turkson, an MPhil student of the Centre for Conflict, Human Rights and Peace Studies in the University of Education, Winneba. This study sought to understand your experiences during and after the end of the extension of humanitarian assistance to you. It is to help me fulfill a partial requirement for the award of an MPhil Degree in Human Rights, Conflict and Peace Studies. Thus, the purpose of this study is purely academic. I want to seek your experiences and perspectives on your relationship with the host community and how you perceive the host community during and after the period you were given humanitarian assistance. I also want to seek your views on the challenges you face during and after end of the humanitarian assistance. Finally, I want to understand the strategies or mechanisms you adopt to cope with your situation or challenges since the end of the humanitarian assistance. You are free to express yourself. I would not mention your name in the research report or associate it to any quotation. Your anonymity and confidentiality is highly guaranteed. Your participation in this study would be beneficial to you as it would give you the opportunity to add your voice to the discourse on refugee. Please, I will like to have your verbal consent to proceed with the interview. Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study.

## Questions

1. What are the perceptions of Liberian refugees in Budumburam about the host community after the humanitarian assistance from the United Nations and government of Ghana ended?
2. What are the challenges faced by you after the humanitarian assistance from the United Nations and government of Ghana to you ended?
3. Did you face the same challenges during the period humanitarian assistance was given to you? What challenges did you face at that time? Tell me some of the challenges you were faced with during the period you were still assisted by the UNHCR.
4. How do you cope after the humanitarian assistance from the United Nations and government of Ghana to you ended?
5. What is your relationship with the host community since the end of the humanitarian assistance?
6. What was your relationship with the host community during the period humanitarian assistance was given to you?
7. Is there a change in your relationship with the people of Budumburam after the assistance from the UNHCR ended?