

How this fits with the Ugandan education system?

YARID's training program supports improvement in the functioning of the Ugandan education system. Ugandan teachers are often faced with numerous challenges associated with having refugee children in their classes. These challenges include misunderstanding due to language barriers, differences in age among classmates of the same level, cultural differences and a lack of understanding about the refugee experience among teachers and peers. While it is beneficial to incorporate interventions that assist teachers in overcoming these barriers, it is also equally important to consider the perspective of the refugee children, addressing the crucial need for assistance in the assimilation process. One of the biggest obstacles involved with policy is that bridging classes for refugee students are often considered by the Ugandan government and its partners to be special treatment, as their legal commitment is to provide education to refugees at the same level as nationals. In order for reconciliation classes to gain acceptance and become incorporated into the Ugandan education system, the Ugandan government must realize that education cannot be provided to refugees at the same level as nationals without the support of these integration trainings. Refugee students are forced to overcome countless obstacles in assimilating into an unfamiliar country, needing to become accustomed all at once to new cultures, new languages and entirely new systems altogether, therefore providing this support and training is the only way for refugees to obtain access to equal education.

For example, how are children assessed before they are incorporated into formal education?

Currently, many schools require students to partake an assessment that determines their level of education for proper class placement. We will work with Ugandan primary schools in order to synchronize our course materials with the learning standards that students must reach before attending formal schooling in Uganda. Basic education standards will be followed strictly, while simultaneously incorporating extra support through periodical assessments relating to behavior and attitude to monitor progress. Upon completion of our bridging classes, students will be given a mock assessment appropriate to their determined level, based upon the criteria currently in place within the standard Ugandan entry examination guidelines, to effectively prepare them for their placement test when applying to attend a formal school.

How might you align your criteria with that of the Ugandan school system?

We will use the Ugandan curriculum, collaborating with experienced Ugandan school teachers in our planning and execution process, using the material incorporated within existing entry examinations and standards. With the national teachers, we will map out learning objectives in basic subjects including speaking, listening, reading and writing. We will organize and align these lessons with topical objectives to familiarize students with other social and systematic aspects of Ugandan schools, to prevent the shock and stress that often is associated with entering an unfamiliar environment.