THE PLIGHT OF UNACCOMPANIED REFUGEE GIRLS FROM THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO IN NAIROBI

BY
KINYUA NYAGUTHII CAROLINE
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SUPERVISOR: DR. ANITA KIAMBA

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ABSTRACT
This research project is an attempt to analyse the multiple challenges faced by unaccompanied refugee children in urban settings but with an emphasis on young girls from the Democratic republic of Congo living in Nairobi, Kenya. The refugee child like all other children have rights and most of all is the right for them to just be children. This however is a privilege or luxury that most refugee children do not have. Despite these children fleeing their countries of origin due to well-founded fear, they get no reprieve in their countries of asylum because being unaccompanied they now have to figure out how they will fed for themselves, their children and most likely their siblings if they are the older ones. 

This research discusses the situation of Congolese girls with regards to the Kenyan government, the local communities, UNHCR and their role in the lives of these children, their psychosocial support, their livelihood and the prospects of durable solutions for these children. This study has looked into various legal statutes providing for the rights of children including the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the UNHCR Guidelines on Refugee Children, and Guidelines on policies and procedures in dealing with unaccompanied children seeking asylum, and Kenyan government immigration procedure on asylum seekers specifically children.

The research finds that unlike what many people think, Kenya is not friendly particularly towards urban refugees. They are harassed by public officials, they are dehumanised by workers and are generally looked down upon by the general public.

The study recommends that Kenya comes up with a policy that will cater for the rights of urban refugees. In that way, Kenya would benefit, not only because the refugees would contribute towards economic growth, but also because this step will encourage more urbanbased refugees to register with the government or with UNHCR.