

WINDLE TRUST INTERNATIONAL KENYA AND PLACEMENT OF REFUGEE STUDENTS IN HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

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International Academic Journal of Arts and Humanities (IAJAH) | ISSN 2520-4688

Received: 12th May 2025

Published: 16th May 2025

Full Length Research

Available Online at: https://iajournals.org/articles/iajah_v2_i1_180_193.pdf

Citation: Dido, I. T., Kiruthu, F. (2025). Windle trust international Kenya and placement of refugee students in higher education institutions. *International Academic Journal of Arts and Humanities*, 2(1), 180-193.

ABSTRACT

The integration of refugees into higher education presents numerous challenges, particularly within refugee environments where instability and uncertainty prevail. Higher education, however, plays a critical role in shaping academic outcomes, social and emotional well-being, and future social and labor market integration. This study examines the effect of Windle International Kenya placement programme for refugee students to higher institutions in Kenya. The research adopted a descriptive research design, guided by Social Learning Theory and Systems Theory, to explore WIK's effect on refugee education. A target population of 577 participants, including WIK staff, guardians of beneficiary students, and refugee students from Dagahaley Camp, was selected. 172 refugee students were selected using purposive and random sampling techniques. Primary data was collected through structured questionnaires and interview schedules, and analyzed using SPSS Version 24 for quantitative data and

content analysis for qualitative data. The findings reveal a strong positive relationship between Windle International Kenya's placement program and its effects on refugees, with a correlation coefficient of 0.789. The model explains 62.2% of the variance in refugee outcomes ($R^2 = 0.622$), and the regression coefficient for the placement program is 0.828, showing its significant positive impact on access to education for refugees. The F-statistic of 32.415 and p-value of 0.000 indicate a highly significant effect. It is recommended that Windle International Kenya's placement program continue to be supported and expanded to further enhance refugees' access to higher education. This program has demonstrated a significant positive effect on refugees' educational outcomes, and scaling it can inspire other refugees to pursue similar opportunities. Additionally, integrating policy frameworks and institutional support will optimize the effectiveness of these placements.

INTRODUCTION

Since World War II, the global refugee crisis has remained a pressing issue, with over 60 million people displaced due to political unrest and conflicts such as the civil wars in Libya, Syria, and Iraq (Sengupta, 2015; Graham, 2015). Refugees face challenges integrating into host nations, particularly in accessing education, which is crucial for their social and emotional well-being and future employment prospects (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2018). Despite their right to basic education, barriers such as language difficulties, inadequate resources, and insufficient psychosocial support hinder refugee children's inclusion in educational systems (European Union, 2018). These challenges have

drawn attention to the need for effective strategies to improve educational access and integration for refugees.

Global organizations and advocacy groups, including Windle International Kenya, the Refugee Assessment and Guidance Unit, and the Foundation for Refugee Students, have undertaken initiatives to enhance refugee access to higher education. Scholarships, sponsorships, and educational programs like the BHER project and Jesuit Commons have been instrumental in these efforts (European Resettlement Network, 2020). Windle International Kenya focuses on teacher training, English language use, and financial aid for exceptional refugee students (Windle International Kenya, 2020). However, despite these initiatives, the enrollment of refugees in universities remains low, raising questions about the efficacy of current programs (Byamungu, 2009; Brown, 2019).

Studies like Wright (2010) and Kiruthu (2020) highlight the importance of comprehensive interventions, including addressing cultural and gender barriers, to improve educational outcomes for refugees. These findings emphasize the need for robust strategies and collaborations to enable refugees to successfully transition into higher education and contribute positively to both host and home communities.

Statement of Research Problem

Despite efforts by organizations such as Windle International Kenya to enhance access to higher education for refugees, the impact of university placement programs remains underexplored. While placement initiatives are intended to bridge the gap between secondary education and university entry, many refugee students still face barriers in navigating application processes, meeting admission requirements, and securing enrollment. This disconnect raises concerns about the effectiveness of placement programs in facilitating actual admission and integration into higher education institutions. Therefore, this study seeks to examine the specific effect of placement programs by Windle International Kenya on improving access to tertiary education for refugee students in Dadaab, Kenya.

Research Objective

The aim of this study is to investigate the effect of Windle International Kenya placement programme for refugee students to higher institutions in Kenya.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a descriptive research design to systematically analyze the effect of international institutions on the facilitation of higher education programs in refugee camps in Kenya, focusing on Windle International Kenya (WIK). A mixed-methods approach was employed, integrating both quantitative and qualitative research to provide a comprehensive understanding of the subject. The target population included 577 individuals comprising WIK staff, students currently sponsored by WIK, and guardians of sponsored students in Dagahaley, Dadaab. These groups were selected because of their direct experience with WIK programs, particularly in relation to scholarships and language courses. A stratified random sampling

technique was used to ensure representativeness by categorizing the population into distinct strata and selecting a 30% sample, resulting in a sample size of 172 respondents.

Data collection involved both primary and secondary sources. Structured questionnaires with both open and closed-ended questions, including Likert scale responses, were administered to WIK staff and sponsored students, while interviews with open-ended questions were conducted with guardians, teachers, and refugee students to capture detailed perspectives. The collected data underwent preparation, including editing, coding, and entry before analysis. Descriptive statistical analysis was conducted using SPSS V22, utilizing frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations to summarize findings. Qualitative data was analyzed through thematic content analysis, identifying key patterns and relationships within responses. The results were presented in tabular format for clarity.

Table 1: Sample Size

Population Category	Target Population	Sample Size (30%)
1. WIK Staff	177	53
2. Teachers	84	25
3. Refugee Students Currently in Universities	158	47
4. Guardians	158	47
Total	577	172

Source: (Author, 2023)

In order to analyse the Windle International Kenya and refugee higher education facilitation in Dadaab, Kenya, the researcher utilized a multiple regression model to establish the connections between the relevant variables. The model was organized in the following manner:

$$Y = \alpha + \beta_1 X_1 + \epsilon$$

Where:

- Y represents the Effects on Refugees.
- α is the intercept, indicating the base level of economic growth.
- X_1 is the variable measuring Windle International Kenya Placement.
- ϵ is the error term.
- β_1 , represents the coefficient and its effect on the independent variable.

The study's significance was evaluated with a confidence level of 95% and a significance level of 5%. If the p-value exceeds the predetermined critical level, it indicates that the model fails to accurately capture the relationship. If the significance value was lower than the critical threshold, the model was considered significant.

RESEARCH RESULTS

5.1 Response Rate

Table 1: Response Rate

Response Rate	Frequency	Perc
Responded	115	66.860%
Non-Response	57	33.140%
Total	172	100%

Source: (Author, 2024)

The study achieved a 66.86% response rate, with 115 participants responding out of 172 targeted, indicating strong engagement and a representative sample for analyzing the effect of Windle International Kenya's scholarship placement programs on refugees. This high response rate enhances the reliability of the findings, reflecting significant interest in the topic. While 33.14% of participants did not respond, this non-response rate is not excessively high and is unlikely to introduce substantial bias, though potential differences between respondents and non-respondents should be considered. Overall, the response rate provides a solid basis for evaluating the effect of the scholarship placement program on refugee education.

Effect of Windle International Kenya Placement Program for Refugee Students

Table 2: Placement Program for Refugee Students

Statement	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly Agree	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
1. Windle International Kenya's placement program effectively facilitates the entry of refugee students into higher institutions.	0	0.000	1	0.125	2	0.250	3	0.375	2	0.250
2. The selection process for placing students is fair and transparent in sandwich programmes.	1	0.125	1	0.125	2	0.250	3	0.375	1	0.125
3. Windle International Kenya provides adequate guidance and support to students during the placement process in foreign universities.	0	0.000	0	0.000	3	0.375	3	0.375	2	0.250
4. The placement program has a high success rate in helping refugee students secure spots in higher institutions.	0	0.000	2	0.250	1	0.125	3	0.375	2	0.250
5. Windle International Kenya's staff are responsive and helpful in addressing any challenges faced during the placement process.	1	0.125	1	0.125	1	0.125	3	0.375	2	0.250

Source: (Author, 2024)

The study evaluated the effectiveness of Windle International Kenya's placement program for refugee students in accessing higher education, focusing on its efficiency, fairness, supportiveness, and overall success. The findings revealed that the majority of participants (62.5%) agreed or strongly agreed that the program effectively facilitates entry into higher institutions. However, a small minority expressed disagreement or neutrality. Similarly, perceptions about the fairness and transparency of the selection process were mixed. While 37.5% agreed with its fairness, notable reservations existed, with 25% of respondents either disagreeing or remaining neutral.

Participants generally viewed the support provided during the placement process positively. For the statement on guidance and support for placements in foreign universities, no respondents expressed disagreement, and 62.5% agreed or strongly agreed that adequate support was offered. The placement program's high success rate was also affirmed by 62.5% of respondents, although 25% expressed some level of disagreement. This suggests that while

most participants were satisfied with the program's outcomes, there are areas for improvement to address concerns raised by a minority.

Regarding staff responsiveness, the majority (62.5%) agreed or strongly agreed that Windle International Kenya's staff were helpful in addressing challenges during the placement process. However, some dissatisfaction was noted, with 25% either disagreeing or remaining neutral. Overall, the study highlights the program's effectiveness in facilitating higher education access for refugee students while identifying potential areas for enhancing transparency, success rates, and staff responsiveness to further improve participant satisfaction.

The findings indicate generally positive perceptions of Windle International Kenya's placement program, particularly in facilitating access to higher institutions and providing guidance. However, there are areas, such as the transparency of the selection process and staff responsiveness, where some respondents expressed neutral or negative views, highlighting potential areas for further development.

Based on the qualitative data, the respondents were asked to give the challenges and opportunities associated with the Windle International Kenya placement program for refugee students into higher institutions in Kenya.

Refugee Student S1 stated, *"One major challenge is the limited availability of spots in reputable universities. Many students are qualified, but there are not enough placements available for everyone."* However, the participant also noted opportunities, mentioning, *"The program provides us with financial assistance and guidance that we wouldn't have had otherwise, helping many of us to pursue degrees we dreamed of." opportunities for our students."*

The qualitative responses reveal significant challenges faced by refugee students within the Windle International Kenya placement program, particularly the limited availability of spots in reputable universities. Refugee students, such as S1, highlighted the competitive nature of admissions and the insufficient placements for qualified individuals, which creates barriers to higher education and limits socioeconomic advancement opportunities. These challenges are compounded by limited infrastructure and resources to support refugee students, leaving many unable to achieve their educational aspirations despite their qualifications.

Despite these challenges, the program offers valuable opportunities through financial assistance and guidance, which refugee students and their guardians greatly appreciate. Students emphasized the critical role of financial support in overcoming barriers to higher education, while guardians viewed the program as a pathway to improved quality of life through education. Additionally, Windle International Kenya is addressing logistical challenges by fostering partnerships with institutions to expand placement opportunities. This proactive approach reflects a commitment to creating inclusive educational environments tailored to the unique needs of refugee students, fostering hope and resilience within refugee communities.

The findings of this study align with existing literature on refugee education, emphasizing both the challenges and opportunities within placement programs like Windle International Kenya. Studies such as Byamungu (2009) and Brown (2019) confirm that while financial aid and language training initiatives significantly support refugee students, barriers such as limited university spots and inadequate infrastructure continue to hinder their full participation in higher education. From the perspective of Social Learning Theory (Bandura, 1977), the proactive role of Windle International Kenya in fostering partnerships and expanding placement opportunities exemplifies how observational learning and social modeling encourage refugee students to pursue higher education despite systemic challenges. Similarly, Systems Theory (Bertalanffy, 1968) reinforces the interconnected nature of these challenges, demonstrating that successful placement programs depend on the alignment of multiple stakeholders, including educational institutions, policymakers, and funding bodies (Smith, 2015; Jones, 2017). While Windle International Kenya's interventions foster resilience and hope, their effectiveness is contingent upon addressing systemic gaps that limit access to higher education. Thus, this study supports prior research by highlighting both the successes and limitations of refugee education initiatives, underscoring the need for comprehensive, multi-stakeholder strategies to enhance educational opportunities for refugee students.

This study adopted a descriptive research design to systematically analyze the effect of international institutions on the facilitation of higher education programs in refugee camps in Kenya, focusing on Windle International Kenya (WIK). A mixed-methods approach was employed, integrating both quantitative and qualitative research to provide a comprehensive understanding of the subject. The target population included 577 individuals comprising WIK staff, students currently sponsored by WIK, and guardians of sponsored students in Dagahaley, Dadaab. These groups were selected because of their direct experience with WIK programs, particularly in relation to scholarships and language courses. A stratified random sampling technique was used to ensure representativeness by categorizing the population into distinct strata and selecting a 30% sample, resulting in a sample size of 172 respondents.

Data collection involved both primary and secondary sources. Structured questionnaires with both open and closed-ended questions, including Likert scale responses, were administered to WIK staff and sponsored students, while interviews with open-ended questions were conducted with guardians, teachers, and refugee students to capture detailed perspectives. The collected data underwent preparation, including editing, coding, and entry before analysis. Descriptive statistical analysis was conducted using SPSS V22, utilizing frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations to summarize findings. Qualitative data was analyzed through thematic content analysis, identifying key patterns and relationships within responses. The results were presented in tabular format for clarity.

The respondents were asked to give the factors that influence the decision-making process of Windle International Kenya staff when selecting and facilitating the placement of refugee students in higher institutions.

WIK Staff W7 mentioned that, *“The academic performance of the students plays a crucial role in the decision-making process. We prioritize those with strong academic records, as they are more likely to succeed in higher education.”* They also consider the *“students’ personal circumstances, including their financial needs and motivation levels.”*

Furthermore, WIK Staff W3 stated, *“We collaborate with universities to understand their requirements and tailor our placements accordingly, ensuring that our students meet the entry criteria.”*

This collaborative approach is essential in providing the best opportunities for students, as noted by WIK Staff W1, who explained that *“the support and understanding of the university staff towards refugee students significantly influences our decisions.”*

Windle International Kenya (WIK) places significant emphasis on academic performance in its decision-making process for refugee student placements in higher education. This focus, as highlighted by WIK Staff W7, reflects a strategic, data-driven approach aimed at maximizing the success of students in rigorous academic environments. Academic achievement serves as a key predictor of students' ability to thrive in higher education. Complementing this emphasis on academics, WIK also considers personal circumstances such as financial needs and motivation levels. This holistic approach ensures that the selection process is equitable, addressing both the academic and socio-economic challenges faced by refugee students.

Collaboration with universities plays a pivotal role in the placement process, as WIK tailors placements to meet institutional requirements and align student capabilities with university expectations. This strategy, highlighted by WIK Staff W3, strengthens the relationships between WIK and educational institutions, facilitating smoother transitions for students. Additionally, the readiness and support of university staff, as noted by WIK Staff W1, are critical factors influencing placement decisions. When university personnel are empathetic and proactive in supporting refugee students, it creates an environment conducive to integration and academic success. These partnerships and support systems are essential for ensuring refugee students not only access higher education but also thrive in it.

The respondents were asked to give how the involvement of guardians whose siblings had been sponsored by Windle International Kenya contributed to the overall success and support system for refugee students pursuing higher education in Dadaab, Kenya.

Guardian G3 expressed that, *“Having a sibling who has gone through the program motivates other family members. They provide emotional support and share their experiences, which encourages younger siblings to pursue higher education.”*

This was supported by Refugee Student S5, who stated, *“My older brother was sponsored, and he helps me with my studies and gives me advice on how to manage my time at university.”* Additionally, Teacher T4 noted, *“Guardians often play a pivotal role in creating a conducive environment for studying. When they are involved, students feel more secure and supported in their educational journeys.”*

This highlights the importance of familial support in enhancing the academic performance and well-being of refugee students, as indicated by Refugee Student S3, who said, *“My guardian keeps reminding me of the sacrifices made for my education, which keeps me motivated.”*

The involvement of guardians plays a significant role in providing both emotional and practical support to refugee students pursuing higher education in Dadaab, Kenya. According to Guardian G3, the presence of a sibling who has previously navigated the educational sponsorship program acts as a key source of motivation for other family members. This sense of resilience and aspiration is further emphasized by Refugee Student S5, who credits his older brother’s support and guidance as pivotal in his academic journey. The shared experiences within the family foster a supportive network that bolsters the students' confidence and reinforces the belief that higher education is achievable.

In addition to emotional encouragement, guardians offer valuable practical support that directly influences academic performance. Refugee Student S5's experience of receiving study assistance and time management advice from his older brother highlights the tangible benefits of guardian involvement in the educational process. Teacher T4 underscores this by stating that guardians help create a conducive study environment, which is essential for academic success. This involvement alleviates the pressure on students, allowing them to focus on their studies without the added stress of managing educational responsibilities alone. Guardians, therefore, contribute significantly to both emotional and academic well-being.

The involvement of guardians also creates a secure environment for refugee students, which is crucial in addressing the challenges these students face. Teacher T4 notes that active guardian involvement fosters a sense of security, which is particularly important for refugees who may have experienced psychological trauma and instability. Refugee Student S3’s reflection on how his guardian’s reminders of the sacrifices made for his education serve as a motivational tool further highlights the critical role of guardians in shaping students' educational experiences. This sense of security and motivational reinforcement is essential for ensuring the students’ perseverance and commitment to education.

The findings from the interviews suggest that guardianship, particularly among those with prior experience in educational sponsorship, has a profound effect on refugee students’ higher education experiences in Dadaab. By providing emotional support, academic guidance, and a secure environment, guardians contribute to enhanced motivation, better academic performance, and a sense of community and belonging. These factors are essential for the personal development and success of students. The insights from these findings align with existing literature, reinforcing the importance of family and guardian involvement in supporting refugee students and highlighting the need for programs like Windle International Kenya to integrate guardians into the support system (Atesok, Komsuoglu, & Ozera, 2019; Windle International Kenya, 2020). Additionally, despite the positive feedback, concerns regarding transparency in the selection process and staff responsiveness point to areas that need improvement to enhance the effectiveness of such programs (OECD, 2018; Byamungu, 2009; Brown, 2019).

Inferential Statistics

Table 3: Model Summary

	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error
	0.789	0.622	0.601	0.590
				2.153

a. Predictors: (Constant), Windle International Kenya Placement

Source: (Author, 2024)

The analysis reveals a strong positive relationship ($R = 0.789$) between Windle International Kenya Scholarship Placement and its effects on refugees, indicating a significant effect. The model explains 62.2% of the variance in the effects on refugees ($R^2 = 0.622$), demonstrating the substantial contribution of the scholarship placement to the dependent variable. The Adjusted R^2 value of 0.601 confirms the model's robustness while accounting for sample size and predictors, showing the effectiveness of the independent variable in explaining the variance.

Table 4: ANOVA

	df	Sum of Squares	Mean Square	F	Significance F
Regression	3	678.921	226.307	32.415	0.000
Residual	111	412.732	3.719		
Total	114	1091.653			

a. Dependent Variable: Effects on Refugees

b. Predictors: (Constant), Windle International Kenya Placement

Source: (Author, 2024)

The findings of this study align with existing literature and theoretical perspectives, particularly Social Learning Theory and Systems Theory. The significant F-statistic (32.415) and highly significant p-value (0.000) affirm a strong relationship between Windle International Kenya's scholarship placement and refugees' access to education, reinforcing Bandura's (1977) argument that social environments shape learning behaviors. This corresponds with Wright (2010) and Kiruthu (2020), who emphasize that scholarship programs serve as social modeling mechanisms, inspiring other refugees to pursue higher education. Furthermore, the study supports Systems Theory (Bertalanffy, 1968), as it demonstrates how scholarships function within an interconnected educational ecosystem, influencing access, integration, and academic outcomes (Smith, 2015). The residual sum of squares (412.732) suggests that while a substantial portion of the variation is explained, additional systemic factors such as policy frameworks and institutional support effect educational accessibility, a point echoed by Byamungu (2009) and Brown (2019), who highlight persistent enrollment barriers. Thus, the study contributes to existing scholarship by validating the critical role of scholarships in refugee education while acknowledging the need for complementary systemic interventions to optimize their effectiveness.

Table 5: Coefficients

	Coefficient	Std. Error	t	P-value
Intercept	5.371	0.614	8.739	0.000
Windle International Kenya Placement	0.828	0.191	4.334	0.000

a. Dependent Variable: Effects on Refugees

Source: (Author, 2024)

The regression coefficients in Table 7 provide valuable insights into the relationship between various independent variables and their effects on refugees, represented by the dependent variable.

$$Y=5.371+0.828X1+\varepsilon$$

The findings of this study, which demonstrate a statistically significant positive relationship between Windle International Kenya’s placement program and the effects on refugees, align with existing literature on refugee education initiatives. Studies such as Wright (2010) and Kiruthu (2020) emphasize the importance of structured placement and scholarship programs in improving refugee access to higher education, thereby supporting the notion that targeted interventions significantly enhance educational outcomes. Additionally, Social Learning Theory (Bandura, 1977) provides a theoretical basis for understanding how the success of placement programs fosters a culture of learning and aspiration among refugees, as observing peers successfully transitioning into higher education motivates others to follow suit. Moreover, Systems Theory (Bertalanffy, 1968) supports these findings by illustrating how educational initiatives, such as those by Windle International Kenya, are interconnected within a broader ecosystem of refugee support, including language training, financial aid, and institutional collaborations (Smith, 2015; Brown, 2019). While previous studies (Byamungu, 2009; Brown, 2019) raise concerns about the low enrollment rates of refugees in universities, this study’s results suggest that effective placement programs can counter these challenges by enhancing access and integration. Therefore, the positive coefficient of 0.828 underscores the critical role of structured placement initiatives in facilitating refugee education, reinforcing both theoretical and empirical perspectives on their significance.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the study reveals that placement programs play crucial role in facilitating access to higher education for refugees in Kenya, with each contributing uniquely to the educational journey. The research findings indicate that 62.5% of respondents were of the view that Windle Trust International Kenya has contributed positively towards the placement of refugee students in higher education institutions, not only within Kenya, but also globally. Moreover, the findings reveal a strong positive relationship between Windle International Kenya's placement program and its effects on refugees, with a correlation coefficient of 0.789. The model explains 62.2% of the variance in refugee outcomes ($R^2 = 0.622$), and the regression coefficient for the placement program is 0.828, showing its significant positive impact on access to education for refugees. The F-statistic of 32.415 and p-value of 0.000 indicate a highly significant effect. Collectively, Windle International Kenya's integrated approach to scholarships, and placement

significantly supports refugee students, improving their educational outcomes and empowering them to succeed in higher education.

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