

What policies and implementation strategies exist for the effective management of teachers in refugee contexts in Ethiopia?

Organization	UNESCO International Institute for Educational Planning
Authors	Stephanie Bengtsson and Helen West
Location	Ethiopia: Benishangul-Gumuz, Gambella, and Tigray
Teacher Profiles	Refugee and host community teachers
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DESCRIPTION OF CRISIS-SPECIFIC CHALLENGE

Ethiopia is home to one of the largest refugee populations in Africa. An early adopter of the global Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF), the country is known for its willingness to welcome and protect refugees, including in the education sector, where the government has committed to improving access for refugees.

While Ethiopia has plans to expand its out-of-camp policy, most refugees continue to reside in camps administered by the Agency for Refugee and Returnee Affairs (ARRA). ARRA is also primarily responsible for the delivery of several essential services within the camps, including primary education, making Ethiopia a unique research setting, as there are two different governmental agencies responsible for primary education: the Ministry of Education (MoE) for host-community schools and ARRA for refugee camp schools.

The strengths and weaknesses of both the MoE and ARRA's ways of training, recruiting, and retaining teachers to staff their respective systems need to be carefully analysed to support teacher management policies benefiting both refugees and the host communities in which they live. Through in-depth policy analysis, this research aims to break down this boundary between host and refugee and produce meaningful, relevant, and practical guidance for the Ethiopian government and other key stakeholders.

BRIEF OVERVIEW

Most refugee children will spend their entire childhood in exile. Responding to their educational needs will require innovative policy solutions that put teachers at the centre, not just because teachers are often the only educational resource available to learners during crisis,

but because teachers are themselves rights-holders as members of affected communities. To help advance this search for innovative policy solutions, UNESCO International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP), together with EdDevTrust, has launched a multi-country research project on teacher management policies in refugee contexts, with a pilot study in Ethiopia supported by UNICEF Ethiopia.

For the purposes of this research, the core aim of effective teacher management policy is **to nurture and sustain a thriving body of great teachers who facilitate quality teaching and learning for all** by:

1. Providing meaningful opportunities for intra- and interpersonal and professional growth
2. Improving employment and career conditions

The research uses an iterative, collaborative, mixed methods approach to explore how teacher management policies are being developed, communicated, interpreted, mediated, struggled over, and implemented at national, regional, and local levels. Our research partners included PRIN International Consultancy and Research Services (an Ethiopian company), IPSOS Kenya, master's students from the McCourt School of Public Policy, and two independent consultants. During the whole research process, the research team worked closely with key stakeholders from Ethiopia including ARRA, MoE, UNHCR, and UNICEF.

Data collection in Ethiopia was undertaken in three phases between September 2018 and May 2019. During Phase I, an understanding of the policy landscape was built through a literature review, an analysis of policy documents and EMIS data, and semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders at the federal level. Phase II involved interviews with government and international agencies at regional,



Photo 1: PTA focus group



Photo 2: Teacher focus group

zonal, and woreda (district) levels, interviews and focus group discussions with teachers at refugee and host-community schools, and a teacher survey from a mix of schools in refugee-hosting woredas. During Phase III, we conducted stakeholder consultations and follow-up interviews with participants from Phase I and II to discuss and validate preliminary findings, interviews with key stakeholders not interviewed in earlier rounds, and one-day case studies at selected schools in each region.

EVIDENCE AND OUTCOMES

In addition to a thorough policy document review, this study has generated rich qualitative data capturing a range of stakeholder perspectives on policies related to teacher status, well-being, personal and professional growth, and working conditions. Comprehensive survey data have been collected from 351 Ethiopian and refugee teachers in refugee and host schools in refugee-hosting woredas in Benishangul-Gumuz, Gambella, and Tigray.

Key findings emerging from the data analysis suggest that while Ethiopia has developed promising policy texts for the effective management of teachers in refugee-hosting communities, problems with communication, interpretation, and implementation remain. These problems stem from underdeveloped relationships between stakeholders, particularly at regional level, and a lack of clarity around roles and responsibilities.

These issues are compounded by significant contextual variations. While Tigray's economy is relatively strong,

and relationships between Eritrean refugees and host communities relatively good, Benishangul-Gumuz and Gambella are emerging regions facing major resource constraints, and refugees from South Sudan and Sudan have less in common with host communities.

Barriers to meaningful opportunities for intra- and interpersonal and professional growth

One major challenge we identified was how the lack of teaching qualifications amongst refugee teachers meant that, regardless of other qualifications, they did not know the basics of pedagogy, teaching methodologies, or pedagogical content knowledge (PCK). In response to this, an upgrading programme has been launched in two regions, funded through the Education Cannot Wait fund. This programme consists of summer training at Colleges of Teacher Education (CTEs) over four years, after which the refugee teachers will graduate with a diploma. So far 350 refugees have completed two summers of study.

Inconducive employment and career conditions

However, through our research it also became apparent that challenges remain around progression and compensation for refugee teachers. Until the recent Refugee Proclamation, refugees have been unable to legally work in Ethiopia, meaning that they are paid a small 'incentive' funded by UNHCR rather than a salary. All refugees earn the same small amount (less than 20% of what their Ethiopian colleagues at refugee schools earn). There are no opportunities to progress or to be paid more – even the refugee vice-directors of schools earn the same as other refugee teachers. Linking this

to the example of professional development above, it means that even those refugee teachers who will graduate from the CTEs with a diploma will not return to a higher paid or promoted position.

We also found that a significant factor which negatively affects the working conditions of refugee teachers is the overcrowding in refugee schools and subsequent high pupil teacher ratio (PTR). Whereas most host community schools visited reported a PTR of around 40:1, within the standard Ethiopian guidelines, the PTR at refugee schools was extremely high, from between 80:1 to 120:1. This was partly due to refugee primary schools admitting students of any age and partly due to the instability of the region as a whole, which resulted in influxes of refugees. At one school visited there were over 6,000 students on roll with one head teacher and a total of 69 teachers; a total PTR of 89:1 and a PTR of qualified national teachers to students of 280:1. The high PTR had a profound effect on the quality of teaching that teachers felt able to provide, with it being reported that even taking the register took up to 15 minutes of a 40-minute lesson.

Implications for well-being and motivation

Poor compensation and tough working conditions have implications for motivation; to both work as a teacher and to undertake additional study. Although the majority of refugee teachers cited a sense of commitment to the community as a reason to teach, we found that in some reasons there were challenges in recruiting refugee teachers due to the workload teaching entailed. With all other jobs available to refugees in the camps paying the same amount, even refugees who had qualified as teachers in their home country were, at times, reluctant to teach in a camp due to the additional preparation and marking time to which they needed to commit. Basically, they could do an 'easier' job for the same amount of money.

Historically, policy development and planning have been undertaken separately for refugees and host communities, but there is an increasing recognition of the importance of joint policies and planning that are responsive to the local context. In the words of one UNHCR representative, "We need to work together so that such disparities can be avoided, and that is only when we have the data that show the disparities" (Interview, March 2019).

Our findings on Ethiopia will be published as a policy brief and in-depth case study, including a set of practical policy recommendations, which have been revised based on inputs from ARRA, MoE, UNHCR, and other stakeholders. In keeping with our iterative approach, we shared preliminary findings with key stakeholders, and these will feed into the development of Ethiopia's new Education Sector Development Plan.

LIMITATIONS, CHALLENGES, AND/OR LESSONS LEARNED

Overall, an iterative, collaborative approach involving multiple field visits allowed for the generation of rich data. However, we faced challenges, which will be considered as research continues:

1. Our research proved timely, commencing just as Ethiopia started rolling out the CRRF and overhauling teacher management policies. However, analysing policy frameworks and policy networks while these policies are being developed and revised has proven challenging.
2. While Ethiopia is relatively stable, security issues did arise, which meant that some schools could not be visited during our fieldwork.
3. Developing policy guidance that can be used by a range of stakeholders is a challenge, but one we have tried to mitigate by soliciting feedback throughout the process.

LINKS

- [Teachers of refugees: A review of the literature:](#) This document, co-authored by IIEP and EdDevTrust, laid the groundwork for the study. It found that relatively few data are available about teacher management in refugee contexts, other than limited statistical data suggesting that qualified teachers are in short supply. The review also concluded that there are few studies on teachers' perspectives on key policy issues.
- [An article about the policy study's launch in Ethiopia](#) authored by Stephanie Bengtsson, Programme Specialist, IIEP-UNESCO.

- [What We Know and What We Need to Know: Identifying and Addressing Evidence Gaps to Support Effective Teacher Management Policies in Refugee Settings in Ethiopia](#), an article authored by Stephanie Bengtsson, Katja Hinz, Ruth Naylor, and Helen West, published in the NORRAG Special Issue: Data Collection and Evidence Building to Support Education in Emergencies
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