

Ethiopia's refugee response

Focus on socio-economic integration and self-reliance

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Implementation of the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework represents a major shift in Ethiopia's refugee policy. Refugees living in camps will benefit from paid employment. Those in protracted situations will have opportunities to integrate locally and live outside camps. Jobs will be created for host communities and government will access international finance and political benefits. Expected implementation challenges include ethnic and resource-related tensions and low wages.

Key findings

- ▶ Implementation of the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF) potentially expands refugees' socio-economic opportunities through wage-earning employment, local integration and the Out of Camp Policy (OCP).
- ▶ Host community consultations have not been conducted sufficiently at the expected level. There have mostly been national consultations, regional launches and mass media broadcasts.
- ▶ The multifaceted nature of the CRRF, which is a new approach to managing refugee issues in Ethiopia, poses a coordination challenge among stakeholders. A national steering committee has been established to drive the process.
- ▶ The industrial parks might not substantially contribute to making refugees and host communities self-sufficient, unless the modes of operation are clearly defined. To this end, addressing issues of low wages and favourable working conditions for employment is critical.
- ▶ In Gambella and Somali regional states, which host some of the long-staying refugees expected to be considered for local integration, there are sensitivities towards refugees' presence at different levels. In Gambella there is tension involving different ethnic groups, environmental pressure and historical tensions. In Ethiopia's Somali regional state, it is critical to understand the clan dynamics before starting any implementation.

Recommendations

- ▶ Serious and candid consultations should be held with the relevant communities before the CRRF is implemented. Strong host community/public outreach programmes should be designed to explain the benefits and challenges of the framework's implementation. The public should understand the link between refugees' presence and the benefits they bring with them, including much-needed funding to implement joint projects. Challenges associated with hosting refugees should also be explained to the public.
- ▶ The job-creation component of the CRRF should be accompanied by a sound plan that enables refugees and host communities to earn enough to cover their basic needs. Ethiopia should adopt a minimum wage policy that meets the increasing cost of living both for the host and refugee communities.
- ▶ The industrial parks and irrigation schemes can only employ a limited number of refugees and host community members. Providing start-up capital and start-up kits for those technically trained including carpenters, tailors, and electricians should be considered.
- ▶ The CRRF's implementation should follow a conflict-sensitive approach, considering three key areas: understanding the context of implementation; existing factors that affect implementation; and intentional/unintentional impacts on existing tensions. This helps develop a deeper understanding of the two way interaction between expanding refugee's socio-economic opportunities and the impact on host communities and local administrations. It also helps forecast the result of the intervention and plan how to maximise benefits, while minimising damage.

Introduction

Ethiopia is the second largest refugee-hosting country in Africa, sheltering more than 900 000¹ refugees as of August 2018, mainly from South Sudan, Somalia and Eritrea. The rest originate from the Sudan, Yemen and over a dozen other countries. In 2017, the refugee population witnessed 109 851 new arrivals.² In the first half of 2018, 38 798 new refugees registered.³

Drivers of forced displacement range from conflict in South Sudan to ongoing economic deprivation, human rights violations and open-ended military service in Eritrea as well as conflict and conflict-induced food insecurity in Somalia. Ethiopia grants prima facie recognition to most asylum seekers from neighbouring countries.⁴

Others have to undergo individual Refugee Status Determination by the Ethiopian government.⁵ Its 2004 Refugee Proclamation is based on the United Nations' 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, and its 1967 Protocol, as well as the 1969 OAU Refugee Convention.

Ethiopia is the second largest refugee-hosting country in Africa, sheltering more than 900 000 refugees

Ethiopia's refugee policy requires refugees to live in camps, with the exception of a small number of people who are allowed to stay in urban centres due to special protection or health considerations. Since 2010, many more have been given the option of living outside of the refugee camps as part of the government's Out of Camp Policy.

Currently, the country is also exploring options to include refugees in its national development plans based on the nine pledges made at the 20 September 2016 Leaders' Summit on Refugees and Migrants in New York.⁶ The pledges include providing work permits to qualifying refugees, facilitating local integration to those in protracted situations, earmarking a percentage of jobs within industrial parks and providing access to irrigable land for refugees.

Expanding the Out of Camp Policy to benefit 10% of refugees in the country at the time the pledges were

made and increasing access to health and education services are also part of the plan.

Ethiopia became one of a few countries in the world⁷ to pilot the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF) in February 2017 with a nationwide launch of the same in November 2017.⁸ The CRRF serves as a means to implement the nine pledges and envisions bringing durable solutions for refugees and supporting host communities through combining humanitarian aid and development.

The draft national comprehensive refugees response strategy explains that objective of the CRRF include ensuring the self-reliance of refugees and host communities through socio-economic integration and facilitating voluntary repatriation and resettlement opportunities.⁹

This paper focuses on analysing the implementation prospects of the CRRF in Ethiopia, with a specific focus on the socio-economic integration of refugees.

Understanding the implementation prospects is critical, because the CRRF has the potential to bring about drastic changes in Ethiopia's refugee protection – such as expanding socio-economic opportunities of refugees in a way that benefits and impact the host communities.

It is expected to benefit various stakeholders. The implementation process may also face many challenges. Taking into consideration these challenges, the paper also offers policy recommendations.

Refugee context in Ethiopia

Ethiopia is the second largest refugee-hosting country in Africa, sheltering over 900 000 refugees: 46.6% of them originate from South Sudan; 28.4% come from Somalia; 19.2% from Eritrea; and the remaining 5.8% from Sudan and over a dozen other countries, including from outside the region, such as Yemen.¹⁰

Between 2012 and 2016, the refugee population in Ethiopia more than doubled from 298 244 to 793 321, including significant arrivals from South Sudan, Somalia and Eritrea.¹¹ The refugees are accommodated in 26 refugee camps across five regional states in the country.¹²

Ethiopia's refugee proclamation requires all refugees to reside in camps with the exception of a small group of

'urban refugees' and Eritreans who are allowed to benefit from the government's Out of Camp Policy. Both groups number 22 885.¹³ All Out of Camp Policy beneficiaries are required to sustain themselves financially.

Driving factors

The reasons for the mass influx of refugees into Ethiopia are diverse. South Sudanese flee their country as a result of conflict and the concomitant instability, humanitarian crisis and human rights abuses.

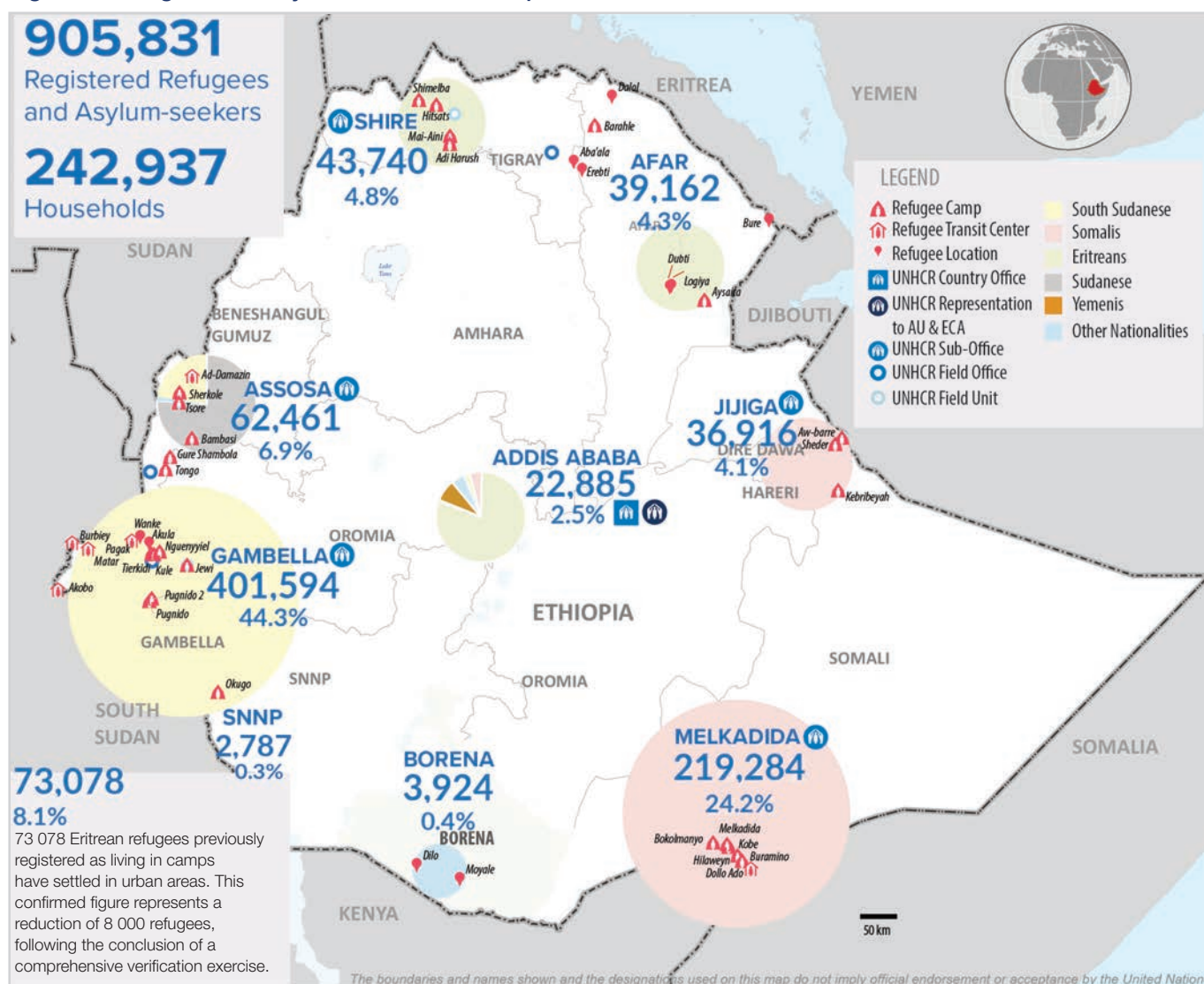
Most Somalis flee due to ongoing conflict, mainly violent attacks by al-Shabaab,¹⁴ and conflict-induced food insecurity. Testimonies by Eritrean refugees indicate that involuntary and open-ended military conscription,

arbitrary arrest and detention, compulsory land acquisition and other systematic human rights violations by the state are their main reasons for flight.

Particularly worrisome is the growing number of unaccompanied and separated Eritrean children arriving in Ethiopia, representing 8% of the nearly 83 000 refugees residing in camps in the Tigray and Afar regions. Children under 18 years account for 48% of the total refugee population in the camps in the Northern part of Ethiopia, of whom 17.8% arrive unaccompanied or separated from their families.¹⁵

On the inflow of Eritrean refugees, it is important to note the changing dynamics in the relations between Ethiopia and Eritrea. In July 2018, the two countries signed a

Figure 1: Refugees and asylum-seekers in Ethiopia



Source: UNHCR.¹⁶

peace deal that ended their two decades-long ‘no war no peace’ situation, which the Eritrean government used as a major reason to implement the open-ended military conscription regime.

However, the government of Eritrea has not yet announced any plans to suspend the forced military conscription or at least to limit it to the 18 months as stipulated in the government’s domestic policy. All the same, the inflow of Eritreans to Ethiopia may not come to a sudden halt even if the government abolishes its conscription policy, as it is not the only reason driving that country’s youth away.

Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework

The Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF) was born out of the 2016 New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants. The declaration is considered a milestone for global solidarity to improve the protection of people on the move, refugees and migrants.

Children under 18 account for 48% of refugees in the camps in the Northern part of Ethiopia

The declaration sets out key elements of the CRRF and puts in motion two processes that will lead to the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR) and the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM).

The CRRF envisions achieving the following four key points:¹⁷

- Ease pressure on countries that welcome and host refugees.
- Build refugees’ self-reliance.
- Expand access to resettlement in third countries and other complementary pathways.
- Foster conditions that enable refugees to voluntarily return to their home countries.

The CRRF in Ethiopia

In the Ethiopian context, the CRRF serves as a means to implement the nine pledges. It envisions bringing durable solutions to refugees’ situations and supporting

host communities through combining humanitarian aid and development.¹⁸

To guide its implementation, a National Comprehensive Refugee Response Strategy was drafted.¹⁹ The draft strategy indicates that the overall goal of the framework’s implementation in Ethiopia is to ensure the self-reliance of refugees and host communities through socio-economic integration and facilitating voluntary repatriation and resettlement opportunities.

Within a 10-year timeframe, the strategy aims to achieve the following four objectives:²⁰

- Enhance capacity to manage sustainable responses to the needs of refugees and host communities.
- Ensure refugees and host communities have access to and benefit from diverse economic and livelihood opportunities, which ultimately ensure self-reliance and socio-economic integration of refugees and host communities.
- Strengthen and build individual capacities of refugees and host communities, and prepare refugees for durable solutions by building their human capital.
- Support conditions in countries of origin and advocate for meaningful responsibility sharing, including expanded access to third-country solutions, using regional and international processes.

National consultations aimed at defining the modes of implementation including coordination mechanisms are ongoing, where different actors including refugees participate.

So far these consultations have deliberated on key components of the pledges such as providing basic and social services, education, work and livelihoods and documentation. The CRRF process was also launched in the five refugee-hosting regions.²¹

Ethiopia’s refugee policy changes

Although Ethiopia grants prima facie recognition to refugees coming from most of its neighbouring countries, it has made qualified reservations to some articles of the 1951 Refugee Convention, including the right to education and access to wage-earning employment, while local integration was unthinkable.

The implementation of the CRRF is expected to help refugees benefit from a range of rights including enhanced access to education and employment.

The government's policy changes are reflected in the Comprehensive Refugee Response Strategy, which envisages enhancing self-reliance of refugees and host communities through socio-economic integration and facilitating voluntary repatriation and resettlement opportunities. The strategy would also like to gradually phase out the camp-based assistance model the country has been implementing for decades.²²

These policy changes are based on the nine pledges made at the 20 September 2016 Leaders' Summit for Refugees and Migrants at the United Nations General Assembly in New York.²³ A day earlier, on 19 September 2016, the New York Declaration was adopted by the General Assembly, with 193 countries pledging to improve the protection of refugees and share burden and responsibility.

Ethiopia's nine pledges are presented regrouped in six thematic areas:²⁴

- **Education:** Increase enrolment for primary, secondary and tertiary education to all qualified refugees without discrimination.
- **Social and basic services:** Enhance the provision of basic and essential social services.
- **Out of Camp:** Expansion of the Out of Camp Policy to benefit 10% of the current refugee population.
- **Documentation:** Provision of benefits such as issuing birth certificates to refugee children born in Ethiopia, and facilitating the opening of bank accounts and obtaining driving licenses.
- **Work and livelihoods:** Provision of work permits to refugees, and facilitating for refugees to work in industrial parks and on irrigable land.
- **Local integration:** Allowing local integration for those refugees in protracted situations – those who have lived for 20 years or more in Ethiopia.

Revision of the Refugee Proclamation

The ongoing revision of Ethiopia's 2004 Refugee Proclamation is central to the implementation of the CRRF. The revised law is expected to grant refugees

a wide range of rights, many of them articulated in the pledges, such as the right to work (K1, CWP).²⁵

Ethiopia's Council of Ministers has already reviewed and adopted the revised proclamation which is awaiting parliament's final approval before it passes into law. This will be a big step forward in addressing long-standing legal hurdles on refugees' right to work, freedom of movement and opportunities to be self-reliant.

The revision of Ethiopia's 2004 Refugee Proclamation is central to the implementation of the CRRF

This is expected to be followed by issuing accompanying implementation regulations and directives that elaborate on the eligibility criteria of the refugees, sectors of involvement and other related issues.

The CRRF and the Growth and Transformation Plan-II

Creating a strong nexus between humanitarian aid and development is central to the CRRF process. To this end, Ethiopia is working towards linking the framework and the pledges with its Growth and Transformation Plan-II (GTP-II) (K1).

The GTP-II provides Ethiopia's development roadmap, with the aim of transforming the country into an industrialised middle-income nation by 2025, achieving the following three objectives:²⁶

- To maintain an annual average GDP growth rate of at least 11%.
- To pursue measures towards rapid industrialisation and structural transformation.
- To ensure sustainable growth by advancing a stable macro-economic framework and climate-resilient green economy.

Regarding emerging regions such as Gambella and Ethiopian Somali region, which host most of the refugees, the GTP-II aims to increase access to services like education.²⁷

One of the starting points in linking the GTP-II and the CRRF is the drive to improve the lives of Ethiopians

Figure 2: Linkages between the Growth and Transformation Plan-II (GTP-II) and Ethiopia's pledges

GTP focus area	Relevant pledges of the government of Ethiopia
Ensuring good governance and building a developmental political economy	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Expansion of the Out of Camp Policy to benefit 10% of the current total refugee population. 2. Provision of work permits to refugees and to those with a permanent residence ID, within the bounds of domestic law. 3. Provision of work permits to refugees in the areas permitted for foreign workers, by giving priority to qualified refugees. 4. Allowing for local integration for those protracted refugees who have lived for 20 years or more in Ethiopia.
Human development and technology capacity building <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education and training • Health sector development 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Increase of enrolment in primary, secondary and tertiary education to all qualified refugees without discrimination and within the available resources. 6. Enhance the provision of basic and essential social services. 7. Provision of other benefits such as issuing birth certificates to refugee children born in Ethiopia, and possibly opening bank accounts and obtaining driving licences.
Economic development sector plan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agriculture and rural transformation • Manufacturing industry 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 8. Making available irrigable land to allow 100 000 people (among them refugees and local communities) to engage in crop production. 9. Building industrial parks where a percentage of jobs will be committed to refugees.

Source: Draft Comprehensive Refugee Response Strategy (August 2018).

(the host communities) through multilateral stakeholder engagement (K1).

The Ministry of Finance and Economic Cooperation (MoFEC) is on board as part of the CRRF governance structure. This helps to institutionalise the links and create a system that better caters for refugees and host communities.

The right to local integration is expected to be reflected in Ethiopia's refugee proclamation

Thematic areas that have been identified to link the two are shown in the table above. Otherwise refugee-related issues are not directly included in the GTP-II. Also, the GTP-II's time frame (2016-2020) does not exactly match the CRRF strategy's timeframe (2018-2027). The GTP-III, which is currently being prepared, is expected to reflect the pledges (K1).

Implementation of the CRRF in Ethiopia

This section focuses on aspects of socio-economic integration of refugees in line with the implementation of the pledges through the CRRF. In line with this, this section starts by shedding light on the concept of local integration in general and socio-economic integration in particular.

Local and socio-economic integration

Local integration is one of Ethiopia's key pledges. The right to local integration is expected to be reflected in Ethiopia's refugee proclamation, which is under revision. The revised version is expected to consider only socio-economic integration at this stage (K1, CWP).²⁸

For refugees to qualify for local integration, they must have lived in the country for 20 or more years and have limited prospects for voluntary repatriation or third-country resettlement.²⁹ This arrangement may benefit up to 13 000 refugees mainly long-staying Somali and South Sudanese refugees.³⁰

Socio-economic integration

In the context of Ethiopia, socio-economic integration of refugees refers to offering work permits to facilitate refugees' self-reliance either through wage-earning or self-employment opportunities; and providing access to education and health services.

It also includes issuing temporary residence permits, which allows refugees to move freely and live outside refugee camps. Providing temporary travel documents is also included. Allowing refugees to live side by side with host communities and offering employment and socio-economic opportunities enhances integration between the refugees and hosts.

However, opportunities for naturalisation and participation in politics in the country of asylum are not included.

Socio-economic integration is a dynamic and multi-way process that involves refugees, host communities, government institutions and donors. Successful socio-economic integration of refugees in the Ethiopian context requires the following:

- A national policy, strategy, and legal and institutional framework on socio-economic integration.
- The host community's acceptance of refugees' integration.
- Refugees' readiness to adapt to the host community's cultural and socio-economic environment.
- Stakeholders' readiness to adapt to the multifaceted nature of processes of implementing socio-economic integration and willingness to coordinate efforts.
- Mechanisms of capacity building of all actors at a national, regional and local level.
- A switch from a humanitarian to a development perspective.
- International partners' support, both financial and technical.

Socio-economic integration is one aspect of local integration, which is considered as one of the durable solutions by the United Nations Refugee Agency. To offer a deeper understanding of the issue, the following section highlights the concept of local integration.

Local integration

Local integration is 'a means to ending exile by allowing refugees to become full members of their host community in their first country of asylum'.³¹ It might refer to a temporary solution pending voluntary repatriation when situations improve in countries of origin or resettlement to third countries.³²

At the same time, it can also have long-term consequences since locally integrated refugees are generally assumed to remain in the country of asylum indefinitely. Local integration is listed as one of the three durable solutions



REFUGEE CHILDREN WILL
BENEFIT FROM SOCIO-
ECONOMIC INTEGRATION

for refugees by the UN 1951 Refugees Convention. The other two are voluntary repatriation to the country of origin, and resettlement in a third country.

Local integration comprises three key interconnected aspects – legal, economic and social/cultural components.³³ The legal aspect refers to the rights to employment, to engage in income-generating activities, to own property, have freedom of movement, and access to public services such as education and healthcare. It can go as far as the right to permanent residence and acquisition of citizenship through naturalisation.

The economic aspect refers to acquiring opportunities to engage in economic activities and be self-sufficient. The social and cultural aspect focuses on enabling refugees to live among host communities and become active participants of the social life of their country of asylum. Countries can offer a variety of rights depending on their political, economic, historical and cultural situations.

Local integration comprises three key interconnected aspects – legal, economic and social/cultural

The overall design of a country's local integration policies depends on a number of factors, such as a host country's identity, its cultural understandings of nation and nationhood,³⁴ as well as the perceived and real benefits and challenges of offering integration opportunities to a certain refugee group.

Local integration is the most emphasised durable solution in the Global Compact on Refugees and a major aspect of the CRRF. This found its way into the New York Declaration, ostensibly propagated by European countries who want to keep refugees and migrants at bay following the much-reported arrival of almost a million refugees and migrants in Europe (CWP).

This is consistent with the current policies of many European countries, a common feature of which is tight border control against refugees and migrants. Among other things, the Global Compact on Refugees aspires to expand third-country resettlement through family reunification, sponsorship, humanitarian visas, education opportunities and labour mobility.³⁵

Benefits of socio-economic integration

All of Ethiopia's pledges contribute to enhancing the socio-economic integration of refugees in one way or another. In this respect, the following section highlights implementation of some of the pledges that contribute to the socio-economic integration of refugees such as documentation, work permits, industrial parks, as well as expanding education opportunities and the Out of Camp Policy. It also highlights the benefits to host communities and the host government.

Documentation

Provision of documentation to refugees is one of the pledges. In this respect, civil registration of refugees, including that of birth, marriage, divorce and death, started in October 2017.

The UN Refugee Agency considers the inclusion of refugees in the national civil registration and vital statistics system as a 'significant milestone' for domestic refugee protection.³⁶ Civil registration is anticipated to enhance access to services for refugees including children within the national education, social services and judicial systems. One key informant explains its importance as follows:

The start of the vital events registration is really a great step forward. Many refugees in the camps and in urban settings are already registering their births, marriages, divorces and deaths. The process is very smooth and efficient and the Agency for Refugees and Returnees Affairs (ARRA) staff do it for us free of charge. (K5).³⁷

This will lead refugees to benefit from a wide range of rights such as owning identity cards, bank accounts and driving licences. These are key steps towards recognising refugees' presence in the host society, and will allow them to access a wide variety of services. The refugees will also address protection challenges of some urban refugees who already work informally.³⁸

Children are also among the beneficiaries. Refugee children born in Ethiopia have been issued with birth certificates since October 2017. Implementation of civil registration has provided retroactive registration rights to approximately 70 000 refugee children born in the country over the past 10 years.³⁹

Biometric Information Management System

As part of the documentation pledge, the country initiated the Biometric Information Management System (BIMS) in July 2017. BIMS is a countrywide refugee registration infrastructure. It will allow refugees to record essential information on their educational and professional skills as well as family members located in other countries against their individual and family profiles.

BIMS will facilitate refugees' access to opportunities related to the CRRF work such as the right to live outside the camps, advance their education, be locally integrated, and work in industrial parks. This can also help in family reunification or other forms of resettlement to a third country.

Provision of work permits

Providing work permits to refugees will be one of the major policy shifts regarding refugee protection. This will help refugees to benefit from wage-earning employment opportunities such as through the industrial parks or irrigated agriculture.

It can also encourage some of the refugees to start businesses, which can create job opportunities for other refugees as well as Ethiopians (K4; K5).⁴⁰

Though they are few in number, it is important to note that some of the urban refugees receive remittances which could help them start small businesses (K5).

Expanding the Out of Camp Policy

Extending the existing Out of Camp Policy (OCP) for Eritrean refugees to 10% of all refugees of different nationalities in the country is one of Ethiopia's pledges. When implemented, this is expected to promote refugees' freedom of movement while providing access to better opportunities. In turn, better opportunities will help refugees prepare themselves to ultimately become self-reliant (K5).

Interestingly, the original policy did not attract as many Eritrean refugees as one would expect; only 7.4% (13 000 out of over 173 879)⁴¹ signed up for the OCP to date. The OCP's requirement that refugees sustain themselves is the main stumbling block (K1; CWP). Many of the Eritreans who signed up for the OCP were those who receive remittances.⁴²

Expanding education opportunities

Expanding education opportunities was one of Ethiopia's pledges. The country planned to increase enrolment as follows:⁴³

- Pre-school from 46 270 (46%) to 63 040 (60%)
- Primary school from 96 700 (54%) to 137 000 (75%)
- Secondary school from 3 785 (7%) to 10 300 (25%)
- Higher education from 1 600 to 2 500

Between 2017-2018, pre-school, primary, secondary and tertiary enrolments increased by 29%, 37%, 102% and 43% respectively. The corresponding enrolment rates increased to 57%, 72%, 12% and 43%. This shows that the government is on track to achieve its pronounced pledge to enhance refugee education at all levels.⁴⁴

Education is one of the key mechanisms to achieve socio-economic integration of refugees as children of both communities go to the same schools, and in most cases, interact on a daily basis. The current education system follows a combination of two systems. In some areas, there are dedicated schools for each category – in others both learn together.⁴⁵ In addition to increasing enrolment, the CRRF aspires to integrate the two systems as much as possible.

Education is one of the key mechanisms to achieve socio-economic integration of refugees

This creates a close bond between the two communities, more so as refugees are placed in locations where they share a similar ethnic background to the host community. Interactions are not limited to the students but extend to their families as well. As most of the refugee schools have better infrastructure, the plan to have combined schools will also benefit the host community.⁴⁶

Industrial parks

The industrial parks are a flagship project facilitating the socio-economic integration of refugees. Ethiopia is finalising preparations to start the construction of \$500 million worth of industrial parks⁴⁷ benefiting the refugees and host communities through funding from

the European Investment Bank and Department for International Development (DFID). So far, sites have been identified (K1).

As part of the process, skills profiling assessment of refugees is undertaken. Once completed, the parks are expected to create up to 100 000 jobs, of which 30% will be available for refugees, and 70% for Ethiopians.

Benefits to host communities

'Host community' refers to nationals of the country of asylum who live close to refugees.⁴⁸ In the case of Ethiopia, host communities reside in Addis Ababa and in the five regions that host refugee camps. The former constitutes residents of Addis Ababa who live in neighbourhoods where refugees live. The latter refers to residents in areas surrounding refugee camps or near refugee camps.

Different levels of interaction exist between the two groups, ranging from renting houses in the cities to interactions in market places in cities or refugee camps; and from attending school together to using similar health facilities.

The CRRF's holistic approach of simultaneously benefiting host communities and refugees is very important. It recognises the disproportionate burden on host communities.

The framework focuses on improving the lives of host communities through bridging the parallel system of humanitarian support to refugees and host communities, combining it with development plans. This is relevant in the case of Ethiopia since most of the host communities themselves live in abject poverty.

This also addresses complaints by host communities that refugees have better access to services due to international support. For example, access to potable water for refugees in Pugnido refugee camp is 13 litres per person per day (7 litres short of the 20 litres minimum, as per the standard of the UN Refugee Agency), while the host community has far less.⁴⁹ So far, the interventions have been humanitarian- and refugee-centred.

The CRRF is also expected to provide host communities with additional socio-economic benefits including through employment in the industrial parks and irrigated agriculture. According to the pledges, 70% of

jobs in industrial parks will go to Ethiopians while 50% of the beneficiaries from irrigated agriculture will be host communities.

Benefits for the host government

The government's decision to roll out the CRRF process helps Ethiopia align its refugee protection system with the current global trend. This trend is towards phasing out strong dependence on humanitarian aid, and focusing on linking development and humanitarian aid as articulated in the New York Declaration, the CRRF, and the Global Compact on Refugees.

The multifaceted nature of the process has brought on board new actors such as the World Bank, which approved \$202 million under its Economic Opportunities Program to support Ethiopia's effort to provide economic opportunities for refugees and Ethiopians.⁵⁰

The decision to roll out the CRRF helps align Ethiopia's refugee protection system with the global trend

Financial and technical support from existing partners is also enhanced, including from the European Union (EU), the Department for International Development (DFID), and different donor countries. To support the framework, the EU is expected to provide €20 million⁵¹ and DFID, £80 million.⁵² This support focuses on building the industrial parks and capacity of institutions involved in implementing the framework.

For a country like Ethiopia, which is striving to balance its refugee protection responsibilities with achieving national development, this can be a good opportunity to link its refugee responses with especially its broader industrialisation policy and job-creation agenda (K2).⁵³

These kinds of development support will also enable the government to build better physical infrastructure with both refugees and host communities benefiting, for example through schools and health centres (K1). Potential welfare-related benefits to host communities in Ethiopia are also worth mentioning.⁵⁴

Moreover, the CRRF and the benefits that come with it could contribute towards Ethiopia's drive to reset its

image. This was tarnished as a result of the famine in the early 1980s and the civil war that followed.

One of the key informants highlighted that Ethiopia's ongoing changes in refugee response mechanisms contributed to the country's growing reputation as a regional leader (K2). The UN High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi once also described the country's refugee protection regime as 'a shining example of African hospitality'.⁵⁵

His predecessor and current UN Secretary-General António Guterres stated, 'Ethiopia is a pillar of refugee protection in the Horn of Africa.'⁵⁶ Donors and politicians alike are praising the country's bold resolve to transform its refugee protection policy.

Ethiopia's ongoing changes in refugee response mechanisms contributed to the country's growing reputation as a regional leader

Implementation of the CRRF can also contribute to enhancing Ethiopia's political negotiation power, especially with European partners. In 2016, Ethiopia was included among 16 'priority' countries by the European Commission to work towards achieving its goal of migrants and refugees' reduction in return for various 'incentives' like development aid and trade.⁵⁷

Consideration for its inclusion could be that Ethiopia is a country of 100 million inhabitants, is one of the few stable countries in the troubled Horn of Africa region, has huge economic growth potential, but is also one of the poorest countries in the world that needs a lot support for capacity building.

Another reason for its inclusion could be Ethiopia's geographical importance. Being located in the Horn of Africa, the epicentre of the movement of people in and out of Africa, it is also a transit and destination country for mixed flows of refugees and migrants. At the same time, it is a source of migrants itself.

Against this background, the country's planned socio-economic integration of refugees is in line with the EU's goal of keeping refugees in first-asylum countries. In fact, this could be one of the factors that prompted the EU's support for the CRRF process.

It could also potentially enhance the country's negotiation power in the Horn of Africa region. The refugees who enjoy good hospitality would become Ethiopia's ambassadors once they eventually return home or find a new home elsewhere (CWP). Such communities of former refugees, some of whom could assume political power, could back Ethiopia's position in the region.

Implementation challenges

The implementation of the CRRF, especially the socio-economic integration aspect, may face various challenges, even if all the required international

30%

OF THE INDUSTRIAL
PARKS WORKERS WILL
BE REFUGEES

financial and technical support can be provided. The section below explains some of the expected challenges.

Creating jobs through industrial parks

The industrial parks might not substantially contribute to making refugees and host communities self-sufficient. Unless the modes of its operation are carefully defined, the industrial parks could face a number of problems.

The first is how to convince business owners to hire refugees and host community members. Even if the industrial parks were constructed with EU and DFID funding, they would be run by business entities. The businesses would probably rent out spaces, as happens currently with Ethiopia's industrial parks.⁵⁸

The second challenge is obtaining refugees and host community members who can deliver as per the expectations of business entities. Making a profit is a major goal of any business. To become profitable, delivering quality products is crucial. This could be challenging since most of the refugees have experienced 'lost time' due to interruptions in their careers, either because of conflict or encampment policies.

Most of the host community members are also located in the most underdeveloped regions of Ethiopia with limited opportunities for skills training, which hinders their ability to deliver quality products.

Wages are very low in Ethiopia, which might hinder the job-creation aspect of the CRRF

Under the Ethiopia's pledges, 70% of industrial park workers would have to be from host communities, while 30% should be refugees.

Setting the criteria for the 70% quota of the host community is the third challenge. Due to high unemployment levels in the country, the industrial parks could attract many Ethiopians. So who qualifies to be hired will be a big issue, especially since all the industrial parks will be constructed far from the refugee camp areas.

Similarly, the criteria for selecting 3.3% of refugees (30 000 out of 900 000) is also challenging. If wages and working conditions can be improved, the industrial

parks can attract lots of refugees. Planning should follow a comprehensive approach. Otherwise, creating job opportunities will remain only a 'very good wish'.

Low wages

Wages are very low in Ethiopia, which can be a stumbling block to the job-creation aspect of the CRRF. In industrial parks in Bole Lemi and Hawassa, for example, Ethiopian workers are paid 900 Birr (US\$32)⁵⁹ per month – an income that barely covers the workers' basic needs.

This has led to a high turnover of workers; in the first half of the 2017–18 financial year, more than half (7 840 of the 14 000 workers) in the Bole Lemi park left.⁶⁰ Demanding higher pay and favourable working conditions, workers in the same park went on strike in May 2018.⁶¹

Particularly for refugees, such low pay is not attractive as they receive more in the form of humanitarian aid, which includes basic services such as food, water and shelter while health and education services are free.

Sensitivities towards refugees' presence

In the Gambella and Somali regions, which host some of the camps that are expected to be considered for local integration, there are sensitivities towards refugees' presence – though at different levels.

Gambella

In Gambella, multiple layers of tension exist – involving the Anuak and Nuer ethnic groups, highlanders and lowlanders, and refugees and host communities. Land is a particularly serious issue, and affects the host community negatively because of the presence of refugees.⁶²

Environmental degradation including deforestation, destruction of wildlife, demographic pressure and historical tensions between the ethnic groups are some of the challenges that need to be addressed before integrating refugees.

Among the Anuak population, there is a 'siege mentality'⁶³ – a feeling of being undermined as a minority ethnic group⁶⁴ – against the Nuer because of the numerical imbalance, which many contribute to the inflow of ethnic Nuer refugees. As of 2017, the refugee population outnumbered⁶⁵ the host community in Gambella.

This threatens to disturb the demographic balance as the overwhelming majority of the refugees are ethnic Nuer, a

development that's not positively perceived by Anuaks. Since May 2017, the government and the UN Refugee Agency have been relocating newly arriving South Sudanese refugees to the neighbouring Benishangul-Gumuz region,⁶⁶ showing they see the challenge between the two entities.

Ethiopia's Somali regional state

There is a strong assumption that integration is eased when refugees and host communities are of the same ethnic background.⁶⁷ In the case of Somalis in the Horn of Africa region, however, clan dynamics play a major role, despite shared linguistic and religious identities. Understanding the clan dynamics that are at play regarding refugee and host community relations should be a key consideration in planning the socio-economic integration plan.

Understanding the clan dynamics regarding refugee and host community relations should be a key consideration

Lack of strong public outreach

Key informant interviews indicate that host community consultations have not yet been conducted at the expected level. Some host community representatives were invited to take part in national consultations and regional launches, and relevant messages were broadcast through the mass media (K1).

However, beyond event-related activities, serious and candid consultations need to be held with the relevant communities before the CRRF is rolled out.

Such outreach programmes should also target areas outside the refugee-hosting locations and extend to communities around the industrial parks. Inclusive consultations will help to detect and address potentially negative perceptions of refugees by host communities.

Lack of strong coordination mechanisms

The CRRF is multifaceted by nature, and requires strong coordination mechanisms between stakeholders at all levels: federal, regional and local. There are coordination challenges between the various stakeholders (K1; K2; CWP).

So far the Administration for Refugee & Returnee Affairs (ARRA) has been the driving force behind the framework process. However, ARRA was mandated, operating under the auspices of the National Intelligence and Security Service, to 'lead emergency refugee responses and manage refugees and returnees' affairs'.⁶⁸

Dealing with development issues and actors is a new experience for ARRA. It also hasn't had a lot of interaction with government ministries. The CRRF process needs a multifaceted coordination mechanism with multiple stakeholders to lead it. A national CRRF steering committee unit has been established to drive the process forward, which is a good move.

Conclusion and recommendations

The CRRF represents a major shift in the protection of refugees in Ethiopia. Not only will refugees' access to socio-economic opportunities be enhanced, but Ethiopians who have been generously hosting the large number of refugees for years will benefit as well.

The close interaction and shared benefits in terms of employment in industrial parks and better access to social services will reduce the likelihood of tensions between the two communities and promote peaceful co-existence.

The government benefits too, as major projects such as the industrial parks attract international financial support. It stands to benefit on the political and diplomatic fronts as well, as the drastic policy shift will be recognised by its neighbours and European partners.

But there are also many potential challenges that must be acknowledged by the government and its partners involved in the CRRF process. From ethnic and resource-related tensions to low-wage and capacity limitations, all need to be closely weighed and addressed.

The current political developments in the country, and the unwelcome trend of attacks based on people's differences, need to be considered seriously as some segments of society could exploit the refugee-host community distinction to meet local political ends.

Due to this and other challenges highlighted in the section above, the government of Ethiopia and concerned regional governments should consider the following points in the implementation stage of the CRRF.

Applying a conflict-sensitive approach

Ethiopia's socio-economic integration of refugees should follow a conflict-sensitive approach based on conflict analysis.⁶⁹ In the context of the CRRF, conflict analysis should aim to achieve the following three key aspects:

- A good understanding of the context in which the CRRF is being implemented.
- Understanding the existing factors (for example refugee-host community relations, gender and access to resources) that affect the implementation of the framework.
- A good knowledge of the CRRF's intentional or unintentional impact on existing tensions.

A deeper understanding of these three aspects will provide a clear picture on the two-way interaction between facilitation of refugees' socio-economic opportunities and the impact these have on host communities and local administrations. This will help to forecast the result of the intervention. It will also serve as a basis for devising a plan to maximise potential benefits while minimising potential damages.

Such an approach should apply to the implementation of all the pledges too – from local integration and facilitating work permits, to expanding the Out of Camp Policy and helping refugees find jobs. Lessons can be learnt from existing socio-economic integration schemes, where refugees and host communities share basic and social services such as schools and health centres.

Experiences from formal schemes such as the Melkadida joint irrigation programme should be taken into account. This involves refugees and host communities around refugee camps in the Dollo Ado area of Ethiopia's Somali Region.⁷⁰

To implement this, all stakeholders – including the ARRA, federal and regional governments, refugees, host community members, UN agencies, humanitarian and development actors, and the private sector – should be involved.

Need for strong public engagement

Implementation of the CRRF requires engagement of the host community members or public. Strong host community/public outreach programmes should be designed to explain the benefits of the framework,

for example in terms of creating job opportunities and access to better services.

In the case of the industrial parks, for example, host community consultations should be conducted with relevant stakeholders such as businesses and government. Eligibility criteria and a fair process should be designed to determine which members of host communities would be hired.

Before implementing the projects, the public needs to have a clear understanding of the link between the presence of refugees in a given location and the benefits that they bring with them. This includes the much-needed funding to implement the joint projects. That way the host communities will see refugees as contributors to the local economy rather than a burden only.

At the same time, the host community should understand that hosting refugees comes with responsibilities, such as sharing limited resources and compromising to accommodate differences.

Strong host community outreach programmes are needed to explain the benefits of the framework

In this respect, a group of community opinion leaders, including elders, could lead public discussions on the issues (K5). Considering the high number of youth both in the host and refugee communities, youth organisations could be part of the plan.

The ARRA, federal, regional, and local government structures should take the lead on this, with strong involvement of community leaders.

Provisions of start-up capitals

The industrial parks and irrigation schemes can only employ a limited number of refugees and host community members. Most refugees and host community members will have to start the journey to self-reliance through self-employing small businesses for which start-up capital is required. The provision of start-up capital and possibly start-up kits for those with technical and vocational training such as caterers, tailors, welders, electricians, carpenters and smith, should be considered.

Development partners including the World Bank, European Union, Department for International Development, donor countries and the private sector should support the government of Ethiopia in this respect.

Whole-of-government approach

To address the lack of a strong coordination mechanism between the different state entities, implementation of the CRRF should follow a whole-of-government approach.

This means all concerned government departments should include the CRRF among their key deliverables and establish close working links with the CRRF's steering committee.

The steering committee and the different government entities should sign memoranda of understanding, as a first step. This must be accompanied by an implementation roadmap.

The process must be continuously evaluated to enhance better management. Building the capacity of key actors to better understand the interrelated nature of the different pledges and the CRRF should be considered.

Federal, regional and local governments, as well as the CRRF steering committee and the ARRA, should take the lead in implementing this aspect.

Continued psychosocial support

Psychosocial support is part of the services offered to refugees in refugee camps in Ethiopia. Psychosocial support refers to programmes that aim to ensure the psychological well-being of mainly traumatised refugees. It includes the prevention as well as the treatment of mental disorders.

The key aim of psychosocial support is to enable refugees to achieve a mentality of 'moving forward', to make the most of their lives, minimising the psychological impact of past negative experiences.

This is important as the effects of conflict and conflict-related challenges are not only physical, but also psychological. The CRRF should consider continuing the psychosocial support programmes refugees had in the camps until that support is no longer needed.

Overall, this enhances refugees' readiness to adapt to the living conditions of the host society. Partners such as international and non-governmental organisations and civil society organisations should participate in implementing this.

Earning enough to live on

The job-creation component of the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework should be accompanied by a sound plan that enables refugees and host communities to earn a living in an acceptable manner. Earning enough to cover at least the basic necessities such as food, clothing, shelter and health-related expenses is critical.

Ethiopia needs to adopt a minimum wage policy that takes into consideration the increasing cost of living in the country. The framework can serve as a

Less
than 1%

OF REFUGEES IN
THE WORLD GET RESETTLED

catalyst for change, even for the general working public, as the country's economic growth is yet to be translated into improved living standards.

Strong and continuous capacity-building programmes for refugees and host communities should also be considered, to match their skills/capacities and employers' demands.

The federal and regional governments should take the lead in implementing this aspect.

Expanding third-country resettlement

Apart from meeting its refugee-protection obligations through for example facilitating their socio-economic integration, Ethiopia should push for third-country resettlement. The developed world should also increase their quotas for traditional third-country resettlement, and come up with innovative ways for legal pathways in the spirit of international solidarity and burden-sharing.⁷¹

Out of the over 928 000 refugees, 65 750 need resettlement in 2018. However, the target for 2018 is only 4 240, of which less than half have been processed to date.⁷² Overall, less than 1% of all refugees in the world enjoy opportunities for third-country resettlement.⁷³

This goes well with the spirit of both the CRRF and the Global Compact on Refugees. Both include the objective of expanding access to third-country solutions.

The CRRF should consider continuing the psychosocial support programmes refugees had in the camps until that support is no longer needed

Under this objective, the Global Compact on Refugees highlights options such as provision of humanitarian visas, humanitarian corridors and other humanitarian admission programmes; educational opportunities for refugees (including women and girls) through scholarships and student visas; and labour mobility opportunities for refugees through the identification of refugees with skills that are needed in third countries.⁷⁴

So far, not much has been achieved in this regard apart from encouraging beginnings on the part of some individuals and faith-based organisations. For example, an innovative Italian Humanitarian Corridor programme, officially launched in 2017, aims to relocate 500 refugees from Ethiopia to Italy by the end of 2018.⁷⁵

Canada also runs a privately sponsored refugees (PSRs) programme, where Canadian families have voluntarily sponsored refugees since the 1970s, in addition to the government sponsorships, which is referred as 'resettlement' in general.⁷⁶ The beneficiaries include refugees from the Horn of Africa.

This is a positive development and needs to be emulated by similar non-governmental organisations as well as governments.

65 750

NUMBER OF REFUGEES
NEEDING RESETTLEMENT
IN 2018

Notes

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