

Critical Gaps in Education and Health Services for Refugees in Ethiopia

Joint Note from UNHCR and RRS

28 March 2023

1. Background

Ethiopia is generously hosting close to 1 million refugees from neighboring countries, including the recent influx of refugees from Laascaanood to Ethiopia's Somali Region.

Education and health services for refugees in Ethiopia is primarily implemented by the Refugees and Returnee Service (RRS), with the support of UNHCR, INGOs and local partner organizations. UNHCR allocates an annual budget for RRS to implement education and health services, however, with the concerning funding situation for UNHCR globally, and specifically for Ethiopia¹, UNHCR and RRS are unable to provide the necessary education and health services for refugees for the most part of 2023. This has alarming implications on large parts of the refugee population, including more than 114,000 refugee children who will no longer be able to attend primary school, more than 15,000 who cannot finish their secondary education, as well as inability to access essential medicine and medical referrals. This note provides an overview of the health and education programmes in Ethiopia, as well as the immediate needs required to sustain access to education and health services in 2023. The schools and health centers in the refugee camps are far below the government standards in terms of the staffing and facilities required.

2. Scope of Refugee Health and Education Programmes in Ethiopia

2.1. Education

There is a total of 165 schools across refugee camps and sites in Ethiopia, as per the below breakdown:

- **Pre-primary:** 95 pre-schools with 49,282 refugee students and 652 refugee teachers/facilitators. Implemented by PLAN, Save the Children, DRC and IHS. In addition to funding provided by UNHCR, the NGO partners bring additional funding.
- **Primary:** 58 primary schools with 114,306 refugee students, taught by 688 national teachers and 1,479 refugee incentive teachers. 51 of the schools are run by RRS, while 7 are implemented by PLAN.
- **Secondary:** 13 schools with 15,202 refugee students, taught by 250 national teachers. Implemented by DICAC and fully funded through UNHCR.
- **Tertiary:** 4,530 refugee students are enrolled in tertiary education in Ethiopia, including 2,793 refugee students enrolled in 32 public universities and 1,737 students enrolled in public TVET institutions (under GIZ/QEP programme). Out of the 2,793 refugee students accessing university education, 1,762 do so under the Government scholarship programme, implemented by RRS, and 1,031 funded through the DAFI scholarship implemented by AEEG. The Government subsidizes up to 75% of the tuition fees for both scholarship programmes.

The allocated budget for education in 2023 is 51% less than the allocated budget in 2022.

¹ UNHCR Ethiopia remains one of the most underfunded operations globally. In 2022, UNHCR Ethiopia was funded by 185 million USD and has had a drastic decrease to 125 million USD in 2023.

2.2. Health

There is a total of 7 health posts and 21 health centers across all refugee camps in Ethiopia, with over 460 health staff and over 1,360 community outreach agents.

- 3 health posts are implemented by RRS and 4 are implemented by CUAMM.
- 20 health centers are implemented by RRS and 1 by MSF Holland.

Primary health care for refugees in Ethiopia is most implemented by RRS, which is fully funded by UNHCR, while partners fund the facilities run by them. Medicines and medical supplies for the refugee population are procured by UNHCR.

The allocated budget for health in 2023 is 53% less than the allocated budget in 2022.

3. Critical Gaps and their Implications on Refugees in Ethiopia

! More than 114,000 refugee children in primary education will be out of school from April to December 2023!

- **Closure of schools:** As per the current budget, salaries of 688 national teachers can only be paid up until June 2023, while payment for 1,479 refugee incentive teachers can only be paid up until March 2023. This means that primary schools will close, and 114,306 refugee children will not be able to access primary education for the rest of the year. Furthermore, the current budget has no provisions for procurement of Teaching and Learning Materials (TLM) in the current budget for RRS.
- **Heightened protection risks for refugee children:** With the closure of schools, these children will be exposed to several protection risks, including early child marriage, GBV, child labour and others.
- **Impact on daily school meals:** The closure of schools also means that the refugee children will not receive their daily meals at schools, which is expected to also have a significant impact on their attendance and performance.
- **Loss of livelihoods:** Not only will the closure of schools affect the refugee children, but it will also have a devastating impact on 688 national teachers and 1,479 refugee incentive workers, currently employed in the schools. With this high number of people losing their livelihoods, their families will also be greatly impacted. The impact on local administration by layoff staff may also cause challenges for partners to operate.
- **Increased secondary movement:** The refugee children will be exposed onward movement to third countries, as they and their parents as may not see a bright future due to closure of schools.
- **Impact on peaceful co-existence with the host community:** Refugee youth will remain idle in the camp who will be adopting negative coping mechanisms, impacting the peaceful co-existence with the host community.

! 15,202 refugee students in secondary education will not be able to continue their education in 2023!

- Although DICAC has been fully funded to cover secondary education for refugees for the academic year of 2023, this funding only covers salaries for the teachers. All other education teaching and learning materials are not funded.
- **Inability of refugee students to sit for their exams in 2023.** Approximately 3,000 refugee students may not be able to sit for their exam and receive their secondary school

leaving certificate (completion of grade 12) in October 2023, undertaken in public universities, due to lack of funding to cover the logistical costs.

! 1,700 refugee students enrolled at universities will not be able to continue their education in 2023!

- **No funding to secure allowances for refugee students:** There is no funds allocated to support allowances for refugee students enrolled in public universities under the Government subsidized scholarship programme managed by RRS. This means that these students will not be able to continue their education.

! Essential medicines cannot be provided for the close to 1 million refugees and host community from June to December 2023!

- **Increase in morbidity among refugee and host community population:** Due to lack of funding, UNHCR are only able to provide medicines or medical supplies until June 2023. This will result in inability to provide essential health care services from June – December 2023 and will have severe consequences for the refugees and members of the host community, including an expected increase in morbidity due to lack of essential medicine and supplies.

! The entire refugee population in Ethiopia cannot access medical referrals in 2023!

- **Increase in morbidity among refugees:** Inability to undertake medical referrals in 2023 will contribute to excess mortality, including an increase in maternal deaths.
- In 2022, over 5,800 refugees were referred for secondary and tertiary health care outside the camps, 45% (2,642) being emergency medical cases. In 2023, the available funding will cater for less than 1,000 medical referrals.

! Essential health services will not be available for the refugee population and host community in Ethiopia from April to December 2023!

- **Increase in disease outbreaks and acute malnutrition:** Most health activities are budgeted for only the first four months of the year, with incentive workers budgeted for the first three months of the year. As incentive workers (whom are mostly refugees) form the backbone of the community health system, this will affect key actions like disease outbreak prevention, early detection and response, and early detection and management of acute malnutrition.
- **Increase in morbidity among refugee and host community population:** High levels of morbidity for common diseases will exacerbate the already critical levels of undernutrition in the camp where already 1 in 2 children below the age of 5 are undernourished!

4. Funding needed to cover immediate needs

EDUCATION	
Description	Funding needed in 2023
National teacher salary from June to December 2023	2,000,000 USD
Refugee Incentive Workers from April to December 2023	540,000 USD
Learning and teaching materials	428,200 USD
Total	2,968,200 USD

HEALTH	
Description	Funding needed in 2023
Salary for Health staff	1,920,000 USD
Salary for Refugee Incentive Workers	567,000 USD
Medical Referrals	640,000 USD
Medicine and medical supplies	2,450,000 USD
Total	5,577,000 USD