



# ETHIOPIA

## Youth Factsheet

September 2016

### CONTEXT

- Ethiopia hosts 743,732 refugees, among which 49.8% are women and girls, while 57.1% are children. The refugee population is primarily from South Sudan, Somalia and Eritrea.
- Refugee youth aged between 15-24 represents 15.8% of the overall refugee population in Ethiopia.
- Amongst South Sudanese refugee population, youth represents 14%, while they represent 17% and 40% amongst Somali and Eritrean refugee populations respectively.

### YOUTH CONSULTATIONS

- A number of youth consultations were organised in various parts of the Ethiopia operation. Most recently, youth consultations were conducted in Gambella, Jijiga, Assosa, Addis Ababa and Melkadida.
- Youth were consulted on the main challenges they face, the impact of these challenges on them and they were encouraged to propose solutions. The summary of the outcomes from these consultations are highlighted as follows:

### MAIN CHALLENGES & ISSUES FACED BY YOUTH

- **Lack of employment opportunities:** Youth are not engaged in livelihood activities and consequently feel they are unable to support themselves and their families.
- **Insufficient number of vocational and life skills trainings:** Majority of youth from camps and urban areas do not have access to vocational and life skill training activities which leaves them with even more limited prospects.
- **Poor quality of education:** Lack of qualified teachers with only few training opportunities for teachers.
- **Access to secondary and tertiary education:** Access to secondary education is limited and only available in some of the camps. Only few scholarships are available for refugees to access higher education in Ethiopia.
- **Lack of recreational activities:** Lack of recreational activities, including cultural and sports tournaments in the camps.

## YOUTH:

The UN defines youth as the persons between the ages of 15-24

**15.8%** of the overall refugee population in Ethiopia

- **Female spaces:** Female youth requires more privacy and separate spaces to freely discuss sensitive issues affecting them. Such spaces rarely exist in camps and activities available for older children and young adults are predominantly used by male youth.
- **Challenges adapting to a new environment:** Youth often find it difficult to adapt to a new environment whilst coping with the loss of home, family members, and friends. Psychosocial support interventions however mostly target children and women at risk and youth have limited options to access services to address personal distress.
- **Dependence of refugee youth on humanitarian agencies:** Many youth feel that they lack sense of self-sufficiency to take steps to deal with and solve challenges.
- **Access to durable solutions:** few youth within their families or singles have access to resettlement and durable solutions.
- **Lack of prospects for returning to home countries:** Youth have lost hope in returning back to their home countries, and feel isolated from what is occurring in their countries.
- **Access to information:** Youth especially in the urban areas have limited means to obtain information regarding their rights and obligations.
- **Lack of social integration with the host community:** lack of activities that encourage and bring youth together from the host and refugee communities.
- **Lack of youth programming by humanitarian partners:** With most child protection partners focusing on younger children, youth are a population group often falling through the cracks. Youth programming is a major gap in most refugee camps in Ethiopia.



## THE IMPACT OF CHALLENGES ON YOUTH

Lack of opportunities, dependency and idleness have serious negative consequences on the youth:

- Many youth in refugee camps and urban areas adapt negative coping mechanisms such as substance abuse. Idle male youth are also more prone to engage in criminal activities and perpetrate SGBV.
- The engagement of youth in crimes and violence has become a major concern and security threat in some refugee camps. The formation of youth gangs, armed attacks within the camps and fights with the host community perpetuate violence and pose serious protection concerns to the entire refugee and host community population.
- The lack of prospects in the country of asylum and no access to durable solutions draws many youth to opt for risky secondary movement which exposes them to a variety of protection concerns including human trafficking.
- As youth see little opportunities to pursue their education / lack of scholarship opportunities or underachieving pre-entry university exam scores, they drop out of schools.

- Early marriages and unwanted pregnancies amongst girls are another consequence of lack of opportunities for girls, including secondary and tertiary education.
- The challenges of adapting to a new environment increases the pressure related to stress and frustration amongst youth.

## SUGGESTED SOLUTIONS BY YOUTH

- Advocating for access to employment for refugees, create job opportunities for youth and facilitate access to livelihood activities including micro finance projects.
- Increase opportunities for youth activities including of sport and cultural centres, creation of platforms (e.g. Youth Associations) for young people to be able to support each other, exchange and access relevant information.
- Establish libraries and computer centres to increase youth access to knowledge and information.
- Increase the role of youth by including them in the establishment and facilitation of outreach activities. This will also enable them to mentor fellow youths, children and the community on the many concerns and issues within the camp. This can also encourage youth to reinforce the peaceful coexistence messages and help in preventing criminal activities.
- Create more scholarships opportunities for youth both inside and outside Ethiopia.
- Expansion of the resettlement and family reunification schemes.



**UNHCR is grateful for the direct contributions to the UNHCR Ethiopia Operation so far in 2016 from:**

USA|IKEA Foundation |Japan | Canada| CERF |Germany| Educate A Child Programme-EAC| Denmark| France| Sweden |International Olympic Committee| Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation| Italy| Band Aid| Private Donors Australia| Private Donors Spain.

**Special thanks to the major donors of unrestricted and regional funds in 2016:**

Sweden | United States of America | Netherlands | Norway Australia | Denmark | Priv Donors Spain | Canada Switzerland | Germany

**Contacts:**

Ms. Rana Milhem, Community-Based Protection Officer, milhem@unhcr.org Tel: +251 116 612 822 (2415); Cell +251 911 255 645