

Teacher voices from Ethiopia



“ ‘Collaboration and coordination [on refugee education] were not very strong before, but have improved in the last two years due to both regional and international agreements.’
- Ministry of Education representative ”

Teacher qualifications



“ ‘A few incentive teachers (refugee teachers that are remunerated with an incentive payment) have teaching experience in Eritrea. They can be identified by written exams. Some have documents.’
- School leader, refugee school, Tigray ”



Classroom conditions

“ ‘There is high overcrowding in all classes, across the grades. There is extreme discomfort due to the hot weather.’
- School leader, refugee school, Gambella ”

“ ‘There is a dire need for more classrooms. The classroom: pupil ratio of 1:50 cannot be met: at the moment it is more like 1:90.’
- Norwegian Refugee Council, Tigray ”

Gender dimensions



“ ‘As much as possible we try to encourage females. But there are not many. If we get one or two we try to support them.’
- Agency for Refugee and Returnee Affairs (ARRA) regional officer, Tigray ”

“ ‘When it comes to having a teacher gender balance in primary schools in the refugee camps, it is non-existent. If you are lucky, you might have a maximum of 5 female teachers to 20–25 male teachers.’
-International Red Cross senior education adviser ”



Early grade teaching

“ ‘Principals are selecting the best teachers to teach Grade 1, because we believe the best classroom and the best teacher should be at the lower grade. Why? If we do well in the lower grades, the foundation is strong and we will be successful. So, as a policy, this is what we are trying, but in reality, we still have a lot to do.’
-Regional Education Bureau, Tigray ”



Teacher retention

“ ‘Teaching is more challenging than the other professions. When these teachers get an alternative option, they go for it. We do not prevent them from leaving.’
-ARRA, federal level ”

“ ‘Absenteeism among teachers is not much of a problem, but teacher retention is a challenge. At the end of this school year, 17 teachers quit. They have left the woreda (or district) for better paying jobs. Remote areas have the biggest turnover.’
- Woreda education officer (WEO), Benishangul-Gumuz ”



Teacher recruitment



“ ‘The school doesn't recruit teachers by itself because it has no mandate. The school informs the Agency for Refugee and Returnee Affairs in writing about vacant posts in the school. Only the highest scorers will be recruited by ARRA as employees, with a 6-month probation.’
-Refugee teacher, refugee school, Gambella ”

Teacher training



“ ‘In reality, training and supervision support is not given equally to government and refugee schools, because of budget, so the teachers in refugee schools need support and special training ... There needs to be professional training for the refugee teachers and also administration.’
-WEO, Tigray ”



Teacher pay

“ ‘We are not paying individuals, we are paying for skills and knowledge. Background doesn't matter; what matters is qualification. Equal pay for equal level of skills. I am not happy with current situation. That's why we lose many qualified teachers.’
- ARRA regional level, Benishangul-Gumuz ”

“ ‘The teaching workload of the incentive teachers is increasing from 15 to 18 lessons per week – just equal to that of the national teachers – while they are being paid very low incentives.’
- Deputy school leader, refugee school, Gambella ”

Teacher motivation



“ ‘Well, money may motivate some people, but to my knowledge, money is good, but professionalism is better. Unless the teacher has professionalism in his mind, I don't think that quality of education will be in place. Effective teacher management starts from the very beginning, with recruitment ... you have to have it from within. ... I have to say, “I will be a teacher”.’
-Tigray Regional Education Bureau representative ”