

Refugee and Internally Displaced Children's Education in the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) Region: Policy Framework, Implementation Status and Recommended Plan of Action

Belay Tefera¹, Abdinasir Ahmed², Kebede Tsegaye³ and Fathia Alwan⁴
abdulbaa1998@gmail.com

¹*School of Psychology, Addis Ababa University*

²*Institute of Educational Research, Addis Ababa University*

³*Coordinator, IGAD, Regional Program on Education, Science, Technology and Innovation*

⁴*Director of Health & Social Development Division of IGAD*

Abstract

The IGAD region is most haunted by political instabilities, armed conflicts, and natural disasters, causing internal displacement and cross-border migration of people. IGAD has been taking different measures in combating these problems, including the issuance of a framework (called “The Djibouti Declaration, DD”) to guide the education of children in displacement and refugee settings in the region. This paper then tried to review the implementation status of this framework since it entered into force in the last one year. It employed a qualitative desk review method of drawing data from IGA publications, the one-year DD implementation report of the respective seven member states and a conference proceeding report and minutes of the regional consultative meeting held to review the DD implementation. Findings suggested that the development of DD has in fact ushered a comprehensive educational guide and direction, catered for the educational needs of multitudes, and ensured inclusion of the most marginalized group in the IGAD region. Yet, the implementation of DD was severely limited by a host of technical, professional and resource constraints and, hence, access, quality, equity and relevance of education seemed compromised. Hence, more strategic approaches were suggested for use to improve the implement ability of DD in a more cost-effective manner.

Keywords: *Djibouti Declaration, emergency education, IGAD, Regional qualification framework, inclusion, resource mobilization, accreditation.*

Introduction

Study of the history of war indicates that armed conflict has existed throughout recorded human history; unfortunately taking increasing intensity, complexity and impact over time. Evidences indicate that in about five thousand years of civilized human history alone, more than five thousand large-scale inter-state wars took place (Sigh, 2005) that claimed the lives of millions. For example, during the 20th century alone, forty-four of every one thousand people died of direct and indirect war-related causes (Barber, 2009; Okrah, 2003). We are currently then in an era of ‘violent social order’ (Chandra, 2005) where violence, poverty and injustice reinforce one another ultimately perpetuating human suffering. The new millennium seems to continue to harbor political violence where an increasing number of people are subjected to massive killings and displacement (Barber, 2009; Boyden, 2009).

More worrisome, Africa as a continent has been most haunted by armed conflicts (Michailof et al.,2002), harboring the highest statistics in the world (Brock-Utne, 2001), nearly in all its member states (Mohamedbhai, 2003), strained over historical time (Tchombe, 2006), and deep rooted into the socio-

cultural fabrics of nations (Okrah, 2003). Eastern African (Michailof et al., 2002; NPI, 2008) and the IGAD region in particular is even the most volatile area composed of fragile states that are entangled with political instabilities (causing internal and cross-border conflicts) as well as natural disasters. As a result, estimates indicate that in 2020 alone, this Region has hosted about 14 million displaced people; of whom 4.2 million were refugees and around 9.6 million were internally displaced people (IDP) forcibly displaced from their villages due to ongoing armed conflicts, individual persecution or natural disasters (IGAD concept note, 2022). Above and beyond the death toll, targeting the way of life of ordinary people is the modus operandi of most modern war. A remarkable example could be the impact of civil war in South Sudan that compromised the effectiveness of traditional conflict resolution mechanisms; that failed in contributing towards the peace building process in the country (Belay, 2015). In the same way, education appears to be the most severely affected service during armed conflicts. Disruption of school facilities destroys the hopes and aspirations of young people that inhabit the land of the next generation. School closure pushes millions of students out of safety zones and exposes them to various social, cultural and economic hardships including early marriage, teenage pregnancies and sexual harassment particularly against girls and young women (IGAD Concept Note, 2022).

Education in Emergencies (EiE) is increasingly viewed as the “fourth pillar”, or a “central pillar”, of humanitarian response, alongside the pillars of nourishment, shelter and health services (NRC, Redd Barna & UNHCR, 1999; Sinclair, 2001; ICWAC, 2000). It is a critical need for children that has to be prioritized in emergency responses (Bensalah, 2002). Hence, EiE has been defined as an absolute right of children and enshrined in a number of global as well as regional instruments outlining these rights (Nicola, 2003; UNHCR and Save the Children, 2000;). These instruments emphasize that governments must be held accountable and do everything in their power to provide education, even in the midst of crisis. When governments cannot provide, responsibilities become those of the international community (Nicolai, 2003).

Beyond legal rights, EiE also helps to meet the various other (psychosocial, health, protection, and social) needs (Bensalah, 2002; Nicolai, 2003; Pigozzi, 1999; Sinclair, 2001;) that Bensalah (2002) expounds to include the following:

- (1) meet the psychosocial needs of children and adolescents affected by conflict or disasters that have disrupted their lives, studies and social networks.
- (2) serve as a tool for protecting children in emergencies.
- (3) provide a channel for conveying health and survival messages and for teaching new skills and values
- (4) facilitate social cohesion, and reduce further civil conflict, and
- (5) reconstruct the economic basis of family, local communities and national life, and
- (6) contribute for sustainable development and peace building.

Sinclair (2001) discusses that education in emergencies counts a lot on the healing process of the children. It is possible and psychologically beneficial to refugees and other crisis-affected children and adolescents to participate rapidly in community-based healing activities including elements of education and recreation, with subsequent systematization of these activities. Education provides opportunities for students, their families and communities to begin the trauma healing process, and to learn the skills and

values needed for a more peaceful future and better governance at local and national levels. These psychological benefits, together with learned knowledge, skills and values can contribute to peace-building and to social and economic development. Last but still crucial is the fact that there are a number of obvious long-term benefits to ensuring a quality education system for children affected by emergencies that include strengthening human resources, fostering new attitudes, and improving educational practices (Nicolai, 2003).

The term “Education in Emergencies” (EiE), generally including education for refugees, returnees and IDPs, refers to education in situations where children lack, due mainly to man-made crises or natural disasters, access to their national education systems with concerns ranging from a minimum of the first few months after a crisis, to a maximum of the years taken to restore normal education systems after a “complex humanitarian emergency” with the purpose to increasingly serve as shorthand for schooling and other organized studies, together with “normalizing” structured activities, arranged for and with children, young people and adults whose lives have been disrupted by conflict and major natural disasters (Sinclair, 2001).

Recognizing these and related other benefits of education in emergencies, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD)¹ has been working to support member states to enforce education to refugees, displaced persons and returnees. As an aid to facilitate the provision of quality education in the region, IGAD has launched a regional instrument called ‘The Djibouti Declaration’ in December 2021. Over the last three years, IGAD, member states and development partners had made considerable progress in translating the key commitments of the Djibouti Declaration into action. This paper then tries to document the development process of this policy initiative. Following this exercise, it then examines the implementation status of the Djibouti Declaration (DD) since it entered into force in the last few years capitalizing on implementation reports of the respective member states. This inquiry involves documenting activities done, achievements and lessons secured, and challenges observed. Finally, it attempts to draw implications for ensuring education for all and the sustainable development goals in refugee, IDP and host communities’ education.

Achieving these objectives bears a number of significances for advancing the education of children in displacement and refugee settings in the IGAD region. First and foremost, it would enable DD become evidence-based by generating relevant empirical data from its one-year implementation experience. Furthermore, it would help understanding the possible challenges that hinder the institutionalization, standardization and inclusion of refugee education in the national education systems of the IGAD member states. This would, then, shed light on the dark side by pointing fingers on the part of the DD that needs to be improved.

Methods

The *design of the study* makes allegiance to the qualitative strand, where DD implementation experiences, internal voices (of frustrations and aspirations), and coping mechanisms and hopes can be adequately explored. In fact, these voices were already articulated in performance reports, as well as discussions during experience sharing forums. *Data sources*: To achieve the objectives above, a range of methods

¹IGAD was established in 1986 to respond to natural and man-made disasters in the East African region by bringing together eight countries of the region (namely: Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan, the Sudan, and Uganda).

were then employed. First and foremost, international, regional and national documents were reviewed. More importantly, the following IGAD documents were used as important data sources:

- 1) *Djibouti Declaration signed on 14 December 2017 by Ministers in charge of Education*
- 2) *IGAD Concept Note for organizing the 3rd Conference of IGAD Ministers in Charge of Education, 2022.*
- 3) *From Djibouti to Djibouti: a document providing a bird's eye view of the implementation of DD, 2017-2021*
- 4) *IGAD-UNHCR Report on the state of inclusion of refugees into national education systems*
- 5) *A report on inclusion of Refugees in National Education Systems Mapping Exercise, 17th July 2018*
- 6) *The Addis Ababa Call for Action, 2018*
- 7) *IGAD's Regional Quality Education Standards and Inclusion into National Systems for refugee children, and*
- 8) *Mapping opportunities and challenges of post-secondary and vocational education for refugees in Djibouti, Ethiopia, and Kenya, 2018.*

The second sources were data borrowed from the following country specific reports of IGAD member states presented in the IGAD High-Level Regional Experts Meeting on the Implementation of the Djibouti Declaration on Education for Refugees, Returnees and Host Communities held from 6th to 9th December 2021, in Djibouti, Republic of Djibouti:

- *Ethiopia: Report and presentation on the status of implementation of the Djibouti Declaration (DD), Federal Democratic republic of Ethiopia*
- *Djibouti: Report and presentation on the status of implementation of the Djibouti Declaration and Costed National Response Plans of the Republic of Djibouti*
- *Kenya: Report and presentation on the status of implementation of the Djibouti Declaration and Costed National Response Plans of Kenya*
- *Uganda: Report and presentation on the implementation of the Djibouti Declaration of Uganda*
- *Somalia: Report and presentation on the implementation of the Djibouti Declaration of the Republic of Somalia*
- *South Sudan: Report and presentation on the implementation of the Djibouti Declaration of the Government of South Sudan*
- *Sudan: Report and presentation on the implementation of the Djibouti Declaration of the Republic of Sudan*

The third data sources were proceedings of these paper presentations, discussions and reflections. All the authors of these papers were attendees of this conference and, therefore, their personal memos, reflections and documentation were also used.

Data analysis: Relevant data were selected, organized and presented against the five core components of the DD framework. Under each core component, three foci were used to organize and analyze data: practices/ performances, strengths/ achievements and challenges/ opportunities. In fact, finally, the reporting was organized in a manner that the salient features capitalize, first and foremost, on development and implementation of DD, then, followed by, the achievements and challenges of the DD implementation. Finally, major conclusions are drawn and recommendations forwarded for IGAD and its partners in the members states (mainly the national ministries of education in the respective countries).

Results and Discussion

Implementation Status of the Djibouti Declaration

The Nairobi Declaration and Action Plan, adopted by the IGAD Heads of State and Governments in the summit held in March 2017, constituted three thematic areas of action (education, livelihoods, and health) on durable solutions to the situation of refugees and returnees. As an upshot of this Nairobi Summit, the Djibouti Declaration was then adopted in the first high-level ministerial and expert meeting in charge of education held six months later in December 2017 in Addis Ababa. This later declaration commits member states to take concrete measures to promote “Regional Quality Education Standards and Inclusion into National Systems for refugee children in line with CRRF, SDG4 and Agenda 2063 on Education.” It also urges the international community to take an increasing role in supporting the implementation of the Declaration within the framework of responsibility sharing. The Second conference of IGAD Ministers in charge of education was held in December 2018, in Addis Ababa to follow up on the implementation of the Djibouti Declaration, one year after. The third ministerial and high-level expert meeting was also held in December 2021 in Djibouti to review subsequent developments and give recommendations. This section highlights key activities, achievements, challenges, and opportunities during the last four years (From Djibouti to Djibouti, 2021).

To begin with, the first conference held in Djibouti, IGAD Ministers in charge of education adopted five key strategic interventions to constitute the Djibouti Declaration (From Djibouti to Djibouti, 2021):

Regional Education Quality Framework (RQF): establish regional minimum education standards and targets on access to and the delivery of quality education for pre-primary, primary, secondary, higher education, including TVET, and education for people with Special needs, refugees, returnees and host communities;

Inclusion of Refugee Education in National Education Systems: expresses the need to integrate education for refugees and returnees into national education sector plan by 2020; and enhance the capacity of IGAD/Member States for this purpose.

Regional Postsecondary Education and Skills Development for Refugees: This calls for local and international partners to provide sustained and increased support for...skills development, particularly in refugee-hosting areas (TVET) as well as create opportunities for higher education for refugees, returnees, and IDPs.

Accreditation and Certification of Education Programs: Recognize and validate the qualifications of refugees and returnees across all levels of education, as well as ratify and domesticate the AU Convention on Recognition of Studies, Certificates, Diplomas, Degrees and other academic qualifications in higher education.

Financing, Partnership and Monitoring: Urge International Financial Institutions (IFIs) and development partners to accelerate their investment in education in refugee host countries, as well as in countries to support the sustainable reintegration of refugees; and operationalize the IGAD regional coordination mechanisms particularly the Ministerial and Experts Committee in charge of Education, Science, Technology and Innovation (ESTI).

In the section that follows implementation of the Djibouti Declaration is discussed along these five key components.

1. The Regional Education Quality Framework (RQF)

A framework is a blueprint of strategic and procedural mechanisms that guide implementing a set of interrelated assignments as well as organizing relevant information for coordinating the performance of these assignments so that different stakeholders are able to do business in a comparable manner. A qualifications framework in particular is a formalized structure in which learning level descriptors and qualifications are used in order to understand learning outcomes (UNESCO-UNEVOC, n.d). It is meant to assist in the development, assessment and improvement of quality education in a number of contexts (Keevy, 2015) so that in the end performances, competencies and skills are judged in a similar way across these various contexts. These qualifications frameworks can be framed at international, regional (e.g. Africa), sub-regional (e.g. East Africa) and/ or national (e.g. Ethiopia) level/s.

With respect to African experience, the first regional qualifications framework (RQF) is the East African Qualifications Framework for Higher Education (EAQFHE). There was a felt need for developing a regional framework for all the levels and including, more importantly, the education of refugee, returnees and displaced children and youth in the IGAD region in particular where the problem appears more pronounced. Given its strategic position, IGAD took the initiative to develop a more regionally relevant and holistic education qualification framework that came to be known as “the Djibouti Declaration and Plan of Action on education for refugees, returnees and host communities”, The Declaration was adopted by the IGAD ministers in charge of education at the first high level regional conference held in Djibouti, 12- 14 December 2017. The Conference was attended by Ministers and experts in charge of education from all IGAD Member States: Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, and Uganda, as well as high-level delegations from different partner agencies and civil society organizations based in Africa, Europe and North America. Among others, the Ministers expressed strong commitment to provide access to quality education for refugees and solemnly declared in this first meeting that there is a need, regarding the Regional Education Quality Standards (*Signed Djibouti Declaration, 2017*) to:

- *establish regional minimum education standards and targets on access and delivery of quality education for pre-primary, primary, secondary, higher education, including TVET, and education for people with special needs to benefit refugees, returnees, and host communities in order to maximize learning outcomes;*
- *adopt national education standards and include refugees in national systems to benefit from established standards within IGAD member states; and*
- *task the IGAD Secretariat to work with Member States to coordinate and guide the implementation, monitoring, and follow-up of the established minimum standards for refugees, returnees, and host communities.*

Immediately following the adoption of the Djibouti Declaration and the above deliberations, IGAD, in partnership with UNESCO, has worked on the RQF. They developed terms of reference for a consultant to conduct a mapping study of the existing national qualifications regimes/mechanisms and the consultant came up with the findings of the status of NQF from four countries ²and the East African RQF³.

²Due to time and resources constraints, the study did not cover Djibouti, Somalia and Sudan.

³The summary of the findings were presented at the 'IGAD-UNESCO-GIZ Consultative Workshop on the IGAD Regional Qualifications Framework (RQF)' on 19 November 2019, held in Nairobi, Kenya to discuss the draft report on the assessment of national qualification frameworks in IGAD member states with the objective of developing a comprehensive Regional Education Qualification Framework(RQF). The workshop was attended by two experts from each member state, namely, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, South

- i) *Ethiopia: That the Ethiopian NQF was ongoing and was being developed. Its main focus was to provide for credit accumulation and credit transfer as well as allow for credit accumulation and transfer horizontally and vertically. The short coming of the Ethiopian NQF was that it did not address refugee issues.*
- ii) *Kenya: The Kenya NQF was the most comprehensive as it covered all the subsectors of the education system in the country. It has a well-established governance structure headed by the Kenya Qualifications Framework Authority (KQFA). It supports the implementation of the new Competency Based Curriculum (CBC). The only shortcoming of the Kenya NQF was that it did not address refugee issues.*
- iii) *South Sudan: That South Sudan had no NQF for any of its education subsectors. They planned to adopt the East African Qualifications Framework for Higher Education (EAQFHE) framework. Like Kenya it does not address refugee issues.*
- iv) *Uganda: Uganda has NQF only for higher education and was in the process of developing the NQF for the other subsectors. However, the Uganda NQF does not address refugee issues as well.*
- v) *The East Africa Qualifications Higher Education Framework (EAQFHE). The EAQFHE was developed by the Inter University Council (IUC) for East Africa HE institutions and especially the universities through a very highly consultative process. The resultant effect is the current free movement of higher education learners in East Africa. The EAQFHE does not also address refugee issues⁴*

Based on the recommendations of this study and of the Workshop conducted to review the report, another consultant was hired by UNESCO to develop a Roadmap for IGAD RQF. The Second Consultant worked on the development of the Roadmap and came up, among others, with a series of recommendations in relation to the steps to be taken in developing a framework including the need to establish (Roadmap, 2020)⁵: a coordinating committee to oversee the design and development process; the principles that guide the design and implementation of the framework; an overall design for the framework including its anticipated use; responsibilities to member states or groups of member states; a technical unit to operate across the region in order to support; and an advisory structure for overall governance.

This consultative process was adopted by the Addis Ababa Call for Action of the IGAD ministers in charge of education for the implementation of the Djibouti Declaration on education for refugees, returnees and host communities; though the implementation of this roadmap was delayed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. A very rough draft of the RQF⁶ was presented at the Second Conference of the IGAD Ministers in charge of education by IGAD and UNESCO and the Ministers welcomed the initiative to develop the RQF and called for a “clear roadmap that results in the agreement and delivery

Sudan, Sudan and Uganda. Partner agencies in attendance included GIZ, UNHCR, UNICEF, Windle International, ICUEA (Inter-University Council of East African Community).

⁴*The report was presented in a joint IGAD-UNESCO consultative workshop held on the 19th of November 2019 in Nairobi, Kenya, to discuss the draft report on the assessment of national qualification frameworks in IGAD member states with the objective of developing a comprehensive Regional Education Qualification Framework (RQF). This consultative process was adopted by the Addis Ababa Call for Action of the IGAD Ministers in charge of education for the implementation of the Djibouti Declaration on education for refugees, returnees and host communities. The workshop was attended by two experts from each member state, namely, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan and Uganda. Partner agencies in attendance included GIZ, UNHCR, UNICEF, Windle International, ICUEA (Inter-University Council of East African Community).*

⁵*Roadmap for the IGADRQF developed by the Second Consultant in 2020.*

⁶*The draft contained the broad spectrum of qualifications, levels of descriptors and areas of focus for added value of the regional framework*

of functional Regional Qualifications Mechanism”⁷. They also requested that “particular attention be given in the short-term to tackle the immediate challenges faced by refugees and returnees specifically the recognition of prior learning and the inability to access schools or being taken as teachers because of the fact that their qualifications are not recognized”⁸

The revised RQF document was then presented in the 3rd Conference to follow up the implementation of Djibouti Declaration where the IGAD Ministers recognized and acknowledged the development of the road map, task IGAD Secretariat to finalize and table the RQF at the upcoming Ministerial Meeting scheduled for December 2022. They also made the following additional deliberations such as tasking the IGAD Secretariat to develop the standards and guidelines to support the implementation of IGAD RQF in collaboration with the relevant development partners; requested Taskforce Members of Djibouti Declaration and other partners to build the capacity of IGAD Secretariat and Member States for the development and operationalization of the National Qualification Frameworks (NQF); call for IGAD Secretariat to facilitate capacity building through training and knowledge/experience sharing among Member States towards the implementation of the Regional Qualifications Framework; and appoint national focal points from each Member State for the IGAD RQF governance structure.

2. Inclusion of Refugee Education in the National Education Systems

There has been a good practice in IGAD Member states of having an open policy for refugees as well as providing some kind of access to national education system long before the launching of the DD. Moreover, this hasn’t been out of a mere humanitarian concern but rather out of a desire to subscribe to some kind of legislative instruments directly articulating the provision of education for refugees, returnees and IDPs; though in limited sense. Hence, adoption of the DD is a renewed commitment rather than a new initiative to integrate the education of refugees, returnees and IDPs into National Education Sector Plans. New initiatives were in fact taken to expand services, give legislative framework to these services, and expand the services to address the needs of the greater majority of school-aged children.

In fact, inclusion needs to be a top priority because emergencies can cause large-scale displacement and uprooting of children over long periods of time from opportunities of socialization and growth pathways of normative development. In recognition of this critical need, the IGAD member states agreed, through adopting the Djibouti Declaration, to “Integrate education for refugees and returnees into National Education Sector Plans by 2020” (Djibouti Declaration, 2017)⁹. They committed themselves to “achieve inclusive and equitable access for refugees and returnees to quality higher education in line with national targets of host communities and countries of origin”¹⁰. They also solemnly declared in their first meeting to accomplish the following tasks (Djibouti Declaration, 2017):

- i) *Ensure the protection of refugees in national education systems particularly refugee and returnee children and their psycho-social well-being.*
- ii) *Respond to the distinct learning needs of refugee and returnee boys and girls and ensure they have equitable and inclusive access to education.*
- iii) *Exchange good practices and expertise in the inclusion of refugee and returnee teachers in national education systems.*

⁷Paragraph 18 of the Addis Ababa Call for Action, 2018.

⁸Paragraph 19, Ibid

⁹Djibouti Declaration, December 2017 (Para 24).

¹⁰Ibid.

- iv) *Simplify the mechanism for refugee children to access quality education and facilitate their rapid entry into the national education system.*
- v) *Enhance the capacity of IGAD Member States to integrate education for refugee and returnees into national education systems*

Since then, member states have made commendable progress in providing inclusive education including development of national legislative frameworks, provision of inclusive services to children, and documenting enrollment figures.

Legal and Policy framework

IGAD member states are on different levels of developing legal and policy frameworks that govern the education of refugees, returnees and IDPs in their territories (Inclusion of refugees, 2018). Nearly all member states had some kind of national provisions for the education of IDP and refugee children with in their territories dated earlier than or after the issuance of the DD, While some had even legislated it earlier (Djibutii, Uganda) or immediately after (Ethiopia, Kenya) the DD, nearly all were in the process of developing some kind of policy or operational guides, strategies to implement it. With respect to legislative provisions, we, can, for example, note the following:

- *Ugandan 2006 Refugee Act and Education Act of 2008 specify that refugees have the right to the same treatment as nationals with respect to elementary education and religious education. Uganda Higher education qualification framework is already in place (2016).*
- *Djibouti passed legislation in December 2017 to grant refugees access to the national education system; announced a decree creating graduation certificates for refugees in 2020.*
- *Ethiopia has ratified a new Refugees Proclamation No. 1110/2019 Art. 24 that recognizes refugees and asylum seekers to receive the same treatment as accorded to Ethiopian nationals with respect to access to education at all levels*
- *The Kenyan Refugee Act 2021 also promises similar provisions*

This being the legislative case, elaborate operational tools is, however, of a more common practice nearly in all.

- *Djibouti (Ministry of Education) and UNHCR signed MoU for the gradual inclusion of refugees in the national education system and the Ministry translated its French curriculum into English for Somali refugees in order to provide access to education accredited by the government of Djibouti.*
- *Ethiopia's Ministry of Education (MoE) signed MoU with Refugee and Returnee Service (RRS) to set out core areas of cooperation and responsibilities, conducted training of 105 refugee teachers and developed a National Comprehensive Refugee Response Strategy (2018- 2027) document*
- *Kenya was developing various documents (frameworks policy and strategy) to guide holistic refugee support, recognition of prior learning, accelerated education, inclusion of refugee and asylum seekers into national education systems together with the costed plan*
- *Uganda's Higher Education Qualification Framework has been serving since 2016 as a basis for establishing comparability of qualifications obtained in Uganda with those obtained elsewhere and vice-versa among others.*
- *Sudan developed its National Education Sector Strategic Plan (2018 – 2022) document (that also includes the refugee case) as well as the Costed Action Plan 2020/21 - 2022/23 for refugees and IDPs as a part of its national educational strategy.*

- *South Sudan's National General Education Policy 2017 -2027 was made to incorporate a statement on mainstreaming refugees in the national education systems, and more elaborate policy and qualification framework was developed and launched to facilitate skills development for refugees and other population groups*
- *The Regional Governments of Somaliland and Puntland have also developed their own education sector strategic plans; refugees being granted access to public education through the existing education strategic plans.*

As it can be noted from the above reports, it is commendable that the attention given to these marginalized groups is being pronounced in all member states within the limits of their capacities. In fact, there were differences not only in the level of engagements but also type of provisions issued to support the refugee and IDP children. Obviously, more explicit and technical support from IGAD would ensure more uniformity and standardization in the kinds of legislative provisions and operational tools that each member state is supposed to put in place. IGAD's role still becomes critical in organizing training opportunities to the task force mandated to develop national legislative and operational tool in each member state is still critically important.

Inclusive Actions of Refugees into National Education Systems

IGAD and UNHCR have been tracking the efforts of member states in fulfilling their commitments at national, regional and international levels in particular those related to the Djibouti Declaration (DD) and related other documents. The 2020 joint IGAD-UNHCR Report highlighted the following achievements in the implementation of the inclusion agenda (From Djibouti to Djibouti, 2021, IGAD-UNHCR Report¹¹, Inclusion of Refugees¹²) in nearly all IGAD member states. First and foremost, refugee children are being enrolled in public schools and learn side by side with the nationals, were integrated in the national education and response plan, their enrollment stat of students incorporated in the National Education Management Information System (NEMIS). However, there are differences in the grade levels integration was made. For example, in Djibouti grade 1 to Grade 7 students are all included in the national curriculum and can access the school of their choice. In Ethiopia, all refugees have access to schools delivering the national curricula and examinations, Refugees can access secondary education in Ethiopia through placement examinations and enroll in higher education through both government and private scholarship opportunities. The first integrated TVET College (refugees and hosts) in Addis Ababa is functioning; TVET centers in refugee camps (Somali Region) are now established and accredited. Additionally, the quality aspects and availability of adequate learning space were, as expected, critically challenging due to the high influx of refugees.

A multi-year costed implementation plan was also being put to use in all of them showing better commitments in translating the DD. Furthermore, donor mapping of education for refugees were made by the Ministries of Education with the support of UNHCR and the World Bank.

Refugee Data Inclusion in the National EMIS

While IGAD Member States were all successful in initiating inclusion of refugee children in their national education system, they are, however, at different levels in the inclusion of refugee data into the national EMIS. Member States also differ in the commencement of this practice. For example, Ethiopia has

¹¹IGAD-UNHCR Report on the state of inclusion of refugees into national education systems.

¹²Inclusion of Refugees in National Education Systems Mapping Exercise – Report Findings, 17th July 2018.

already managed to integrate the refugee education data in the Education Statistics Annual Abstract beginning from 2016/17 academic year. Obviously, this is an important step towards ensuring national inclusion. As regards enrolments figures, the data in Table 1 shows that, though incomplete in many ways, the figure in 2021 is between 39% in Djibouti to 65% in Kenya (49% in Somali, Ethiopia 52%). It can also be noted that primary education enrolment appears better and at par with host community while secondary and tertiary access is limited; subject to availability of resources suggesting that there is a serious need for intervention so that education may not be truncated quite early in the system.

Table 1: School-age and school-going children in refugee settings

IGAD Member states	School-age children	Preprimary	Primary	Middle	Secondary	Total
Djibouti	12,046	379	2608	1280	284	4741 (39%)
Ethiopia	380,565	47,611	100,659		12,638	160,908 (52%)
Kenya	216,718					140867 (65%)
Somalia	69,792					33898 (49%)
South Sudan						
Sudan			71,331		4169	
Uganda	969,856					

Sources: Presentation of country-specific reports of IGAD member state delegates in a meeting held in December in Djibouti.

Hence, whilst access to schooling for refugee children may be improving, it is yet well below the national average (of, for example, 109 percent in Ethiopia for 2019); a more than 9 percent GER deficit in secondary school, compared to 39 percent as a national average. Hence, the system is with a large amount of refugee children remaining out of school, particularly at the secondary level, low gender parity, and high attrition rate (World Bank Group, 2019).

While all refugee schools in camp settings¹³use same national curriculum, follow the national standards set by the Ministry of Education, use children's mother tongue for lower primary (and transition to English for upper primary and secondary) children, and lower refugee primary schools are usually staffed by refugee incentive teachers who know the children and their culture, evidences indicate that the minimum standards of quality education are barely met (World Bank Group, 2019). In-camp refugee children were found to learn in contexts that are frequently poor, with overcrowded classrooms, low teacher to pupil ratios, few professionally qualified teachers and poor infrastructure as it can also be seen with sample schools in Figure 1.

¹³Note that refugee children attend a mixture of refugee- and host community schools. Refugee children living in camp who enroll in primary school almost all attend refugee primary schools run by the Agency for Refugee and Returnee Affairs (ARRA). Out of camp, there are no such schools and refugee children go to host community primary schools. At secondary level, however, there are far fewer refugee children enrolled and fewer refugee specific schools, creating a more mixed picture (World bank group, 2019)..



Figure 1: Learning classrooms, students and teachers in refugee schools in South Sudan (left side at the top) and Sudan

Source: Presentation of country specific reports of IGAD member state delegates in a meeting held in December in Djibouti

Other studies have also underscored several barriers limiting in-camp refugee school children's learning that include lower teacher quality particularly at lower primary schools, lack of school resources and facilities, and parental financial constraints causing either school dropout or not even enrolling in the first place (e.g. World Bank Group, 2019). In a case study in Ethiopia, for example, teachers were not meeting minimum qualifications mainly at lower primary schools, there were poor school facilities (lack of toilets and water supplies, limited size and provision of the school library, and laboratory), lack of school support (books and supplies, uniforms, school feeding and hunger), language problems and large class sizes, and financial constraints of parents restricting them from sending their children to school or that the children were wage earning instead thus causing drop out and failure to enroll in schools (World Bank Group, 2019).

The quality of education for refugee children who join host community schools may still be severely compromised as the regular community schools in the IGAD region are already fragile; suggesting that including refugee children may be like adding insult to the existing sickness in the schools that already suffer from large class size, limited school facilities, and untrained teachers (Belay & Belay, 2020). Arnold and colleagues elegantly explained what a typical classroom looks like in East Africa as follows:

In East Africa, a Grade 1 teacher often has 100 children enrolled in her class in the first months of school. The vast majority have not attended preschool before enrolling in primary school. Textbooks – especially in the first weeks or months – may not yet have arrived in the rural schools. The ages of the students range from 4 to 9+ years. The teacher – who is often paid less and treated as lower status than those teaching higher grades – is unlikely to have

had specialized teacher training to help her organize, manage and teach the diverse group of students in her class. There may be at most a chalk board and chalk. Some children may not speak the language used for daily instruction. The teacher may well come from another part of the country and may or may not speak the children's home language (cited in Belay & Belay, 2020, p.207).

Inclusion of refugee and IDP children in regular schools is most welcome, but the critical concern is inclusion has any benefit in a classroom context that is already underserved.

3. Post-secondary Education (Higher Education) and Skills Training (TVET)

One of the major principles of emergency education is that education should support durable solutions for the refugees. An education response is durable to the extent that it provides valuable knowledge and skills for individuals to take with them through life, regardless of where they find themselves (Sinclair, 2001). Recognizing the role skills and competencies play in bringing durable solutions to the refugee and displacement problems, the IGAD Ministers of Education took the initiative in their first meeting to urge local and international partners to provide sustained and increased support for infrastructure and capacity building for skills development, particularly in refugee-hosting areas as well try to match skills training to job opportunities in the IGAD region in order to enable access to secure livelihoods, self-reliance and dignified work for refugees as provided for in the 1951 Refugee Convention and. They also tasked IGAD through the Djibouti Declaration to develop a regional TVET Strategy. These important commitments have helped ensuring political and policy support for a regional initiative towards implementing the IGAD Regional TVET Strategy.

Following the adoption of DD and mandating responsibilities to IGAD and its partner

German Development Agency (GIZ), the skills development initiative was launched in the region with the result that the assignment to developing the TVET strategy was done within a year and was then adopted in the Second Conference of IGAD ministers in charge of education held in Addis Ababa (Addis Ababa, 2018)¹⁴. By way of endorsing the Strategy, Ministers urged IGAD "...to support policy and programs coherence across TVET quality, norms and standards as stated in the Djibouti Declaration"¹⁵. The ministers further "*Emphasized the importance of mutual recognition and accreditation of qualifications issued by the TVET institutions (From Djibouti to Djibouti, 2021).*

With the adoption of the TVET strategy, a pilot program of the IGAD Teacher Training Program (ITTP) was initiated in 2019, crystallized in 2020 and launched in August 2021 in Ethiopia, Sudan and Uganda. This program was developed after a thorough needs assessment, national consultations, as well as development of training module that is believed to serve as a model for future regional teacher training programs. Then, teachers (one each) were trained from the three member states. IGAD is planning to scale-up this project in collaboration with GIZ¹⁶.

The IGAD ministers of education have appreciated these experiences in the 3rd Conference on Implementation of Djibouti Declaration and committed to promote the initiative of IGAD and Government of Germany through GIZ for the IGAD Teacher Training Program to enhance quality,

¹⁴ See the Addis Ababa Call for Action, Para 21-27.

¹⁵ Ibid

¹⁶ Details of the process, lessons, opportunities, etc., were presented during the 3rd Conference of IGAD ministers in charge of education, 6-9 December 2021.

inclusivity and accessibility of education for refugees, returnees, IDPs and host communities and also (*Inclusion of Refugees, 2018*) took note of the successful completion of the pilot phase of the IGAD Teacher Training initiative; and request IGAD to compile and share lessons from the training process and scale up the training to all IGAD Member States; requested the IGAD Secretariat and partners to explore further areas of skills development for refugees, returnees, IDPs and host communities with particular focus on female teachers, in line with the Djibouti Declaration as well as the IGAD Regional Strategy for TVET; and committed to simplify the process of certification and recognition of the qualification of refugee teachers;

With respect to access, quality and certification of TVET in the IGAD region, the Ugandan specific experience seems interesting and may send lessons to others. In Uganda, skills development opportunities have been provided within the refugee settlements through a non-formal approach conducted by local artisans. The skills training offered are concluded by national assessment by the Directorate of Industrial Training. Trainees are awarded Certificates. Skills development requires extended time duration, but majority trainees prefer the short modular training. Those who succeed in the short modular training programs are enticed to take up extended training in under the formal system. Most popular trades include (see also Figure 2): leather works and goods production, motorcycle mechanics, tailoring and garment cutting, bakery, agriculture, beads production and artistry, brick laying, metal fabrication, and hair dressing



Figure 2: Refugees engagements in various vocational activities in Uganda (Source: Report on DD implementation in Uganda presented on the high level expert meeting in Djibouti in December 2021).

In Ethiopia, too, there was an initiative of an “Integrated Employment Promotion Programme” (IEPP) that benefited 150 graduates and this commendable exercise needs to be sustained in different forms. In a nut shell, the major activity millstones achieved were the development of the regional TVET Strategy and IGAD plans for scale-up in collaboration with GIZ and others. Furthermore post-secondary and vocational programs and opportunities have expanded over the recent years, but they remain ad hoc. Reports from IGAD member states usher critical concerns with respect to TVET for refugees. Of prime concern is that vocational training programmes are largely designed and implemented by humanitarian organizations and funded by donor governments. These interventions are often of small-scale, embedded

in short-term and non-holistic strategies and not linked to labour market needs. In addition, when governments are not involved in the design of the curricula, skill validation and certificate recognition remains a challenge in the IGAD countries. Problem of attitude among trainees and host communities was also mentioned as a serious challenge (*Postsecondary and Vocational Education for Refugees, 2018*).

With respect to university education, initiatives were appreciated but there were very minimal efforts thus far. The IGAD ministers of education have reviewed the implementation of the Djibouti Declaration on Education for Refugee, Returnees, and Host Communities in the 3rd Sub-Regional Conference held in Addis Ababa ministerial meeting on March 2022 on IGAD Scholarships for Refugees, Returnees, IDPs and Host Communities. The Ministers appreciated universities that are providing scholarship opportunities to refugee, returnee, IDPs and host community students in the IGAD region and called upon more universities and higher institutions of learning in the member countries to allocate/increase scholarship opportunities; and they also requested IGAD Secretariat to develop and implement a coherent scholarship plan and put in place effective coordination mechanism for this initiative. They also urged partners to support the IGAD initiative on scholarships as a mechanism for ensuring inclusive access to tertiary/higher education. But, the refugee student support service in higher education seem to be in its infancy as students were reportedly exposed to a wide range of obstacles (Yonal, 2018). For example, in a case study of higher education challenges of refugee students in a university setting in Ethiopia, Yonas (2018) provides an anecdote of the journey of refugees students from refugee camp to higher education institutions and documents several challenges encountered in the process that include the limited access to higher education, absence of documentation and lack of information as entry barriers to higher education, learning experience that embody linguistic, cultural, academic, and financial challenges, discrimination and isolation from host students, unfamiliarity with pedagogical related activities, and financial challenges.

4. Accreditation and Certification of Education Programs

According to the Djibouti Declaration signed on 14 December 2017 by Ministers in charge of Education in the IGAD Member States on "Regional Quality Education Standards and Inclusion into National Systems for refugee children", accreditation is a formal, independent and external process of verifying, attesting, and recognizing the extent to which a program or institution adheres to a set of standards of performance or hold a certain status, meets established quality standards and is competent to carry out specific conformity or adherence assessment tasks. Adherence or conformity assessment tasks may include, but not limited to, testing, inspection, and, ultimately, certification. Typically, accreditation is held by education institutions or organizations. Such accreditation exercise is an essential professional practice having numerous benefits in ensuring public safety and welfare as well as some anticipated long-term impacts like quality of general education. It ensures accountability and seriousness of concerned institutions in discharging responsibilities, improves credibility of these institutions and helps them reap benefit in the long-term, builds confidence to external regulators and customers, can lead to more business or more engagement, gives confidence to customers or service users in the standards and abilities to comply with regulations and laws etc. (*Djibouti Declaration, 2017*).

This being the benefit, identifying the right accreditation, assurance or association body particularly in education and yet at regional level is one of the most challenging exercises. Having realized the importance of regional accreditation and certification of education particularly for refugees, returnees and displaced persons, the Djibouti Declaration was developed, among others, to, first and foremost, recognize and validate the qualifications of refugees and returnees across all levels of education, and, on the other hand, to call upon all IGAD Member States to ratify and domesticate the Convention

on Recognition of Studies, Certificates, Diplomas, Degrees and Other Academic Qualifications as a basis for the recognition of refugee and returnee qualifications.

Accreditation and certification of education at IGAD level is already developed for the teacher training program. With respect to country specific practices, member states have district and national level examinations to certify completion of education at various levels. Information on issues of accreditation was obtained only on few countries. For example, in Uganda there is an existing mechanism by the Republic of Uganda to equate and certify academic documents. At lower levels, this is mandated to the Uganda National Examinations Board (UNEB) /Uganda Business Technical Examinations Board (UBTEB) and Directorate of Industrial Training (DIT). At tertiary level, it is managed by the National Council for Higher Education (NCHE). In Ethiopia, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed between the Ministry of Education (MoE) and Refugee and Returnee Service (RRS) where in MoE is committed to provide to refugees regional and national examinations; accreditation of the qualifications of refugee teachers; and training of refugee teachers. In Djibouti, the Decree No. 2020-234/PR/MENFOP created and defined the conditions for accessing and issuing the secondary school leaving certificate entitled "Certificate of High-School Graduation". Several such measures of accreditation mechanisms and agencies exist in the remaining other member states as well.

5. Resource Mobilization, Partnership and Monitoring

The IGAD ministers in charge of education at the first high level regional conference held in Djibouti in December 2017 expressed strong commitment to provide access to quality education for refugees and solemnly declared in this first meeting Financing, partnerships and Monitoring in Support of Refugee Education (Djibouti Declaration, 2017) that there is a need, to commit to developing costed, long-term refugee education response strategies, as part of national education sector plans based on a comprehensive mapping of current and emerging resources and call upon humanitarian and development partners to support this process. The ministers urge International Financial Institutions (IFIs) and bilateral, regional and international partners, in the spirit of responsibility sharing, to increase multi-year, predictable and sustainable support to IGAD and its Member States to ensure refugee and host community children and youth have greater access to and quality of education; also ensure that this support is transparent and aligned with national education sector plans;

The Djibouti Declaration calls upon IFIs and international partners to accelerate their investment in the education sector in countries of origin to help support the voluntary return and sustainable reintegration of returnees and IDPs in-line with the National Development Plan. Similarly, the DD calls to strengthen the capacity of the IGAD secretariat to coordinate and monitor the commitments of Member States towards quality education and learning for refugees, returnees and host communities. This includes the establishment of the regular platform of the Ministerial Committee on Education, Science, Technology and Innovation (ESTI); The Declaration underscored the importance to enhance the capacity of Member States to implement commitments to quality Education and learning for refugees, returnees and host communities. Finally, it was deemed essential to align financing from member states and partners to strengthen national systems and plans with a focus on the delivery of quality education and learning outcomes for refugees, returnees and host communities.

With respect to the funding mechanisms supporting education for both refugees and host community, it is worth noting that long-term funding partners already exist in IGAD Member States that can be coordinated to fund inclusion of refugees in national systems (Inclusion of Refugees, 2018). While country differences may exist in funding experiences, some of the most commonly cited funding agencies in the IGAD member states in the last years with respect to education of children in refugee and IDP

communities include UN Agencies (UNHCR, World Bank, UNICEF, UNESCO), Education Cannot Wait (ECW), Global Partnership for Education (GPE), GIZ, UNESCO and Save the Children. These and related other agencies have been around for long in supporting the needs of children for emergency education; yet, more sustainable mechanisms need to be sought. Characteristically, external funding is meant to supplement rather than supplant funding as we know it in the IGAD region today. Member states need to cultivate a more promising internal funding mechanism that fundamentally involve forging public and private partnership for the purpose at hand.

Achievements and Challenges

By way of giving emphasis, we shall try, in this section, to reiterate major achievements and challenges in the development and implementation of the DD raised in previous section.

Achievements

Adoption of the Djibouti Declaration: To begin with the beginning, the very adoption of the Djibouti Declaration in itself can be considered as an important milestone in recognizing the educational needs of the huge population of marginalized groups in the IGAD region. The first Conference of Ministers in charge of education issued the Addis Ababa Call for Action which adopted the Djibouti Declaration along with recommended action points. Over the last few years, IGAD member states and development partners had made considerable progress in translating the key commitments of the Djibouti Declaration into action. According to the IGAD Social Development Division head (From Djibouti to Djibouti, 2021), experiences over the last years of implementing DD has been productive:

The past four years have been busy but productive. As soon as our ministers of education adopted the Djibouti Declaration, the Division embarked upon a series of activities to domesticate, create consensus and implement the Djibouti Declaration. I can state with confidence that this was the only Declaration that was moving from success to success right from day one, thanks to the all-rounded support of our partners. In addition to addressing the policy gaps relevant to education for refugees, returnees and host communities, IGAD is using the Djibouti Declaration to promote quality education for all in the context of Agenda 2063, SDG4 and other global and regional commitments including CRRF, GCR and GRF. Because of this, IGAD has become one of the regional and global players in advancing the goals of education through active and meaningful participation of its member states.

The IGAD Executive Secretary has also expressed in the same document that education in general and education for refugees, returnees and host communities in particular has been top on the regional integration agenda of IGAD that led to the adoption of DD in 2017, which pinpointed the key priority areas for equitable, inclusive and quality education for all, with special emphasis on education for forcibly displaced people which is one of the largest on the continent and in the last four years, IGAD and its partners have been making concerted efforts to translate the Djibouti Declaration into concrete action.

Establishment of Coordination Mechanisms: The Djibouti Declaration urged member states, development partners and the International Financial Institutions (IFs) to “Strengthen the capacity of the IGAD secretariat to coordinate and monitor the commitments of Member States towards quality education and learning for refugees, returnees and host communities. This includes the establishment of the regular platform of the Ministerial Committee on education, science, technology and innovation (ESTI).”¹⁷ In implementing this mandate, IGAD has established the Ministerial Committee whose work

¹⁷Djibouti Declaration(Para., 36)

coordinated by the Secretariat and being advised by experts from member states and core taskforce members. A Terms of Reference (ToR) was developed specifying the role of the Ministerial Committee. To re-propose that the experts meet twice a year while the ministers meet once a year, on regular basis with the possibility of holding extraordinary meetings as the need arises. So far, IGAD has convened six meetings of the experts and partners whereas the ministers met only twice. As indicated earlier, the 3rd session had to be postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. However, IGAD holds occasional consultations with partners and member states on matters that require consensus. Most importantly, since February 2021, IGAD, in partnership with UNHCR, was organizing national consultations on durable solutions for South Sudan and Sudan as part of the implementation of commitments of the IGAD Support Platform as well as the key provisions of the DD.

Selected achievements in implementing the DD: While most of the activities in the subsequent sections are either coordinated or supported by IGAD and its partners, they are so undertaken in collaboration with the member states. Some of the key achievements are outlined below:¹⁸

- *Adoption of the Addis Ababa Call for Action towards accelerated implementation of the commitments, development of a comprehensive regional education policy framework (Primary, Secondary & Vocational Education), a Regional TVET Strategy and the process for developing the IGAD Regional Qualifications Framework (RQF)*
- *IGAD has assisted Member States to elaborate the said NERP which, among others, (a) provided directions to the national level realization of the Djibouti Declaration; (b) helped mobilize resources for multi-year, predictable and adequate funding; (c) enabled IGAD, Member States, core partners and other stakeholders to track progresses and (d) generated regional data and compile lessons learned for wider dissemination.*
- *Regional level interventions in creating awareness, building consensus, increasing interest among different stakeholders, and mobilizing support for the implementation of the Djibouti Declaration and policies/strategies derived from the DD, the Addis Ababa Call for Action, and the recommendations of various national, regional and international platforms.*
- *Development of a monitoring tool to assess progresses made in the implementation of the Djibouti Declaration.*
- *Development of the roadmap for a regional qualifications framework, as provided in the Djibouti Declaration and Addis Ababa Call for Action.*
- *Supported, in partnership with different partners and stakeholders, member states to develop their costed national education response plan for the implementation of the Djibouti Declaration as well as other regional and international commitments. As a result some countries managed to develop costed national education response plans (NERP). They have also included refugee data in their EMIS.*
- *Development of a roadmap for the elaboration of a regional qualifications framework (RQF).*
- *Launching of a scholarship program aimed largely at benefiting students from refugees, returnees and disadvantaged host communities to enable eligible citizens achieve their aspirations in life through Higher Education and Skills Development Programs. The initiative was launched by the Executive Secretary of IGAD, Dr. Workneh Gebeyehu, on 5th April 2021 at the 1st IGAD Universities Forum held at Jijjiga University in Ethiopia. The International University of Africa pledged 200 scholarships to benefit the most vulnerable students in the region.*

¹⁸Ppt document Education and skills development for displaced populations, 12/2/2021

- *Launched a regional teacher training program which targets building skills and competencies among secondary school teachers in refugee hosting communities with support of BMZ/GIZ. IGAD launched a Regional Teachers Training Program on 16 August, 2021 (Gambella, Ethiopia) to train teachers teaching refugee and host community children in secondary schools.*
- *Establishment Network of Research Institutions/Universities on Migration*
- *Establishment of IGAD Council of Higher Education (ICHE) with advisory Board to serve as a think tank on displacement, peace building and conflict resolution, innovation, durable solutions etc. The first IGAD Universities Forum was organized on April 5, 2021 (at Jigjiga University, Jigjiga, Ethiopia).*

Challenges

The list of challenges secured from annual reports of the member states has been thermalized to encompass child, teacher, resource, and system-related constraints below that has equally been documented in previous research and reports globally (UNHCR Education Report, 2021), regionally (e.g. Karanja, 2010) and nationally in Ethiopia (Yonas, 2018):

Child-related constraints: greater number (over 3.5 million) of out of school children yet, diversities of refugees making educational delivery a challenge, discrimination by host children, limited protection services to children particularly staying in remote camps, school dropouts, unaccompanied minors heading families, mental health concern in which, for example, a vulnerability and essential needs assessment (VENA) once indicated that about 28% needed mental health services while 50% were at risk of developing mental health problems.

Teacher-related constraints: Shortage of qualified teachers, low incentive for teachers causing attrition; teachers diverting to other gainful economic activities, untrained teachers at the lower primary school level.

Resource-related constraints: Limited resource capacity; limited funding, poor infrastructure, overcrowded classrooms, lower teacher- to- pupil ratios, textbook shortages, shortage of classrooms, and schools not fulfilling minimum standard of a safe learning environment, limited resource capacity at the ministry to facilitate the inclusion of refugees, and limited capacity among local populations to care for children and youth, send children to school covering their expenditures etc.

Systemic problems: Education equivalence problem/certification differences from pace of origin, low political will in mobilizing resources, limited capacity at all levels to implement DD, language barriers, COVID-19 slowing down implementation of costed plans of actions, lack of awareness about DD, refugee camps in the remotest parts of the host countries and insecurity in accessing some areas, and double shift system limiting the amount time of spent in learning activities. Lack of information has also been mentioned in different ways: refugees lacking proper identification and documentation on arrival, lack of data base, documentation problems and lack of information, lack of robust systems of monitoring and evaluation and the limited capacity of the national EMIS.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Conclusions

This paper attempted to examine the development and implementation of the DD to enhance the education of refugee and IDP children in the IGAD region along with achievements and challenges there in. It was generally believed that making this provision is most welcome not only because of the recognition and affordances it makes to the most marginalized group in the region but also because of the understanding taken to frame the approach of refugee education in the context where national boundaries have increasingly become irrelevant and, therefore, the need for standardization of educational provisions and exchange of information is a matter of necessity than a choice. Development of this (Djibouti) Declaration has streamlined five key strategic areas of intervention with respect to refugee, returnee and IDP education in the IGAD region: regional education quality framework (RQF), inclusion of refugee education in the national education systems of member states, regional postsecondary education and skills development for refugees, accreditation and certification of education programs, financing, partnership and monitoring. Review of reports of implementation experiences of the DD only in a year time into the development of DD has ushered not only a promising outcome but also a sparkling hope that DD is indeed implementable in the region. However, the implementation was incarcerated by a range of (resource, technical and professional) challenges that compromised access, quality, equity and relevance of education.

Recommendations

It has to be recalled from the outset that the findings and recommendations of this paper was based mainly on a one year implementation report of the DD by the IGAD member states. Furthermore, the reporting was not uniform and extracting common themes was a challenge. Hence, lack of evidence of performance in the reports is not necessarily evidence of absence of performance in a member state. In the absence of this uniformity, there is no intention of any sort in this paper to compare national differences among the member states. While reminding IGAD to share a reporting format for members along with a sample report for future use, we would then like to offer the following general as well as DD-them specific recommendations for IGAD education secretariat as well as the ministries of education in member states to work hand in glove to overcome the implementation challenges in good time before they become debilitating.

General Recommendations for IGAD: While IGAD's indispensable role in leadership, coordination and follow up of the DD implementation needs to continue with a renewed momentum, IGAD needs, as a regional strategic actor, to equally look for more sustained mechanisms of ensuring:

- *Exchange of information among member states to reduce/avoid duplication of effort, Partnerships, synergies and coordination for optimizing use of meager resources*
- *sustainable funding opportunities to be tapped in implementing DD in a more feasible manner*
- *technical expertise, (financial and human) resources, and commitment to support implementation of DD from a lot more potential international organizations organizations*
- *Support to member states in developing and implementing DD tools (NQF, costed plan...)*
- *Advocacy and awareness creation activities*
- *IGAD-supported research institutes and centres of excellence in each member states*

- *Efficient IGAD and national level data base of stakeholders (refugee population, students, teachers and partners) and documentation centre at IGAD level as well as in the member states in collaboration with UNJCR*
- *member states to initiate national dialogues on ERR*

Adoption of DD tools: IGAD in particular needs to continue engaging member states to review customize and adopt the regional Qualification Frameworks and the Addis Convention (2014) on the Recognition of Studies (certificates, diplomas, degrees).

Improve implementation of DD through capacity building of member states: IGAD needs to support the ministries of education in member states in building the technical and professional skills of education leaders, experts, and teachers; organize Knowledge sharing forum regarding implementation of DD, establish efficient data base for documenting work at national, regional and local school levels.

*Improving the secondary and [post-secondary education and skills training:]*¹⁹Given that the upper levels of education are known to have more challenges, IGAD and the respective ministries of education in member states need to take a joint effort to secure/ increase scholarship opportunities for refugees to access higher education (e.g. IGAD universities can be mobilized), increase Connected Learning opportunities for refugees and host communities , expand intra and inter-regional cooperation and cross-border collaboration in higher education, expand local universities in refugee hosting locations to benefit both refugees and host communities, encourage and support provision of market-linked skills development opportunities in vocational education. Furthermore, need to support out of camp policy employment opportunities for refugees in camp set-ups to enable them move freely to access employment and start-up businesses. They also need to support linkage of vocational education to accredited government institutions for easy access to government curriculum, examination and certification and post-training support to vocational education trainees.

Inclusion of students: IGAD and relevant offices in member states need to review and update national multi-year costed plans of action for inclusion, organize regional experience sharing forum on good implementation practices of DD, lobby development partners for a more consolidated, holistic and continued support, develop a more efficient and persuasive scholarship plan for HE, and organize regional and national platforms to share experiences and good practices.

Resource Mobilization: IGAD needs to encourage/ mobilize member states to Concerted and joint efforts (IGAD and Member States) for fund raising, encourage inward looking of fund raising, look for internal funding and allocate resources for the costed national education plans, look for voluntary services to use educated youth as teachers, and develop strategy and plan of action for resource mobilization for IGAD & Member States

Monitoring and Evaluation: IGAD and ministries of education in the member states need to join hands to develop and implement solid M&E Framework for DD, use this M&E Framework for tracking progress, areas of improvement and challenges encountered, organize training for national M&E Experts to customize set time-line for periodic assessment and reviewing of implementation of DD and establish IGAD data base of stakeholders (refugees, refugee students, teachers, and partners).

¹⁹*Post - secondary and vocational education for refugees in Djibouti, Ethiopia and Kenya, Mapping Opportunities and Challenges in the Framework of the Djibouti Declaration on Refugee Education, 17th July 2018*

References

- Barber, B. (2009). *Adolescents and war: How youth deal with political violence*: Oxford University Press New York, United States.
- Belay, T., & Belay, H. (2020). School readiness programs in Ethiopia: Practices, challenges and the way forward. In Belay Tefera, Yigzaw Haile, Admas Fiseha Teklu, Beide Melaku and Fantahun (Eds). *Early childhood education in Ethiopia: Past Developments, Present Practices, and Future Directions*, pp. 187-212. Addis Ababa, Ethiopia: Eclipse Printing Press
- Belay Tefera K. (2015). Conflicts, Conflict Resolution Practices and Impacts of the War in South Sudan. *International Journal of School and Cognitive Psychology* S2: 013. *Doi:10.4172/ijscp.S2-013*.
- Bensalah, K. (2002). *Guidelines for education in situations of emergency and crisis. Division of policies and strategies of Education, Support to Countries in Crisis and Reconstruction, UNESCO*.
- Boyden, J. (2009). *Why the current fascination with children and armed conflict? Public Debate with Children's lives and development during war and armed conflict*. Coventry, UK.
- Brock-Utne, B. (2001). *Indigenous conflict resolution in Africa*. University of Oslo, Norway.
- Nairobi Peace Initiative (2008). *Peace education in Central and East Africa. Peace Education in Central and Eastern Africa: The state of the art, lessons and possibilities*, Nairobi, Kenya.
- Chandra, S. (2005). *Global peace and harmony through peace education: Towards the 21st Century. A paper presented in the International Seminar on Teacher Education for Peace and Harmony*. <http://www.unesco.org/education/emergency/>.
- Djibouti Declaration. (2017). "*Regional quality education standards and inclusion into National Systems for refugee children in line with CRRF, SDG 4 and Agenda 2063 on Education*".
- (From) Djibouti to Djibouti: Overview of the implementation of the Djibouti Declaration on education for refugees, returnees and host communities, 2017-2021. Education and Innovation Section, Health and Social Development Division, IGAD.
- EAQFHE. (2015). *East African Qualifications Framework for Higher Education*. Website accessed on 5 February 2020 from <http://iucea.org/eahea1/qualifications-framework>
- ICWAC. (2000). *Caught in the crossfire no more: a framework for commitment to war-affected children – Summary by the Chairs of the Experts' Meeting 13–15 Sept. 2000*. The International Conference on War-Affected Children, Winnipeg.
- IGAD Concept Note. (2022). *IGAD Ministers in charge of education, 28-30 March, 3rd Conference Skylight Hotel, on the theme "Accelerating Access to Inclusive and Quality Education for Refugees, Returnees, IDPs and Host Communities: Shared Responsibilities for better Results amidst the COVID-19 Crisis"*. IGAD Social Development Division Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD).
- IGAD High-Level Regional Experts Meeting. (2021). *Implementation of the Djibouti declaration on education for refugees, Returnees, and Host Communities, 6th–9th, in Djibouti, Republic of Djibouti*.
- IGAD-UNHCR Report on the state of inclusion of refugees into national education systems. Inclusion of Refugees in National Education Systems Mapping Exercise – Report Findings, 17th July 2018.
- Karanja, L. (2010). The educational pursuits and obstacles for urban refugee students in Kenya. *International Journal for Cross-Disciplinary Subjects in Education (IJCDSE)*, 1 (3), 147-155.
- Keevy, J., & Chakroun, B. (2015). *Level-setting and recognition of learning outcomes: The use of level descriptors in the twenty-first century (PDF)*. Paris, UNESCO. pp. 10, 12–13. ISBN 978-92-3-100138-3.

- Michailof S., Kostner, M., & Devictor, X. (2002). *Post-conflict recovery in Africa: An agenda for the Africa Region*. Africa Region Working Paper Series No. 30. United States.
- Mohamedbhai, G. (2003). *The role of higher education in developing a culture of peace in Africa*, UNESCO Publication, United States.
- Nicolai, S. (2003). *Education in emergencies: A toolkit for starting and managing education in emergencies*, Save the Children.
- NRC, Norwegian Refugee Council, Redd Barna & UNHCR. (1999). *Protection of children and adolescents in complex emergencies: conference report*. Norwegian Refugee Council, Oslo.
- NPI, Nairobi Peace Initiative. (2008). *Peace education in Central and East Africa. Peace Education in Central and Eastern Africa: The state of the art, lessons and possibilities*, Nairobi, Kenya.
- Okrah, K. A. (2003). Toward global conflict resolution: Lessons from the Akan traditional judicial system. *Journal of Social Studies Research 27: 04-13*.
- Pigozzi, M. J. (1999). *Education in emergencies and for reconstruction: A developmental approach*, United Nations Children's Fund Working Paper Series. Education Section Programme Division New York, NY, USA.
- Postsecondary & vocational education for refugees in Djibouti, Ethiopia, and Kenya. (2018). *Mapping Opportunities and Challenges in the Framework of the Djibouti Declaration on Refugee Education*.
- Sigh, B.K.(2005). *Twenty-first century: A century of peace and harmony through education. An International Seminar on Teacher Education for Peace and Harmony*.
- Sinclair, M. (2001). *Education in Emergencies*. In Jeff Crisp, Christopher Talbot, and Daiana B. Cipollone (eds.), *Learning for a Future: Refugee Education in Developing Countries*, UNHCR, pp.1-83.
- Tchombe, T. (2006). *Education, violence, conflict, and prospects for peace in Africa: An Evaluation of Research Endeavors for Peace Education*. Colloquium International, United Kingdom.
- UNESCO-UNEVOC (n.d). Qualifications Framework".
<https://unevoc.unesco.org/home/Qualifications+Framework&context=>
- UNHCR Education Report. (2021). *Staying the course. The challenges facing refugee education*.
<https://www.unhcr.org/media/unhcr-education-report-2021-staying-course-challenges-facing-refugee-education>
- UNHCR & Save the Children. (2000). *Action for the rights of the child: resource materials to strengthen training and capacity-building*. UNHCR, Geneva/Save the Children Alliance, London.
- World Bank Group (2019). *Education for Resilience Exploring: The Experience Of Refugee Students In Three Communities In Ethiopia*. The Ministry of Education, Ethiopia Agency of Refugees and Returnees Affair (ARRA), Ethiopia.
- Yonas, B.G. (2018). *Being a refugee student in higher education: Exploring the challenges and coping strategies: A case study of Mekelle University, Ethiopia*. Unpublished Thesis Submitted as a requirement for Master of Philosophy in Higher Education to the Faculty of Education of University of Oslo.