



Building the Evidence on Forced Displacement

ETHIOPIA FORCED DISPLACEMENT RESEARCH AND POLICY WORKSHOP

SUMMARY REPORT

02 June 2023 (9 AM – 5 PM) - Hybrid Event (Skylight Hotel, Addis Ababa, and MS Teams)

SUMMARY

This report summarizes the key takeaways from a research and policy workshop centered on forced displacement in Ethiopia. The workshop was organized jointly by the World Bank, Ethiopia’s Refugees and Returnees Service (RRS), and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in a hybrid format on June 2nd, 2023. The presentations and discussions were on four themes, namely: 1) impact of refugee presence on host communities and livelihoods; 2) social cohesion; 3) socio-economic characteristics of refugees and hosts; and 4) labor markets, jobs, and work permits. The presentations covered research financed by the [UK Government-UNHCR-World Bank Building the Evidence on Forced Displacement research program](#), the Joint Data Center on Forced Displacement (JDC), the PROSPECTS partnership, the State and Peace Building Fund (SPF) and project budgets. The presentations were met with great interest and spurred discussion amongst participants from relevant government line ministries, UN agencies, development actors, civil society organizations, and academic institutions. As a first of its kind held in Ethiopia, the event offered attendees the opportunity to not only learn from existing evidence and ongoing initiatives, but also to exchange ideas on priority areas for future displacement research. By and large, there was positive feedback from the audience especially in terms of the event purpose, format, themes, and contents. Discussants and participants emphasized the relevance of the findings and recommendations for programming and policy in relation to forced displacement in Ethiopia. The workshop revealed that there is a strong appetite for such discussions on analytics and, in particular, a desire to have more space to undertake demand-driven research. The research conducted in the refugee-hosting regions of Ethiopia and the one-day workshop would have not been successful without RRS’s and UNHCR’s support and collaboration. This report is divided into three parts. Part A highlights the workshop background. Part B summarizes the workshop sessions. Part C gives the key takeaways which arose from the presentations and discussions.

PART A: WORKSHOP BACKGROUND

1. INTRODUCTION

The [Building the Evidence on Forced Displacement](#) (BEoFD) is a 7 year research program (2016-2023) funded by the UK Government and implemented by the World Bank and the UNHCR. The program

includes: 1) Six thematic global studies on education, health, social protection, jobs, gender, and social cohesion, 2) Impact evaluations, 3) a Young Fellows program, 4) Focus papers utilizing existing data, 5) the establishment of a data platform, and a 6) dissemination and research uptake component. Ethiopia featured prominently across program components. Among the topics of research are measuring the impact of refugee presence on host communities; studying what works in promoting social cohesion between displaced and host communities; a multi-country study on labor market outcomes of host communities, including new data on job activities and labor market interactions collected among refugees and hosts amongst others in Ethiopia (Addis Ababa and Jijiga) as well as two work permits case studies (forthcoming); a study on the cost-effectiveness of jobs interventions; and impact evaluations, for example one of a ‘mental imagery’ intervention aimed to improve refugees’ readiness to work (forthcoming), one embedded in the Refugees-Host Integration through Safety Nets (RHISN) project, and one for the Development Response to Displacement Impacts project (DRDIP). Further, a Socio-Economic Survey of Refugees in Ethiopia (SESRE) was undertaken with funding from the World Bank-UNHCR Joint Data Center on Forced Displacement and various applied analytics were conducted and are planned as part of the WHR-funded projects such as the Refugees-Host Integration through Safety Nets project (RHISN, part of UPSNJP).

Against this backdrop, the World Bank, RRS, and UNHCR jointly organized a workshop to disseminate the findings from completed and forthcoming research papers that focused on forced displacement in Ethiopia, a country hosting a large number of forcibly displaced persons. The workshop enabled participants to discuss the overall implication of the research findings for policy, programs, and projects, and to brainstorm priority areas for future research and analytics.

2. OBJECTIVES

Objectives of the workshop were:

1. Presenting and discussing research findings and implications for policy, programmes and projects.
2. Stock-taking and discussing a forward-looking research and analytics agenda.
3. Informing preparations to the December 2023 Global Refugee Forum (sharing learning).

PART B: SUMMARY OF WORKSHOP SESSIONS

1. PARTICIPATION

Over 60 people took part in the workshop (40 in-person and 20 online). The full list of participating entities is included at the end of the document. The workshop brought together representatives from relevant government entities, UN agencies, CSOs, development actors, donors, PROSPECTS partners, and academia.

2. OPENING REMARKS

The workshop was officially opened following welcoming and opening remarks delivered by H.E Ato Tesfahun Gobezay, Director General of RRS, and Ms. Leslie Velez, Assistant Representative (Protection) at UNHCR Ethiopia. Both speakers thanked the organizers for creating this vital platform and bringing relevant stakeholders together to deliberate on forced displacement research and policy in Ethiopia.

Ato Tesfahun underscored Ethiopia's longstanding tradition of hosting refugees anchored on the fundamental principle of humanity. He said that the workshop helps to understand real needs of the refugees and host communities as well as the challenges and opportunities to move from humanitarian to a more integrated and development-oriented response mechanisms. Ato Tesfahun also stressed that refugees can be agents of change if they are provided with the necessary opportunities, and to that end, he underlined the need for long term projects and fundings to support refugees and host communities to achieve self-reliance, stabilization, and development.

Ms. Velez on her part emphasized the growing number of forcibly displaced persons both globally and in Ethiopia. She referred to ongoing efforts in terms of contributing towards building the evidence base together with RRS including through the establishment of an academic network among Ethiopian public universities and conducting annual participatory assessments. She stressed the need to make sure that research works are driven by operational demands.

3. PRESENTATIONS

Following the opening remarks, which enabled setting the context for the workshop, the stage was open for presentations and discussions on key study findings and policy recommendations.

Ms. Paola Elice, an economist from the World Bank (based in Kampala) provided a background on how the Building the Evidence research program started and its objectives as well as its main components. She encouraged the audience to read more on the program as all the research is publicly available in digestible formats [on its website](#). She emphasized that the workshop was the first of its kind and that it was organized through the collaboration of WB, RRS, and UNHCR.

Following this introduction, the working sessions started and were organized in four thematic areas. The presentations mainly focused on the motivation, questions, context, data sources, design, results and policy implications of the selected research papers. While the majority of the presented research papers are already completed, a few are forthcoming. After each presentation, the floor was open for discussion and the participants were able to raise questions and comments to the presenters and organizers.

The presentations are summarized as follows:

Morning Sessions	
Theme 1: Impact on host communities and livelihoods	
Moderator: Ato Daba Lemessa, M&E Team Leader, RRS	
Presenter/s	Title
Kirsten Schuettler, Economist, World Bank	The impact of forced displacement on host communities: A review of the empirical literature in economics (global)
Yeshwas Bogale, Economist, FAO (In-person)	Forced Displacement, Gender, and Livelihoods: A Case of Refugees in Ethiopia

Solomon Zena Walelign , Research Director, ICED (In-person)	Livelihood impacts of refugees on host communities: Evidence from Ethiopia
Carolyn Ndawula , Senior Development Officer, UNHCR (In-person)	Presentation of UNHCR livelihoods study: Investment opportunities by regions
Solomon Zena Walelign , Research Director, ICED (In-person)	Ethiopia DRDIP Phase I impact evaluation: preliminary results
Theme 2: Social cohesion Moderator: Paola Elice , Economist, World Bank Discussant: Ato Mekonnen Yaie , UPSNJP Coordinator, Ministry of Urban and Infrastructure (MoUI)	
Presenter/s	Title
Maria Flinder Stierna , Researcher, University of Oxford (online)	Refugees welcome? Inter-group interaction and host community attitude formation
Davide Vurchio , Assistant Professor, University of Bari (online)	The effects of refugees' camps on hosting areas: Social conflicts and economic growth
Rana Comertpay , Research Associate, Luxembourg Institute of Socio-Economic Research (online)	Refugees, Diversity and Conflict in Sub-Saharan Africa
Taies Nezam , Consultant/Senior Social Development Specialist, World Bank (online)	Action research & Rapid evaluation of RHISN Phase 1
Dennis Egger , Associate Professor, University of Oxford (online)	RHISN Phase 2: forthcoming impact evaluation

Afternoon Sessions	
Theme 3: Socio-economic characteristics of refugees and hosts Moderator: Florence Nimoh , Economist, UNHCR Discussant: Carolyn Ndawula , Senior Development Advisor, UNHCR	
Presenter/s	Title
Yeshwas Bogale , Economist, FAO (In-person)	A Multi-Country Analysis of Multidimensional Poverty in Contexts of Forced Displacement
Christina Wieser , Senior Economist, World Bank (online)	The Living Standards of Refugees in Ethiopia: The Socio-Economic Survey of Refugees in Ethiopia (forthcoming)
Alfredo Manfredini Bohm , Economist, World Bank (online)	Study on conditions in refugee camps in Ethiopia (covering 7 sites), conducted as part of WHR-funded RHISN
Theme 4: Labor Market Impacts, Jobs, and Work Permits Moderator: Ato Anteneh Mekasha , Livelihoods and Jobs Creation Team Leader, RRS	
Presenter/s	Title
Jan von der Goltz , Economist, World Bank (online)	Cost-Effectiveness of Jobs Projects in Conflict and Forced Displacement Contexts
Kirsten Schuettler , Economist, World Bank (online)	Impacts of Forced Displacement on Labor Markets in Host Communities, including a comparative case study of Colombia, Ethiopia, Jordan, and Uganda (forthcoming)
Kirsten Schuettler , Economist, World Bank (online)	Work permits case studies (forthcoming)
Ashley Pople , Economist, World Bank (online)	Memory, Trauma and Economic Behavior Among Refugees: Experimental Evidence from Teaching "Positive Imagery" in Ethiopia (forthcoming)
Alfredo Manfredini Bohm , Economist, World Bank (online)	Conflict, displacement, and livelihoods in Ethiopia --- The Role of Social Protection (IDP paper, forthcoming)

PART C: KEY TAKEAWAYS

At the end of the workshop, concluding remarks were provided by Mr. Ewen Macleod, a forced displacement consultant at the World Bank (based in the UK) and former UNHCR staff member. His remarks form the basis of the below summary on key take-aways and the next steps.

1. KEY TAKEAWAYS

- The volume of quality analytical works on forced displacement available compared to a few years ago when the *Building the Evidence* program started is encouraging. The research presented during the workshop is relevant for programming and policy in Ethiopia and other contexts and fills important data gaps. Moving ahead, area and sector specific analytics are needed considering the diverse context and dynamic nature of the forced displacement situation in the country.
- Refugee-hosting can be perceived as a burden especially as countries have their own socio-economic and political challenges. However, through adopting policies that enable refugee inclusion within the country's development agenda, governments, with proper funding from the international community following the principle of responsibility and burden sharing, can allow displaced populations to make positive contributions to the economy. Refugees are often held responsible for natural resource degradation, for increased pressure on local labour markets, and increasing costs for the hosting communities. The studies presented show that enabling refugees to work, to start businesses and to acquire assets and skills can contribute to improving local socio-economic conditions. Policies of inclusion also assist human capital development, potentially enhancing sustainable reintegration in the country of return as well.
- Overall, the growing body of literature looking at the impacts of refugee presence on host communities' labor market outcomes in low-income countries finds that the net effect is insignificant or mildly positive, a result that mirrors similar results in the literature of high-income countries. Typically, there are winners and losers within both refugee and host communities. Identifying these more vulnerable populations, and which policies can best address their needs and mitigate some of the initial shocks over time, need to be further unpacked in a context-specific manner in future research.
- Evaluations of completed and ongoing development-oriented projects have shown their contribution towards improving the lives of refugees and their host communities in various ways. Projects that have a medium to long-term impact should be scaled up in line with the country's development priorities.
- Inclusion and social cohesion are streamlined by programs implemented in Ethiopia in different ways and it remains important to continue investigating which approaches may be working best. The important [gender dimensions of forced displacement](#) and their associated inequalities are now

starting to be uncovered more systematically through analytical work and are key to take into account for programming purposes.

- The research delivered interesting insights on work permits. Areas that remain open for further exploration are how perceptions of labor market competition or perceptions of inequality may affect social cohesion outcomes between refugees and hosts. It is important to note that the research confirms that there are legitimate concerns for the host community especially in the initial stages of displacement. The [social cohesion research](#) however shows that inclusive investments can help mitigate social tension and foster positive social relations among displaced and local populations.

- Although not a traditional priority in a displacement crisis, early engagement in data collection is important to (i) establishing a baseline that allows comparative evaluation and analysis to be undertaken and (ii) to designing policy-focused analytical work in forced displacement situations.

LIST OF PARTICIPATING ENTITIES	
In-person	Online
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ RRS ▪ UNHCR ▪ World Bank ▪ Ministry of Urban and Infrastructure ▪ Ethiopian Investment Commission ▪ IFC ▪ UNICEF ▪ UNOPS ▪ IGAD ▪ ReDSS ▪ FAO ▪ ICED 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ World Bank ▪ ODI ▪ University of Bari ▪ LISER ▪ University of Oxford