



Refugee Opportunity Index

Ethiopia

Refugees and other displaced persons face a challenging but evolving environment in Ethiopia. The country stands out in its efforts to admit, integrate and resettle displaced people, but employment conditions remain poor. Supported by leading international organisations, such as UNHCR and the Norwegian Refugee Council, the government is implementing policies to improve the situation for refugees.

Country environment

Refugees	821,283
Asylum seekers	2,251
Internally displaced people (IDPs)	4,168,000
Stateless people*	0
Total people of concern	4,991,953
Nominal GDP (PPP\$ bn)	296
GDP per head (US\$ PPP)	2,510
Population (m)	117.9

Overall score on
Refugee Opportunity Index **41.4/100**

* This category is not recognised by the government.
Source: UNHCR, IDMC

Overview

Access to economic opportunity for refugees in Ethiopia is a mixed picture. Out of the three East African countries in the ROI, Ethiopia performed the best on admissions, integration and resettlement policy, scoring 55.6 out of 100. While Ethiopia scores highest in assistance for new arrivals, there is still room for improvement. For example, despite most displaced persons being foreign-language speakers, there are no systematic efforts to provide support for language education.

With regard to basic rights and access to services, Ethiopia performs well in some areas and has room to improve in others. While it performs above the regional average on access to education, healthcare and financial inclusion, significant barriers remain for refugees, especially regarding their mobility and access to housing. The 2019 Ethiopian Refugee Proclamation gives freedom of movement to refugees and asylum seekers, although it is far from fully implemented. In practice, they are largely restricted to refugee camps. It is possible to apply to live outside the camps but other restrictions, such as location-restrictive work authorization, hinder mobility.

Ethiopia scores lowest on employment conditions due to a lack of job-seeking support and support for entrepreneurship. The results of the recent policies, such as the 2019 Ethiopian Refugee Proclamation, are yet to be seen, but they tackle only some of the areas that need improvement.

Strengths

Ethiopia performs significantly better than its East African counterparts in terms of resettlement and integration programs: there are clearly articulated policies regarding refugee resettlement and reunification schemes for the resettlement of immediate relatives of refugees and asylum seekers. Since 2019, the Agency for Refugees and Returnees Affairs (ARRA) is Ethiopia's organisation with clearly defined responsibility for coordinating efforts and implementing refugee admission and resettlement policy. Among its functions, the ARRA can issue identification documents and facilitate family reunification.

In terms of integration, Ethiopia stands out in the region for having cash transfers to refugees and other displaced persons. Refugees and other displaced persons in Ethiopia can also access education in the same way as nationals, especially for primary education. In terms of financial inclusion, Ethiopia stands out in the region because refugees and asylum seekers can open a bank or mobile account as nationals do, their national IDs are broadly accepted and governmental financial support can be delivered to their bank accounts.

Challenges

The 2019 Proclamation gives several rights to refugees and asylum seekers, such as legal right to employment, but it is far from fully implemented and the rights are often restricted in practice. In addition, job permits are required and the sectors and regions where refugees can work are restricted. Labor rights and benefits are not fully extended to refugees. A similar scenario is found for business-owners: hurdles exist due to the regulations around opening a business and challenges in accessing credit for MSMEs, which make it difficult to be an entrepreneur.

As the new 2019 law rolls out, this scenario is expected to improve. Freedom of movement will certainly improve. Currently, refugees have to apply to live outside of camps but do not have access to adequate housing beyond government-provided shelter. Developments in other areas are welcome too. Like other countries in the region, Ethiopia does not yet have clear rules requiring non-discrimination in financial service provision for refugees. Hence, refugees still face discriminatory treatment due to ignorance of refugee's rights.

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Category	Score
1 Admissions, integration and resettlement	55.6
2 Basic rights and access to services	52.4
3 Employment conditions	16.2

Sub-category	Score
1.1 Admissions policies	72.2
1.2 Refugee resettlement and integration programs	58.3
1.3 Assistance for new arrivals	58.3
1.4 Data for policy monitoring and evaluation	33.3
2.1 Freedom of movement	0.0
2.2 Right to hold a national identification document	66.7
2.3 Property rights and access to housing	16.7
2.4 Access to education and healthcare	80.0
2.5 Financial inclusion	61.1
2.6 Equality between women and men	89.7
3.1 Employment policies and laws	32.0
3.2 Job-seeking support	16.7
3.3 Support for entrepreneurship	0.0

Strengths of Ethiopia's enabling environment

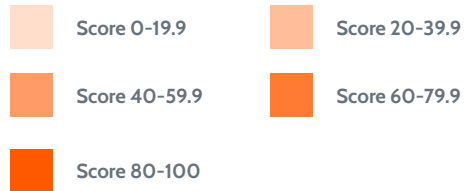
- 1.2.1) National policy on refugee resettlement
- 1.3.4) Cash assistance
- 2.4.1) Access to education
- 2.5.4) Digital cash assistance payments
- 3.2.3) NGO information on hiring disadvantaged groups

Focus areas

- 1.1.3) Recognition of climate change and disaster-related displacement
- 1.2.2) Matched resettlement
- 2.1.1) Right to move freely within host country
- 2.1.2) Residence restrictions
- 3.1.1) Right to employment



Refugee Opportunity Index (overall score)		41.4/100
1	Admissions, integration and resettlement	55.6
1.1	Admissions policies	72.2
1.1.1	Participation in international agreements	100
1.1.2	Existence of a national policy on admissions	66.7
1.1.3	Recognition of climate change and disaster-related displacement	0
1.1.4	Existence of national refugee agency	100
1.2	Refugee resettlement and integration programs	58.3
1.2.1	National policy on refugee resettlement	100
1.2.2	Matched resettlement	0
1.2.3	Family reunification	66.7
1.2.4	Pathway to citizenship	66.7
1.3	Assistance for new arrivals	58.3
1.3.1	Language education	0
1.3.2	Legal assistance	100
1.3.3	Integration education	33.3
1.3.4	Cash assistance	100
1.4	Data for policy monitoring and evaluation	33.3
1.4.1	Collecting and publishing data	66.7
1.4.2	Disaggregated data	0
2	Basic rights and access to services	52.4
2.1	Freedom of movement	0
2.1.1	Right to move freely within host country	0
2.1.2	Residence restrictions	0
2.1.3	Work location restrictions	0
2.2	Right to hold a national identification document	66.7
2.2.1	Right to a national identity document	66.7
2.3	Property rights and access to housing	16.7
2.3.1	Property ownership rights	0
2.3.2	Access to housing	25
2.4	Access to education and healthcare	80
2.4.1	Access to education	100
2.4.2	Recognition of foreign qualifications	50
2.4.3	Access to healthcare	75
2.5	Financial inclusion	61.1
2.5.1	Requirements for opening bank and mobile money accounts	66.7
2.5.2	Stringency of ID requirements	100
2.5.3	Non-discrimination provision	0
2.5.4	Digital cash assistance payments	100
2.6	Equality between men and women	89.7
2.6.1	Equal requirements obtain a national identity document	100
2.6.2	Equal property rights	100
2.6.3	Equal requirements for a bank account	100
2.6.4	Equal business ownership	100
2.6.5	Gender equality	48.3
3	Employment conditions	16.2
3.1	Employment policies and laws	32
3.1.1	Right to employment	0
3.1.2	Job permit requirement	0
3.1.3	Restrictive work permits	100
3.1.4	Work permit renewal	100
3.1.5	Local job market distortions	0
3.2	Job-seeking support	16.7
3.2.1	Inclusive labor rights and protections	0
3.2.2	Government Information on hiring disadvantaged groups	0
3.2.3	NGO information on hiring disadvantaged groups	100
3.3	Support for entrepreneurship	0
3.3.1	Refugee right to own a business	0
3.3.2	Lack of requirement for a local partner	0
3.3.3	Access to finance for businesses	0





About the Refugee Opportunity Index

Refugees' self-reliance depends on unfettered access to economic opportunity in their host communities, yet unequal and inconsistent policies often create unintended barriers and constraints to refugee employment and entrepreneurship.

Recognizing the immense economic potential of refugees, the Refugee Opportunity Index (ROI) seeks to measure the extent to which a country's policy environment enables access to economic opportunity for refugees within their host communities. The ROI includes 43 qualitative and quantitative indicators organized into 13 sub-categories and 3 categories.

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