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Local Governments and the Sustainable Integration of Refugees in Ethiopia

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In cooperation with:

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Preface

This Discussion Paper results from joint research conducted by the German Development Institute / Deutsches Institut für Entwicklungspolitik (DIE), the Institute for Peace and Security Studies (IPSS) in Addis Ababa and the Institute of Migration Studies (IMS) at Jigjiga University in 2019 and 2020. The research also formed part of the 55th DIE Postgraduate Training Programme. Data collection for the representative survey benefited from funding under the DIE "Contested Mobility" project, financed by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ).

Our most sincere thanks go to our research partners Asresahegn Birhanu (IPSS), Mercy Fekadu (IPSS), and Abis Getachew (Policy Study Institute (PSI)) for their valuable contributions and insights at all stages of this research. We further thank the enumerators who performed the quantitative survey conducted in the Somali Region of Ethiopia.

This report is the first account of findings derived from our joint research project. Since the COVID-19 crisis interrupted our data collection, the empirical work will continue as circumstances allow, and our picture of the opportunities and challenges connected to the local integration of refugees will evolve and become more complete. Other, more specialised papers will be published in due course under varying co-authorships from among the joint research team. All judgements contained in this Discussion Paper as well as possible mistakes or omissions are the sole responsibility of the authors.

We extend a heartfelt thank you to all experts and stakeholders, Ethiopian and international, who agreed to be interviewed or provided background information, as well as the participants in our focus group discussions who not only sacrificed their time but also shared their valuable insights with us. Without them, our research would not have been possible. We are likewise grateful to the staff of IPSS and the Danish Refugee Council (DRC) who hosted our team in their offices over the course of several weeks in Addis and Jigjiga, respectively, and provided us with a most inspiring work environment.

We, furthermore, would like to thank colleagues at DIE for their support: Eva Dick, Charles Martin-Shields, Benjamin Schraven, Christoph Sommer and Christian von Haldenwang. They contributed valuable suggestions at varying stages of the project. Finally, we also thank Regine Mehl, Andrea Herder as well as Andrea Cordes for providing logistical and moral support throughout our research. We are grateful for the support received from Anna-Katharina Hornidge, Imme Scholz and Margret Heyen in connection with the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic.

To everyone who helped make this work possible: you have our deepest gratitude.

The research for this paper was conducted before the recent political crisis hit Ethiopia. A major armed conflict erupted in November 2020 between the federal armed forces and military units under the control of the Tigray People's Liberation Front, causing massive violence and a wave of displacement among the civilian population. In addition, there are ongoing disputes over the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam between Ethiopia, Sudan and Egypt. The conclusions and recommendations derived in this paper take into account some possible consequences of this situation. For the most part, however, they reflect the status quo before November 2020.

Bonn, July 2021

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Abbreviations

ARRA	Agency for Refugee and Returnee Affairs (Ethiopia)
BoFED	Bureau of Finance and Economic Development (Ethiopia)
CRRF	Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
DFID	Department for International Development (United Kingdom)
DRC	Danish Refugee Council
EOC-DICAC	Ethiopian Orthodox Church - Development and Inter-Church Aid Commission
EPRDF	Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front
FCDO	Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (United Kingdom)
GCR	Global Compact on Refugees
IDP	internally displaced person
IGAD	Intergovernmental Authority on Development
IMS	Institute of Migration Studies
JCC	Jobs Creation Commission (Ethiopia)
LMICs	low- and middle-income countries
MoE	Ministry of Education (Ethiopia)
MoFEC	Ministry of Finance and Economic Cooperation (Ethiopia)
MoLSA	Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (Ethiopia)
MoU	memorandum of understanding
NCRRS	National Comprehensive Refugee Response Strategy (Ethiopia)
NGO	non-governmental organisation
ODA	official development assistance
SCI	Save the Children International
TVET	technical and vocational education and training
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
VERA	Vital Events Registration Agency (Ethiopia)
WFP	World Food Programme

Executive summary

As of 2019, more than three quarters of the global refugees under the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) mandate were living in long-lasting displacement situations. The majority have found refuge in the low- or middle-income countries that border their countries of origin. These host countries are facing economic and development challenges of their own. Many refugees live in refugee camps, depend on humanitarian assistance and face a situation of persistent uncertainty – sometimes lasting for decades. Such protracted situations are expected to increase further in scope, scale and complexity.

Increasingly, humanitarian and development actors highlight the local integration of refugees as a durable solution to protracted displacement. Hosting states are called upon to include refugees in their national public services rather than sustain a parallel (humanitarian) system and to empower refugees so they can sustain themselves as part of the local community. The international community has endorsed this idea by adopting the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF) and vowing financial support. Ethiopia is one of the pilot countries to implement this framework and adopted the Refugee Proclamation, a new, progressive, national refugee legislation, in early 2019. Unfortunately, the implementation of the ambitious approach has encountered numerous challenges. One crucial challenge is the role that municipalities are supposed to play in the local integration of refugees. Without their commitment to the process, refugee integration is unlikely to succeed. Yet somewhat surprisingly, local governments have not been the focus of attention within the CRRF implementation process. Both the academic community and the development cooperation community are only beginning to acknowledge the relevance of the local level for refugee integration. At the same time, refugee integration touches upon challenges associated with the "humanitarian-development nexus", the increased consideration of which was a major demand raised at the 2016 World Humanitarian Summit. Moving from the purportedly transient situation of a refugee camp to the durable solution of local integration involves a paradigm shift away from a largely humanitarian to a development-driven approach of external support.

This Discussion Paper examines the policy of refugee integration in Ethiopia with a special focus on local governments. It analyses their role and capability in order to identify both specific challenges and opportunities to facilitate the effective integration of refugees, and it sheds light on the views of refugee communities regarding local integration.

Due to its relevance to the issue of displacement in the Horn of Africa and its important role as a pilot country for CRRF implementation, Ethiopia is an excellent case to study. By the end of 2019, the country accommodated around 700,000 refugees, mostly from its crisis-affected neighbours South Sudan, Eritrea, Somalia and Sudan. Under these circumstances, the Ethiopian government's early political commitment to the CRRF process seemed to create an exceptionally conducive environment for the ambitions of the international community to enact a meaningful integration of refugees.

Within Ethiopia, the research presented in this paper has focused on the Somali Regional State, the second largest and easternmost of the country's ten regions. The protracted crisis in neighbouring Somalia displaced millions of persons throughout the past decades. The more than 190,000 people of Somali origin, according to 2019 estimates, constitute the second largest refugee group in Ethiopia. Most of them live in camps distributed throughout the Somali Region. The research relies on a mixed-methods design that combines qualitative data collected through in-depth interviews with stakeholders and a focus group discussion with a quantitative household survey conducted in the refugee camps of Aw-Barre and Sheder.

The results show that since the adoption of the Refugee Proclamation the implementation of the CRRF has slowed down considerably. Ethiopia's changing political environment largely explains this outcome. With elections originally scheduled for 2020 and a wide-ranging political and economic transformation of the country underway, accompanied by ethnic tensions and the restructuring of public institutions, the political priorities of Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed's government shifted quickly from an interest in "good international citizenship" towards a purely domestic agenda. The reduced backing from the top to revamp the refugee policy made it far more difficult to overcome the typical obstacles that are inevitably associated with any major structural reform – including vested interests.

Moreover, a lack of leadership and coordination has resulted in an inadequate commitment to push the implementation process. While on paper there is a national CRRF steering committee to fill this role, it is in fact not functional. Most notably, Ethiopia's Agency for Refugee and Returnee Affairs (ARRA), the key stakeholder in the Ethiopian CRRF implementation, is dominating the implementation process and, thus, degrading the potential of a more active role of local governments. Consequently, in several sectors, such as education, parallel structures for the provision of government services to refugees on the one side and host communities on the other side have been established. While this hinders the process of refugee integration into national structures, ARRA and international actors mostly maintain their responsibility for refugee services, and local governments often lack the capacity and resources to meet the same quality of service delivery.

On the other hand, structural issues at the regional and local level hinder full implementation of the CRRF in the Somali Region despite high interest among regional and local actors. These barriers relate to the prevailing harsh living conditions of the region as well as the unclear role and low capacities of local governments. For the local integration of refugees to succeed, local governments would need to play a far greater role. The lack of coordination among national key actors and the slow implementation at the national level results in an unclear role of local authorities and their self-awareness within this process. This weak position of local actors is likely to hamper implementation in the long run since they are supposed to take on a much larger role and take over tasks from ARRA and UNHCR. Currently, local governments often only act as gatekeepers to involve host communities in refugee programming and share local information. National legislation has in large part not yet been cascaded down to lower federative levels and, hence, its application remains fragmented. Moreover, the process of translating national

ambitions into local action within the Somali Region lacks the consideration of customary law and realities on the ground.

Due to Ethiopia's political commitments, international actors in general encounter a favourable environment for the implementation of the CRRF in Ethiopia and take on an important role in this context. They increasingly involve host communities and slowly take on a more (long-term) development-oriented perspective. However, it is key for international actors to design projects carefully to avoid the perception of unequal treatment of the host communities. The funding situation of humanitarian aid organisations and development cooperation projects reflects this challenge. Sometimes, donors' budgets are not flexible enough to additionally cater to the needs of the host communities, which can create tensions. Short-term funding cycles among humanitarian actors still undermine an increased recognition of the humanitarian-development nexus.

The perceptions on local integration of refugees among the respective communities appear to be ambiguous. The majority of refugees finds it hard to pursue formal employment and perceive the missing issuance of formal work permits and the limitation on movement as a key obstacle to their successful integration. Additional challenges arise from the fact that large segments of the Ethiopian population are not economically better off than the refugees. Overall, resource scarcity in the Somali Region emerges as a major constraint. On the other hand, the idea of local integration has to a large extent been realised informally long before the CRRF was adopted. The majority of the refugees in the Somali Region originate from bordering Somalia. Many of these refugees have been staying in Ethiopia for a protracted period of time and, in many sectors, informal solutions for local integration have been adopted. Refugees engage in informal employment, have reached informal agreements on land access, are part of informal dispute settlement mechanisms and even get married to Ethiopian nationals. These forms of informal integration are closely linked to a shared Somali identity, which shapes the coexistence between local host communities and refugees. However, host community and refugee status are the definitions that guide the actions of the government on the federal and regional level as well as the international community. This results in differential treatment of refugees and the local population by national and international actors.

Thus, CRRF implementation in the Somali Region remains a challenge, even though some structural factors, such as shared ethnicity among refugees and hosts, may make it seem to be a comparatively "easy case" for local integration. Nonetheless, the Somali Region is a forerunner in the local integration of refugees and many insights can be gained from its experience.

Six recommendations are derived from the analysis:

- Guidance from the federal government needs to be strengthened. For this, the degree of horizontal coordination between the different entities of the federal government should be increased. A strong coordinating body, including the Prime Minister's Office, the Ministry of Finance and Economic Cooperation and ARRA, seems necessary to ensure an effective strategy for the local integration of refugees.

- The federal government should draft a transition plan for how institutional structures and funding channels can be revised successively to the benefit of local authorities with a view to reducing parallel structures. This transition plan should include a future vision for the composition and role of ARRA to incentivise the agency not to bypass this process. We recommend sector-specific approaches to the step-by-step transfer of competencies to respective (subordinate) authorities.

- The federal government needs to recognise regional and local-level authorities as relevant actors. Without their contribution a successful CRRF implementation is impossible. Thus, local and regional governments should be consulted about general CRRF implementation and specific sectoral plans.

- Regional and local authorities should exercise their leverage to make their voices heard among federal and international actors in order to communicate their needs effectively and foster exchange of lessons learned.

- In the long run, international agencies and donors – above all UNHCR – should focus on reducing parallel structures for refugees and hosts. The reduction of parallel structures inevitably goes along with a reorganisation of competences and a decreased role for the powerful actor, ARRA. For this to happen, they should work closely with the Government of Ethiopia towards developing an appropriate clear timeline on these processes.

- The project planning of donors themselves should not only ensure that a service is delivered, but at the same time think about how local authorities can be involved in the planning and implementation. In line with the humanitarian-development nexus, this not only satisfies immediate needs, but also strengthens local capacities and increases the sustainability of projects.

1 Introduction

In mid-2020, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) estimated the number of refugees and asylum seekers worldwide at almost 34 million.[1] The majority of these people live in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs), many of them in refugee camps and other "temporary" settlements. The state structures of their host countries are often fragile, and the challenge of hosting displaced populations can add to social, political and economic instability. In an attempt to ease the burden on host countries, international support aims to improve the living conditions of displaced populations. However, a frequent criticism is that many interventions do not lead to sustainable solutions. Many refugees, after decades of displacement, still depend on food aid and services provided by humanitarian actors. At the same time, the global number of protracted refugee situations (those lasting five years or more) is constantly increasing (UNHCR, 2020b). Thus, many call for more durable solutions that would combine humanitarian and development approaches and empower refugees to sustain their own lives. In recent years, local integration has been increasingly promoted as such a durable solution. The idea is to integrate refugees in local communities and labour markets instead of keeping them in a parallel humanitarian system.

In 2018 the UN General Assembly affirmed the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR). The compact provides a new framework, recognising that a sustainable long-term solution to refugee situations can only be achieved through international cooperation involving, among others, governments, international organisations, civil society and the private sector. It aims to ease the pressure on host countries through more equitable sharing of burden and responsibility and enhanced refugee self-reliance. The GCR includes the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF), which provides a blueprint for sustainable integration of refugees into resident societies. While the negotiations leading up to these documents largely took place at the international and national levels, their claims need to be turned into reality at the very local level where integration actually can take place. However, implementing the CRRF concept of local integration is likely to be a process with many challenges. Local governments have not yet been the focus of attention in refugee policies, neither among international aid agencies nor in academic research, although sustainable solutions largely depend on them.

This paper investigates the example of Ethiopia to assess the current state of the CRRF implementation and identify challenges and best practices at the local level and of international support in this context. How do diverging political agendas and interests concerning the local integration of refugees among the different actors impact the CRRF implementation? What are the practical challenges in the CRRF implementation process? What is the role of local authorities in the local integration of refugees? What is the role of

1 This figure includes persons under the official categories of refugees under UNHCR and the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) mandates, asylum seekers and Venezuelans displaced abroad (UNHCR, 2020b). More generally, UNHCR defines a refugee as "someone who has been forced to flee his or her country because of persecution, war or violence. A refugee has a well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, political opinion or membership in a particular social group. Most likely, they cannot return home or are afraid to do so. War and ethnic, tribal and religious violence are leading causes of refugees fleeing their countries" (UNHCR, 2019d). In this paper we use the terms "refugees" and "displaced population" interchangeably. Thus, the latter is not meant to refer to internally displaced persons.

international actors and what is the context within which they operate? And finally, what are the perceptions on local integration of refugees among the host[2] and refugee communities themselves?

To answer these research questions, respective policy fields ("sectors") are taken into account in which, according to priorities of the Ethiopian legislation, integration plays a crucial role. Thus, the analysis is based on different sectoral experiences. Among these are education, land access, livelihood/employment and documentation. To obtain a comprehensive picture, a mixed methods research design is employed, combining qualitative data collected through interviews with involved stakeholders and a focus group discussion with a quantitative household survey in the refugee camps of Aw-Barre and Sheder in eastern Ethiopia.

By the end of 2019, the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia was accommodating around 700,000 refugees from neighbouring crisis-affected countries including South Sudan, Eritrea, Somalia and Sudan (UNHCR, 2019e). This makes it the third-largest refugee-receiving country in Africa. At the same time, Ethiopia is one of the pilot countries for the implementation of the CRRF. International aid organisations, above all the UNHCR, aim to support the country with this task. The cornerstones of the CRRF implementation in Ethiopia are far-reaching pledges to the international community and the adoption of a progressive national refugee legislation. The country has set up governance structures to translate the legislation into practice.

Research into the CRRF also sheds light on challenges around the humanitarian-development nexus, the increased consideration of which has been a major demand since the 2016 World Humanitarian Summit. Overall, humanitarian as well as development actors are called upon to coordinate their activities more closely. Particularly in the displacement context, "traditional" humanitarian aid should be examined and aligned more closely with a view to its longer-term structural effects (UN WHS, 2016).

The report continues as follows. Chapter 2 sets the scene for the research, providing background on the state of worldwide displacement (Section 2.1) and introducing the concept of local integration and its legal application in Ethiopia (Section 2.2). It goes on to explain the system of local governance in Ethiopia and its relevance for the process of CRRF implementation (Section 2.3) and closes by outlining the role of the international donor community in this process (Section 2.4). In Chapter 3 the research questions are presented (Section 3.1), the case selection is explained (Section 3.2) and the methodological approach is outlined (Section 3.3). Chapter 4 analyses and discusses the empirical findings, while Chapter 5 summarises the results. Chapter 6 puts forward recommendations for government authorities and international actors.

2 The term "host community" is commonly used to describe the community of residents in areas where refugees live. The authors are aware of the questionable connotations it can evoke, such as defining local populations through refugees, oversimplifying more fluid realities or evoking a biological host context (see Carver, 2019a). However, this is still the most commonly used terminology among all stakeholders. In this paper, "host community", "local residents" and "local community" are used interchangeably.

2 Context and literature review

2.1 Global trends and new approaches towards displacement

According to 2019 data, almost three quarters of the global refugees live in countries bordering their countries of origin. Consequently, 85 per cent of refugees are hosted in developing countries that often are already socially, politically and economically instable and many of these hosting contexts are also characterised by fragility (OECD, 2019; UNHCR, 2020b). Furthermore, the number of protracted refugee situations, defined as situations where 25,000 or more refugees from the same nationality have been hosted by the same country for five years or more, has been increasing steadily. In 2019, 77 per cent of all refugees under UNHCR mandate were living in protracted situations – all of these in LMICs (UNHCR, 2019c, 2020b).

Donors of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's (OECD) Development Assistance Committee (DAC) contributed significantly to the financing of refugee situations, giving USD 26 billion (between 2015 and 2017) in official development assistance (ODA). This figure is expected to increase further (Forichon, 2018). However, 72 per cent of ODA disbursements to refugee situations is labelled as humanitarian funding, even though most refugees live in protracted situations (OECD, 2019). This implies that most programmes and projects targeting refugees and resident communities depend on short-term humanitarian funding and programming rather than long-term development approaches and financing (Forichon, 2018). At the same time, and despite increasing durations of displacements, the humanitarian funding cycle tends to get shorter: more than 50 per cent of all respondents of DAC-donors reported that more than 50 per cent of their aid had been allocated for a year or less (Forichon, 2018).

The increasing number of refugees living in protracted situations, thus, questions the described dominance of short-term humanitarian funding. Recognition of this issue has led to a rethinking of the paradigm on how to manage large refugee populations more sustainably (Forichon, 2018). Against this backdrop of the quest for more durable solutions, the concept of local integration has gained popularity among humanitarian and development actors. This approach builds on the idea that refugees, if entitled and empowered, are actors that can sustain themselves, thereby contributing to the social and economic development of local communities. Moreover, this considers previous experiences in which the short-term ("humanitarian") thinking of satisfying immediate needs is insufficient, unsustainable and, hence, inadequate for protracted displacement situations. Instead, national structures and capacities should be strengthened from the outset to accommodate nationals and refugees alike (Türk, 2018; World Bank, 2017b).

On 19 September 2016, the United Nations General Assembly unanimously adopted the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants, calling upon states to improve international cooperation with regards to migration. It provides guiding principles and commitments for a more predictable and more comprehensive international response to large-scale migration movements. An integral part of the Declaration is the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF). It aims to "provide a framework for a comprehensive and people-centred refugee response" (UN, 2016, p. 16) by involving multiple stakeholders from all fields in the process. Signatory states make commitments to improve the situation of refugees and to increase support to communities that host them.

What is more, it calls for the elaboration and adoption of a GCR, which was finally affirmed by the United Nations General Assembly in 2018. Core motivation of the GCR, which contains the previously adopted CRRF as an integral part, is a "more equitable sharing of the burden and responsibility for hosting and supporting the world's refugees" (UN, 2018b, p. 7). Given the scarce resources of those countries hosting the majority of refugees, a related aim is "to ensure that [hosting] communities are not impaired in making progress towards the SDGs" (UN, 2018b, p.12). Considering the care for refugees as a global common good, the GCR seeks to establish more equitable arrangements between states. Central to both parts are endeavours to include refugees in the local communities, economies, national social services and legal systems.

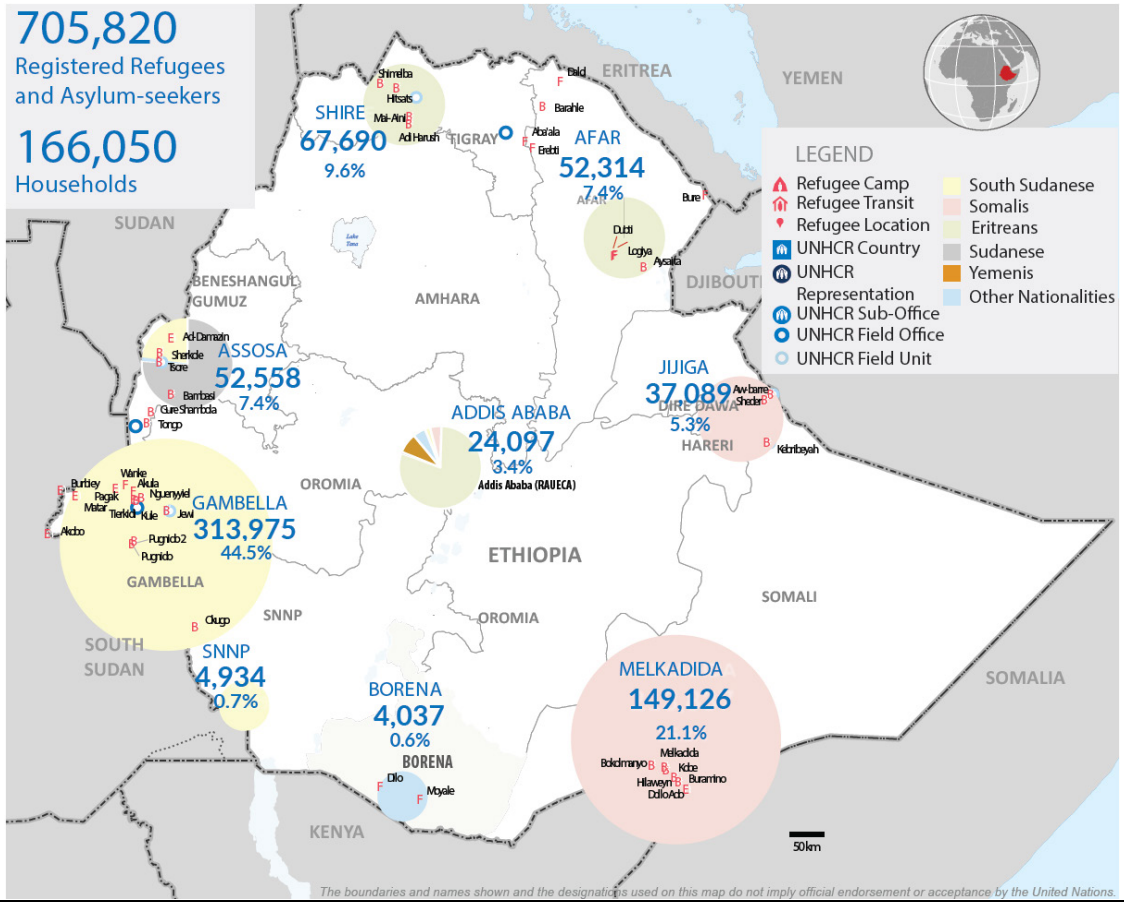
While international considerations of durable solutions to displacement such as voluntary repatriation, resettlement, as well as local integration are not entirely new, the GCR particularly emphasises the priority of the latter. Essentially, to facilitate local integration, the GCR calls for efforts by all involved parties. Initially, host countries, who elect to resolve refugee situations locally, ideally should guide the process through the development of a strategic framework and aligned national legislation. In LMICs, additional financial and technical support from the international community will be required to ensure successful local integration in a manner that takes into account the needs of both refugee and host communities. Moreover, local integration is described as a dynamic and two-way process that requires the preparedness of refugees to adapt to the host society and the corresponding readiness of the host communities to welcome refugees. Consequently, the role of local actors, including relevant state institutions, local communities and civil society, comes to the fore (UN, 2018a, p. 19).

The GCR and the CRRF have generally been highlighted as important policy documents with the potential to "breathe new life into an apparently tired regime" (Cantor, 2018, p. 628), which prior to this, addressed considerations of fairness only rudimentarily (Chimni, 2018). Even so, the new documents have also drawn criticism among observers. The "rhetorical centrality of 'burden- and responsibility-sharing'" (Doyle, 2018, p. 618) may provide opportunities for countries to pull out of unpopular obligations, among them potentially the hosting of refugees. Likewise, the comprehensive list of suggested commitments may allow respective states to cherry-pick only convenient fields for implementation, possibly justifying other restrictive measures (Angenendt, Biehler, Kipp, & Meier, 2019). Being resolutions of the General Assembly, the non-binding nature of the policy documents is a further general point of criticism, as states can only be held to account politically. Nonetheless, they express a strong political will and provide a benchmark for reference and further guidance. In addition, the process launched new fora such as the Global Refugee Forum, the first iteration of which was held in December 2019.

2.2 Ethiopia's approach to refugee integration and its legal implementation

Ethiopia not only has a long history of hosting refugees, but also played an important role in the global process of developing and implementing the ideas of local integration. By the end of 2019, Ethiopia was host to over 700,000 refugees and asylum seekers. In line with the global trend, protracted displacement situations are increasingly affecting Ethiopia. Most refugees live in camps in regions bordering their respective origin countries, most notably in the western Gambella Region and the eastern Somali Region.

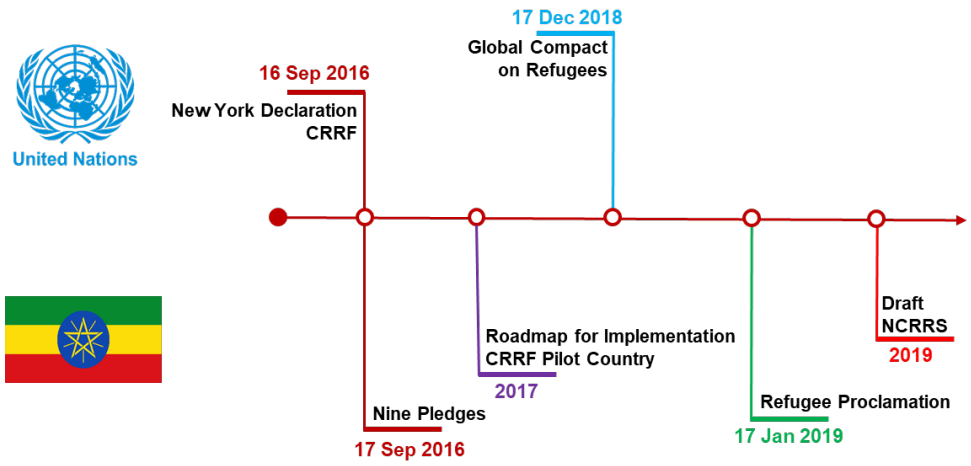
Figure 1: Number of registered refugees and asylum seekers in Ethiopia, 2019



Source: UNHCR (2019e) CC-BY 3.0

Ethiopia's approach to the management of refugees has experienced major revisions over recent years. These are closely linked to a changing paradigm at the global level. The declared objective of the Ethiopian government is to ensure a more sustainable approach to refugee care by allowing refugees to integrate into local communities and national systems, giving them the opportunity to sustain themselves. This should go hand in hand with increased donor support. Subsequently, Ethiopia not only became a co-convener of the first GRF, but also one of 15 pilot countries to implement the CRRF. During a Leaders' Summit, the day after the adoption of the New York Declaration (in December 2016), Ethiopia promulgated commitments on how to operationalise the CRRF (see Figure 2). These became known as the Nine Pledges. Their implementation is described in a roadmap strategy paper (ARRA, 2017). The pledges address, inter alia, the sectors of education, work and livelihoods, documentation, access to land and social cohesion. Additionally, Ethiopia vowed to increase the share of refugees living outside of refugee camps to 10 per cent. In a similar vein, the Ethiopian government provided new opportunities for local integration by declaring its intent to issue work permits, devote land and provide jobs in recently created industrial parks to refugees. In this way, the integration of refugees aligns with Ethiopia's overall industrial development policy, the Growth and Transformation Plan II (Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, 2016).

Figure 2: Policy milestones regarding the local integration of refugees



Source: Authors

The CRRF process in Ethiopia peaked in January 2019 with the adoption of the Refugee Proclamation,[3] which revises the previous refugee law of 2004. Whereas the previous legal framework highlighted the protection of refugees, the new law's emphasis is on creating durable solutions through local integration. Thereby, it effectively converts many ideas of the CRRF into national law. UNHCR was involved in the drafting process of this new law (Maru, 2019) and endorsed it as a model for other refugee hosting nations (UNHCR, 2019f).

The Proclamation aims to create durable local solutions by reducing the barriers refugees face in pursuing economic activities for their livelihoods. Most crucial in this regard is the right to work, which is granted to refugees and asylum seekers to the same extent as the most favourable treatment accorded to other foreign nationals. Considering scarce economic opportunities in hosting areas, this right is bolstered by the right to freely move and reside within Ethiopia (Art. 28 (1)). The Proclamation, thus, effectively ends Ethiopia's strict encampment policy, which only saw exemptions for students and Eritrean refugees. However, the freedom of movement may be limited, as Ethiopia's Agency for Refugee and Returnee Affairs (ARRA) retains the right to "arrange places or areas within which refugees and asylum-seekers may live" (Art. 28 (2)). The Proclamation, furthermore, provides improved legal grounds for the access to national services like primary education (Art. 24 (1)), health systems (Art. 25), justice (Art. 36), banking (Art. 33), telecommunications (Art. 34) and vital events registration (Art. 36).

Overall, the Proclamation is, thus, praised internationally as a pioneering force for refugee protection, assistance and provision of durable solutions. However, so far, it remains unclear to what extent refugees can effectively claim their new rights. One reason for concern is the overall poor availability and standards of services (i.e., health) for Ethiopian citizens, which are often inferior to those provided in refugee camps. Moreover, since an effective implementation likewise requires a restructuring of competences and finance, it likely creates opposition. On a bureaucratic level, the implementation of the law through secondary legislation will require additional efforts by various actors, such as local

3 Hereinafter referred to as the "Proclamation".

governments and the consultation with host communities. The government has drafted a National Comprehensive Refugee Response Strategy (NCRRS) as a key reference for the operationalisation of the CRRF and GCR in Ethiopia. However, even though a draft of the NCRRS was submitted through ARRA to the Council of Ministers in 2019, it awaits finalisation until further notice (UNHCR, 2019a). Related regional action plans are envisioned to be developed to support the adaptation of the national policies to the local context.

Refugee policies in Ethiopia, however, are not insulated from the broader political developments in the country. At least in parts of Ethiopia, most notably in the Gambella Region, regional and local level governments and other political stakeholders have reservations about, if not outright resistance against, the formal integration of refugees (Maru, 2019). Their presence (and often informal integration into local communities) has already begun to change the existing ethnic composition in certain areas, challenging the basis of established power arrangements in Ethiopia's ethnic federalism. Especially in Gambella, regional leaders are concerned that formal integration might change the relative balance between the two dominant ethnic groups and, thus, cause a shift in power relations (Carver, Gebresenbet, et al., 2019; Hagos, 2021). In these cases, integration could, thus, give rise to further tensions and violence. In other parts of the country, though, such as the Somali Region, ethnic concerns play a minor role as refugees share the same ethnicity as their host communities.

2.3 The role of local governments: theory and status quo in Ethiopia

2.3.1 Why foster the role of local governments in refugee integration?

Integrating refugees into their host communities is inevitably a process that requires a great amount of political and administrative management at the local level. Consequently, local authorities are key actors when it comes to the successful local integration of refugees. In many LMICs, however, and especially in fragile contexts, local governance structures are often weak, understaffed and insufficiently financed (Grävingholt & Von Haldenwang, 2016). The implementation of international and national refugee integration policies should, therefore, be expected to constitute a particular challenge for local authorities.

In principle, decentralised political structures have been shown to be advantageous as they foster accountability, civic monitoring and the efficiency and demand-orientation of the public sector. This can be particularly relevant in fragile contexts and humanitarian crises, where political participation, the provision of government services, the mobilisation of state revenues and policy implementation are major challenges. In contrast to the opportunities associated with empowered local governments in fragile contexts, their reality is often marked by a lack of personnel, financial, legal, and political resources. In more conducive environments, characterised by clear competences and a minimum of guaranteed financial independence, local authorities can become essential drivers for development (Grävingholt & Von Haldenwang, 2016) as well as humanitarian governance (Hilhorst, 2019). Scientific findings increasingly highlight the crucial role of local governments in shaping humanitarian aid through interactions between authorities, implementing agencies and communities (Grävingholt & Von Haldenwang, 2016; Hilhorst, 2019, pp. 109-110).

Facilitated engagement between local governments and humanitarian actors can help to ensure a smooth transition between humanitarian, recovery and development phases.

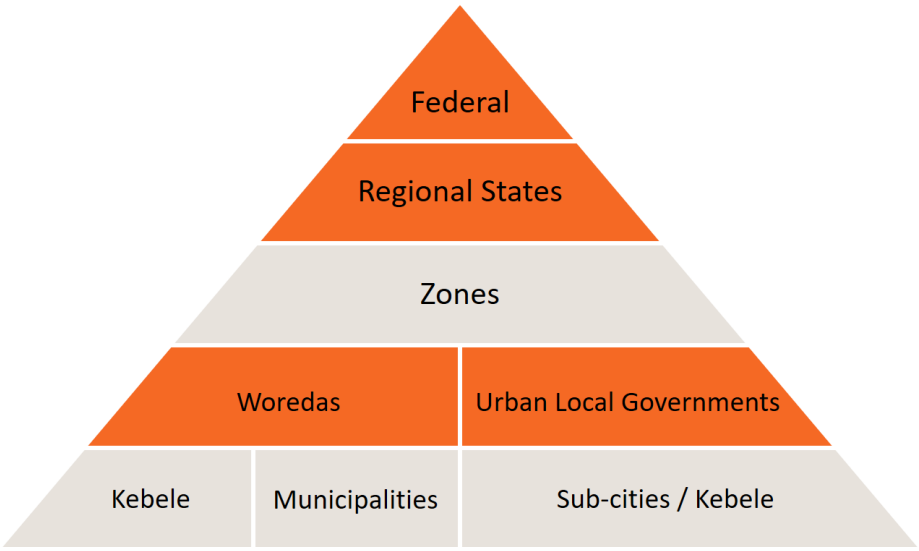
The assumption that decentralisation and strong local governments are beneficial for development as well as humanitarian contexts is not only an academic point of view, it derives from experience of practical implementation. Efforts must happen at the local level, where migrants integrate. This may include the new community where migrants settle, the workplace where they find a job or the schools where they send their children. Subnational governments manage many of the policies that support migrant integration, such as housing and education as well as support to local employment and welfare services. Local leaders know their cities and communities best. They know how migrants can contribute in many areas, from meeting employment gaps to diversifying economic and cultural opportunities for all residents. Many local authorities are familiar with integration challenges due to the presence of long-settled migrants in their communities. Over time, they have developed (informal) integration practices, often before the formulation of (formalised) national policies. Integrating people also means implementing policies, and this can only happen through cross-level and cross-department coordination on the ground (European Commission, 2013; OECD, 2018).

Nevertheless, when humanitarian crises occur, humanitarian and development actors do not necessarily know how to work with local governments. They often lack the knowledge of complex socio-economic dynamics and governance structures at the local level and do not necessarily have an understanding of the diversity of actors on the ground (Global Alliance for Urban Crises, 2019).

2.3.2 Local governments in Ethiopia: structures, roles and refugee integration

The Ethiopian federal government structure has three tiers – federal, regional and local – while the local level can be divided into two sublevels, the *woreda* (or city/municipal) and *kebele* (neighbourhood) (Figure 3). Formally, the national constitution only recognises and assigns powers, functions, and revenues between the first two tiers: the federal government and the nine politically autonomous regional states, which are further subdivided into administrative zones. Local governments, the third tier, are established by regions according to their own constitutions and governance structures, specifying responsibilities and powers (MUDHCo, 2014; World Bank, 2015). The most prevalent local structures are woredas (in rural areas) and urban local governments referred to as “city administrations”. These are semi-autonomous local government entities with legal status as corporate bodies with their own political leadership (council) and their own budget. Depending on the regional state and on the size of the city, woreda-level and city administrations may be further sub-divided into sub-cities/city districts, and/or kebeles. Smaller municipalities (which exist in rural areas below the woreda-level) may be governed by “town administrations” or “municipalities”, which are exclusively responsible for municipal functions and revenues (MUDHCo, 2014, pp. 29-30; World Bank, 2015, pp. 63-64, 99-100).

Figure 3: Three tiers of the Ethiopian federal governance system



Source: Authors, based on World Bank (2014)

In reality, experts agree that sub-national government entities only play a minor role in terms of policy- and decision-making in Ethiopia (Abbink, 2011, p. 601). Besides a generally observed lack of capacity, two reasons appear to be predominant: the persistence of ethnic politics and the long-standing one-party domination of the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) until its termination in 2019.[4]

However, decentralisation reforms have strengthened the role of local governments and given them responsibility for the provision of state services, such as education, health, justice, and security, and municipal services, such as roads, drainage, sanitation, and solid waste collection and disposal. Nevertheless, they often lack the capacity and the authority to fulfil their responsibilities. Important powers mostly remain at the regional level, particularly with respect to finance, land and personnel management. More generally, many municipalities lack the human and financial resources to govern and deliver services (World Bank, 2015, pp. 65-66). In line with the process of decentralisation, regional states have devolved some powers to woreda administrations that enjoy administrative autonomy: they have the discretion to hire, promote, transfer and take disciplinary action against their public employees. Primary school, primary health, inter-woreda road service and land administration are also delegated to the woredas. Responsibilities for secondary education, technical and vocational education and training (TVET), and hospital-level health services are only delegated as far down as the local level. woredas prepare their own budgets and allocate recurrent and capital expenditures. However, woreda capital budget needs are centralised at the regional state level. This implies

4 The EPRDF was an ethnic federalist political coalition that dominated Ethiopian politics from 1991 to 2019 and shaped the state building process. Ethnic politics often took place, not within the formal institutions of the federal system, but within the country's dominant political party (Erk, 2017, p. 222). In practice, the omnipresent interference of the federal government via the ruling party and its cadre led to an effective (but centralised) governance structure (Abbink, 2011, p. 602). However, the situation has changed since 2018 with the election of Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed, whose term has so far been characterised by a realignment of political and ethnical practice – on both the national and sub-national level.

that woredas apply states' policies and norms with little scope to modify and provide public services set by the states (Baraki, 2015, pp. 174-175).

One of the major constraints for development and the performance of local governments are financial capacities. The system of municipal finance has a strong influence on the resources available to local authorities to provide public services to populations. Regions receive the majority of their financial resources through fiscal transfers from the federal government, and, in turn, provide intergovernmental fiscal transfers to the local level. The main federal to regional transfer takes the form of non-earmarked block grants. Although resources flowing through the block grant system are increasing, on average 80 per cent of these resources are used to fund salaries and other recurrent expenditures, while resources for capital expenditures are limited. This hampers development, although local governments are improving in the area of service delivery. Nevertheless, the current financing arrangements rely heavily on own-source revenues, which are mostly insufficient to meet the demand for public services (Fiseha, 2019, p. 3; World Bank, 2015, p. 38).

Generally speaking, for managerial, institutional and political reasons, not all local authorities enjoy the same level of autonomy. woredas in the relatively advanced states have stronger decision-making power than their counterparts in the "emerging states",[5] such as the Somali Region, where decision-making powers remain mostly at higher-level institutions.

Considering the research setting, woredas and kebeles as the predominant form of local governments are the focus of the study. However, to grasp the political process of CRRF implementation in a holistic way and further identify different interests, roles and responsibilities, attention is also paid to regional and federal government authorities.

2.3.3 Decentralisation and local governments in Ethiopia: the Somali Region

The Somali Regional State is the second largest Ethiopian state by land mass. It is one of the least developed and most unstable regions in Ethiopia. The regional state has a rather negative image that is mostly associated with drought, inaccessibility and conflict (Hagmann, 2005, pp. 510, 512); until a change of government in 2018, it was characterised by widespread political, organisational, and financial disorganisation within different branches of government. Regarding the political dimension of this image, there are two hindering factors that go hand in hand with the process of federal state building: intra-regional conflicts and a dominant federal government. Additionally, the region's political makeup is characterised by inherent clan structures in which elders and clan leaders are formally as well as informally integrated into political processes (Hagmann, 2005, pp. 428-429).

Besides ongoing and newly emerging conflicts within the Somali Region, the post-1991 regional state building initially opened new opportunities and promised autonomy.

5 The Somali Region, Benishangul-Gumuz, Gambella and Afar are the four regional states of Ethiopia often referred to as "emerging states". According to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, they share six characteristics: (1) a poor level of infrastructure and services; (2) proneness to border conflicts; (3) strong traditional social practices, a predominantly rural, mobile population, and pastoralism and agriculture as dominating means of livelihood; (4) women suffer from traditional marriage practices and a lack of education; (5) the local government is impoverished; and (6) the regional government lacks the capacity to support the local government system (Government of Ethiopia, 2007).

However, the attempt to establish a functional and autonomous administration has been unfruitful, partly owing to the limited devolution of resources to the woreda level. Hence, "state presence has remained embryonic in urban centres and has nearly been fictional in the rural areas" (Hagmann, 2005, pp. 449-450).

Hagmann (2005) and Samatar (2004) explain the underperformance of local and regional authorities in the Somali Region by EPRDF's interference in regional politics. This derailed the promise of an autonomous and legitimate local administration that could remedy past ailments. The combination of an ill-equipped regional authority and a dominating national regime barely left space for the creation of a viable and autonomous regional state.

Nevertheless, new hopes for political stability were raised with the inauguration of Prime Minister Ahmed Abiy in 2018, whose brief tenure, thus far has been marked by a new political direction, as well as an increased tolerance for political dissidents and a historic peace deal with neighbouring Eritrea. Up to this point, his tenure has also led to a political shift at the regional level. Prime Minster Abiy deposed the former Somali State President Abdi Mohamed Omar in August 2018 and invited Mustafa Omer, an exiled activist, to take over as acting state president. Before 2018, the Somali Region was reportedly oppressed by its former president. Since then, the newly appointed state president has overseen a political turnaround, trying to reform the former authoritarian set-up. The change of leadership opens up new opportunities towards decentralisation, while Jigjiga, the capital of the Somali Regional State, has already seen an influx of outside investment that is creating new economic potential in the region (Caniglia, 2018; de la Chaux & Nutz, 2019; The Economist, 2019). After years of closed politics, this new context provides an opportunity to work towards the operationalisation of the pledges on local integration, while it also created a (temporary) state of instability and political re-orientation (Hall, 2019, p. 5).

However, as this study is being written, Ethiopia is experiencing severe political turmoil as a result of armed conflicts between federal armed forces and military units under the control of the Tigray People's Liberation Front. The TPLF took control over Mekelle in June 2021 after nearly seven months of rule by the federal armed forces. However, the fighting continues in the Western Tigray, home to large populations of both Amhara and Tigrayans. Moreover, the dispute over the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam between Ethiopia, Sudan and Egypt remains an ongoing issue between the three countries. At this point, possible implications for internal political stability and the response of the international community cannot be foreseen. In reaction to the conflict, the EU has already delayed 90 million in aid (Reuters, 2020). The situation might impact the formerly favourable political environment as described above.

2.4 The role of the international community in Ethiopia

Ethiopia's major role in hosting a large number of refugees that are prone to humanitarian crises, as well as the country's recent international commitments to engage in the local integration of refugees, make it particularly interesting to the international community. Ethiopia has been affected by numerous humanitarian crises and conflicts in the Horn of Africa over the past decades. However, it has proven to be an anchor of stability by hosting a large number of refugees and being a reliable partner in the cooperation with humanitarian and development organisations.

The country's approach to refugee integration and development concerns has a close connection to the humanitarian-development nexus. In 2016, at the World Humanitarian Summit donor states and institutions, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), private actors and crisis-affected states coined the term "humanitarian-development nexus" to underline the interconnection between humanitarian aid and development cooperation (UNDP, 2019). The main objective of acknowledging the nexus is to closely align and intertwine the activities of the hitherto separate fields of action in order to enhance the sustainability and effectiveness of their engagement. One of the core points of this nexus framework is a focus on the close cooperation and information sharing among the crisis-affected states and the humanitarian aid and development institutions. Furthermore, the aim is to put local leadership and a demand-driven approach in the limelight of the cooperation with crisis-affected states – an endeavour that does not lack challenges. In Ethiopia, the intended closer connection of humanitarian aid and development cooperation manifests itself in an increasing number of projects that incorporate priority areas of both sectors. Many of these projects explicitly refer to the CRRF, and more widely, to the sustainable integration of refugees in local contexts to foster national and regional development plans.

Due to its important role as a pilot country for CRRF implementation and its relevance for displacement in the Horn of Africa, the conducive environment in Ethiopia opens a window of opportunity for the ambitions of the international community to promote the humanitarian development nexus.

Ethiopia's role for the international community is also reflected in terms of development assistance. A wide range of international actors are currently active and financially involved in Ethiopia. According to the gross ODA provided for 2017 and 2018 (USD 4.3 billion and USD 5.1 billion, respectively), the top ten donors in Ethiopia rank as follows: the World Bank, the United States, the United Kingdom, EU institutions, the African Development Fund, Germany, the Global Fund, Canada, the Netherlands and Sweden (OECD, 2020).

Moreover, with regard to humanitarian organisations in Ethiopia, the total funding requirements for 2020 amount to USD 1 billion (UNOCHA, 2020), out of which USD 658 million account for UNHCR planned operations in 2020 (UNHCR, 2020a). According to UNHCR, the central humanitarian actors are UNHCR, the World Food Programme (WFP), the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), Plan International Ethiopia, Save the Children International (SCI), the International Rescue Committee (IRC), the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), and the Danish Refugee Council (DRC) (UNHCR, 2020a). Furthermore, independent organisations like the IKEA Foundation and bilateral development cooperation agencies, such as the United Kingdom's Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO)[6], Germany's development agency (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ)), and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), complement the list of aid organisations dealing with displacement in Ethiopia.

6 The UK's Department for International Development (DFID) was a ministerial department from May 1997 to September 2020. It merged with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office to create the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO).

Focus areas of international actors in Ethiopia cut across the humanitarian sector (such as food, shelter, protection and health, as well as water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) facilities (UNHCR, 2019b, p. 17) and also across more developmental issues (such as education, job opportunities, infrastructure, manufacturing and strengthening governance (World Bank, 2017a).

3 The local integration of refugees in Ethiopia: research questions and methodology

3.1 Research questions

In light of the increasing number of protracted refugee situations, the concept of local integration of refugees has gained ground as a sustainable approach not only in academia but also in political practice. This paper presents results from research conducted on the concept of local integration of refugees in the Ethiopian Somali Region. To understand local integration over the course of the CRRF and the conditions for its successful implementation, this research addresses the following five key factors.

a) Which dynamics, interests and political agendas have shaped the CRRF policy process and, thus, guided the (effective) CRRF implementation in Ethiopia?

It is important to understand the underlying dynamics, interests and political agendas of CRRF stakeholders as these are highly relevant to the political process guiding the CRRF implementation. Based on the assumption that the CRRF implementation needs to bring significant restructuring of resources and competences for the benefit of local authorities, this study aims to shed light on the political economy of the CRRF implementation and the policy process behind it. Governance structures, decision-making processes and motivations are decisive factors that impact the effective realisation of local integration.

b) What are the practical challenges for the CRRF implementation?

Since the CRRF implementation is a complex process involving a multitude of stakeholders on different federative levels, it is likely to face several practical challenges, including parallel service delivery structures, different delivery standards and resource competition (Carver, Gedi, & Naish, 2019).

c) What is the role of local authorities in the CRRF implementation process, and to what extent are they playing an active role in fostering the local integration of refugees?

While the negotiations leading up to Ethiopia's commitment as a CRRF pilot country have largely taken place at the international and national level, their actual implementation is to be realised at the very local level. To grasp the realisation of local integration, this study looks at the role of local governments and implementing governance structures. The literature suggests that local authorities lack the capacity to be involved in the process in a constant and significant way. This is more relevant for the Somali Region, which belongs to the four "emerging regions" characterised by fragile socio-economic conditions and governance structures that are too weak to deliver most rudimentary infrastructure and services.

d) How and to what degree are international actors engaged in and, thus, supporting the sustainable integration of refugees in line with the CRRF in Ethiopia?

This paper addresses, furthermore, the scope of action of international actors within the CRRF implementation process and the context in which they operate. Durable solutions in LMICs largely depend on the support of the international community. This research examines the international involvement in light of the humanitarian-development nexus.

e) What are the perceptions regarding local refugee integration among the host and refugee communities, and what are the material and community factors that influence these perceptions?

CRRF implementation, if comprehensively addressed, will have a significant impact on the lives of both refugees and host communities. Currently, the relationship between host and refugee communities in the Somali Region is largely peaceful, and the concept of local integration of refugees, therefore, has not encountered any substantial criticism from either group (Carver, Gedi, et al., 2019). But how the impacts of the CRRF implementation are perceived by the two communities might also shape the long-term prospects of the concept of local integration and is, thus, also a subject of this analysis.

By answering these questions, this study aims to create a comprehensive picture of local integration of refugees in Ethiopia. Based on the commitments that are aligned with the GCR and the CRRF, this research assesses factors that determine the degree of successful realisation and, furthermore, derives recommendations for involved actors.

3.2 Case selection and research sites

The Somali Region serves as a case study to answer the research questions. Regarding the overall geographical determination of the research area, the Somali Region was chosen for several reasons. First, it hosts a large number of refugees. Second, the situation for Somali refugees in Ethiopia has generally been a protracted one. Third, it is particularly relevant to CRRF implementation in Ethiopia, given the regional government's buy-in to the concept and many existing donor activities. And fourth, the refugees and host communities there are ethnically relatively homogenous and less prone to conflict.

Hence, the Somali Region provides a suitable case study for assessing the CRRF implementation in Ethiopia. The protracted crisis in Somalia has displaced millions of persons over the past decades. More than 190,000 of the 700,000 refugees in Ethiopia are of Somali origin (UNHCR, 2019e); they constituted the second largest group of refugees in Ethiopia in 2019. They predominantly live in camps distributed throughout the Ethiopian Somali Region. Whereas refugee populations in other parts of the country and with other origins (South Sudan, Eritrea, Sudan) are similarly significant in number, regional differences regarding the local context and integration potential of the various populations require acknowledgement. For example, since 2009, Eritrean refugees have experienced benefits resulting from the "Out-of-Camp Policy"[7] that affect the potential experiences of

7 The "Out-of-Camp Policy" gives Eritrean refugees the right to choose their place of residence freely but under the discretion of the regulations of ARRA (Federal Government of Ethiopia, 2019, Art. 28).

the CRRF implementation. Another political factor to acknowledge is the existence of ethnic tensions between (and among) refugees and locals. Here, Gambella Region is a case in point where the swift influx of refugees from the cross-national ethnicity of Nuer has altered power relations and threatens social peace, complicating both local integration and data collection (Carver, Gebresenbet, et al., 2019; Hagos, 2021). More crucially, the delicate situation has affected local governments' attitudes towards the concept of local integration, slowing down its implementation. By contrast, there are many CRRF-related activities in the Somali Region. This may be facilitated by the fact that refugees and host communities share a mutual ethnicity and language. Yet, different (sub-)clan structures may still induce tensions.

The interpretation of results must bear in mind the particular context of this case selection; the intent is to identify lessons learned that can inform policies elsewhere. On the one hand, less conflictual relations due to a shared ethnic identity may provide a comparatively easy field for local integration. Nonetheless, this situation is not unusual; there are many contexts in which refugees and host communities are transnational ethnic kin. On the other hand, many structural issues of the Somali Region, such as the weak capacities of local administrations, high poverty rates and the novelty of the CRRF implementation, pose major obstacles to successful implementation. These structural issues are likewise widespread in other humanitarian contexts, making the Somali Region a specific yet generalisable case study. In summary, these factors exemplify the relevance of the CRRF implementation in the Somali Region and allow for extrapolation to other refugee hosting contexts.

As derived from the Nine Pledges (see Section 2.2), this research is organised along the overriding sectors of education, work and livelihoods, documentation, access to land and peaceful coexistence. These sectors cover most fields of the pledges and combine areas of implementation in which integration seems to have already proceeded (i.e., education) and others that are less advanced (i.e., documentation) or even appear highly conflictual (i.e., land access). Thus, the selection of several sectors allows conclusions to be drawn from different contexts, political settings and specific challenges within the Somali Region. Aw-Barre and Sheder, both within the Aw-Barre Woreda, were chosen as the two refugee camps to be assessed in more detail (see Appendix 2 for a detailed justification of camp selection). The camp selection drew from considerations of representativeness for the Somali Region and Ethiopia in general, as well as their coverage in previous studies.

Due to the emergence of the global COVID-19 pandemic at the beginning of 2020, data collection was not able to be completed as planned, which affected the level of comparison regarding certain aspects of the research questions.

3.3 Methodology

This study employs a mixed methods research design, combining qualitative data collected through expert interviews and a focus group discussion with a quantitative household survey. Both methodological components were designed to be of equal relevance to the research. Results were only fully integrated at the inferential stage; however, the qualitative findings from the interviews informed the questionnaire design. The different methodological approaches address separate aspects of the research, crosscutting the thematic areas.

The qualitative interviews shed light on the policy process as well as on the role, capacities and challenges of local governments in the CRRF implementation process by consulting different actors from the local to the international level. They consisted of semi-structured interviews with stakeholders and experts from Ethiopian and international public and civil society institutions that are involved in the CRRF process. They were based on topical guiding questions and were conducted at federal, regional and local levels in Ethiopia (including woreda and kebele). To better understand the perspectives of the affected communities, a focus group discussion was conducted with the Refugee Central Committee of Sheder refugee camp. With the informed consent of the interviewees, interviews were recorded, transcribed and coded for later analysis.

The quantitative household survey aimed to capture the status quo and perceptions about developments in the past year concerning the integration of refugees in the Somali Region. The survey was set up to be representative of the refugee and host community in and around the refugee camps Sheder and Aw-Barre with a total of 2,000 respondents. Due to the COVID-19 interruptions in data collection activities, only data from 675 respondents from both refugee communities was collected. Within the selected communities, a random sample was drawn on the household level. To capture different experiences concerning the thematic areas within one household, which are likely to vary along characteristics such as gender or age, three persons per household were interviewed. These three persons were (1) the self-defined household head, (2) the main caretaker of children and (3) a randomly selected household member aged between 18 and 35. The further elaboration of the questionnaire highly benefited from the contextual expertise of local research partners and the feedback of the enumerators during the survey training before conducting the survey.

4 Findings and analysis

4.1 Policy process

4.1.1 Process leading up to the adoption of the Refugee Proclamation

With the 2019 Refugee Proclamation, Ethiopia adopted one of the most liberal refugee legislations in the world (see Section 2.1). Considering that the integration of refugees is a costly endeavour and that Ethiopia is one of the poorest countries in the world, this seems surprising.

When Ethiopia first presented the Nine Pledges in New York in 2016, the international community's political agenda was dominated by the will to find solutions to the migration challenges that were affecting many of its key donors. Accordingly, UNHCR was looking for partners among refugee-hosting countries to take a new path of cooperation, focussing on refugees' prospects of staying in their countries of origin or transit (Carver, Gedi, et al., 2019). Ethiopia at the time had a very ambitious industrialisation strategy, the implementation of which required heavy investment. Inspired by the Jordan Jobs Compact launched in February 2016, the Ethiopian government and its international partners connected these two discussions. In return for Ethiopia's reform of its refugee policy, the

Ethiopia Jobs Compact was announced just a few days later.[8] This Jobs Compact pledged funds over USD 500 million from the European Investment Bank, DFID and the World Bank and was supposed to create 100,000 jobs, 30 per cent of which were to be allocated to refugees (Nigusie & Carver, 2019). In the education sector, the Ethiopian government had taken a lead role on the level of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) by fostering the regional alignment of education standards and adopting the Djibouti Declaration on Refugee Education in 2017 (IGAD, 2017). The document represents a strong commitment for IGAD member states and development partners to take collective responsibility to ensure that every refugee, returnee and member of host communities has access to quality education in a safe learning environment without discrimination.

Economic and social development considerations have most likely been the biggest driver for Ethiopia's commitment to the legislative refugee reform. Heavy investment from the international community not only helped Ethiopia in its industrialisation endeavours, it also helped to combat the persisting shortage of foreign exchange reserves (Interviews 14 and 15). However, the adoption of a liberal refugee legislation also fit the zeitgeist in Ethiopia (Interview 14). Being one of the biggest refugee hosting countries in the world is not only part and parcel of Ethiopia's international self-depiction, but is also consistent with a wide-spread culture of supporting people who flee from war and persecution; this was also a shared view of many of the Ethiopian interviewees (Interviews 4 and 27).

It is important to note that the decision-making process prior to the adoption of the Refugee Proclamation was strongly dominated by the top levels of the Ethiopian government. As one interviewee put it, "It was a political decision, made on the highest level. It did not come from the ground" (Interview 7). Regional and local actors often emphasised this. They pointed out that they do not "own" the agenda and, therefore, are waiting for further directives from the government to cascade the national legislation down to their level (Interviews 9, 15 and 50). Many of the interviewed stakeholders saw a big challenge in the fact that the top-down process of decision-making did not offer enough incentives for lower federative levels to implement the legislation (Interviews 15 and 23).

After the Ethiopian government had made the Nine Pledges in New York in 2016, the political process of the CRRF implementation began quickly and was relatively smooth. The 2017 roadmap for the implementation of the Nine Pledges and the application of CRRF in Ethiopia outlined the bureaucratic structures that would oversee the implementation of CRRF in Ethiopia, emphasising a "whole government approach" to delivery through joint ownership by ARRA and the Ministry of Finance and Economic Cooperation (MoFEC) (ARRA, 2017). A steering committee under the Office of the Prime Minister, comprising ARRA, MoFEC and UNHCR, was set up to steer and coordinate CRRF implementation endeavours of national and international actors, as well as of different federative levels of the Ethiopian governmental system. The Steering Committee started meeting monthly in early 2018 and technical committee meetings were held in Addis Ababa for each of the thematic areas. A National Coordination Office (originally referred to as a National Coordination Unit) was established,

8 The Ethiopian government identified industrialisation as the means to transform the economy, reduce poverty, provide jobs and achieve the ambitious aim of transitioning the economy to lower-middle-income status by 2025. The Job Compact aims to support the industrialisation, employment and refugee policies of the Government of Ethiopia so that decent jobs can be created for Ethiopians and refugees. Thus, it supports Ethiopia's economic ambitions and at the same time guarantees the government's commitment to the integration of refugees.

and launch events were held in each of the five refugee hosting regions. What is more, Ethiopia started elaborating the new implementation strategy, the NCRRS.

4.1.2 A bumpy road to local implementation

However, the national legislation has not yet cascaded down to lower federative levels and, hence, its application on the ground remains fragmented.[9] On the national level, implementation has been sluggish due to the following four factors.

a) The government change in April 2018 and concomitant reorganisation processes

With the accelerating reform processes following the inauguration of Abiy Ahmed as Prime Minister in April 2018, CRRF implementation slowed down significantly (Interviews 7, 15, 44 and 54). On the one hand, the new government continued to work along the lines decided upon by the previous government. It drafted the NCRRS, issued the Refugee Proclamation and made new pledges at the Global Refugee Forum in Geneva in late 2019.[10] However, although there is "still a sense of commitment" in the current government, it did not originally sign the agreements but inherited them from the previous government (Interview 33). Some of the interviewed stakeholders considered this to be one of the factors hampering the implementation process, stating that it would be "very hard to build up that momentum again" (ibid.). The last meeting of the Steering Committee took place in May 2018. Since this meeting, there has been a widespread change of structures and personnel in all relevant government institutions, including ARRA. ARRA's institutional structure and personnel underwent significant changes after 2018. Not only was the institution's leadership changed, but the agency was also assigned to another ministry (Ministry of Peace) and underwent a functional internal review (Interview 26). As ARRA is an essential stakeholder in the CRRF implementation process, its structural and internal reorganisation put the whole CRRF implementation process in Ethiopia on hold.

b) Competing political priorities

Since his inauguration, Ethiopia's Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed has accelerated a comprehensive and very ambitious reform process, which has changed the political context in the country significantly. Ethiopia is currently undergoing a radical political and economic transition, which has been compared with that of the former Eastern European States after the fall of the Iron Curtain (Interview 14). Rapid progress in terms of political liberalisation has been made: the state of emergency has been lifted; political prisoners have been released and plans have been announced to revise repressive structures.[11] This liberalisation process, however, has been marred by ethnic violence and tensions, which

9 The governments of the five refugee hosting regions were supposed to draft regional action plans for the implementation of CRRF in their respective contexts. The maturity of these regional action plans remains unclear: some of the interviewees claim that they have already been finalised (Interview 2), while others say they are still under preparation (Interview 15).

10 However, one of the interviewees observing the Geneva Forum contended that the new pledges developed during the forum were replacing the Nine Pledges from 2016 and were "tremendously watered down" (Interview 15).

11 To be sure, in April 2020 the Ethiopian government announced a (new) nation-wide state of emergency, valid for a five-month period, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

have been partly inherited from the previous administration. The number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) has increased to 1.8 million (Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, 2019), clearly surpassing the number of refugees. Ethiopia has seen authoritarian regimes for many decades and ethnic discrimination has a long history in the country. The release of pressure due to the political liberalisation reforms opened space for protest, tension and violence. In addition to these enormous ethnic tensions, Ethiopia is currently facing an economic transition. Due to its socialist past, much of the economic structures are still based on a planned economy mindset. The current government has set up ambitious economic plans to open the Ethiopian economy. Although Ethiopia's economy experienced annual growth rates of 9.9 per cent from 2007/2008 to 2017/2018, poverty reduction and employment creation remain a big economic challenge.

In light of these major challenges (the COVID-19 pandemic, the continued Tigray conflict, the ongoing dispute of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam and the delayed national elections[12]) the Ethiopian government has increasingly less incentive to implement the Refugee Proclamation, which would grant rights to refugees in times of domestic turmoil and transition. Many of the interviewees stated that the development of secondary legislation to assist interpretation of the new Refugee Proclamation was very unlikely to be in place before the pending elections (Interviews 11 and 15).

c) Lack of coordination and awareness

Generally, the degree of coordination between the stakeholders involved in the implementation process is rather low. The dysfunctionality of the Steering Committee, which has not met in more than two years, is perceived as a major factor hampering the coordination process, which is regretted by many of the interviewed stakeholders (Interviews 7 and 11). Several interviewees pointed out that they wished for a high-level coordination unit to steer and coordinate their endeavours. However, some interviewees made it clear that some of the institutions were not even aware of the Steering Committee's absence and concomitant dysfunctionality, while perceiving themselves as supportive to inclusive and efficient cooperation mechanisms (Interview 47). The absence of a functional steering committee consequently hinders the involvement of relevant line ministries. At the same time, coordination is also a big challenge for the international community and national NGOs. Knowledge sharing and cooperation between the stakeholders takes place only sporadically and, thus, is weak. International actors further highlight that local actors were not easy to work with because they were hardly aware of the CRRF and their own role in its implementation (Interviews 7, 21 and 51).

Second, it addresses the challenge for international actors to coordinate their actions with the Ethiopian government. A central issue is the so far rather centralised coordination and rigid stipulations set by the Ethiopian government with regard to both humanitarian aid and development projects. In this context, the vertical distribution of tasks, responsibilities, financial support and capacity building in the Ethiopian governing structures play an important role.

12 General parliamentary elections were supposed to be held in Ethiopia in August 2020 but were postponed to June 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The elections in the Somali and Harar regional states were postponed a second time to September 2021. Thus, the government under Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed remained in power for an extended period of time, which has had an impact on the political agenda and aroused opposition.

d) ARRA's institutional self-interest

When it comes to refugee affairs, ARRA is the most important Ethiopian institution. In cooperation with UNHCR, it is responsible for large parts of service delivery to refugees within the camps. Moreover, ARRA is a well-funded organisation and the services it delivers to refugees qualitatively exceed those that the national institutions offer to Ethiopian nationals. While it is a powerful federal agency, ARRA also holds comprehensive responsibilities on the lowest federative levels, as it is exclusively responsible for "everything that happens in the refugee camps" (Interview 42). In practice, this means that ARRA operates both as a federal and local actor, possibly circumventing woreda administration. The agency's staff is better educated and often receives higher salaries than those in other government entities (Interviews 11 and 21). ARRA's role in the CRRF implementation process is complex. A comprehensive CRRF implementation would enable national, regional and local governments and ministries to deliver their services not only to national citizens but also to refugees. Thus, current parallel structures and ARRA's exclusive responsibility for refugee affairs would be dismantled by a uniform service delivery structure that included both hosts and refugees. This would mean the loss of funds, personnel and consequently political relevance for ARRA. From a political economy perspective, ARRA's institutional incentive to implement the CRRF is, therefore, questionable.

Another internal characteristic of the institution also limits ARRA's genuine will to implement the CRRF. Some observers argue that as a former semi-military institution once subordinate to the National Intelligence and Security Service (NISS), ARRA is still dominated by staff who prioritise security interests and harbour scepticism towards the liberalisation expressed in the Refugee Proclamation (Interview 7). The former powerful position under NISS entails the heritage of a self-perception of being an independent organisation that "does not want to be under the authority of anybody" (Interview 44). Experiences of the international community in cooperating with ARRA confirm this perception (Interviews 15, 22 and 42).

The limited incentive to step back from its power, combined with the self-perception as an independent and capable institution, imply ARRA's reluctance to actively coordinate their endeavours with the line ministries on all federative levels to prepare them for their future task, as rolled out in the CRRF. However, the line ministries themselves also have limited incentives to claim higher involvement and responsibilities. First, they are facing major challenges concerning service delivery even with regard to Ethiopian citizens and, second, the funds they could gain through engagement in refugee affairs seem to be limited for them and not worth the effort (Interview 15).

The political environment, as described above, has an irrefutable impact on the CRRF implementation on the ground and, thus, on the local realities of refugee integration. This can implicitly lead to practical challenges, which will be discussed in the following section.

4.2 Practical challenges of local integration

4.2.1 Parallel structures and diverging standards

ARRA's self-awareness is strongly interlinked with its predominant role in refugee service delivery within key sectors. Repeatedly, interviewees stated that ARRA and UNHCR are responsible for refugees, whereas local authorities are the main ones responsible for the national population. Currently, the objective of joint service delivery is realised by humanitarian actors starting to extend their programmes to the host population, rather than local authorities including refugees in their service delivery. ARRA clearly states that even when refugees are out of camp, they will remain as the main responsible institution for refugee affairs (Interview 20).

Moreover, the prevailing dominant role of ARRA and humanitarian actors creates an environment in which decentralisation processes are slowed down, and a system of parallel structures for the provision of government services has been established in several cases. Inefficiency as well as diverging standards of service delivery for refugees on the one side and the host community on the other side are often a result. While this observation also indicates a hindering factor for refugee integration in general, differences in quality of service delivery pose additional challenges with respect to tensions between the two groups.

The fact that the allocation of roles within the integration process can create a system of parallel structures and standards is most apparent in the education sector. Unlike other sectors analysed in this study, the structures for service delivery to refugees are very well established, however, they exist in a parallel system. ARRA is responsible for the refugee schools within the camp, and the Ethiopian government is responsible for the host community's schools. This hinders sound integration. Additionally, there is a strong divergence between the capacities of ARRA on the one hand and the education ministry, bureaus and offices on the other, which has implications for the quality of services provided.

At the same time, the integration of refugees into the local school system had already been practiced before the initiation of the CRRF. For decades, it has been a lived practice on the local level to allow refugee children to attend government-run schools (Interview 38). However, the CRRF and the policies that followed on the federal level pushed the formalisation process. This resulted in the adoption of a memorandum of understanding (MoU) between ARRA and the Ministry of Education (MoE) in April 2019 that codified the previously loose, informal and person-dependent agreements on the local level (Interview 4). This can be seen as a major achievement. According to the MoU, the aim is to have a shared responsibility for providing education services to both refugees and host communities, to foster joint coordination processes, integrate refugee secondary schools, and harmonise refugee primary schools (Interview 45).

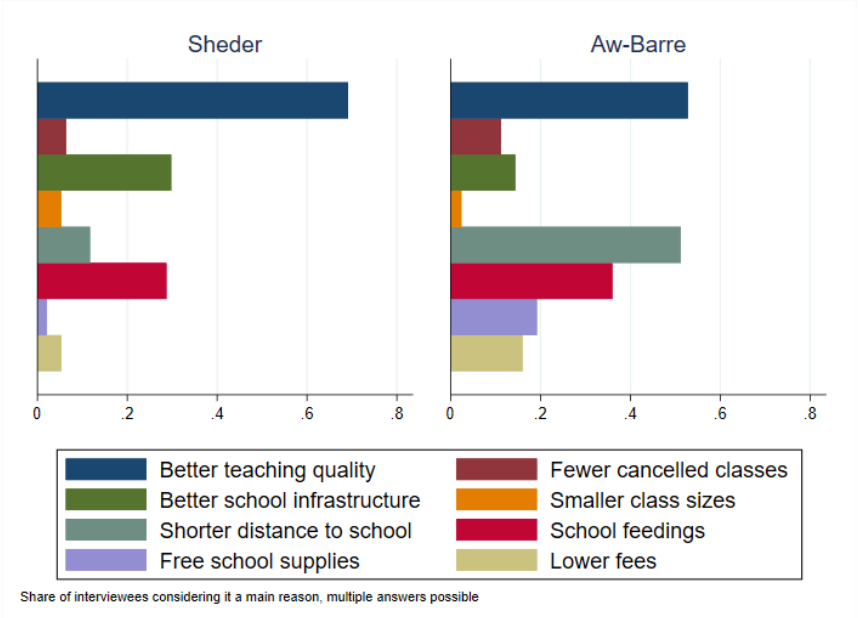
Nevertheless, the education sector remains divided into parallel structures. In accordance with Ethiopia's federal system, the Regional Education Bureaus at the regional state level are responsible for the overall administration and management of the educational system, with the exception of tertiary education and TVET, which are managed centrally by the Ministry of Science and Higher Education (MoSHE) (Fiseha, 2019, p. 14). This decentralised model implies that each Regional Education Bureau is both administratively and financially responsible for education delivery and receives substantial subsidies from

the federal government in support of general education and teacher training colleges (UNHCR, 2017, pp. 11-12). The same general structures apply for the education of refugees, with the only difference that ARRA appears as a key intermediary.

With regard to the general educational service provision, national standards are set by the MoE that each school is supposed to follow. However, ARRA-run schools within the camps and government-run schools outside the camp differ in their ability to meet these standards, with refugee schools performing better than "ordinary" local schools. (Interviews 19, 45 and 54). For example, the standard student-teacher ratio applied both by ARRA for refugee schools and by the woreda for host community schools is 40 to 1. While ARRA-managed refugee schools almost meet this standard with ratios of around 50 to 1, host community schools' pupil-teacher ratios lie around 80 to 1 (Interview 28). Additionally, several interviewees claimed that the infrastructure quality in the refugee camps was generally better than in local schools (Interview 4). A public official emphasises the difference in education quality between refugees and local residents: "If I had a child and had the choice between sending it to a school inside or outside the camp, I would definitely send it to the school inside the camp. No matter whether primary or secondary level is concerned" (Interview 19).

Additionally, for refugees, educational materials (such as school uniforms, textbooks, exercise books and school feedings) are free of charge whereas the local pupils normally have to provide all materials themselves (Interviews 19 and 45). This unequal treatment creates dissatisfaction among the local residents. Given these circumstances, it is not surprising that 97 per cent of the youngest school children of the refugees interviewed attend the school inside the camp. As main reasons for sending the children to this school (and not to a government-run school outside the camp), survey respondents mentioned the superior teaching quality (60 per cent), shorter distance (34 per cent), availability of school feeding (33 per cent) and better school infrastructure (21 per cent) (Figure 4).

Figure 4: Reasons for sending children to school inside refugee camp

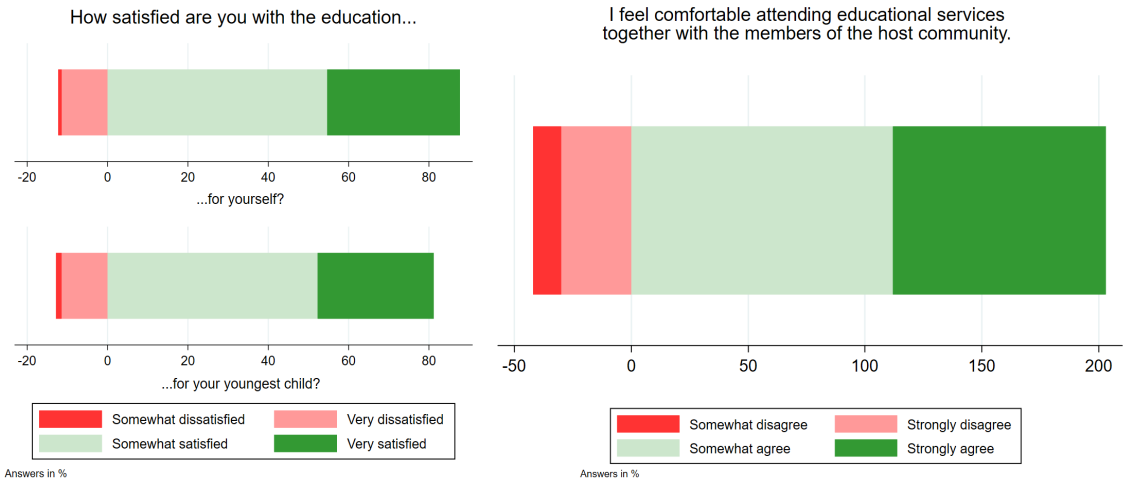


Source: Authors

Differences in (meeting) the standards of educational services between refugee and host communities are a controversial topic where two parallel systems compete for the same teachers. Perspectives differ considerably between the federal and local level.

Generally, refugees are satisfied with the education for themselves and their children (both 81 per cent). Also, when sharing schools with the local community, most refugees feel comfortable (67 per cent) and only 14 per cent feel discomfort (Figure 5). These positive perceptions support the further integration of educational services without risking social discomfort.[13] Referring to integrated secondary schools, a focus group discussion revealed: "They are friends [students from both communities]. But primary school, which is before, is difficult. The reason is that they are separated in primary school. And when they go to secondary school afterwards, they do not know each other. They need one year in secondary school to adapt to each other" (Interview 36). This is due to the fact that in the Somali Region, ARRA is the only provider of primary education for refugees, whereas secondary education (both, school inside and outside the camps) is open to children from both the host and refugee communities (Interviews 37, 38 and 45). These perceptions point to the potential that education can have for the sustainable integration of refugees, but also highlight the existing challenges to integration due to the parallel education system.

Figure 5: Satisfaction of refugees with educational services



Source: Authors

4.2.2 Lacking secondary legislation to translate national law into local action

Although the framework for the integration of refugees in the form of national legislation is in place, it is not being adequately translated into action. This has a substantial impact on the implementation processes on the ground. The lack of leadership (see Section 4.1) results in a lack of commitment to push through necessary secondary legislation and implementation processes. Moreover, the regulations drafted in the new legislation are leaving loopholes that obstruct a swift and comprehensive implementation of the policies. In particular, ARRA has a great deal of independence and individual agency over the timeframe by which the reforms are implemented.

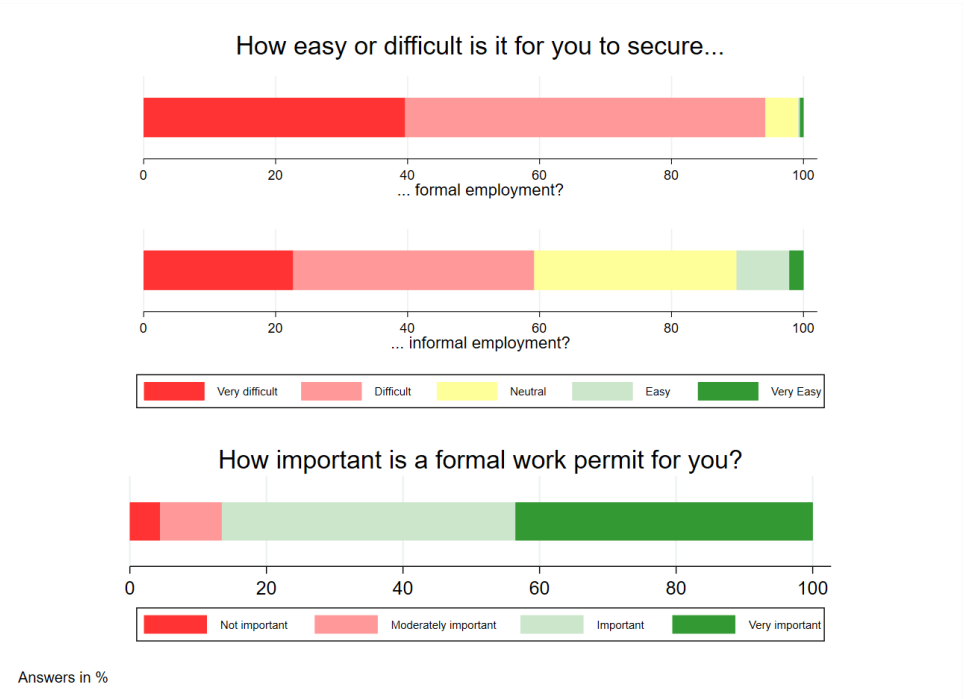
13 Due to limited availability of data, this only reflects the perception among the refugees.

This becomes evident when looking at the livelihood and employment sector, where many of the legal documents focussing on the economic integration of refugees are already in place on the national level, but the implementation of these measures is still lacking progress (Hall, 2019). On the one hand, MoUs between ARRA and the respective line ministries are being drafted (in the employment, agricultural and documentation sectors) and one is already in place (in the education sector) (Interviews 2 and 4), which suggests that the implementation is moving forward. On the other hand, it has also become clear that the pace of the reforms in the livelihood and employment sector has been underwhelming, and much of the progress has only been achieved because of pressure from external actors and donors, such as the World Bank (Interview 48).

Many of the introduced policies are implemented when ARRA feels that the appropriate time has come (Interview 48). Universal employment rights for refugees continue to be restricted (ibid.). The right to (formal) work, which is granted to refugees through the Refugee Proclamation (Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, 2019, Art. 26) is limited due to the fact that refugees are not issued official work permits or business licenses yet. Work permits under the regulation of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MoLSA) can only be issued when the person applying for the permit already has a prospective contract with a company and can prove that there is no equally or more qualified Ethiopian citizen that applied for the job: "You know the law of the country is for you to have a work permit, it should be a special skill that cannot be filled by Ethiopians. You need a hiring body that will apply on behalf of you saying that that person has a skill that they cannot find in an Ethiopian and then require a work permit for that person" (Interview 39). An additional obstacle is the current status of the implementation of the Out-of-Camp Policy, which gives refugees the right to choose their place of residence freely but under the discretion of the regulations of ARRA (Federal Government of Ethiopia, 2019, Art. 28). In practice, the vast majority of the refugees inside the camps are not allowed to resettle outside the camps, even though they are not subjected to a strict encampment policy. This significantly limits the opportunity to find and pursue employment (Interview 39). Under the current circumstances it is almost impossible for refugees to find formal work even though national legislation grants them this right.

According to the quantitative data, the majority of the refugees does not have a job and are, therefore, dependent on the transfer payments provided by ARRA and UNHCR. Moreover, from the refugees' own perspective, the issuing of work permits appears to be an issue of particular importance (Figure 6).

Figure 6: Meaning of formal and informal work for refugees



Source: Authors

4.2.3 Lack of consideration of local contexts

The process of drafting and adopting secondary legislation and directives is complicated by the fact that existing local circumstances and realities as well as traditional structures have oftentimes not been accounted for during the formulation of national and regional legislation. To help illustrate the pivotal need to consider local conditions to guarantee a successful integration, the livelihoods and employment sectors are analysed.

National legislation grants refugees the right to work. The newly established industrial parks were intended to create employment opportunities for up to 100,000 individuals, with 30% of the jobs reserved for refugees. However, progress has so far been marginal. While the government still aims to give a certain number of jobs in the parks to refugees (Interviews 38 and 48), there are structural and practical issues that prevent the implementation. One challenge is that none of the existing industrial parks are located in proximity to any of the refugee camps, which means that it is not possible for refugees to travel to work while continuing to reside within the camp (World Bank, 2017a). In combination with the fact that the majority of the Ethiopian refugee camps are located in the periphery of the border regions, this leads to a relatively high rate of economic inactivity in the refugee population.

The refugee camps in the Somali Region, just as in Ethiopia as a whole, were mostly set up in places that do not have a large degree of economic opportunity beyond the agricultural sector and are characterised as the least developed regions of the country (UNHCR, 2018). Further, not a single industrial park is located in one of the emerging regions of Ethiopia. From the perspective of the Somali Region, the closest industrial park from Jigjiga is the

one in Dire Dawa (Interview 30), which is about three to four hours away by car. Additionally, one interviewee also questioned whether the refugee population in the camps would fulfil the employment requirements of the respective companies (Interview 48).

Another example for the disparity between national legislation and realities on the ground, including the existence of traditional local structures in form of customary law, can be found in the land sector. In the pursuit of livelihood opportunities for refugees, agricultural production can be a means to food self-sufficiency and income creation through participation in market activities. In many cases, agricultural production was the refugee's former occupation. The most important precondition and resource for agricultural production is land; access to water and necessary equipment are additional factors. Accordingly, the Ethiopian government has pledged "to make available 10,000 hectares of irrigable land to allow 20,000 refugee and host community households (100,000 people) to engage in crop production by facilitating irrigation schemes" (ARRA, 2017). Regarding the legal framework to provide access to land for refugees, the Refugee Proclamation sets out that "the use of agricultural and irrigable lands shall be made in agreement with Regional States using a land lease system, subject to payment of lease price, for a period renewable every seven years" (Federal Government of Ethiopia, 2019, Art. 24 (5)). Besides the question of land use rights, it also states that the implementation is going to be facilitated through "projects jointly designed by the Ethiopian government and the international community to benefit refugees and Ethiopian nationals" (ibid.). Moreover, it highlights the need for equal treatment of refugees and Ethiopian nationals engaged in these projects (Federal Government of Ethiopia, 2019, Art. 24 (4)). The references to equal treatment and the role of the international community are repeated narratives that played an important role in our interviews. While the provision of land as part of the CRRF and the policy process are the responsibilities of ARRA, its local implementation and translation into regional legislation are still in process (Interview 3).

However, the state of policy implementation and the practices of providing access to land to refugees may differ locally and require context-specific consideration. This applies particularly to the context of the Somali Region, where refugees have already gained access to land both informally and formally through projects carried out by the international community. Most of these solutions to facilitate the access to land are individually negotiated and defined through individual projects or informal agreements on the personal level. It is essential to recognise that current solutions of providing land access to refugees at the local level deviate from what is written in the Refugee Proclamation.[14] The common practice that has been applied locally, even before the Refugee Proclamation became effective, is not based on the seven-year land lease system, which should build the legal basis for land access as part of the Proclamation.

This has a significant impact on the government's role for providing access to land and illustrates the importance of local contexts for CRRF implementation. In theory, all land in Ethiopia is state-owned and allocated through a lease system. This gives the government an important role in land management and administration. Local governments mostly act as the sole suppliers of land, while legislative power remains at the regional level. Currently, they do so through two means, direct allocation of land and auctions (Ariti, 2017; World

14 At least, this applies for the regional context of the Somali Region; it may be different in other regions of Ethiopia.

Bank, 2015). However, considering the socio-cultural tradition of the Somali Region, land also belongs to the community, while legal structures are of rather subordinate relevance: "First of all, land belongs to the government in Ethiopia. There is no question about it. But in Jigjiga, in the Somali Region, it is a bit different" (Interview 8). Both international organisations and local government institutions highlight the important role of customary law with regard to the allocation of land. Informal approaches and the inclusion of the communities appear to be stronger than legal rights; it is particularly relevant to include elders and clan leaders in decisions and projects regarding land allocation (Interviews 17 and 59). However, this fact has not yet been reflected within a comprehensive regional approach that is based on a reliable legal basis.

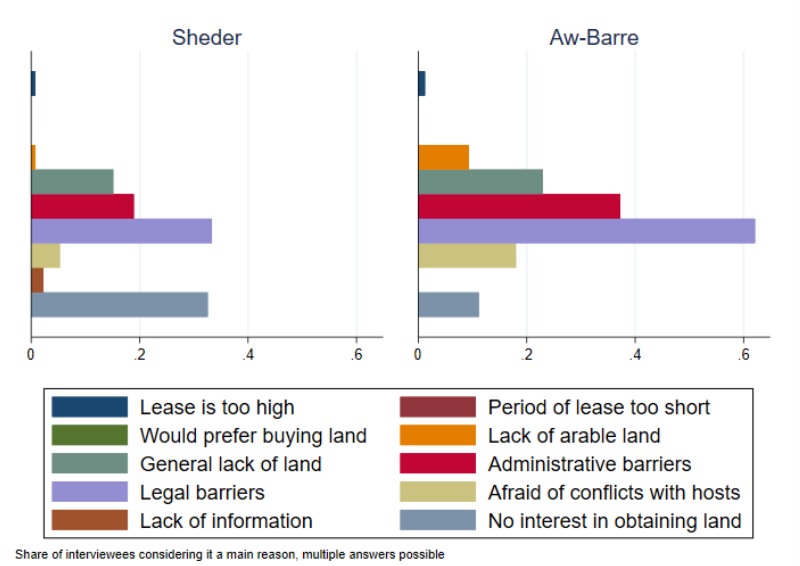
4.2.4 Exiting informal solutions: challenges and opportunities

Informality plays a crucial role for refugee integration on the ground. While informal practices are common in the context of fragility and developing countries per se, it appears to be crucial to have a closer look at the challenges in the context of the CRRF implementation and simultaneously investigate what can be learned from informal solutions.

Again, the land sector is an interesting case in point. Throughout the past years, refugee and host communities developed their own (informal) solutions to the issue of land allocation. Consequently, refugees have already gained access to agricultural land through these local practices and herewith have the opportunity to cultivate land. Several interviewees mentioned that host communities are supportive and willing to provide land for refugees through informal means without the involvement of the government. In other words, refugees lease land from the host community and not the government (Interview 59). In addition to sufficient availability of land, an important factor here is the length of time that refugees have been residing in the host communities. "They are neighbours. They have become friends or even gotten married. Of course, they share their land" (Interview 35). Moreover, of further benefit is the fact that refugees and host communities share the same ethnicity, language, culture and customs (Interviews 16, 25 and 35), an observation that confirms findings from other studies conducted in the Somali Region (Hall, 2019, p. 17).

Nevertheless, informal agreements also have the potential to cause conflict: "If we deal with leased land use, we see that refugees are leasing land from the host community, and anything that happens with Somalis is very informal. And with that informality, you have no power to go to the legal system, to the courts, because there are no contracts, there is nothing" (Interview 59). Legal and administrative barriers remain one of the main obstacles for refugees regarding access to land, even if informal practices show that there is fertile ground for integration within the agricultural sector (Figure 7).

Figure 7: Main reasons refugees do not have access to land



Source: Authors

Apart from the agricultural sector, informal economic activities play an important role for refugee integration. Although refugees are not issued official work permits and business licences yet, they are engaging in economic activities. The existing informal integration shows the potential that refugees have for the local labour market. According to the quantitative data, 12 per cent of refugees work. Further studies (Betts, Bradenbrink, Greenland, Omata, & Sterck, 2019; Betts, Fryszer, Omata, & Sterck, 2019; Betts, Marden, Bradenbrink, & Kaufmann, 2020; Betts, Omata, Rodgers, Sterck, & Stierna, 2019) and interview data (Interviews 17, 21 and 30) confirm this. However, this economic activity only applies to a minority of refugees, usually those who are comparatively well integrated, with a high ability to adapt to the host society and an above-average level of educational (Interview 61). Refugees are predominantly economically active as employees in the informal sector and as small-business owners operating without a license (Interview 7). This applies in particular to the sectors of agriculture, construction and trade, in which the local refugee populations in Aw-Barre and Sheder play a pivotal role (ILO, 2018). Since the refugees can move relatively freely in the region surrounding their camps as long as they maintain their residence inside, a number of them partake in cross-border trade with nearby Somaliland, where the taxation on imported goods is lower than in Ethiopia. But this is not the only benefit that refugees have in the trade business, as one of the interviewees described when asked whether the level of administrative services is higher inside of the refugee camps, “Maybe not, but there is no taxation in the camps. And when you talk to the government, they say that is because they are not supposed to do business. So, we are not supposed to tax because by taxing them you are accepting them. So, their business is illegal, there is no tax from the government, so they have the upper hand on that” (Interview 59).

However, without official business licenses and work permits, refugees are oftentimes dependent on Ethiopian nationals and vulnerable for economic exploitation when engaging in informal economic activities. A main challenge is that the majority of the economic activity is based on informal, often traditional structures that bypass the official administrations (Interview 40). On the one hand, refugees are not able to rely on formal

rights and government services, and on the other hand, the government misses the chance to generate valuable revenue through taxes.

4.2.5 Competition and potential for tension

The attempt to integrate refugees into local communities also bears the potential for tension between refugee and host communities. This might then hamper possibilities of integration as this is a process where all involved parties need to be on board. Also, there is the danger of growing nationalistic and xenophobic tendencies that might endanger the political will to foster the integration of refugees in the country. Competition and tension might directly arise from measurements taken as part of the CRRF implementation process within certain sectors and, therewith, harm the potential for local integration on the ground.

This applies particularly to the allocation of land. Besides informal agreements, refugees are granted access to land through projects that have mostly been designed and implemented by international NGOs. Typically, such project activities include both refugee and host communities through creating cooperatives, as can be seen in the Dolo Ado area. Other examples include making arable land available by providing irrigation schemes, tools and training. Even if there is sufficient land available, regional water scarcity has a negative impact on the arability and required cost-intensive irrigation. In general, all interviewees agree that the key success factor for project designs related to land access is to include and consult the host community. It appears crucial to create win-win situations to avoid discontent among the host community that otherwise might feel disadvantaged (Interviews 8, 16, 24, 35, 36 and 52).

Thus, even if there is a positive attitude towards allocating land to refugees from the side of the host communities and major conflicts are not reported in the Somali Region, there is also potential for (small-scale) tension around land ownership (Interview 23). An observation that complements findings from other studies (Carver, Gedi, et al., 2019). One reason might be a general competition over resources, including access to development project activities, as host communities might feel disadvantaged. Other conflicts might arise at the individual level, when pastoralists among the refugee community take their cattle to graze on land used by the host community (Interview 21). While the current approach focusses on refugee integration, it should be noted that conflicts over land are not limited to agricultural land use. There can also be tensions over land that has been allocated to provide space for housing and shelters by the government.

Regardless of the positive attitude of the host community, there is also the need to consider the needs of the refugee community. Not all refugees are willing to engage in agricultural production or consider it a viable livelihood. Around 75 per cent of the surveyed refugees consider land access to be important for themselves. But around 25 per cent do not. Refugees who resided in urban areas before they came to refugee camps in Ethiopia typically lack the skills and ambition for cultivating land as they are used to different forms of employment. Thus, there is a need for versatile employment opportunities in addition to agriculture. Furthermore, the decision to lease and cultivate land also means to settle down and consider staying in one place for a longer period of time. While this offers the chance for integration in Ethiopia, a large number of refugees fled with the hope of resettlement in a third country. According to the quantitative data, more than 90 per cent of the refugees

hope to move on. To accept staying in one place and making a living through agriculture would mean giving up those hopes and plans.

Additional challenges arise from the fact that large parts of the Ethiopian population are not better off than the refugees. Ethiopia has a large number of job seekers among their own population. One interviewee highlights the repercussions this can have for the economic integration of refugees: "But formally integrating refugees and creating jobs is difficult. Because there is the understanding that Ethiopians do not have jobs ourselves. We have a high unemployment rate and now we say that we are giving jobs to the refugees" (Interview 39).

4.3 The role of local governments

4.3.1 Untapped potential: local governments solely act as facilitators

Local authorities (woreda and kebele) are important and valued actors in the relationship between refugees and hosts, especially in interaction with donor engagement. Currently, local governments play an important role as facilitators for international actors and as mediators between stakeholders on the ground. Their role in social cohesion issues is particularly strong as they are the formal entry point through which international organisations engage with host communities, for example, in negotiations about land usage or in local semi-formal dispute settlement (Interview 35). It was emphasized that "[it is] critical to involve [local authorities]. For example, if you are drilling a borehole for the refugees, you have to consult with the host community administration – especially woreda administration. Unless you do that, you cannot do anything" (Interview 52). A key role in this facilitating process is the consultation with the local community to pave the way for other actors to take over: "The role of the kebele will be to consult with the community and provide an area of land for [the NGO] or any other potential implementer" (Interview 35). Similarly, another task of the kebele is to identify and select potential beneficiaries for projects that NGOs implement:

> When we want to target the local community, we also have to approach the woreda....Then we share information on who we want to target, and they would come up with a list of selected beneficiaries in the community. Then we can implement the project. (Interview 32)

Even if an active role of regional and local line offices has been mostly neglected by federal decision-makers, several interviewees agreed that, based on their experience with the implementation of projects funded by the international community, it is important to have them on board. Their role as facilitators goes beyond the function of mediating between different stakeholders and taking their technical expertise and local experience into account. Their necessary participation for successful implementation of CRRF measures creates the potential for leverage on decision-makers. Even if the regional Bureau of Agriculture is not directly responsible for the allocation of land, the authority can be crucial to guarantee the compliance of agreements made between refugees and host communities. Such agreements are currently (mostly) made in the form of an MoU as part of the project design of international NGOs and guarantee the right to use land for agricultural cultivation, owned by the host community, for refugees. After the end of the project period, NGOs might not be there anymore, while local governments can fulfil the function to ensure that legal

agreements are observed (Interview 24). Furthermore, line offices act as facilitators for horizontal coordination among government authorities, due to their established working relationships and experience with other line offices. An example of this is the design of irrigation schemes as part of land-access-related projects, which require the involvement and expertise of the Regional Water Bureau (Interviews 24 and 31).

The fact that local governments barely act as drivers for sustainable integration is strongly interlinked with the predominant role of ARRA for service delivery in key sectors. This degrades the potential of a more active role of local governments as part of a decentralisation process, which is exemplified in the employment and livelihood sector. Whereas ARRA has an extensive network of offices and officials in the areas where refugees are hosted, many of the other agencies, such as the regional Bureaus of Labour and Social Affairs (BoLSA) and particularly the Jobs Creation Commission (JCC) (Interview 40), do not yet have local structures in place (Interview 30). This does not only apply to employment services for refugees, but also affects Ethiopian citizens in the economically underdeveloped peripheral regions. This issue becomes particularly visible with regard to the employment centres that are supposed to be implemented by MoLSA and the JCC (ibid.). Even though these centres are planned to be established in all woredas of the country, none of the centres are operational in the Somali Region. Since the foundation of such centres is one of the organisational preconditions for a successful integration of refugees in the Ethiopian formal labour market, ARRA is considering establishing these centres for the refugees under its own control and in cooperation with MoLSA and the JCC. However, this could mean that the only operational centres are located in the woredas that host refugee camps; providing the same service to the residents of other woredas will not be part of the reform. Furthermore, it also implies that ARRA will control these centres under its own roof, while the woreda administrations, which were originally thought to be the focal point, will be missing out (Interview 15).

In essence, local actors rarely play a bigger role than a point of contact to share information and act as a passive facilitator, rather than a proactive actor shaping the process. Currently, their potential for a more effective local integration process largely remains untapped. They mostly do not fill a role as providers of integrated services or take over responsibility for CRRF implementation measures. Main reasons for this situation are the dominant role of ARRA, the unclear role of local governments within the CRRF implementation process and a lack of capacities at the local level.

4.3.2 Unclear role of local authorities

On the one hand, a lack of clarity about the role of local governments for the CRRF originates from missing communication and allocation from higher levels. The lack of coordination among national key actors and the slow implementation process at the national level results in an unclear role of local authorities and their self-awareness within this process. A lack of knowledge sharing within institutions and the high staff turnover due to the change in government have been additional hinderances to defining the role of local actors (Interviews 18, 30 and 26).

On the other hand, the interpretation of their role also depends on local governments themselves. Overall, local actors are perceived as being very welcoming towards the idea

of the local integration of refugees (Interview 7). In fact, they have long lobbied for an increased recognition of the interest of the hosts and criticised what they perceived as unequal treatment (Interview 21). However, it remains unclear, whether officials at the local level have already grasped the full meaning of local integration as foreseen in the CRRF. Full implementation of CRRF would result in a huge increase in importance and responsibilities for all local actors. Some local actors have the idea that the CRRF is just another "project" bringing increased donor funding that also includes hosts as in the target group, without any deep structural changes: "They told us that the CRRF project is different from the previous projects that have been implemented by the NGOs, because in the previous projects they used to give 25 per cent of the project to the host community and the rest to the refugees, and sometimes they were fully engaged with the refugees. But they told us that this one is different and will give more emphasis to the host community – equally with that of the refugee communities….So, this kind of share will be very good for the host community and to avoid any possible discontent and misunderstanding between the two communities" (Interview 35). Currently, the budget available to regional and local actors is not programmed for refugees (Interview 57). Hence, it is not surprising when local officials have the perception that they do not have anything to do with refugee issues (Interview 51).

Nonetheless, generally, the local CRRF implementation in the Somali Region is not negatively perceived by local actors, but rather they are waiting for more directives. Here, the slow progress on the national level is a main hindering factor – largely owing to problems beyond the Somali Region: "It would not be a problem with the local authorities the moment that the legislation is in place because locally many things are already happening [...] the problem with the local authorities now is that they say they are ready, but they need instruction" (Interview 7).

4.3.3 Weak capacities at the local level

Overall, the results of this study show that a lack of financial, administrative and human capacities of local authorities makes it impossible for them to fulfil their role in the local integration of refugees. Even though the responsibility for the implementation of policy reforms cascades down from the national to the regional and then further to the local level, the amount of funding and the staff hiring capacities available decrease further down the administrative ladder. In part, the reason for this is based on the fact that even though the Ethiopian tax law employs an approach that shares the responsibilities and duties between the federal and regional tax authorities, the predominant taxation power lies in the hands of the federal level in practice (Lencho, 2012). Concerning the ability to deliver services in many sectors, this circumstance limits the administrative, organisational and financial capacities that many local and sometimes even regional authorities have.

The general lack of financial capacities of local authorities is a challenge that has several implications for the service provision and its quality. This is, for example, the case in the education sector, where limited school infrastructure, teaching materials, teacher and administrative capacities on the local level remain a core issue (Interviews 29, 45 and 52). Accessibility and infrastructural problems can even pose difficulties to local administration to attend CRRF coordination meetings (Interview 45). Hence, besides direct implications for the provision of education, the limited working capacity of local and regional authorities also has a direct impact on the CRRF process. This can also be

exemplified by the weak capacity of the regional education bureau, which plays a central role with regard to refugee education. It is supposed to provide technical support and follow up on the accreditation of schools. This requires close linkages between the regional bureau and the implementing organisations, like ARRA, UNHCR and the Ethiopian Orthodox Church – Development and Inter-Church Aid Commission (EOC-DICAC) (Interview 38). When it comes to advocacy work, this exceeds the current capacities of the local and regional education officials and, therefore, it is fostered by international organisations like SCI and UNICEF (Interview 52).

A similar situation prevails within the livelihood and employment sector. While there are a number of ambitious job creation programmes between Ethiopian and international actors (Interviews 39, 40, 41 and 60), there also appears to be a willingness for policy implementation and to improve the employment situation of the refugees. However, the two main obstructive factors that prevent the government from actually doing so are the lack of local financial and administrative resources in a time when the country is preoccupied with far-reaching economic reforms, as well as the lack of formalised economic activities in the refugee hosting regions (Carver, 2019a).

Weak capacities can also be considered a major challenge for the sector of documentation and vital events registration. kebeles, which are responsible for passing on the relevant information on vital events of the host community to the woreda and the Vital Events Registration Agency (VERA), have so far not been able to fulfil that task. The limited capacity, in terms of administrative infrastructure and human resources, does not suffice to fulfil these functions. While these are common issues in the context of developing countries, in the Somali case it is worsened by language barriers. Approximately 90 per cent of the kebele managers in the Somali Region cannot speak or write Amharic, Ethiopia's official language (Interview 43). At the same time, vital events registration documents must be filled out in Somali and Amharic. As a consequence, kebele managers send semi-filled forms to the woreda officials, who are confronted with additional workload in a structure of weak capacities in terms of personnel and equipment. This lack of capacities, in turn, also results from the missing implementation structure that still needs to be passed by the Somali cabinet (Interview 43).[15]

On the other side, the issuing of documents for refugees is well advanced and functional, in contrast to service provision for the host community. However, even ARRA has not been able to reach all refugees, and according to the survey data, only 72 per cent of the last-born children in the households have a birth certificate. Moreover, 3 per cent of all respondents declared they had no legal status in Ethiopia, while 13 per cent explained that they had no proof of their refugee status. Interviewees explained that this results from a lack of human capacities in comparison with the workload of issuing one birth certificate and the large backlog. Furthermore, digital infrastructures are not present; issuing one birth certificate means filling out five pages by hand and doing approximately 20-30 minutes of work (Interview 20).

15 Other hinderances are low awareness of vital events registration among the host community, the necessity to pay fees for certain services, as well as, for example, the need for the presence of both parents to register a child. A large percentage of Somalis are nomadic pastoralists, which means that (in most cases) the father of a child can be far away from the Kebele with the herd for several months and unable to be present to fulfil the formal requirements for a birth registration.

In addition, the employment regulations, payment, contract periods and opportunities that international organisations provide are more favourable and remunerative than those of local authorities. This leads to a situation where local authorities and their adjacent institutions lose their staff; a dynamic that has a negative impact on the capacities and service delivery quality of local authorities (Carver, 2019b, pp. 16-17).

4.4 International aid and CRRF

4.4.1 Conducive environment for CRRF implementation

In general, international actors encounter a favourable environment for the implementation of the CRRF in Ethiopia and especially in the Somali Region. Historically, the local integration of refugees, particularly in the educational sector, was already an issue in the 1960s. Back then, due to a lack of other structures, EOC-DICAC supported refugee children, for example, by providing them with schooling material and including them in government school structures (Interview 38). The establishment of refugee camps altered the situation, but loose integration arrangements remained (Interview 38). In more recent years but before the CRRF, NGOs und UNHCR conducted projects that directly and indirectly benefitted both the hosts and the refugees. These projects entailed, for example, the shared use of schools, Birkas[16] and health facilities. Arguably, donor engagements like those of the IKEA Foundation and the Regional Development and Protection Programme (RDPP) NGO consortium through their coordination meetings, bringing together refugees, hosts, donors and local authorities in formalised projects, paved the way for many CRRF activities (Interview 18).

Also, on a political level the conditions for CRRF implementation through international actors were conducive. A good example for illustration is the education sector. In practical terms, on the Ethiopian federal level, international organisations and NGOs participate in the technical working group on education alongside the MoE and ARRA to align the coordination of refugee education with national plans (Interview 38). In other sectors the Ethiopian government also welcomes international support to foster refugee integration. One example is the Job Compact that provides structures where international organisations can become further involved.

Due to the existing local integration and the limited conflict in the Somali Region, international actors encounter fertile ground for their CRRF interventions; however, it is key for them to carefully design their actions to not evoke conflicts due to one-sided projects or unfair treatments. In practice, most of the recent projects are set up in a way that considers and benefits both host and refugee communities but the respective share, for example with regard to providing arable land, differs between projects (Interviews 8 and 17).

4.4.2 International efforts for CRRF implementation: challenges

The efforts of international humanitarian aid organisations and development cooperation agencies to promote the overarching objective of sustainable integration of refugees in line with the humanitarian-development nexus bring about various challenges. The results from

16 Birkas are underground concrete water tanks.

the analysis suggest that the four major challenges for international organisations are the following.

a) Misfit: funding conditions

The funding situation of humanitarian aid organisations and development cooperation projects is an important challenge. Particularly in humanitarian aid, a sector predominantly dependent on yearly grants and donations, the fluctuation and uncertainty of funds becomes most visible. Consequently, for example, the World Food Programme (WFP) has had to reduce food ratios in the past due to a lack of financial support. According to Carver (2019b, p. 18), among international organisations, there is "a narrative of significantly diminishing resources for the traditional refugee operation in recent years". At the same time, the financial resources provided are increasingly fragmented and earmarked (Carver, 2019b). The lack of long-term engagements and commitments make it difficult for international organisations to support the sustainable integration of refugees. In addition, in many instances, donor budgets are not flexible enough to also cater to the needs of the host communities, which creates tensions. Short-term funding cycles among humanitarian actors still undermine an increased recognition of the humanitarian-development nexus.

With respect to the funding misfit, another critical factor of donor engagement relates to their geographic scope of action. Even if humanitarian actors include host communities in their programming, it is earmarked for adjacent host communities and limited to the direct proximity to the camp. For example, the Aw-Barre Woreda comprises over forty kebeles, out of which only nine are considered direct "hosts" and, thus, receive all the attention (Interview 28). Negative impacts of the presence of refugees (e.g., increased firewood prices, environmental degradation and water shortages), however, can be felt within a much larger radius (Interviews 3 and 31). This poses the risk that only those in direct proximity benefit from a comprehensive approach, whereas local residents in the outskirts are further outstripped and develop a more negative image towards refugees.

b) Limited coordination and inter-project incoherence

The coordination among multiple stakeholders and the coherence of their engagements pose difficulties to international actors as well. This challenge is twofold.

First, it concerns the limited coordination among international actors and, thus, fragmentation in projects that results in a low coherence of the common and overall objective of achieving sustainable integration of refugees (Carver, 2019b, pp. 18-19). In the education sector, for example, international donors predominantly implement refugee integration projects through scattered NGO projects and humanitarian structures (Interviews 21, 33 and 57). As a consequence, each NGO has its own project focus and does not necessarily coordinate well with others. Consequences are oftentimes differences in meeting standards, doubling of efforts and a generally absent comprehensive approach.

Second, it addresses the challenge for international actors to coordinate their actions with Ethiopian institutions. According to UNHCR, the current efforts taken under the CRRF implementation process already feed into a better alignment and foster "a transition towards an increasingly integrated approach to refugee assistance, aligned to the Government of Ethiopia's Growth and Transformation Plan" (UNHCR, 2019b, p. 17). However, while international actors implement nationally approved projects in the local contexts at a faster

pace, there is oftentimes a divergence from the devolution process and, hence, the work routines and capacities of local authorities. This creates imbalances and discontent that hinder improved coordination and cooperation (Carver, 2019b, pp. 18-19) and promotes the emergence of parallel structures that undermine local authorities. In many instances, the involvement of local authorities is limited and hardly exceeds formal consultations.

The documentation sector exemplifies this challenge. The capacity gap between the structures responsible for refugees vis-à-vis the administrative structure for host communities coincides with a funding gap. The operations by ARRA are fully funded by UNHCR, which also gives operational support directly in the camps. At the same time, VERA is not only lacking the implementation structure that has not yet been passed by the regional cabinet and, therefore, has not yet received funds from the Somali Region government, it also lacks assistance by donors (Interview 43). Its main donor is UNICEF; however, those funds as well as most NGO funds it receives are earmarked to be used to improve birth registration. In conjunction with the missing implementation structure, this creates a situation where even the support received from donors cannot be used effectively. One interviewee explained the situation: "Now I have 396 office chairs and 77 motorcycles, around 70 printers. All of this machinery has been bought through UNICEF or the federal government…and the idea is that they are given to the staff at woreda and kebele level. But the implementation of the structure is still pending, so we can't distribute them, because we don't know whom to give it to" (Interview 43). This points to the difficulties that missing coordination between international and local actors can create.

c) Legal uncertainty

In the current situation, international actors encounter an environment with an undefined framework to operate in. The Refugee Proclamation sets out a general policy framework directed towards the local integration of refugees, from which directives have not yet been derived. However, the measures necessary to enable local integration on the ground have not yet been effectively implemented. While more authority was given to regional governments, the much-needed local actors in the Somali Region seemingly do not feel entitled enough nor sufficiently funded to assume this new role (Interview 28). Given these circumstances, international actors have to carefully navigate between the tone set by the traditionally centralised government on the federal level and the possibility of promoting CRRF implementation in support of the growing authority and importance of the regional and local levels.

Owing to the absence of legal clarity and translation of national into secondary legislation and directives, international actors face difficulties in pursuing a closer interlinkage of humanitarian and development actions and, thus, CRRF implementation. In the livelihoods sector, for example, there is a multitude of programmes already in place, especially in the fields of qualification, training and the promotion of sustainable economic development. Nevertheless, the effectiveness and impact of these programmes are limited for the refugee population because of the lack of formal employment opportunities for refugees. For example, under the current circumstances international actors are not even allowed to hire qualified refugees (Interview 56), since this would contravene with the Ethiopian labour law for registered refugees. Therefore, most of the NGO and international organisation jobs are benefiting the host community. Refugees, if they are not voluntary incentive workers, can only acquire the permission to work under exceptional circumstances (Interview 47).

Consequently, numerous donors and NGOs are engaging in the field of qualification measures, offering trainings to both refugees and host communities in order to increase their employability. However, since it remains unclear when the refugees will be allowed to work and which economic sectors will be open to them (Interview 36), the effectiveness of many of these qualification measures is questionable.

Similarly, the limited access to arable land and the nonbinding nature of (formal) land rights are obstacles to smooth project implementation (Interview 32). Negotiations might be difficult for donors because they cannot rely on a formal legal framework and need show flexibility. They must carefully design each project to prevent tensions between host and refugee communities, which are easily caused due to the share of assistance allocated being perceived as unfair (Interview 37). This requires additional efforts, time and local expertise. One interviewee mentioned a case in which the agreement on the allocation of land from the host community was still missing, while the project had already started its implementation phase. This incident not only caused tension between the host community and refugees, who had already started to cultivate the provided land and were kindly requested to leave again, it also created mistrust towards NGOs among the refugees (Interview 36).

d) Unequal treatment and potential for tension

The CRRF raised expectations among the host community to benefit from the presence of the refugees and the engagement of international organisations. However, if their "share" is insufficient or if they are not included in project activities, they might feel neglected by international organisations. Potential consequences are tension and mistrust (Interview 54). The claim that internationals pay too little attention to the host community and, thus, create tensions, is an observation that confirms findings from other studies (Hall, 2019; Vemuru, Sarkar, & Fitri Woodhouse, 2020). To live up to the expectations of the host community and cater to the needs of both the refugees and the host community is certainly challenging, but also crucial for successful project implementation.

Furthermore, poor planning of projects and the shortcoming of international organisations and NGOs to live up to their promises, has induced tensions between the two groups occasionally. For instance, an NGO, after formally consulting the regional government, gave land to refugees without consulting the host community clan that informally owns the land (Interview 36). Hosts reacted by chasing the refugees away, and the refugees agreed to not use their land in order to prevent any conflict. In another case in Sheder, communities provided land for new refugee shelters with the expectation of receiving benefits, such as the shared use of an ambulance service. However, UNHCR and ARRA cannot provide this service due to the high use by the refugee community (there is only one ambulance for all of Aw-Bare Woreda) (Interview 37). Another livelihood project included both groups and created a job for a member of the host community to guard the premises. However, as this person was not paid according to their agreement, the guard seized the livestock as a compensation for the salary. As the livestock belonged to refugees, tensions between the groups emerged (Interview 35).

4.4.3 International efforts for CRRF implementation: shaping a positive way forward

Unclear roles and capacity gaps of local actors, a misfit between local realities and donors' funding conditions and the unclear legal framework pose difficulties to the work of international actors in the field of local integration of refugees in Ethiopia. However, the unclear political and legal situation also provides opportunities for international actors to actively shape the future of the CRRF implementation.

In the context of a historically rather centralised rule in Ethiopia and the recent devolution of powers, international actors take on an important role in shaping the discourse and practise of the CRRF implementation. Under the conditions of a not yet clearly defined legal framework, international humanitarian aid organisations and development cooperation agencies have a certain leeway of action to foster a humanitarian-development nexus approach.

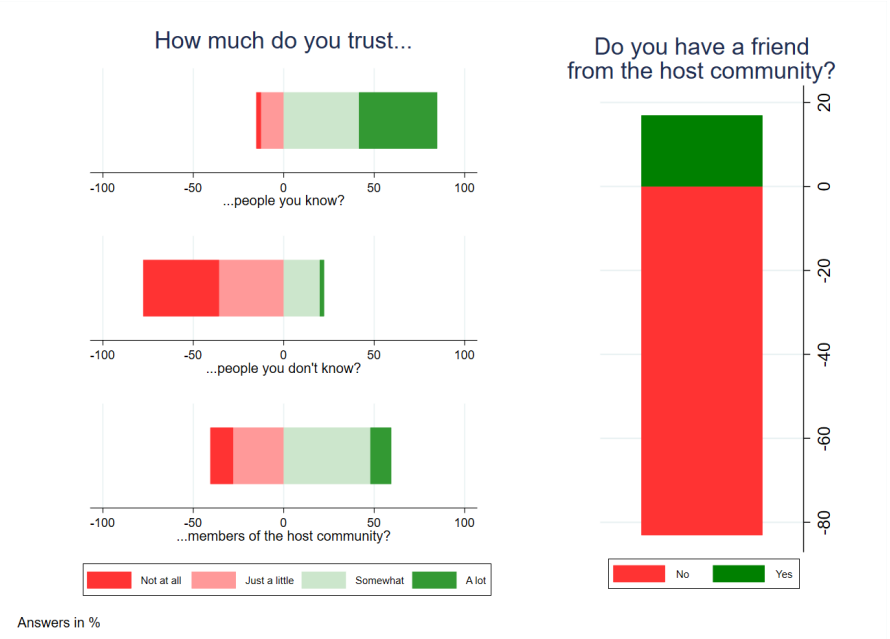
International actors have run many projects that aimed to improve living conditions for refugees. At the same time, they increasingly involved host communities and, herewith, integrated a more development-oriented perspective. Most notably, land and water projects led to mutually used services that improved living conditions and income opportunities for both groups. In consequence, host communities became aware of a new policy postulating the inclusion of host communities in refugee programming. Both the local administration as well as the humanitarian actors have communicated this to the host and refugee communities over the past years. Currently, the impression still dominates that this (only) means that a higher share of the monetary value of each project should go directly to host communities (Interviews 50 and 35). Such a formula approach has been followed by many organisations in the past (Interviews 32, 13 and 18), but mostly lacks commitment for structural transformation. Interestingly, while this kind of communication highlights the benefit to the host community, it remains almost the opposite of a full-fledged CRRF. The ultimate aim would be to include refugees in national planning and not to include hosts in refugee planning. In a long-run capacity development view, investment in services to the host communities must be boosted, such that they can accommodate any new arrivals, which may also include IDPs.

Moreover, by fostering demand-driven and need-based approaches, international programming enhances the involvement of local authorities and, thereby, come closer to a reflection of the humanitarian-development nexus. A positive example of such a donor intervention is the Regional Development and Protection Programme (RDPP) that uses a more holistic approach that considers the whole community. This programme explicitly aims to create long-time perspectives by strengthening social cohesion and employment opportunities, for example, around Dolo Ado and Jigjiga in the Somali Region (Interview 18). Rather than following a strict formula distributing goods and services between the two communities, they follow a need-based approach. They first investigate where need is greatest, whether it is a host-community or a refugee area that needs to be strengthened. Additionally, a large-scale project implemented by the IKEA Foundation has frequently been highlighted as a positive example of donor involvement in the field of land access and livelihood. The project is based on the humanitarian-development nexus approach, whereby the foundation provides the funding for implementation through local partners in close cooperation with local governments, ARRA and UNHCR and in consultation with the local community (Interviews 16 and 31).

4.5 Local realities of integration – perspectives of refugees and host communities in the Somali Region

Refugees perceive host communities as very welcoming. They accept the necessity to provide space and resources to refugees, as they acknowledge that they had once fled a civil war. Refugees and local residents share large parts of their identity. Both groups are almost exclusively Somali. They not only share the same language and religion, but also informal institutions on how to settle disputes and treat newcomers. These rules apply to the diaspora and are often preferred over formal judiciary systems. In their direct relations, the mutual Somali identity, therefore – or on the other side the differences between clans – outweigh differences between nationalities: "They [members of the host community] are not even seeing the refugee in you, they are seeing the clan in you. [...] Hierarchy is everywhere, not because of being a refugee, but because of being a Somali" (Interview 59). Identity in Somali culture is to a large extent clan based. In everyday interactions, this social identity clearly takes precedence over the differences resulting from a purely formal notion of nationality. In the survey, clan membership emerged as a top reason for discrimination, equal to refugee status (Figure 10). Whereas areas devoted to refugees and host communities are geographically separated, the life of the two communities are more intertwined. For example, refugees go to the host communities' markets to buy goods and work informally. Host communities may go to the camps to buy refugees' unwanted food rations for further trade, visit the health posts or watch football matches on DSTV. Many recognised refugees were born in Ethiopia or married Ethiopian nationals. As a consequence, mutual relations in the Somali Region are consistently described as smooth and kind. Overall, refugees' attitudes towards the hosts are positive. While 59 per cent of the respondents generally trust members of the host community, only 22 per cent would trust unknown people (Figure 8). However, fewer than one in five refugees has a friend from the host community.

Figure 8: Social relations between refugees and host community



Source: Authors

To a large extent, the idea of local integration had been realised informally in the Somali Region long before CRRF was adopted. Many of the refugees have been staying in the Somali Region for a protracted period of time. According to the quantitative data, the majority of the refugees have been living in the camps for more than 10 years. In many sectors, informal solutions have been found to locally integrate them. However, refugees' perspective on local integration is ambiguous: 90 per cent of refugees have the long-term plan of moving on and hope for resettlement in a third country. Although aware of the limited opportunities to realise this wish, policies have a limited impact on these aspirations (Mallett, Hagen-Zanker, Majidi, & Cummings, 2017; Vemuru et al., 2020, p. II 143). This affects their decision-making in the integration process, for example, in the land sector. The decision to lease and cultivate land means settling down and staying in one place for a longer period of time. Besides the fact that most refugees in Aw Barre and Sheder come from urban settings (Carver, Gedi, et al., 2019) and, therefore, lack the skills and ambition to cultivate land, the hope for resettlement might keep some refugees from actually leasing land.

Further ambiguity towards local integration arises from the fact that while informal solutions have been found, many of the formal rights granted in the Proclamation are not yet applied in practise. Refugees do not yet have access to the formal labour market as they only rarely obtain work permits. Accordingly, the majority of refugees find it hard to acquire a job and perceive the issuing of formal work permits as a key issue to their successful integration. Moreover, possible jobs pay barely more than what refugee households obtain from the WFP and UNHCR. Incentives to work, but also incentives to pursue education are weak, if they do not lead to better income opportunities (Vemuru et al., 2020, p. II 142).

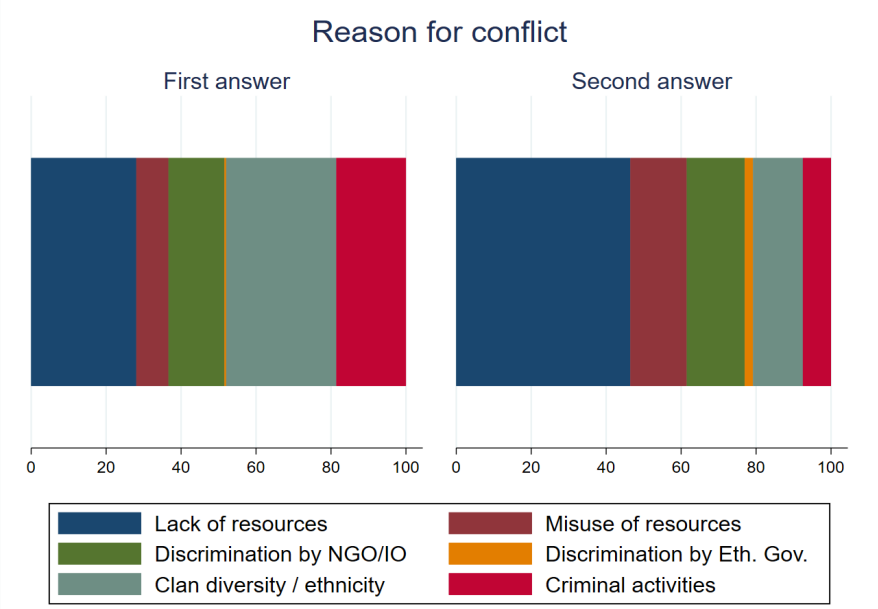
The host community on the other hand generally perceives the CRRF process and the local integration of refugees as an opportunity. They benefit from the refugees' presence, which has fostered economic development and improved service provision, for example, in the education and health sector. The presence and investment of international organisations benefits the host community as well. However, there is also potential for tension. Most notably, they are worried about job distribution. Even if refugees do not have access to the formal labour market, they engage in trade or work as daily labourers (Interviews 30 and 59). In a context where economic opportunities are limited, this additional labour market competition – whether formal or informal – makes refugees appear as a threat to local residents. Also, there is widespread resentment among local residents towards international organisations for focussing too much on refugees while the host community also faces major challenges related to livelihoods and access to basic services (Vemuru et al., 2020).

Host community and refugee status are the definitions that guide the actions of the government as well as the international community. This results in highly differential treatment by national and international actors. Only refugees are entitled to many services, such as shelter and food distribution. In other sectors, such as education and documentation, the quality of service delivery is higher for refugees than it is for members of the host community. Some education and documentation services are free of charge for refugees, whereas they are subject to payment for hosts (Interviews 20 and 39). Arguably, the differential treatment is perceived as even more unfair as integration and concessions have been underway informally for many years. For example, the main justification for transfers to refugees is that they are formally not allowed to sustain themselves economically. However, informal integration allows them to work and lessens the formal justification of the differential treatment (Interview 55).

After the launch of CRRF in the Somali Region, local residents increasingly put forward confident claims that they want to benefit from donor engagement in the same way as refugees. Hosts in Sheder now claim "their higher share" with confidence – as donors do not always live up to this. For example, an NGO performing a shelter improvement programme in a refugee camp did not plan to include hosts, given that the budget they received from an international donor was only devoted to refugees. As hosts learned that they would not get "their share", they resisted and refrained from selling construction material to refugees. This led to negotiations and a compromise that will now include hosts to a very small extent in this NGO's future projects (Interview 32).

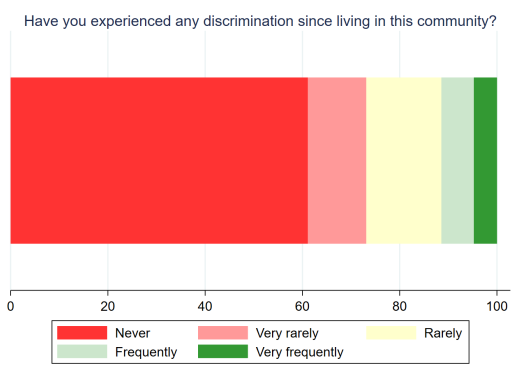
Despite these tensions, conflicts between the groups are still rare and largely depicted as individual quarrels. Correspondingly, 66 per cent of interviewed refugees consider conflicts to happen "never" or "very rarely" (Figure 9). Only 5 per cent were directly affected by such conflicts. From the perspective of the organisations that were interviewed, most conflicts surround the issue of firewood. Following budget cuts, UNHCR had to stop ethanol distribution to refugees. This resulted in an increase in cutting of firewood as an energy substitute in the whole area, and a threefold increase in prices for charcoal (Interviews 32 and 56). Besides competition for this increasingly scarce resource, environmental degradation follows. Also, refugees see lacking resources as a main reason for conflict, but likewise emphasise conflicts resulting from clan diversity, general crime and differential treatment by donors. Donors' performance with regard to cohesion seems more critical in Sheder than in Aw-Barre; almost all answers on that issue (97 per cent) were from the refugee community in Sheder. Discrimination in general seems to be a relatively small issue for most refugees: 89 per cent believe discrimination happens rarely or never (Figure 10). Main reasons are both the formal refugee status and the informal clan membership.

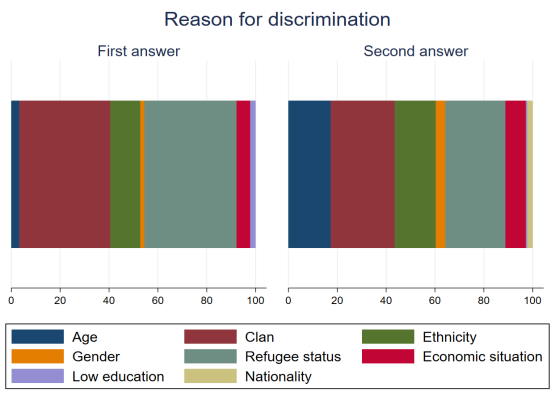
Figure 9: Frequency of and reasons for conflicts



Source: Authors

Figure 10: Frequency of and reasons for discrimination





Source: Authors

Both, informal and formal mechanisms of dispute settlement exist (Interviews 21 and 54): "The informal way is through the clan system – and the Somali clan system does not discriminate between refugees and hosts" (Interview 54). Both the norms applicable between and within clans are relevant for the relations between refugees and hosts (Interview 55). Within this system, elders of each clan draw on their experience of the settlement of comparable cases and agree upon compensation payments (Interviews 24 and 54). Whereas this system is highly accepted and efficient, it provides little security in a formal legal sense (Interview 59). Also, in some cases, it competes with national law regarding the persecution of crimes, such as rape and murder (Interviews 54 and 59). The formal dispute settlement system reiterates the formal lines between hosts and refugees. Issues are forwarded to the Refugee Central Committee (RCC)[17] which refers critical cases to ARRA. Host communities have built a similar committee, the Community Care Coalition (CCC). Disputes between the groups can be settled together, involving ARRA, UNHCR and the local woreda's Bureau of Social Affairs (Interview 54). It remains unclear, how the Neighbourhood Relation Committees that ARRA (federal) tries to establish, bringing together hosts and refugees, will relate to these established forms of communication and decision-finding (Interviews 39 and 49). ARRA plans to create branch offices in every community where 300 or more (out of camp) refugees will settle. This office will facilitate exchange between refugee and host representatives and may also point the local police towards issues (Interviews 39 and 49).

Strikingly, the formal mechanism emphasises the lines of conflicts between refugees and hosts, whereas the informal system would consider them to be conflicts between clans.[18] Ironically, to overcome issues between two groups, the formal system makes sure that this problem is to be interpreted as a problem between the two groups. The challenge will be how to build a system that makes rulings legally stable and covers (criminal) cases that arguably ought to be persecuted by formal judiciary persecution (Interviews 54 and 59), but

17 RCC is the committee of refugees whose members serve as representatives and spokespersons for a refugee camp. The RCC can have several thematic subcommittees.

18 To be sure, the informal dispute settlement system between and among clans is supposed to address small-scale conflicts and crimes. Once they reach a certain level of criminality, the police or other legal entities must intervene. While this relationship between the two systems is generally recognised, it is not always adhered to.

enjoys an acceptance and efficiency similar to the informal system. Survey results show that conditions for this are favourable, given that many refugees have high trust in formal government institutions, such as the police, judiciary system and regional government.

5 Conclusion

The implementation of the CRFF in the Somali Region, one year after the adoption of the Refugee Proclamation, has remained superficial and on a project base. National legislation has not yet been cascaded down to lower federative levels and, hence, its application on the ground remains fragmented. The sluggish implementation process has partly been due to political reasons beyond the Somali Region, such as the low priority of the CRFF process for the national government in the wake of the postponed elections. As we write, the political situation in Ethiopia has worsened with ongoing tensions in the wake of armed conflicts in the Tigray Region as well as the dispute over the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam. This has created additional uncertainty and led to the suspension of donor funding from the EU (Reuters, 2020). These developments might lead to a further de-prioritisation of the CRRF implementation in Ethiopia.

Generally, further issues that have pushed refugee issues down the political agenda relate to the overall political and economic transformation process of the country, which is accompanied by ethnic tensions and a restructuring of public institutions. Moreover, the vacuum left by the dysfunctional CRRF steering committee has led to a lack of leadership and coordination and consequently resulted in a lack of commitment to push the implementation process. Knowledge sharing and cooperation between the stakeholders has taken place only sporadically and been correspondingly weak. Most notably, the role of ARRA, the key stakeholder in the Ethiopian CRRF implementation process, has remained ambiguous since a full CRRF implementation seems to be in contradiction to the powerful agency's institutional self-interests. Following the idea of the CRRF, with its full implementation, ARRA would primarily have to take on a coordinating role, with line ministries and local authorities taking over the provision of services for (integrated) refugees. This would result in a massive loss of personnel, funds and power for ARRA.

Partly as a result of ARRA's predominant role for the implementation process, competencies and funds have so far not been transferred to local authorities. Instead, the implementation of the CRRF is mostly managed by ARRA, which is degrading the potential of a more active role of local governments as part of a decentralisation process. These delicate power balances highlight the need for strong political guidance at the federal level. Consequently, in several key sectors a system of parallel structures for the provision of government services for refugees on the one side and host communities on the other side has been established. While this hinders the process of refugee integration into national structures, ARRA and international actors maintain their responsibility for refugee services, and local governments oftentimes lack the capacities to meet the same quality of service delivery. Moreover, the process of cascading national legislation to the regional level and translating it into local action within the Somali Region lacks the consideration of local realities, such as informal and traditional structures. Legal and administrative barriers remain and are two of the major obstacles to refugees being fully integrated into reliable governance structures.

Regardless of its potential and irrefutable positive impact, the attempt to integrate refugees in Ethiopia more generally and in particular into local communities also carries the risk of tensions between refugee and host communities and discomfort among Ethiopian nationals. Reasons for competition and tension might directly arise from measures taken as part of the CRRF implementation process within certain sectors (e.g., land and employment), as host communities might feel neglected or overlooked in the decision-making processes.

Local authorities often lack the capacity to participate meaningfully in the CRRF process, as due to their missing early involvement they have little knowledge about the process and lack financial and human capacities to take on a leading role in it. High staff turnover complicates building up an inherent understanding of CRRF processes. On the other hand, there is ARRA – the powerful and highly capable institution acting as a "localised federal agency" –, which is equipped with donor funding and much better educated staff. The resulting weak position of local actors threatens to hamper the successful CRRF implementation in the long run, since they are supposed to take on a much larger role and take over tasks from ARRA and UNHCR. The lack of coordination and the slow implementation process at the national level also result in unclear roles for local authorities and their self-awareness within this process. They are to a large extent not well aware of the processes and their role or are simply waiting for further federal legislation to become active. Currently, local authorities often only deal as a gatekeeper to involve host communities in refugee programming and to share local information. At this time, it would be a challenge for them to take over parts of ARRA's tasks without downgrading the offered service quality. This exemplifies the need to carefully balance the short-term objectives of providing quality services and the long-term objectives of reducing parallel structures. At the same time, local actors are perceived as being very welcoming towards the idea of local integration of refugees, since they recognise the potential positive impact of the CRRF for their communities. Their local knowledge of community needs is crucial for the implementation of many projects, in particular within the context of many informal practices in the Somali Region. These factors again highlight the importance for increased consideration of the needs of local authorities for them to adequately fulfil their future tasks. Yet, frustration among local authorities is slowly growing. The launch of the CRRF in the Somali Region set high expectations. Largely, these have not yet been fulfilled.

Nonetheless, the Somali Region is a forerunner in the local integration of refugees and many lessons can be learned from its experience. Since the CRRF implementation in other regions in Ethiopia – and beyond – is still in its infancy, these insights can inform future action. In general, international actors have so far encountered a favourable environment for the implementation of the CRRF in Ethiopia and taken on an important role in this context. Moreover, due to the already practiced local integration and low degree of conflict in the Somali Region, they encounter fertile ground for interventions. Thus, they run many projects that aim to improve the living conditions of refugees. By doing so, they increasingly involve host communities and slowly take on a more needs-based and development-oriented perspective. However, it is key for international actors to carefully design projects to avoid the perception of unequal treatment among host communities. Further challenges arise due to often short-term, earmarked funding conditions, a missing legal framework for many areas of integration that endangers sustainable impacts of donor activities and a difficult situation with respect to coordination of actors involved.

The perceptions on local integration of refugees among the respective communities appear to be ambiguous. The vast majority of refugees have the long-term aim of resettlement to a

third country. Moreover, the majority of refugees finds it hard to pursue formal employment while perceiving the procrastination of issuing formal work permits and the limitation on movement as a key hindering factor for their successful integration. Additional challenges arise from the general scarcity of resources, such as employment opportunities, in the Somali Region. Moreover, possible jobs pay barely more than what refugee households obtain from the WFP and UNHCR. Not only incentives to work, but also incentives to pursue education may be weak, if they do not lead to better income opportunities. Host communities, on the other hand, consider the CRRF process as an opportunity for them. After the launch of the CRRF in the Somali Region, they increasingly put forward confident claims that they equally want to be considered by donors. Overall, the host population has benefited from the refugees' presence as this has fostered economic development and improved service provision, for example, in the education and health sector. It remains unclear, to what extent host communities are likewise aware of potential downsides of the CRRF for them that may come with an increased competition for arable land or on labour markets.

Nevertheless, to a large extent, the idea of local integration has been realised informally since long before the CRRF was adopted. Many of the refugees have been in the Somali Region for a protracted period of time, and in many sectors, informal solutions for local integration have been found. In the social realm and despite encampment policies, interaction and coordination between refugees and hosts are common. In the Somali Region, these forms of informal integration are closely linked to a shared Somali identity, which shapes the coexistence between local host communities and refugees. In everyday interactions, this social identity clearly takes precedence over the differences resulting from a purely formal notion of nationality. However, host community and refugee status are the definitions that guide the actions of the government at federal and regional level as well as the international community. This results in highly differential treatment by national and international actors. Only refugees are entitled to many services, such as shelter and food distribution. In other sectors, such as education and documentation, the quality of service delivery is higher for refugees. In the context of resource scarcity, the members of the host community perceive this treatment as unjust.

Summing up, CRRF implementation in the Somali Region remains a challenge, even if it may constitute a relatively "easy case" of formalising what – in large parts – has already been happening on the ground. Considering the overall positive attitude towards the CRRF in the Somali Region, the sluggish implementation process points at problems resulting from political priorities at the national level, combined with structural issues in the Somali Region. The latter relate to the overall scarcity of resources and the weak bureaucratic structures, hardly living up to the basic tasks of the (local) state. Broad-based donor support to the refugee-hosting regions and public actors to overcome these structural deficiencies seem crucial. The Somali Region, under active guidance from the Bureau of Finance and Economic Development (BoFED) and ARRA, has set up working coordination structures that bring together relevant stakeholders, including line ministries and donors. Nonetheless, involvement of local authorities remains superficial, despite their essential role for the success of many CRRF-related projects. Although their capacities are limited, they are motivated to move forward with the CRRF agenda. However, to fill out their role more effectively, they require not only more support to strengthen their financial and human capacities, but also clear national legislation (or leeway) defining their responsibilities in the CRRF implementation process. As of Spring 2020, the patience of local authorities and host communities for national and international actors to live up to their promises has been slowly fading.

6 Recommendations

Research towards this study took place in early 2020. Since the manuscript was drafted (in December 2020), the political situation in Ethiopia has evolved and, thus, created new uncertainty. At this point in time, consequences for CRRF implementation as a result of the political turmoil and conflict in the Tigray Region and the dispute over the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam cannot be predicted, but CRRF implementation is likely to be further de-prioritised. Based on the presented findings and given that the local situation eases back into stability and the CRRF will be put back on the political agenda, the following recommendations are derived.

6.1 To federal authorities

- Guidance by the federal level needs to be strengthened. For this, the degree of horizontal coordination between the different entities of the Ethiopian federal government should ideally increase once again. A strong coordinating body must be reinstated for this purpose and needs to include the Prime Minister's Office, MoFEC and ARRA. Only this can lead to an efficient strategy for both the refugee and host communities.

- The federal government should draft a transition plan on how institutional structures and funding channels can be revised successively to the benefit of regional and local actors with a view to reducing parallel structures. This transition plan should include a future vision for the composition and role of ARRA to incentivise the agency not to bypass this process. Sector-specific approaches are recommended for the step-by-step transfer of competencies to respective (subordinate) authorities.

- The federal government needs to recognise the regional and local level as a relevant actor. Without their contribution a successful CRRF implementation is impossible. Thus, local and regional governments should be consulted concerning general CRRF implementation and concrete sectoral plans.

- The federal government should exercise its leverage on the distribution of international funds devoted to refugees. To guarantee the integrated service provision for both refugees and host communities, funding would need to be redirected towards respective line ministries and authorities.

- The process of drafting and adopting secondary legislation and directives should be accelerated in order to cascade the national legislation to the regional and local levels. This would increase the agency and room for manoeuvre of regional and local authorities.

- The local and regional administration should be strengthened through a variety of capacity building measures. This would allow for better and more equal service provision for both refugee and host communities and increase participation in the CRRF process. One starting point might be to increase the relative attractiveness of local and regional administration posts vis-à-vis positions in NGOs to lessen the high staff turnover.

- Refugees should be given livelihood opportunities and allowed to seek formal employment. Accordingly, the federal government should push for the implementation of the laws that allow refugees to gain work permits and partake in the Out-of-Camp

Policy. This would constitute a game-changing move for refugee integration. The federal level should push for the implementation of these policies, for example, by extending the industrial parks' strategy to the refugee hosting areas.

- The government should formalise economic structures, not only to generate a higher degree of accountability and induce economic growth, but also to create higher revenues for local administration. By creating an effective system for providing work permits and business licences in accordance to the Refugee Proclamation, the Ethiopian government would not only legalise the access to better livelihoods for the refugees, but also create a level playing field between the communities and create tax revenue for the government itself.

6.2 To regional and local authorities

- The overall good coordination structures in the Somali Region, established by BoFED and ARRA, should be maintained and can be considered as best practice for other cases.

- Regional and local authorities should exercise their leverage to make their voices heard among federal and international actors in order to communicate their needs effectively and foster exchange of best practices.

- The regional level needs to strengthen local authorities concerning infrastructure and human resources, both on the kebele and woreda levels. This may include making regional and local administrative posts more attractive and salaries more competitive.

- The regional government should increasingly adapt federal legislation to regional circumstances through necessary regional legislation. Local context, the pastoral lifestyle in the Somali Region and customary law are important factors in areas such as access to land, dispute settlement and documentation.

- A legal basis for informal practices should be provided as this would increase accountability and, thus, avoid potential for conflicts, reduce dependency and increase tax revenues.

- The Somali cabinet should approve the implementation structure for VERA, making the agency functional on the local level. Accessibility for documentation must be improved, for example, by reaching out to rural communities and adopting the requirements for registration processes to local contexts.

- Where possible, primary schools should follow an integrative approach and offer education for both refugees and host communities. Regional and local authorities should harmonise the quality of service delivery to guarantee the observance of standards in host community schools.

6.3 To international actors

- In the long run, international agencies and donors – above all UNHCR – should focus on reducing parallel structures for refugees and hosts. Reduction of parallel structures

inevitably goes along with a reorganisation of competences and a decreased role for the powerful actor ARRA. For this to happen they should work closely with the Government of Ethiopia towards developing an appropriate, clear timeline for these processes.

- The relevance of local and regional authorities should also be better mirrored in the funding process. The funding situation of Somali BoFED, for instance, should reflect its importance in the local process.

- Also, the project planning of donors themselves should not only ensure that a service is delivered, but at the same time think about how local authorities can be involved in the planning and implementation. In line with the humanitarian-development nexus, this not only satisfies immediate needs, but also strengthens local capacities and increases the sustainability of projects.

- In a long-run capacity development view, investment in services to the host communities must be boosted by fostering local structures, such that they can accommodate any new arrivals, which may also include IDPs. Consequently, this means including refugees in development programming rather than including hosts in refugee programming and, thus, (only) increasing the share of the monetary value of project activities for hosts.

- To ease the feelings of hosts of being treated unfairly, donors should increasingly adopt needs-based approaches within their area of action. This requires donors' budgets and monitoring systems to be more flexible and not strictly tied to one or the other beneficiary group (or a fixed ratio). Thus, international actors can enhance the involvement of local actors and, thereby, come closer to a reflection of the humanitarian-development nexus.

- Members of host communities should not only be considered beneficiaries, but also be included in decision-making processes. For many projects, most notably with regard to land use, their consent is a precondition for finding lasting solutions. For example, good experiences have been with community-driven programming, such as the World Bank's DRDIP-project (Development Response to Displacement Impacts Project).

- International actors should be aware of local customs and informal solutions as they are often a good starting point for local integration.

- In case of conflicts (e.g., over land) among community members, development actors and locally engaged NGOs can act as mediators between conflicting parties. They are able to provide an impartial platform or training for conflict resolution. Through their expertise, NGOs can provide legal support in case informal conflict resolution mechanisms seem inadequate and conflicts require the formal judicial system.

- To promote a development-oriented perspective, international actors should increase their focus on creating employment opportunities and induce self-reliance through comprehensive approaches in order to elevate large numbers of job seekers into wage employment.

- Energy related projects, such as the promotion of efficient fuel stoves, solar cooking or mini-grids, as well as investments in water sources may not only improve living conditions, but also be a boon for the environment and peaceful coexistence.

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Appendix

Appendix 1: Background of interview partners (comprehensive list)

Please note: The category "public" includes aid agencies, embassies, government agencies and UN organisations. The category "civil society" refers to NGOs (international and national) and community committees as well as members from the host and refugee communities.

All interviews were semi-structured, based on an interview guide. Most interviews took place face to face in the respective countries, only a few were conducted via phone / video-call. They usually lasted between 45 and 90 minutes. Most interviews took place in the capital Addis Ababa, while a significant number (though less than planned due to field research disruption caused by the COVID-19 crisis) were conducted at the subnational level. Most interviews were recorded and fully transcribed. Only very few rely on hand-written notes. All interviews were coded and systematically analysed with Atlas.ti. Further information regarding the content of the interviews can be made available by the authors upon request.

Table A1: Background of interview partners

ID	Date	Country of analysis	Origin of interviewee	Institution	Level of institution	Location of interview
2	18.02.2020	Ethiopia	Domestic	Public	Federal	Addis Ababa
3	18.02.2020	Ethiopia	Domestic	Public	Federal	Addis Ababa
4	19.02.2020	Ethiopia	Domestic	Public	Federal	Addis Ababa
5	19.02.2020	Ethiopia	Domestic	Public	Federal	Addis Ababa
6	19.02.2020	Ethiopia	Domestic	Public	Federal	Addis Ababa
7	27.02.2020	Ethiopia	International	Public	Federal	Addis Ababa
8	27.02.2020	Ethiopia	Unknown	Civil society	Federal	Addis Ababa
9	05.03.2020	Ethiopia	Domestic	Public	Regional	Jigjiga
10	12.03.2020	Ethiopia	Unknown	Public	Regional	Jigjiga
11	24.02.2020	Ethiopia	Domestic/international	Civil society	Federal	Addis Ababa
12	26.02.2020	Ethiopia	International	Public	Federal	Addis Ababa
13	13.02.2020	Ethiopia	Domestic	Public	Federal	Addis Ababa
14	21.02.2020	Ethiopia	International	Public	Federal	Addis Ababa
15	25.02.2020	Ethiopia	International	Civil society	Federal	Addis Ababa
16	27.02.2020	Ethiopia	International	Civil society	Local	Remote
17	28.02.2020	Ethiopia	International	Civil society	Federal	Addis Ababa
18	28.02.2020	Ethiopia	Unknown	Civil society	Federal	Addis Ababa
19	05.03.2020	Ethiopia	Domestic	Public	Federal	Addis Ababa
20	05.03.2020	Ethiopia	Domestic	Public	Regional	Jigjiga
21	05.03.2020	Ethiopia	Domestic	Civil society	Regional	Jigjiga
22	05.03.2020	Ethiopia	Domestic	Civil society	Federal	Jigjiga
23	10.03.2020	Ethiopia	Domestic	Civil society	Regional	Jigjiga
24	17.03.2020	Ethiopia	Domestic	Civil society	Regional	Jigjiga
25	18.03.2020	Ethiopia	Domestic	Public	Regional	Jigjiga
26	15.04.2020	Ethiopia	International	Public	Federal	Remote

Table A1: Background of interview partners						
27	14.02.2020	Ethiopia	Domestic/international	Civil society	Federal	Addis Ababa
28	04.03.2020	Ethiopia	Domestic	Public	Regional	Jigjiga
29	09.03.2020	Ethiopia	Domestic	Civil society	Regional	Jigjiga
30	13.03.2020	Ethiopia	Domestic	Public	Regional	Jigjiga
31	13.03.2020	Ethiopia	Domestic	Public	Regional	Jigjiga
32	13.03.2020	Ethiopia	Domestic	Civil society	Regional	Jigjiga
33	17.04.2020	Ethiopia	International	Public	Federal	Remote
34	04.03.2020	Ethiopia	Domestic	Public	Regional	Jigjiga
35	16.03.2020	Ethiopia	Domestic	Public	Local	Sheder
36	16.03.2020	Ethiopia	International	Civil society	Local	Sheder
37	18.03.2020	Ethiopia	Unknown	Public	Local	Sheder
38	27.02.2020	Ethiopia	Domestic	Civil society	Federal	Addis Ababa
39	21.02.2020	Ethiopia	Domestic	Public	Federal	Addis Ababa
40	26.02.2020	Ethiopia	Unknown	Public	Federal	Addis Ababa
41	27.02.2020	Ethiopia	Unknown	Public	Federal	Addis Ababa
42	09.03.2020	Ethiopia	Domestic	Public	Regional	Jigjiga
43	09.03.2020	Ethiopia	Domestic	Public	Regional	Jigjiga
44	11.03.2020	Ethiopia	International	Public	Federal	Jigjiga
45	21.02.2020	Ethiopia	Domestic	Public	Federal	Addis Ababa
46	26.02.2020	Ethiopia	Domestic	Public	Federal	Addis Ababa
47	27.02.2020	Ethiopia	Domestic	Civil society	Federal	Addis Ababa
48	27.02.2020	Ethiopia	Domestic	Public	Federal	Addis Ababa
49	28.02.2020	Ethiopia	Domestic	Public	Federal	Addis Ababa
50	10.03.2020	Ethiopia	Domestic	Public	Local	Aw-Barre
51	10.03.2020	Ethiopia	Domestic	Public	Local	Aw-Barre
52	11.03.2020	Ethiopia	Domestic	Civil society	Regional	Jigjiga
53	13.03.2020	Ethiopia	Domestic	Public	Regional	Jigjiga
54	23.04.2020	Ethiopia	International	Public	Regional	Remote
55	05.03.2020	Ethiopia	Unknown	Public	Regional	Jigjiga
56	11.03.2020	Ethiopia	Domestic	Public	Local	Sheder
57	22.04.2020	Ethiopia	International	Public	Federal	Remote
58	24.02.2020	Ethiopia	Domestic	Public	Federal	Addis Ababa
59	09.03.2020	Ethiopia	International	Civil society	Regional	Jigjiga
60	23.04.2020	Ethiopia	Unknown	Public	Federal	Remote
61	04.03.2020	Ethiopia	Domestic	Public	Regional	Jigjiga

Appendix 2: Camp selection

For the quantitative analysis, the selection of particular communities within the Somali Region was informed by motivations of relevance for each sector, representativeness for other camps in the Somali Region and Ethiopia, as well as availability of previous studies. Whereas qualitative interviews were held in both refugee-hosting regions within the Somali Region, the survey was only conducted in two camps. The focus lies around the Jigjiga area, where three refugee camps are located (Kebrebeyah, Sheder and Aw-Barre).[19] Aw-Barre and Sheder were selected as the two camps for the closer analysis. They largely resemble one another in terms of structure, host community interaction and inauguration date. Their main difference compared with Kebrebeyah is their date of inauguration and the consequences thereof. Whereas construction of Sheder and Aw-Barre began in 2007/2008, Kebrebeyah was established in 1991 and predominantly hosts refugees from an earlier wave of migration. Refugees who had lived in other camps and who could not return to Somalia or resettle to other countries were resettled to Kebrebeyah. Kebrebeyah is, thus, the only remaining camp from this previous migration flow. Given this background, the camp hosts refugees who have already been in Ethiopia for a long time or who were even born in the camp and were not able to relocate elsewhere. The atmosphere in Kebrebeyah is, therefore, described as more depressed compared with the other two (Carver, Gedi, et al., 2019). Related to the later date of inauguration, the camp structures and quality of service-delivery vary between the camps. Whereas the Kebrebeyah camp is located directly next to the city, a clear geographic separation between the Ethiopian local population and the camp is visible in Sheder/Aw-Barre. Furthermore, the latter two camps' grid structure is clearly planned, whereas Kebrebeyah has rather developed and grown over time. Meanwhile, Kebrebeyah attracts less attention by donors and its service delivery is described as inferior. For example, there are no cash interventions in the camp and refugees complain more often about the quality of health services and an increasing neglect by international organisations. Interaction with the local community is less pronounced and slightly more conflictual (Carver, Gedi, et al., 2019).

Whereas Kebrebeyah and Aw-Barre are capitals of their respective woredas, Sheder is a relatively small community within the Aw-Barre Woreda, located between Jigjiga and Aw-Barre. The inclusion of Kebrebeyah would have allowed for a cross-woreda comparison of approaches of different local administrations. The Sheder camp within the Aw-Barre Woreda adds a different aspect of refugee-host interaction and factors out differences arising from the earlier inauguration date. As only the establishment of the Sheder camp gave rise to the development of a larger local community, the proportion of the camp to the community is particularly large and the impact of the establishment of the camp on Ethiopian residents might have been particularly pronounced. Furthermore, the more rural context allows us to address our sectoral focus on land issues in more depth. Inter-woreda comparisons are nonetheless important in the qualitative part.

The selection of Sheder and Aw-Barre is also preferable in terms of external validity, given their similarities with other camps in the Somali Region, most notably with regard to their inauguration date, the grid-style construction of the camps, as well as the proximity to the

19 The three camps are very similar in size (11,000-14,000 inhabitants), their share of underage persons (55-57 per cent) and female population (~53 per cent). They are all located along larger regional roads; Aw-Barre is closest to the Somali border.

Somali border. Other camps in the Somali Region are located in the Liben Zone around Dolo Ado and host an additional 150,000 refugees (UNHCR, 2019e). They are distributed across five camps, which, therefore, are considerably larger (ranging from 35,000 to 49,000 inhabitants). They were built around the same time (2009 onwards) and have a slightly higher share of underage persons (63-68 per cent) than the camps in Fafan. Their economies are highly interlinked with those of neighbouring areas in Somalia and Kenya. As the camps of Sheder and Aw-Barre are located only 3 km and 23 km from the Somalia/Somaliland border and are near the regional hub Boorama, similar economic inter-border interactions are expected.

In comparison with refugee camps in other regions of Ethiopia, the camps in Sheder and Aw-Barre appear to be relatively similar to a number of camps in the Tigray region. They are comparable in size and have geographically separated areas in close proximity to host communities. However, they host predominantly Eritrean refugees. Kebrebeyah on the other hand seems to be a unique camp for the Ethiopian context, as it is by far the oldest of all refugee camps in the country and emerged as a non-planned camp. However, it might be comparable to a number of smaller camps in the Afar region, which are also relatively old and have emerged as part of pre-existing communities but are mainly inhabited by Eritrean refugees. The Afar region in general resembles the Somali Region in terms of its economic structure and the issues concerning the use of agricultural land.

Consideration of previous research also influenced the camp selection. All Somali Region camps have been assessed previously, emphasising various aspects of refugee integration and their socio-economic background. The five camps around Dolo Ado were assessed intensively regarding economic opportunities for refugees (Betts, Bradenbrink, et al., 2019). Most recently and most pertinent to our team's research question, Carver, Gedi, et al. (2019), in a qualitative study, compare Kebrebeyah and Sheder with regards to the implementation potential of the Nine Pledges. The World Bank Skill Survey (World Bank, 2018), providing detailed information on socio-economic standards of host communities and refugees alike, as well as the ILO (2018) study focussing on livelihoods and value chains, included samples from all three Fafan camps in their quantitative survey but in rather small numbers. Conditions within the refugee education system were studied extensively by Lashford and Malik (2019), comparing Sheder and Aw-Barre with experiences in Gambella and Addis. The comprehensive baseline survey for the Building Self-Reliance for Refugees and Host Communities by Improved Sustainable Basic Social Service Delivery Programme (BSRP) on the other hand, was only conducted in Kebrebeyah. In general, Kebrebeyah has been the object of many studies, resulting in research fatigue among the population. The ethical issues resulting from this, as well as the relative research gap concerning Aw-Barre were other motivations to focus only on Aw-Bare and Sheder.

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