

Access to Higher Education of Refugees, and Returnees in the IGAD Region: The Djibouti Declaration and its Ramifications for Higher Education and Sustainable Development

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Abstract: *This paper argues that access to quality education for refugees, returnees and Internally Displaced Populations (IDPs) is not only fundamental human rights but also an obligation which states and non-state actors have to fulfill. It is also an integral part of sustainable development efforts which will have significant contributions to socioeconomic transformations in host countries, countries of origin and countries of destinations in the event that refugees become migrant, which is sometimes the case. The IGAD region, consisting of eight member states, namely, Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan and Uganda, host more than 7.5 million forcibly displaced people (3 million refugees and 4.5 million IDPs). This results from protracted and devastating conflicts; drought and famine and other natural or man-made calamities. Within the IGAD region, Somalia, South Sudan and Sudan produce 80 to 90 percent of the refugees and IDPs due to the protracted/on-going civil wars in the two countries. However, almost all the member state have refugees, IDPs or migrants sheltered in their territories. Refugees stay in their host communities for 11 years on average. Access to higher education among refugees, returnees and IDPs is very low at only 1% compared to 36% of the student population globally. The figure for Africa is still dismal, at less than 1%; and the same holds true for the IGAD region. In an effort to address this major challenge facing these population categories, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) convened a high level regional (Ministerial Conference) on refugee education in Djibouti, from 12-14 December 2017. That Conference adopted what is now called the Djibouti Declaration and Plan of Action for refugee education in the IGAD region. The major purpose of this paper was to outline the refugee situations in general and the state of education in particular.*

Key words: **IGAD, refugee education, higher education, sustainable development, quality**

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This paper has tried to examine the implication of the Djibouti Declaration on access to quality education among refugees, returnees and IDPs, on the one hand and the anticipated contributions of higher education for personal, national and regional development on the other. The study employed blended methodological approach: quantitative analysis and qualitative interpretation where feasible and applicable. The conclusions and recommendations emphasize the need for concerted efforts and further studies on this very important but neglected theme of higher education not only in the IGAD region, but also throughout Africa since refugees, returnees and IDPs account for a significant proportion of the Continent.

Introduction

The IGAD region, consisting of eight member states, namely, Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan and Uganda, host more than 7.5 million forcibly displaced people (3 million refugees and 4.5 million IDPs). This results from protracted and devastating conflicts; drought and famine and other natural or man-made calamities. Within the IGAD region, Somalia, South Sudan and Sudan produce 80 to 90 percent of the refugees and IDPs due to the protracted/on-going civil wars in the two countries. However, almost all the member states have refugees, IDPs or migrants sheltered in their territories.

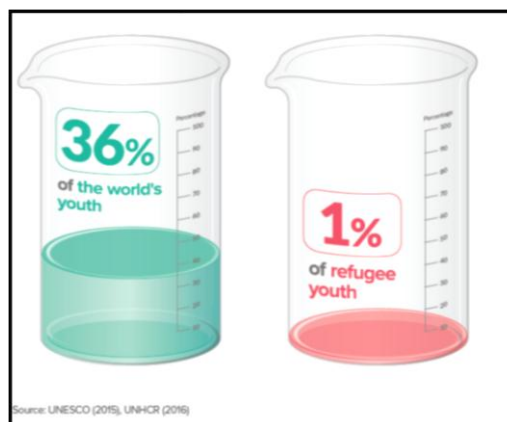
The region has a population of more than 250 million accounting for a quarter of the population of the continent. With a population of over a 100 million, Ethiopia alone contributes to 40 per cent of the regional total. On average, 60 to 65 per cent of the population consists of the youth and school age children. The region is also characterized by high level of poverty, frequent drought and famine owing to climate change and global warming. All these contribute to competition for the scarce resources because of which frequent and protracted conflicts are erupted here and there. Almost all the member states of IGAD have been/are involved in several internal or external clashes. Some of these have lasted for decades. The terrible civil wars that quickly come to the mind include Ethiopia and Eritrea; South Sudan and Sudan, Somalia, Sudan (notably Darfur) and Uganda (Lord's Resistance Army). These and many other skirmishes have produced millions of refugees, IDPs, and forced migration in and outside of the region.

Why Refugee Education?

The thrust of this paper is not much on the root causes of conflicts or civil wars. Nor will it focus on the long list of social problems emanating from conflicts, which could be a legitimate subject for another paper. As clearly suggested by the title, the three interrelated concerns of this paper will be (a) access to quality higher education by refugees, returnees, IDPs and host communities; (b) regional approaches to ensure access to education as illustrated in the Djibouti Declaration on Refugee Education (IGAD, 2017) and (c) the role higher education institutions in general and private higher education institutions in particular play in providing access and ensuring quality education for refugees, returnees and host communities. These issues will be discussed in the context of major regional and global commitments to provide education to all for inclusive and sustainable development. The key commitments from which the Djibouti Declaration was based include: Agenda 2063 of the African Union as a collective aspiration of “the African We Want” as well as the decadal policies, strategies and plans of action derived from it; the United Nations’ Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG4 which contains targets on inclusive and quality education; and another UN initiative: the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (UNHCR, 2017).

Of the 22.5 million refugees globally, only 1% has access to higher education (UNHCR, 2016). In Africa, where the overall university enrollment is less than 5% (Harvard University, 2006), refugees access to tertiary education is less than the global average. The major refugee hosting countries in Africa in general and the IGAD region in particular did not have a clear policy and strategy on access to higher education by refugees, returnees and IDPs. This is often a neglected area since much focus, even for nationals, has been placed on universal primary and secondary education. The MDGs scarcely mention higher education as a target to be met by member states of the UN. This neglect has been somehow rectified in then SDGs which under Goal 4 considers quality tertiary education and inclusive development as major requirements for the attainment of the SDGs. Therefore though refugees do not receive explicit coverage in the SDGs, the emphasis on inclusiveness captures the specific needs of refugees, returnees and IDPs.

Fig 1: Higher Education Enrolment Rates



The Linkage between Higher Education and Sustainable Development

Higher education institutions, be it in the private or public sector should have significant roles to play both to ensure equitable access to education by all and to develop the requisite skills and competencies as well as the knowledge base for the successful implementation of the SDGs. Special attention should be given to populations in difficult circumstances such as refugees and hard-to-reach peripheral communities, where often refugees are accommodated.

The role of education in socioeconomic development has long been recognized quite early in the history of emerging Africa from the yoke of colonialism. The 1961 Addis Ababa Conference on the Development of Education in Africa underlined the "... vital importance of education as an investment in any programme of economic and social development, and the need for a close link between educational planning and overall development planning." (UNESCO, 1961). This theme of education for development continued to be the major preoccupation for post-independence and contemporary Africa as well. The Founding Conference of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) in May 1963 called for strong educational and cultural cooperation amongst the newly independent African States both to broker socioeconomic development and also enhance regional integration by breaking "... down linguistic barriers and promote understanding amongst the people of the continent" (OAU, 1963). The Second Decade of Education of the African Union (2006-2015) and its operational Plan of Action considers higher education as one of the seven areas of focus both as a field of development and a critical tool for sustainable

development. This emphasis on higher education was further capitalized in the Continental Strategy for Education in Africa (CESA) for 2016-2025 of the African Union which states that “Virtually all development players now concur that for any meaningful and sustainable economic growth to be realized and sustained, tertiary education must be centrally placed in the development agenda of nations” (AU 2016). Of course, this assertion is firmly based on the priorities identified by Agenda 2063 of the Union which embodies the vision for Africa for the next fifty years of collective aspiration of the ‘Africa We Want’ (AU 2013). Other international institutions have confirmed the place of higher education in delivering rapid and sustainable development. The World Bank Group Education Strategy 2020 underlined the need for inclusive education which is firmly grounded on the Bank’s conviction that “Educated individuals are more employable, able to earn higher wages, cope better with economic shocks and raise healthier children” (World Bank, 2011). When this notion of education for a better life is extended to forcibly displaced population it means a lot. For this category of population education in general and higher education in particular creates the capacity to understand the root causes of displacement, builds power of resilience and problem-solving, contributes to conflict-resolution, reconciliation and provides skills need for post-conflict reconstruction and recovery. During their stay in the host countries, educated refugees could participate actively in economic and social development provided that they are given the opportunity to do so.

Higher education for refugees in IAGD

Access to education including higher education is a fundamental human right enshrined in global, regional and national legal instruments such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the African Charter on Peoples and Human Rights, the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child and several other legal frameworks. The World Declaration on Higher Education of UNESCO (1998) stressed, among others, that: Access to higher education for members of some special target groups, such as indigenous peoples, cultural and linguistic minorities, disadvantaged groups, peoples living under occupation and those who suffer from disabilities, must be actively facilitated, since these groups as collectivities and as individuals may have both experience and talent that can be of great value for the development of societies and nations. Special material help and educational solutions can help overcome the obstacles that these groups face, both in accessing and in continuing higher education.

Though refugees are not mentioned here, perhaps, for lack of awareness on special higher education needs of this category of the population which could be explained in terms of universities not having focused their attention on displaced population as important targets for higher education, the general reference to ‘disadvantaged groups’, could also be extended to cover refugees, returnees and internally displaced peoples (IDPs)

According to the World Bank (2017) “Higher education can be a powerful engine for building a stronger society, ending extreme poverty and boosting shared prosperity. It can serve the community by contributing knowledge of and advanced skills as well as basic competencies and research ...” The Bank further pointed out that “The economic returns for higher education are the highest in the entire educational system – an estimated 17 per cent increase in earnings as compared with 10 per cent for primary and 7 per cent for secondary education.” There is also a strong correlation between higher education and economic development. The rapid growth in Asian and Latin American over the last three to four decades and in recent years in Africa is associated with the expansion of higher education.

Realizing this transformative role of higher education in Africa, Agenda 2063 of the African Union envisions that “at least 70 per cent of all high-school graduates go on to have tertiary education, with 70 per cent of those graduating in subjects related to science and technology.” (Chipperfield, 2016) Refugees’ access to higher education is very low in the IGAD region. Ethiopia is one of the few countries to establish a specific target for increasing refugee enrolment in higher education. In March, 2017, it announced its intention to increase refugee enrolment in higher education from 1,600 to 2,500. Kenya has committed to continued access to the education system, schools and training institutions for refugees. (UNHCR/IGAD, 2017).

State of Education Sector Plans, integration of refugee education

As seen in the table below, IGAD member states are at different stages of incorporating refugee education into their national education programs. Some do not even make reference to ‘refugee’ in their education plans. As a result, it is very difficult to find solid empirical evidence on the state of refugee education in these countries. Even those that have made reference to refugee education in their education sector plans either as a passing remark or as a separate chapter, do with no solid statistical data.

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	Country	Status of ESP	Reference to Refugee Education in ESP	Actions
1	Somalia	ESP endorsed in December 2017.	Need for refugee education mentioned without any concrete activity or program.	Action to be identified after ESPIG application processed.
2	Djibouti	Ten-year 2008-2018 ESP extended till 2019.	Refugee education is not mentioned in the ESP.	The new ESPIG process will start in mid-2018. CL will ensure integration of refugee education is considered in the new ESP.
3	Ethiopia	Under implementation. Next one is due in 2020.	There is a chapter on Refugee education but not based on credible data and analysis. CL asked for support from UNHCR on refugee children data.	Include refugee education as a topic for discussion in 2018 JSR to be held in March. Discuss data issues, possible support from other DPs in data and analysis.
4	Eritrea	Draft ESP submitted for QA	Little reference to refugees in ESP. No data available.	Explore the possibility collecting data in the country- consider political sensitivities and reality of data collection.
5	Sudan	ESP completed.	Integration of refugee education is part of the ESP as a separate chapter.	Program application is being developed. CL will check if refugee education is part of the program.
6	South Sudan	Completed. ESPIG application due in April 2018.	Refugee, displaced population referenced without any analytical base. DPs pointed out the gap and put that as a caveat for endorsement of the ESP. Ministry has agreed to include further data, analysis and activities for refugees, returnees and IDPs in the ESP. But will need support in doing so.	Discuss with MoE and DPs possible support for collection and analysis of data on refugee education. A chapter on refugee can be integrated as part of the ESP during JAR in November 2018.
7	Kenya	ESA underway, ESP to be completed by June/July 2018.	Kenya has a standalone refugee education policy with little to show for implementation. Integration of refugee education in the current is not confirmed.	Ensure refugee education is integrated into the ESA. Provide feedback on refugee data as a point during QA report to the country.
8	Uganda	A new ESP process to start in March 2018	Uganda has a standalone refugee education policy that the ministry of education has agreed to integrate into the next ESP. Quantitative basis of the policy needs to be assessed re: data compatibility with EMIS, ESA, ESP for integration within ESP.	Discuss data issues with the MoEST. Identify areas for support and ensure those are covered in the ESPDG application. Discuss other possible bottlenecks of integrating refugee education

Source: Global Partnership for Education (GPE)

This vague situation calls for the development of a strong education management information system (EMIS) which should capture all categories of students including refugees, returnees, IDPs and children of host communities. The Djibouti Declaration has emphasized on the need for this and other intervention areas which are outlined below.

Key Elements of the Djibouti Declaration

The Djibouti Declaration emanated from a three-day Conference of IGAD ministers in charge of education held in Djibouti from 12 to 14 December 2017. The Conference was organized by IGAD in partnership with the UNHCR, EU, GIZ and attended by representatives from the seven IGAD member states, international institutions and civil society organizations in the region, from the rest Africa, Europe and North America. The theme of this Conference was “Regional Quality Education Standards and Inclusion into National Systems for Refugee Children in Line with CRRF, SDG4 and Agenda 2063 on Education”. This shows very clearly that education for refugees, returnees and host communities was a development issue for two major reasons. First, societies cannot claim to have achieved development without ensuring right to access to education and skills building opportunities to their citizens. The right to education at all levels is a gateway to the meaningful enjoyment of other rights. Second, access to quality education, as shown in the relevant sections above, is a critical instrument for sustainable development. In conflict and post-conflict situations educating refugees is believed to have considerable implications in resolving conflicts, rebuilding shattered socioeconomic infrastructures and lives, enhancing reconciliation processes, building peace and preventing relapse to conflicts given the fact that educated citizens together with other segments of the society notable elders and religious leaders can help create better understanding and enabling conditions for peace and development. In this context, the IGAD Summit of Heads of State and Government held in March 2017, commits member states to: *Enhance, education, training and skills development for refugees to reduce their dependence on humanitarian assistance, and prepare them for gainful employment in host communities and upon return.*

Regional Economic Communities like IGAD understood their catalytic role in terms of fulfilling the rights of individuals or groups on the one hand and contributing to the successful realization of regional and global initiatives for sustainable development, on the other. It is in this context that IGAD took-up the responsibility to promote education for refugees, returnees and host communities as outlined in the Djibouti Declaration. Refugee affairs, including education, being cross-border or **transnational** they require: (a) a shared vision, (b) *collective responsibilities*, (c) *collaborative efforts and* (d) *pooled resources*. These are the major assumptions underlying the Djibouti Declaration whose key elements are outlined below:

1. Regional Education Quality Standards

Refugees stay in the host country for an extended period of time, on average up to 11 years. Though a limited percentage of the refugee young refugees receive education, they face several challenges in terms of quality and relevance of their education. Host countries follow curricula and educational systems which might be different from the countries of origin. When refugees either return home or migrate to other countries, they face difficulties in getting their educational certificates accredited or accepted. This problem discourages others from pursuing education. Those who undergo certain levels of training would consider their years in school as wasted. This problem cannot be addressed by individual countries and thence the need for a regional approach. The Djibouti Declaration commits member states to “Establish regional minimum education standards and targets on access and delivery of quality education for ... higher education including TVET and education for people with special needs to benefit refugees, returnees, and host communities in order to maximize learning outcomes” (IGAD, 2017). Doing so is believed to contribute to refugees’ access not only to quality education but also to learning outcomes that will be recognized by countries of origin, hosting countries or third countries in the region. In the final analysis, educational achievements recognized by these countries could also meet global standards; hence their acceptance outside the region as well building confidence among students and/or graduates.

2. Regional Skills Development for Refugees

Higher education provides opportunities to specialize in different disciplines. Some of them help to develop skills and competencies whereas others offer generalized orientation in the sense of learning to learn. Skills can be

acquired from experience or specialized training received from a given institutions with purposely designed modules. Skills are essential to perform certain tasks or provide services. Regional skill development programs for refugees involve coordination of efforts of member states, identifying skill gaps (needs assessment), inventory of skills and competencies existing in different countries to see if there would be possibilities for cross-fertilizations and exchanges. It also enables to compile best practices in delivery methods, regulatory frameworks to recognize qualifications and in quality assurance systems in place. These require considerable investment and follow-up. In this regard, the Djibouti Declaration urges:

- Local and international partners to provide sustained and increased support for infrastructure and capacity building for skills development, particularly in refugee-hosting areas; and
- Match skills training to job opportunities in the IGAD region in order to enable access to secure livelihoods, self-reliance and dignified work for refugees as stated in the 1951 Refugee Convention (IGAD, 2017).

If refugees stay in a concentrated location staying for a long period of time, it is possible to achieve this objective of developing employability skills among refugees, returnees, and host communities through regional cooperation.

3. Inclusion of Refugees' Education in National Education Systems

The experience of many countries in the past shows that refugees receive education as outsiders in a manner perceived appropriate for the refugees. Recent studies emphasize the need for integrating refugees into national education systems to ensure consistency and sustainability. The Djibouti Declaration echoes this when it urges member states to:

- Integrate education for refugees and returnees into National Education Sector Plans by 2020;
- Enhance the capacity of IGAD Member States to integrate education for refugees and returnees into national education system; and
- Ensure the protection of refugees in national education systems particular refugee and returnee children and their psycho-social well-being through a multi-sectoral approach.

4. Financing, Partnership and Monitoring

Financing education in general and refugee education in particular is one of the challenges facing developing countries. Budgetary allocations for the

latter often come from humanitarian assistance, often inadequate and time-bound. The debate on keeping the balance between humanitarian supports and investing in long-term development sectors including education in crisis and post-crisis situations still rages. Donors usually respond to emergencies. States struggle with competing priorities to spend their meagre resources. This poses a formidable impediment for specific group of populations such as refugees who are often sheltered in communities with weak and poorly developed infrastructures and facilities. Addressing this challenge calls for coordinated and collaborative efforts by different actors. The Djibouti Declaration articulated this need and urged governments to “Commit to developing, long-term refugee education response strategies, as part of national education sector plans based on a comprehensive mapping of current and emerging resources and call upon humanitarian and development partners to support this process.” The Declaration also “Urge[d] International Financial Institutions (IFIs) and bilateral, regional and international partners, in the spirit of responsibility sharing, to increase multi-year, predictable and sustainable support to IGAD and its Member States to ensure refugee and host community children and youth have greater access to and quality education ...” (IGAD, 2017).

Ramifications of the Djibouti Declaration on Sustainable Development

Sustainable development is possible only through inclusive, equitable and participatory undertaking through comprehensive planning and visionary leadership. It also requires bringing on board a wide-range of actors, stakeholders and partners. The Djibouti Declaration is not merely about refugee education though this is the cardinal issue to be tackled in a coordinated manner. It is also about education, science, technology and innovation that have to be promoted at both national and regional levels. These are amply captured in the Continental Agenda 2063 of the AU and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the UN and IGAD’s own five-year strategic plan for 2016-2020 as well as the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF) of the UN adopted in 2016. These are all political commitment at macro levels and will need to be translated into concrete action; and this is not an easy task.

The successful implementation of the Djibouti Declaration will result in developing and operationalization of various instruments and guidelines

which will ensure children's and young peoples' access to quality education, skills and competencies through TVET and higher education programs. It will also result in regional frameworks that will encourage as well as oblige member states to recognize certificates and credentials obtained in other countries within the region. Obviously, this in turn will require establishment or strengthening of quality assurance and equivalency rating mechanisms and agencies which will have to work in line with regional and continental guidelines.

Of course, it will be an ambitious goal given the fact that countries will take time to domesticate and implement the Declaration and all the required instruments. Some of the activities, especially inclusion of refugees into national education systems will require huge resource. It will also take time to convince partners and mobilize support that responds to the education needs of refugees. As economic entities manned mostly by pragmatic economists, International Financial Institutions will have to look into the short, medium and long-term returns to investment in this sector. In other words, there is a need, on the part of both IGAD and its Member States, to develop sound projects, engage in persuasive advocacy and build strong partnership with a wide range of actors and stakeholders.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Conclusions

The IGAD region is one of the regions affected by frequent and protracted conflicts, climate change and the resulting drought and famine as well as other natural and man-made disasters. These socio-political and natural calamities produce millions of forcibly displaced people. Accordingly the region hosts more than 3 million refugees and 4.7 million internally displaced people.

Providing access to basic social services, including education for this population category has been one of the formidable challenges for both refugees and host communities. The refugees cross borders and remain in their host communities for a considerable period of time. Lack of access to quality education and relevant skills means years wasted and opportunities lost. Realizing this fact, international and regional organizations have begun to find comprehensive response to refugee problem.

IGAD, as one of the Regional Economic Communities in the eastern and horn of Africa region, has taken special interest in the multiple challenges facing refugees. The Djibouti Declaration and its accompanying plan of action, aims at responding to the education needs of refugees, returnees and IDPs and host communities. Among others, the Declaration urges member states, partners and IFIs to coordinate their efforts in providing access to quality education; develop regional educational quality frameworks; integrate refugee education into national education systems; and adopt mechanism for mutual recognition education certificates, degrees, diplomas and other credentials obtained in a host country. The Declaration also calls upon IGAD and member states to establish regional platforms and coordination mechanism in order to follow up progress in the Declaration and to implement regional programs in education, science, technology and innovation that are critical for the attainment of globally agreed development instruments such as the Agenda 2063 and SDGs. IGAD has taken up these assignments and is working towards meeting the target in the next three to five years.

Recommendations

Regional institutions play important roles in creating political space for their member states to develop commonly agreed commitments. The various normative instruments adopted by member states through the convening power of regional bodies like IGAD will have immense contributions in setting agenda, creating consensus, developing plans and monitoring progresses. They also bring various stakeholders together to learn from each other and chart the next best way forward based on the lessons learnt. With regard to the subject of this paper, the Djibouti Declaration on refugee education, it is essential to consider the following key recommendations.

- ***Make Refugees a Concern for Higher Education Institutions.*** Higher education institutions, in both the public and private sectors within the region have to give serious attention to the education of refugees, returnees and host communities in the context triple responsibilities: teaching, research and community services. If institutions of higher learning are not concerned with the education and social development of forcibly displaced populations, who else would? Despite some sporadic research efforts in cross-border education, which rarely refers refugees and IDPs, universities do not seem to have a coherent program on tertiary education needs of refugees. It is

imperative that this deficit is addressed through the active involvement of higher education institutions the provision of quality education for refugees, returnees, IDPs and host communities. As privileged social institutions, some of them running projects funded from taxpayers' money or grants in the name of the population, should not ignore this important segment of the populations.

- ***Strengthen Partnership and Cooperation.*** Regional institutions, IFIs, and UN Agencies and civil society organizations should join hands in addressing the challenges faced by refugees and refugee-hosting communities in promoting refugees access to quality education. In the context of the Djibouti Declaration, its effective implementation can only be achieved if IGAD and its development partners work in concerted and coordinated manner. To this effect, IGAD needs to undertake vigorous advocacy and partnership building campaign. It should also support member states in their endeavor to mobilize adequate resources for integration of refugees into their respective national education sector development plan.
- ***Establish strong regional coordination and implementation mechanisms.*** Regional normative instruments require regular follow-up on the status their implementation. Countries have myriads of competing and often conflicting priorities. Because of this, they may likely fail to meet agreed regional targets unless constantly reminded and assisted technically, financially or otherwise. Therefore, it is essential to put regional coordination, implementation and monitoring and evaluation mechanisms in place. This will facilitate the flow of information and ideas on subsequent action in a two-way traffic: from regional secretariats to member states and vice versa.
- ***Encourage refugees to pursue education.*** The reasons for extremely low percentage of refugee enrolment in tertiary education is linked to a number of internal and external factors. The first refers to the difficult situations in which refugees find themselves. Having been forcibly displaced from their homes and countries, they experience a series of social, political, economic, psychological and ecological challenges. Their primary concern will, therefore, be survival, adaptation and looking for possibilities of either returning home or migrating to other destinations often to the West or to the Middle East. Higher education or skills though training could add value to refugees and their families wherever they live. Therefore, they should be

encouraged and supported to seek higher education and skills development opportunities.

- **Conduct further studies.** In addition to the practical actions towards the implementation of the Djibouti Declaration within a broader framework to enhance quality, affordable and accessible education in the region, higher education institutions are encouraged to conduct studies on the linkage between access to education by refugees, returnees and host communities and sustainable development. This can be done through collaborative projects and multi-stakeholder partners including between public and private higher education institutions.

In summing up this paper, the author wishes to reiterate a point made elsewhere that refugees, returnees, and host communities have been grappling with situations that are often beyond their control. Young people under such circumstances need to be provided with the opportunities to build their capacity through education and skills training in order to play important roles in society. Educated citizens will be a vital force in resolving conflicts, speeding-up post-conflict reconstruction, recovery and reconciliation and peace building as well as transition to democracy. The Djibouti Declaration is adopted with these in mind and its implementation to the fullest extent should be the concern for all stakeholders including refugees.

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