



**African Population and
Health Research Center**



Save the Children

FACT SHEET

REFUGEE TEACHER INCLUSION IN THE KENYA NATIONAL EDUCATION SYSTEM: CHALLENGES AND WAY FORWARD

PURPOSE OF THE FACT SHEET

TO PROVIDE AN OVERVIEW OF REFUGEE TEACHER INCLUSION OPERATES IN KENYA.

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80% of teachers in refugee camp schools are refugees—74.6% of refugee teachers surveyed do not have teacher certification by TSC!

Methodology

- Political Economy Analysis (PEA) (Nov 2024) in Garissa and Turkana
- Conducted by the TeachWell Voices project funded by the LEGO Foundation
- Evidence generated through:
 - Policy analysis; survey (of 51% teachers in Kakuma and Kalobeyei, and 53% in Dadaab); focus group discussions with refugee teachers
 - Key informant interviews with government officials, school heads association, UN development partners

Key Findings: Inclusion of refugees into the national education system in Kenya

1. The School Context in the Refugee Camps

- Schools are registered with the Ministry of Education but managed as private institutions (referred to as "refugee camp schools").
- Primarily funded and managed by UNHCR, NGOs, and refugee communities
- Refugee learners are exposed to Kenya's Competence-based curriculum
- Over 80% of teachers in Kakuma and Dadaab are refugees
- Over 200 schools cater to more than 160,000 learners in Kakuma and Dadaab
- High teacher-student ratio—over 200 students per class in some schools [1],[2]
- Poor infrastructure, overcrowded classrooms and double shifting
- Gender imbalance with more male (54.2%) than female learners (45.8%)

2. Teacher Certification

- Limited pathways to formal qualifications
- Most teachers (74.6%) have not undergone teacher certification by TSC.
- This is compounded by other hindrances to professional growth (see Table 1).

3. Teacher Professional Development (TPD)

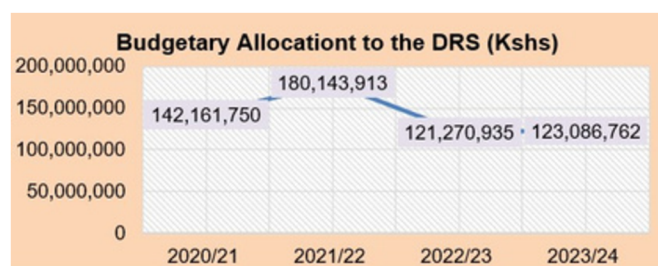
- TPD is primarily offered by NGOs with typically non-accredited programs.
- TPD is hampered by several barriers (See Table 2).
- The dire need for teacher capacity development is illuminated:
 1. The youthful workforce (47.3% between 26-30 years)
 2. Limited teaching experience (45.5% 1-3 years; 16.7% less than one year)
 3. Prevalence of untrained and unlicensed teachers (61.7%).

4. Teacher Participation and Well-being

- Refugee teachers face diverse student needs, including gender, disability, trauma, mixed age group and diverse linguistic and ethnic backgrounds
- Refugee teachers are ill-equipped to cope or support traumatized students
- The encampment policy restricts teacher mobility and access to services
- Short-term contracts and job instability affect feelings of well-being.

Key Findings: Inclusion of refugees into the national education system in Kenya**5. Financing and budgetary allocation**

- Declining Government allocation to the Department for Refugee Services (DRS)
- UNHCR's (2024) funding was only at 48% of the required budget^[1].
- These agencies provide salaries, teacher training, and educational resources.
- Refugee teachers earn Ksh. 8,000 vs. national teachers at Ksh. 22,800/month
- Many refugee teachers perceive this pay structure as discriminatory
- This has affected job satisfaction and high turnover among refugee teachers

**6. Gender Equality and Inclusion**

- Gender imbalance—male (79.1%); female teachers (20.9%) has implications:
 - Lack of female role models for female students
 - Gender-sensitive teaching practices and inclusive education
 - Safe spaces, menstrual hygiene services, protection from GBV
- Male teachers are more likely to receive support for training
- Barriers to employment and advancement disproportionately affect women
- Attributed to cultural norms, access to education, and family responsibilities
- Female teachers are limited to teaching younger students or specific subjects
- Cultural norms influence interactions between teachers and students^[1].
- Teachers with special needs, like mobility struggles, given the camp terrain.
- Adopting Kenya sign language is challenging for refugee teachers.

Implications

1. Policy reform for recognition of refugee camps schools as public schools for staff and infrastructural resourcing.
2. Create pathways for teacher certification such as recognition of Prior Learning, customized government-led training, and certification programs.
3. Capacity building through targeted TPD programs, emphasizing cultural competency and trauma-informed pedagogy.
4. Innovative resource mobilization towards sustainable support for teacher salaries, training, and infrastructure.
5. Gender, equity and inclusion through inclusive policies and practices to increase female teacher participation and address barriers faced by marginalized groups.
6. Enhance stakeholder collaboration, including UNHCR, the Ministry of Education, and NGOs, to align efforts and improve accountability.

Tables

Table 1: Challenges faced by refugee teachers

Challenges	Dadaab	Kakuma	Total
Lack of Certification	19.20%	12.30%	31.40%
Inadequate Professional Development	14.20%	18.70%	32.90%
Limited Resources	8.50%	12.60%	21.10%
Language Barriers	0.90%	9.10%	9.90%
other	3.20%	1.40%	4.60%

Table 2: Barriers to refugee teachers' access to professional development

Barriers	Dadaab	Kakuma	Total
Lack of time	4.00%	2.90%	3.40%
Lack of funds	40.50%	47.80%	44.30%
Lack of opportunities in my area	55.60%	47.80%	51.50%
Other	0.00%	1.40%	0.80%

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