



COUNTRY REPORT FOR ETHIOPIA

Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning of Actions financed
by the Asylum Migration Integration Fund (AMIF)

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GLOSSARY

Biographical data	Refers to personal data such as name, sex, marital status, date and place of birth, country of origin, country of asylum, individual registration number, occupation, religion, and ethnicity
Biometric data	Data related to a personal biological (anatomical or physiological) characteristic which can be used to establish a person's identity by comparing it with stored reference biometric data, specifically fingerprint, facial or iris image
Civil registration	The continuous, permanent, compulsory, and universal recording of the occurrence and characteristics of vital events pertaining to the population as provided through decree or regulation in accordance with the legal requirements of a country. Civil registration is carried out primarily for the purpose of establishing the documents provided by law
Case management	Refers to all the actions taken in relation to an individual or case over time, including referral to protection intervention, assistance, counselling, and other follow-up based on registration and other data recorded in Population Registration and Identity Management EcoSystem (PRIMES)
Continuous registration	Refers to the updating and verifying of records that takes place as part of day-to-day case management activities over time.
Entitlement document	Any document which is used to identify eligibility for, allow access to and/or track the provision of benefits, services or assistance to specific individuals or groups
Identity	A set of attributes that uniquely describes an individual or entity. Identity document or credential is any document or credential which may be used as proof of identity, which may also include reference to the individuals' legal status and associated rights
Implementing partner	An organisation established as an autonomous and independent entity engaged through a project partnership agreement to undertake the implementation of programmatic activities within a given organization's mandate
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Legal identity	A person's existence everywhere before the law, facilitating the realization of fundamental rights and corresponding duties. Article 6 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights affirms this right, which is realized, inter alia, through registration of birth in a state civil registry or population register
Joint registration	An arrangement whereby UNHCR works in partnership with governments of host states to provide individual registration and documentation of refugees and asylum seekers
State legal identity system	Refers to any centralized, government-administered register by means of which a state manages identity records of its citizens and residents, including for the purpose of issuance of identity documentation
Targeting	A process that aims to ensure that persons of concern are supported with the most appropriate interventions to address their needs, reinforce their capacities, and exercise their rights
Personal data	Means any information relating to an identified or identifiable natural person (i.e. information about a person from which the person can be identified)
Person of concern	Refers to specific categories of persons in need of protection and assistance. This often includes refugees and asylum seekers, returnees, stateless persons, and internally displaced persons
Proof of legal identity	Defined as a document or credential, such as a birth certificate, identity card or digital identity credential that is recognized as proof of legal identity under national law and in accordance with emerging international norms and principles
Registration	The recording, verifying, and updating of information on individual persons of concern to UNHCR with the aim of protecting, assisting, and documenting them and of implementing durable solutions
Verification exercises	Time-bound registration activity in a defined area and/or for a specific population or caseload and consists of verifying and updating individual registration records and, as appropriate, collecting additional information. Verification exercises are considered a type of continuous registration
Vital event	The occurrence of a live birth, death, foetal death, marriage, divorce, annulment, judicial separation, adoption, legitimation, or recognition of parenthood

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

AMIF	Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund	KII	Key Informant Interview
APAI-CRVS	Africa Programme on Accelerated Improvement of Civil Registration and Vital Statistics	NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
ARRA	Administration for Refugee & Returnee Affairs	NRC	Norwegian Refugee Council
BIMS	Biometric Management System	OSS	One Stop Shop
COVID-19	CoronaVirus Disease 2019	PRIMES	Population Registration and Identity Management EcoSystem
CRRF	Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework	ProGres	Profile Global Registration System
CRVS	Civil registration and vital statistics	RDPP	Regional Development and Protection Programme
DRC	Danish Refugee Council	SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
FGD	Focus Group Discussion	UN	United Nations
ID	Identification Document	UNFPA	United National Population Fund
INVEA	Immigration Nationality and Vital Events Agency	UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
IP	Implementing Partner	UNICEF	United Nations Children’s Fund
		VERA	Vital Events Registration Agency
		VER	Vital Events Registration

KEY TAKEAWAYS

Registration and documentation are fundamental concepts of international protection. In Ethiopia, the Asylum, Migration, and Integration Fund (AMIF) actions aimed at enabling the provision of better protection, assistance and durable solutions for refugees and asylum seekers through improved documentation and robust data storage systems. This involved building a refugee registration system with biometric identification management, real-time data verification capacity and simultaneous identification of protection needs of persons of concern. Not only benefiting refugees, the actions also aimed to improve civil registration more broadly, in particular birth registration, for both refugee and nationals.

The following provides key takeaways from the evaluation focused on actions implemented under AMIF 2016 and 2018 in Ethiopia.

1. AMIF actions supported the necessary groundwork for transforming registration systems, building needed momentum for broad level change.

Under UNHCR refugee registration component, a comprehensive approach to system upgrade and refugee registration, verification and documentation transformed Ethiopia's basic infrastructure to handle refugee flows. Due to AMIF support, the number of refugees with identity documents increased from 2% to 76%, improving protection and opportunities for inclusion. The significant improvement in the quality and type of data available has led to better service delivery and further opportunities for improved access to needed services by refugees themselves. This includes innovative approaches, such as the One-Stop-Shop (OSS) and Digital Request and Complaint System.

AMIF support acted as a needed catalyst to launch the refugee vital events registration system in Ethiopia. Efforts focused on addressing interoperability between civil registration and the health systems, community mobilization to increase demand, capacity building of key government agencies and resource needs in remote settings. Important steps were made to improve coordination as a critical component to manage the complex landscape of actors involved and harmonise the necessary protocols.

Further, the generation of evidence through AMIF has outlined the needed next steps to scale up efforts and address integration and interoperability with national systems to ensure sustainability of action.

The most important [output of AMIF] is being a catalyst, leading the launch of the registration system for refugees and helping us with the necessary groundwork. – UNHCR Ethiopia

2. For vital events registration, important achievements have been made from streamlining administrative processes and improving coordination mechanisms to building demand and access, particularly for refugees.

AMIF contributed to increasing birth registration rates in Ethiopia, and to a better understanding of the factors influencing demand. Technical support has had a positive effect on Immigration Nationality and Vital Events Agency (INVEA) and Administration for Refugee and Returnee Affairs (ARRA) to facilitate an improved and streamline processes, but lack of staff and manual systems continue to impact data quality and efficiency. The creation of sustainable coordination systems at the national and sub-national levels has been one of the most important achievements. The implementation of the civil registration system in both refugee and host community contexts was embedded in the national legal framework, and political commitment has been strengthened. Government (both at the national and regional levels) has committed to allocating budget and assigning resources to sustain the system.

While immediate protection outcomes thanks to the vital events registration component of AMIF cannot yet be ascertained, the systems-building has been started with opportunities to continue to build digital systems and create linkages, such as through Profile Global Registration System (proGres) for refugees, and OSS.

Government structure and infrastructure, human resources... parallel investment via AMIF was important and will last after the project. — UNICEF Ethiopia

3. The generation of better data through the improved refugee registration systems have allowed for better planning and improved protection through UNHCR with clear next steps for a more inclusive approach.

AMIF was instrumental in supporting the transition of UNHCR registration from manual to digital through investments in equipment, network and training. Possibly the main impact in terms of protection as directly felt by the population of concern was the creation of a unique refugee identification (ID) card recognised by all actors at different levels. The reregistration of refugees between 2017 and 2020 significantly improved data in Ethiopia, readjusting the estimated population numbers, reducing fraud, allowing for more efficient allocation of resource and improving planning for both national and international partners.

AMIF-supported improvements should eventually benefit all those seeking to serve vulnerable refugees. The impact in terms of more tailored protection activities thanks to improved refugee registration data has started through actions such as the digital food distribution system and digital education platform. The impact is not yet felt to the fullest extent, but the actions completed with AMIF support are a necessary prerequisite. Next steps include fully utilizing proGres v4 and the OSS for integrated service delivery, as well as necessary interoperability and coordination between key partners.

The next step for us with the government is to agree on a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU). The objective, once the MoU is reviewed, is to come up with a more comprehensive strategy. ARRA will be issuing ID codes, issuing registration. The objective is to come with a clear capacity building strategy from the government side... All of us, partners, refugees, governments need to be on the same platform. We need to have a clear communication for the refugees – UNHCR

4. The successes achieved to date through AMIF funding are preliminary. More efforts are needed to ensure sustainability.

An ongoing challenge will be to **ensure the necessary momentum** to keep and build on the technological and capacity improvements; continue policy reform; apply and update the necessary regulations and SOPs and take further steps to capitalise and expand on gains made. Critical areas include:

- National ownership

Sustainability of action can only be achieved through ownership of the process at the highest level. This requires developing national strategies and setting up appropriate MOUs to outline responsibilities and ensure accountability. Regulations and procedures remain key barriers to address.

- Collaboration

Significant progress has been made in setting up collaboration mechanisms between key partners. However, duplication of efforts remains with parallel registration systems and needed interoperability particularly between UNHCR and ARRA. The many actors involved in birth registration require a standing coordinating body and clear guidelines and SOPs to capture roles and responsibilities.

- Data usage

For better use of the data generated by outside actors (for instance those wanting to build programming around vulnerabilities identified via proGres 4 registration), the challenge is improving data sharing. Many stakeholders could use more granular data on, for instance, skills and education for programming and targeting but are currently limited by data sharing protocols. For civil registration, improvements in digitisation and demand are needed to address data quality.

The process for data sharing takes a long time. Digital tools should be implemented to ease the process. Data quality [of vital event registration] is also a problem. This should be taken into consideration. — ARRA

- Capacity building and resources

Addressing capacity and infrastructure has been a critical component to lead to sustainability. However, high levels of the staff turnover put these gains at risk unless refresher training is an ongoing commitment. Gaps continue to exist in basic equipment for registry offices. Significant staff and resources are needed to address the backlog in paper registration to digitise, verify, archive and store sensitive data in a secure location.

The main issue is the limited resources and funding allocated by the state. It is not sufficient. UNICEF also has very limited funding; this is a barrier to a comprehensive strategy. – UNICEF Ethiopia

- Interoperability

To truly benefit from registration improvements, including PRIMES, for full interoperability between UNHCR registration, identity management and caseload management tools and applications, connectivity issues will need to be overcome. Further, a consolidated approach is needed for government counterparts, other relevant ministries and humanitarian agencies for a more efficient systems overall through clear linkages.

- Trust and access

On the demand side, there remain gaps in registration. Significant work needs to be done to reach remote areas and ensure access to birth registration. Legal and procedural restrictions remain barriers, especially for the most vulnerable.

To adequately build on the successes achieved, continued funding is needed, along with the necessary **long-term vision** expanding beyond the next two to three years into the next 10 to 15 to fully plot the steps needed.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Context

1.1.1 Global

In 2015, the international community adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). One of these goals is to provide legal identity for all, including birth registration, by 2030. In parallel, the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants (2016) led to the development of a comprehensive set of commitments specific to refugees and countries hosting them.¹ The Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF) aims to strengthen the international response to large or protracted refugee situations, including by easing pressure on host countries and enhance refugee self-reliance in host countries.² With respect to both of these goals, registration and civil documentation are crucial.³

Refugee registration is the recording, verifying, and updating of information on persons of concern with the aim of protecting and documenting them and of implementing durable solutions.

UNHCR – Operational standards for Registration and Documentation

Registration is a fundamental component of international **protection** – it is a first step in formalising the relationship between a refugee / asylum seeker and the host government / international community and should allow persons of concern to avail themselves of the assistance they need. Registration is also crucial for identifying those who are at risk, those who are often the least likely to come forward and make their needs known. Registration data analysis can facilitate early identification of vulnerabilities and inform resources for the greatest **protection impact** through a rights-based and needs-based approach. This includes socioeconomic inclusion, livelihood opportunities and **digital access** to build participation, inclusion and accountability. Registration informs **planning**, with the number of people requiring protection determining the amount of food, water, shelter, health and sanitation facilities etc. which should be made available under ever-evolving circumstances.

Yet, in many countries which host vast numbers of refugees, there is a significant backlog in terms of registration. Frequently national data collected through various systems has not adequately covered the displaced, whose vital events were not recorded in a civil registry. **Gaps in the overall data on the protection needs of the displaced existed - hampering government-level planning and the activities of humanitarian and development actors.**

1.2 AMIF-financed actions

As one of the flagship initiatives of the broader Valletta Action Plan, the Regional Development and Protection Programme (RDPP) was launched in June 2015. The overarching purpose of the RDPP in the Horn of Africa is to create evidence-based, innovative and sustainable protection and development approaches for refugees and their host communities in close partnership with governments in the region. For **Ethiopia**, the activities within the RDPP framework and financed by **AMIF 2016 and 2018** direct grants (and co-financed by the Netherlands and other member states) aim at strengthening the protection of refugees and Ethiopian nationals through registration (for the former) and improved civil documentation (for both groups). The goal was to support government in their transition from a country that faced a significant backlog in terms of registration and corresponding technology to a country that aims to be one of the frontrunners in the field of refugee registration.

1.2.1 AMIF 2016: Registration systems

The AMIF 2016 program in Ethiopia had the following objectives:

¹ UN General Assembly, "New York Declaration on Refugees and Migrants," 2016.

² United Nations, "Global Compact on Refugees." 2018.

³ UNHCR, "Strengthening the protection of and durable solutions for refugees and asylum-seekers in Sudan, including children, through improved registration," 2019.

- Support the creation of a nationally implemented and unified data registration system using biometric technology with the expected outcomes of improved security, coordination, data quality and ARRA staff capacity (UNHCR component),
- Enhance access to the national civil registration system (birth registration) for refugees and their host communities, specifically by strengthening the administrative data management system at the regional and zonal levels with the expected outcomes of increased birth and death registration, more accurate and timely data, improved capacity of institutions, increased demand for Vital Events Registration (VER) under UNICEF’s component,
- Prepare for a census with the Central Statistical Agency, including the enumeration of refugees and asylum seekers to enable better development planning and migration policy formulation (UNFPA component). *This component has been partially implemented and remaining funds reallocated to COVID-19 response.*

Figure 1: Sample of refugee ID card



1.2.2 AMIF 2018: Digital inclusion and protection

A follow-up of the action in Ethiopia under the AMIF 2018 grant aims to enable digital inclusion of refugees, improved digital identity management, and the integration into the national system of the OSS registration services, eventually to be embedded in the national system, integrating INVEA. This action aimed to:

- Contribute to **systems-level improvement of civil registration** via a comprehensive situational assessment and the development of the national costed Civil Registration and Vital System (CRVS) plan.
- Enhance the delivery of civil registration for Ethiopian nationals and refugees in Ethiopia within the national vital events registration system, by improving VER processes and via the integration of vital events registration data of refugees within the national civil registration and vital statistics system.
- Promote the digital identity for all refugees to increase their empowerment, inclusion, and protection, both in- and out-of-camp through the national system ensure interoperability of the refugee database with ARRA and immigration systems.

1.3 Research objectives

In 2020, Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) of the Netherlands on behalf of the donors funding RDPP commissioned an evaluation to assess the results and impact of the AMIF-funded activities and the effectiveness of strategies adopted to achieve the desired outcomes at project/country level. The scope of this work was designed to complement the broader activities of Learning and Evaluation Team consortium focused on the Combined Quantitative and Qualitative Progressive Effects Evaluation for the RDPP in the Horn of Africa.

The evaluation centred on two main research questions:

1. How have AMIF 2016 and 2018 supported interventions in Ethiopia strengthened the registration and protection of refugees and asylum seekers, and allowed the governments to better manage the migration and development nexus?
2. What lessons learned can be captured from these interventions to inform the continuation and replication of current activities at the country and regional level?

To answer these, the following evaluation sub-questions (Table 1) were included as part of the terms of reference.

Table 1: Evaluation questions

Evaluation sub-questions
1. How did AMIF 2016-2018 activities improve the registration, monitoring and protection of refugees through sustainable data systems?
2. How did AMIF 2016-2018 activities help to strengthen the capacity of local and central authorities to maintain these data systems?

3. What is the effect of each of the activities on the targeted beneficiaries?
4. How did AMIF 2016-2018 activities enable the government of Ethiopia and their partners to better plan for, and implement development projects?
5. How did AMIF 2016-2018 activities improve basic service delivery to refugees and their host communities?
6. How did AMIF 2016-2018 activities improve the coordination and information management between the government of Ethiopia and the UN agencies, and between the government of Sudan and the UN agencies on registration-related objectives and activities?
7. Based on evaluation findings, is it possible to identify some first lessons learned valuable for improving the continuation of current activities, as well as for the replication of these activities and/or for regional learning?
8. To what extent have partners in Sudan been able to learn and build on experiences in Ethiopia, where it concerns the improvement of registration systems? Which experiences could be generalized to other countries in the region?

This **country report** presents the findings of a learning evaluation of the AMIF-sponsored actions in Ethiopia, with a focus on the UNHCR and UNICEF registration components. The analysis serves to inform the continuation of the activities and their potential replicability, as well broader policy and migration dialogues. A workshop with key stakeholders was held in January 2021, which further contributed to the analysis and final recommendations and ways forward.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 Research Framework

Samuel Hall adopted a learning approach that goes beyond assessing outputs and gathers quantitative and qualitative data from a range of stakeholders in a position to influence desired outcomes. Samuel Hall used a **mixed-methods design** containing quantitative and qualitative elements that build on each other to allow for cross-validation. This design was informed by the following methodological approaches:

- **Multi-phased:** allows for effective piloting, validation of the outputs’ quality and appropriateness of the research tools to local contexts, and opportunities to adapt and learn.
- **Participatory and people-centred:** ensures the participation of direct/indirect beneficiaries and project stakeholders to capture local perceptions and opinions - *measuring the impact of a project is important but understanding how and why changes occurred from beneficiary and stakeholder perspectives is essential.*
- **360-degree:** captures the voices and perspectives from a range of actors, including implementing partners, host and refugee communities, registrars, humanitarian / development actors and government counterparts.
- **Gender-sensitive:** provides multiple opportunities and adapted platforms for both male and female voices.

This framework provided the flexibility to first capture broader trends regarding what achievements have been accomplished, and then gain a deeper understanding of **how** and **why** change is or is not happening.

2.2 Research Approach

As the AMIF program itself has had to adapt to COVID-19 imperatives, as evidenced by the partial reallocation of AMIF 2016 funding to COVID action, research activities were adapted to account for the challenging context in 2020. In light of duty of care obligations toward Samuel Hall staff and research participants at all levels, research implementation embedded guidelines for health and safety with respect to COVID-19, such as provision and use of personal protective equipment, social distancing, limited interactions and the study of impacts of COVID-19 on the research population, and the AMIF actions themselves.

The team used **remote methods** – reaching participants via phone for a quantitative survey and key informant interviews (KIIs) where possible – and **minimum-contact methods** – reducing group size, ensuring social distancing, and adhering to public health guidelines during qualitative data collection. In this context, a number of research tools were deployed to answer the evaluation questions (Table 2).

Table 2: List of research tools

Tool	Description
Desk review	Reviewed relevant reports and documentation from implementing partners (IPs), grey literature and academic articles
KIIs ⁴	Conducted with government officials, community leaders, international non-governmental organisations (NGOs), UN agencies, and data system staff
Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)	Conducted with different refugee and host community groups to understand experiences with and perceptions of registration and any change over time
Case Studies	Provided in-depth, life history type interviews to understand the role documentation played in the lives of refugee and host populations
Site observations	Visited registration centres, observed activities and spoke to staff about their experiences conducting registration activities
Skills test	Held informal skills tests with registration staff to assess success of capacity building actions
Quantitative survey (phone based)	Deployed a phone-based survey focused on knowledge, attitudes and practices of populations targeted by AMIF’s registration/ civil documentation activities

⁴ See list of current completed KIIs in Annex 1.

Three locations of fieldwork were chosen in each country based on discussions with the IPs, coordinating research with the ongoing RDPP endline evaluation, and ensuring a variety of demographic and contextual samples. Ethiopia AMIF data collection focused on two refugee populations - Eritrean and Somali – and the host population. Given the scope of the project and time and access constraints, other critical refugee populations, such as South Sudanese, were not included in this study. While this represents a certain bias, many of the conclusions of this research apply to other cohorts.

A critical component was a final regional learning event with stakeholders working on the nexus of protection, civil documentation and registration. Held over two days, it was an opportunity for stakeholders to showcase experience on the thematic focus of the supported program and allow for the exchange of knowledge, as well as reflect on preliminary research findings. Outputs from the conversation fed into this analysis and the final synthesis report.

More detail on methodology can be found in Annex 1.

Figure 2: Locations of research and data collected

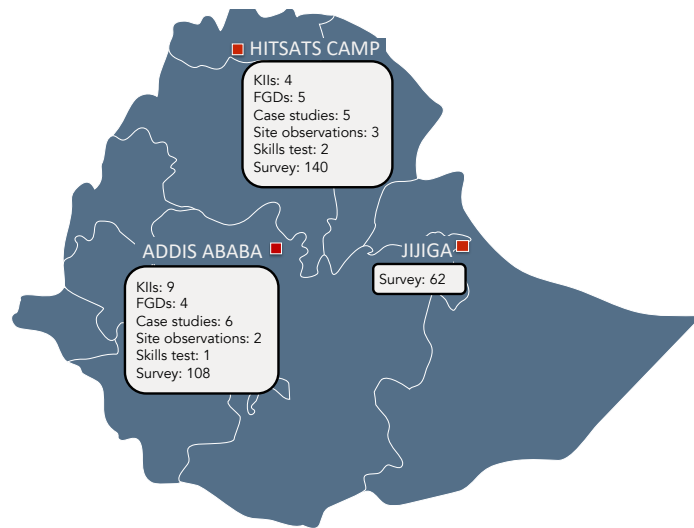


Figure 3: Increasing demand: INVEA billboard in Addis Ababa



2.2 Constraints and limitations

The findings presented in this report are not intended to be representative, but rather provide a snapshot of a selected group of respondents. Critical to this point includes two key components:

- The main focus on Addis Ababa and the Tigray region excluded much of work done in other regions of the country under AMIF-financing.
- Research started with refugees and Ethiopian nationals themselves to understand the direct impact of AMIF funding on their lives. This bottom-up methodological approach does not fully capture the breadth of AMIF activities that may be more technical and systems-focus in nature.

Any granular findings found in the report on indicative in nature, recognizing that contextual and demographic factors may have strong differentiating effects not fully captured here. Particular themes are included and addressed in this report only when they emerge as findings from the data and are not meant to be exhaustive.

One of the challenges faced by the team was suspicion, particularly among the Eritrean population. In Addis Ababa, high levels of suspicion and fear of government spies made recruitment of Eritreans for FGDs – where the

goal is to bring together strangers to discuss potentially sensitive topics –somewhat challenging.⁵ Samuel Hall’s trained enumerators followed trust-building protocols and explained confidentiality to all potential participants with some success. Using a mixed method approach also further mitigated these challenges by provide multiple opportunities and means to capture perspectives.

The team also found it difficult to identify vulnerable groups willing to consent to being interviewed. One FGD was held with single mothers, in both Addis and Hitsats. However, additional case studies were added to capture the stories of a wider variety of vulnerable persons, such as a person with a disability and young female sex worker who was vulnerable to trafficking.

2.3 Respondent Profile

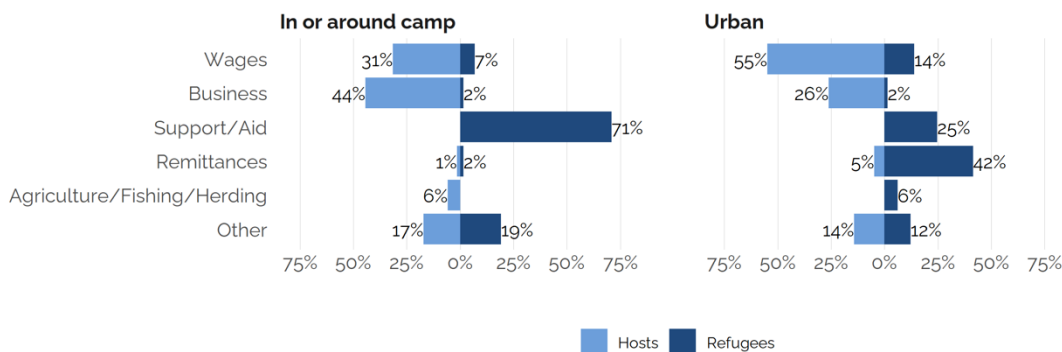
A rapid phone-based quantitative survey focused on the perceptions of the AMIF activities according to the targeted populations, with an eye to how AMIF activities and actions have positively or negatively impacted their vulnerability and responded to their needs. 310 individuals were interviewed through a phone survey for the purpose of this research, split into 196 refugees and 114 Ethiopian nationals (Table 3).

The median age of respondents was 31 years, and 60% of interviewees were male. Refugee households in this sample were found to be similar to host community households in terms of size, with an average of five members. The majority of interviewed host households received income from wages and other businesses, while refugees in camps mainly relied on aid. Displaced interviewees in Addis Ababa most frequently relied on remittances for their survival.

Table 3: Number of survey respondents by location

Location	Ethiopian nationals	Refugees	
		Country of origin	TOTAL
Addis Ababa	43	Eritrea	31
		Somalia	34
Hitsats	50	Eritrea	90
Jijiga area	21	Somalia	41
TOTAL	114		196

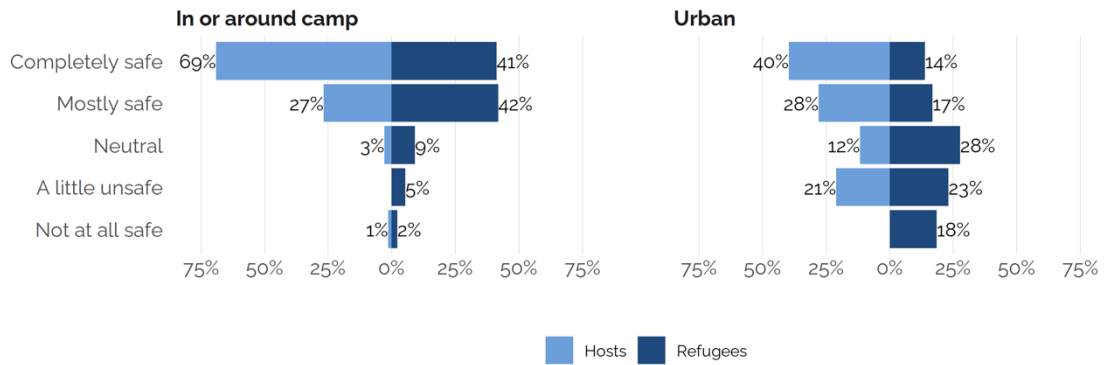
Figure 4: Most important source of household income



Camps were also deemed a safer environment, with over 80% of interviewed refugees feeling safe in Hitsats and camps near Jijiga, while only 31% of refugees in Addis felt safe there in their daily pursuits. Unsurprisingly, the vast majority of camp-based displaced interviewees benefit from food assistance, and close to half report receiving some type of cash / non-food item support. For their urban peers, cash is the primary form of support. 17% of interviewed Ethiopian nationals near Hitsats camp have benefited from TVET activities, likely a result of the integrated support provided under the RDPP programme.

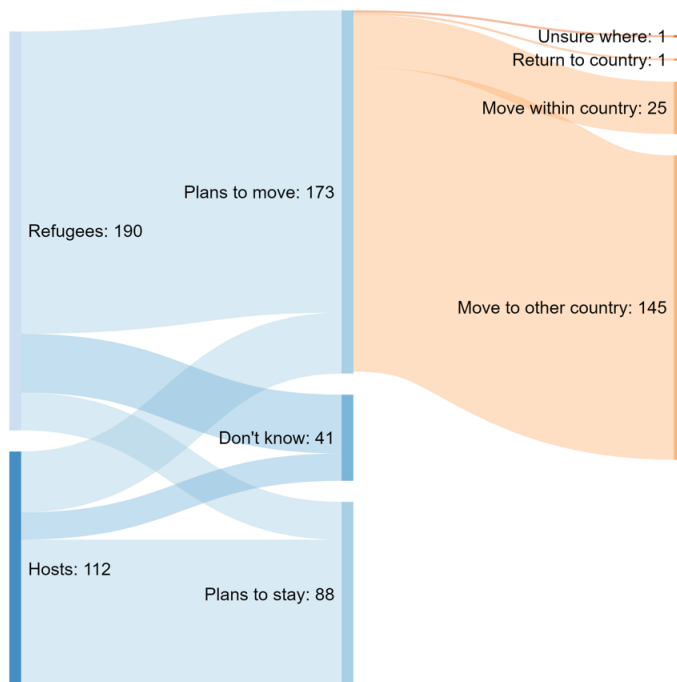
⁵ As a more insular community, this suspicion was less active in Hitsats camp but still present.

Figure 5: Level of feeling safe in this community



Important in the context of building reliable registration data which provides an accurate portrait of the profile and needs of the population living in a given administrative space, a large share of the interviewed refugees (85% in camps and 54% in urban environments) suspect they will no longer be living at their current place of residence in five years' time. While the announced closure of Hitsats camp might play a role, 96% of those who are expecting to move is not to relocate within Ethiopia, but rather to a different country.⁶ These plans can be both motivators for different types of registration and inhibitors, as will be explored in the following section.

Figure 6: Plans to be living in this location in five years' time



⁶ Eritrean refugees' propensity to migrate onward is well evidenced in the literature : see for instance World Bank, "A skills survey of refugees in Ethiopia", October 2018. Given the developments in the Tigray region at the time of writing, it seems likely that demand to relocate will greatly increase in the weeks and months to come.

3. OVERVIEW OF AMIF COMPONENTS, ACTORS AND SYSTEMS

3.1 Refugee registration

On the adoption of the New York Declaration and CRRF in 2016, the Government of Ethiopia quickly followed with a commitment to nine pledges to more sustainably and holistically address the rights and services for refugees. These pledges included an expansion of the 'out-of-camp' policy, increases in access to education, new opportunities around work and livelihoods, provision of documentation, enhancement of a social and basic services, and allowance for local integration for protracted refugee populations.⁷

With these commitments, increased efforts on documentation, registration and legal identity were being made to integrate systems by different entities or covering different demographics. In December 2016, ARRA and UNHCR signed a Data Sharing Agreement with a provision to develop and implement a Registration Multi-Year Plan of Action (2017-2020), aiming to move away from the parallel registration system between UNHCR and ARRA towards a joint and unified system. The Plan of Action focused on **enhancing the capacity** of the government of Ethiopia and UNHCR in registration and data management for refugees, **addressing data quality** and **ensuring the sustainability** of these actions.

With AMIF support, UNHCR initiated the rollout of **level 3 registration**, covering a large number of refugees under the Biometric Identity Management System (BIMS), working closely with ARRA to improve capacity, data sharing and data management practices. This formally concluded on 30 June 2019, covering 26 camps and 10 settlements and supporting the verification of the active refugee population currently residing in Ethiopia. In addition, AMIF-funded nine key digital initiatives critical for refugee registration system building:

- **Camp Internet Project:** Aims to deploy internet in partnership with Ethio-Telecom in the remote areas to process new arrivals. This will enable the use of PRIMES and other systems in remote regions of Ethiopia.
- **One-Stop-Shop (OSS):** Focuses on facilitating access to services, including civil registration, consolidated in one physical space for transparent, predictable, and efficient service provision. The project includes the construction of 27 OSS.
- **Digitization of the Government documents:** Collects all essential documents issues to refugees to access services, such as pass permits, work permits, birth certificates, etc and integrates them in PRIMES.
- **Digital Request and Complaint System:** Collects requests and complaints from refugees and asylum-seekers in Ethiopia from various sources (Online form, WhatsApp, telephone call, SMS) to improve services.
- **Digital Filing System:** Creates a shared digital space of all scanned copies of physical files of persons registered with the proGres database to increase accountability, safeguarding, oversight and control of personal refugee files.
- **Digital Food Distribution System:** Focuses on addressing gaps in food distribution through use of phones.
- **Digital Education Platform:** Collects accurate data on enrolment of children in school and update the information into proGres for tracking and follow up.
- **Digital Partner Statistical Tool:** Offers access to Level 3 aggregated data to partners and donors.
- **Digital Identity:** Develops a new generation of identity cards for refugees and other persons of concern, which will replace existing ID.

3.2 Civil registration

After years of low rates of civil registration, a significant milestone occurred in August 2016. The government of Ethiopia launched the roll-out of a comprehensive national CRVS system across the country. Responsibility for the registration of vital life events at lower administrative levels follows the existing regional and local

⁷ FDRE/ARRA, Roadmap for the Implementation of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia Government Pledges and for the practical application of the CRRF 2017,

governance structure in Ethiopia. At the kebele level, vital events are registered through a manual, paper-based process after being informed by notifiers, such as health workers. These records are sent upward to through **wereda and/or zone offices**, the **regional Vital Events Registration Agency (VERA) office** and the federal Immigration, INVEA and finally transmitted to the **Central Statistics Agency**.⁸

In July 2017, the Ethiopian Parliament adopted an amendment to Proclamation 760/2012, which previously restricted the VERA from providing vital events documents for non-Ethiopian nationals, including refugees. The new proclamation entitles refugees to obtain work permits, reside out-of-camps, access primary education, to national financial services, obtain driver's licenses, and to legally register life events such as births and marriages. For all of these, a legal identity is a prerequisite. **ARRA** is mandated to register vital events of refugees in and out of camps.

Thus, the AMIF investment embarked on strengthening and standardizing the civil registration service through improving the quality and efficiency of registration, ensuring integration of vital events registration data of refugees within Ethiopia's CRVS system as well strengthening interoperability with the health system and community structures. Following an assessment to identify the largest gaps in vital events registration service provision, a number of components were undertaken:

- Strengthening interoperability between civil registration and the health system, including support to health workers
- Mobilizing community members and driving awareness to increase demand for registration activities
- Improving coordination and joint monitoring and review of UNICEF, UNHCR and government actors to improve performance and address identified bottlenecks
- Addressing institutional and technical capacity building of civil registration agencies (ARRA and Regional VERAs)
- Training of ARRA personnel serving as civil registrars and civil registrars in host communities to improve data quality
- Reducing gaps in essential supplies for registrars and addressing efficiency of registration in refugee and host community settings

Further, a **comprehensive assessment and costed national strategic plan** to address existing barriers and inefficiencies in the system, including for integration of civil registration data of refugees with the national system, are currently underway.

3.3 Census support

UNFPA worked with Ethiopia's **Central Statistical Agency** to support the preparation of the 2018 Ethiopian Census. For the first time, in the spirit of leaving no one behind, this census was to include refugees and asylum seekers. Pre-enumeration activities included the following:

- Mapping 152,175 Enumeration Areas
- Developing enumeration Instruments, materials and applications and testing them in three different pilot censuses
- Updating and procuring additional tablets, electric power banks and solar power banks
- Procuring communication materials
- Training of enumeration staff and publicity officers

The following section presents key finding to understand the full impact of implementation of these activities on both the institutional context in Ethiopia and protection outcomes for the targeted populations themselves. These are not designed to capture the full breadth of AMIF activities.

⁸ UNICEF, "Synthesis Report - Review of Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Innovations in Eastern and Southern Africa Region: Digitization, processes, and strategies," 2020.

4. KEY FINDINGS

4.1 Refugee registration

4.1.1 Overall improvements in registration, monitoring and protection for refugees

Ethiopia’s registration operation has been moved from a manual to a digitalised biometric registration system and proGres v3 registration through AMIF contributions, allowing for country-wide reregistration effort. The quality and unity of UNHCR’s outputs are entirely contingent on the quality and consistency of its inputs. Any mistakes made at the UNHCR’s scores of registration sites may skew the worldview made available through proGres.⁹ The organisation’s Registration and Information divisions have worked diligently since 1999 to build a progressively systematic manner of registration to be deployed globally, insisting on the constancy of methods and datasets. With AMIF support, great strides have been made in the efforts to raise the bar in Ethiopia, by allowing for the application of biometrics to the registration of refugees and asylum seekers.¹⁰ This was the occasion for a thorough re-registry effort resulting in updated statistics regarding refugee numbers and profile in Ethiopia.

The BIMS is a global UNHCR registration and identity management tool capturing fingerprints and iris information in addition to a photo and profiling information. It is essential for the implementation of pledges made by the Government in the context of the CRRF.

UNHCR has initiated the rollout of Level 3 registration and enrolled tens of thousands of refugees into BIMS. Rolling out BIMS and comprehensive level 3 registration required training sessions and procurement for infrastructure development. The network connectivity was enhanced between UNHCR’s Country Office and the Refugee Reception Centre in Addis Ababa.

Level 3 registration data allows refugees to record essential information on their educational and professional skills, as well as details of family members located in other countries, in their individual and family profile. This improved data collection system should allow humanitarian actors to better tailor assistance to the specific needs of refugees.

Refugees who have completed the Level 3 exercise received a proof of registration document while individuals aged 14 and above receive refugee/asylum seeker identity card on the day of registration.

Figure 7: BIMS devices at ARRA registration centre



One very important component that I need to highlight is the move to the digital space: Before AMIF, the whole system was manual. We have gone from 2.7% of refugees to 74% who are now in a digital system. From a refugee perspective, you cannot see the progress. But moving to that digital space will eventually enable them to access more services. –UNHCR AMIF Focal Point

Rollout of the v2 case management system has been ongoing. The rollout of proGres v4 has continued across Ethiopia and the final location, Melkadida, will be complete by the end of 2020. More than a simple registration tool, proGres v4 is a case management system prescribing processes in most areas of protection work including refugee status determination and resettlement. While proGres v3 stores data locally – currently there are around

⁹ Franke MFN. “Refugee Registration as Foreclosure of the Freedom to Move: The Virtualisation of Refugees’ Rights within Maps of International Protection”. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*. 2009; 27(2): 352-369.

¹⁰ Progress made by camp can be tracked via the UNHCR Operational Data Portal, <https://data2.unhcr.org>, and directly at <https://im.unhcr.org/eth/>.

500 data bases worldwide – the PRIMES will consolidate all UNHCR data in a single database that can be accessed via the web. This system is part of the architecture to structure the joint registration between the Government, UNHCR, and other actors, no longer requiring refugees to register separately with both UNHCR and ARRA and resulting in improved security of registration data.

In Addis Ababa, ARRA uses proGres v4 while work is in progress to ensure countrywide integration. This action was delayed due to issues in the construction of the OSS described below. However, UNHCR has provided all required training and logistics for ARRA to start issuing the ID to refugees in Addis Ababa.

AMIF contributed to the harmonisation of documents across regions and actors, leading to the creation of a refugee ID recognised by all.

Once the refugee verification has been filled by ARRA, UNHCR is in charge of the full registration and issuance of related documents (ration card, refugee ID, revaluation document, case application number, pass permits, etc). **The harmonisation of these documents is an achievement under AMIF.** In 2017, documents produced via refugee registration would vary between regions. They have now been streamlined to two types: the ID card and the proof of registration. *The fact that registration now results in the issuance of an ID was cheered by respondents interviewed for this research.*

Figure 8: A welcome addition: Refugee ID card



In 2019 there was great new information: ARRA and UNHCR would allow us to have our own ID card. The information telling us to take the card was disseminated via microphone all over the camp. — Female

Critical delays in the opening of the OSS mean that coordination among different service providers, including the roll out of proGres v4, and referrals for improved protection outcomes remain underdeveloped.

Mentioned in Ethiopia’s “Registration Multi-Year Plan of Action” 2017-2020 and aligned with the Sustainable Development Agenda SDG 16.9,¹¹ the OSS model seeks to integrate all services available to refugees and asylum-seekers in one physical space, simplifying referral mechanisms. The vision was to allow refugees and asylum seekers to access registration (ARRA and UNHCR), protection (sexual and gender-based violence, child protection, disability, etc), vital events registration, issuance of documentation in one single location.

Particularly relevant in light of the out-of-camp policy which foresees a significant number of refugees living and working outside of camps and accessing basic services provided by the government, this will not only facilitate processes for the refugees, who will no longer have to navigate different offices, but also improve coordination between ARRA, UNHCR and their partners. OSS aims to enhance the inclusion of persons of concern in the national systems through its civil registration component.

OSS will be equipped with the latest digital registration technology together with internet connectivity to facilitate a two-way communication between persons of concern and service providers. The longer-term vision is for the service to be handed over to ARRA. OSS might also eventually serve Ethiopian nationals, though discussions between INVEA and ARRA have not yet progressed to the concrete planning stage in this regard.

Construction of these locations was outsourced to ARRA in 2018 at a cost of \$1.6 million, but the project experienced considerable delays. Currently, **only one of the 27 planned OSS is semi-operational.** 16 OSS constructed are not usable, according to UNHCR. UNOPS will be charged with undertaking the construction of the remaining OSS, and renovation of the existing insufficient ones. UNHCR is currently reviewing the outcome of UNOPS assessment mission. The timeline for operationalising this important element of the AMIF vision, and arguably the most visible AMIF contribution from a public relations standpoint, was delayed significantly.

Through generating more reliable refugee numbers and vital statistics data, the effective monitoring of national and donor resources has improved. The rolling out, with AMIF’s support, of the proGres v3 registration and population verification exercise, exercise allowed to readjust estimates of the size of the refugee population in Ethiopia from 906,000 to 721,000. Because this number included 121,660 new arrivals after the start of the

¹¹ Provide legal identity for all, including free birth registrations.

exercise, the verified Persons of Concern were 599,131, representing a 34% reduction from those in the records.¹² The impact of this was not immediately felt directly, as the Government requested a continued verification exercise. But it was clearly an important step towards ensuring population registration data remain up to date.

*The results of the L3 registration helped our planning. But in Addis, the L3 was carried out before the influx of Eritreans. Data is only relevant if it is timely. I thought L3 was supposed to be updated systematically but I think it is not the case...I would be curious to know.—
DRC Key Informant*

4.1.2 Progress in capacity strengthening and coordination

Refugees’ experience of the registration process has been improved by moving from a manual to a digital system. ARRA processes have already benefited from improvements made under the AMIF actions. At the time of writing, the fact that ARRA and UNHCR continue to use two different systems is an important gap.

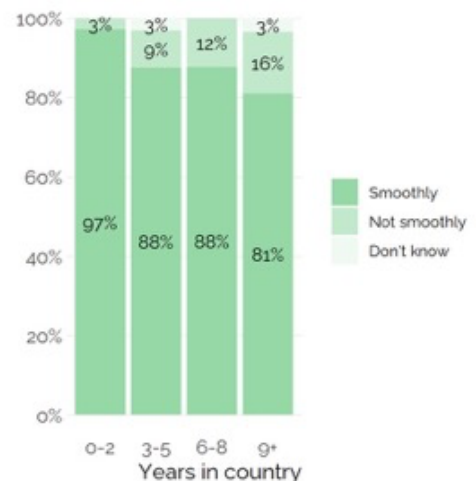
There has definitely been progress. Before, there used to be much more paperwork. The forms were both in Amharic and Tigrinya. Now, after UNHCR’s input, it’s just one standardized form in English. It is filled very carefully and filed in hard and soft copy. It can be accessed from anywhere in the world. This is the Refugee Status Document. –Staff, ARRA, Endabaguna Refugee Reception Centre

A more streamlined process relying on biometrics, along with the increased capacity of registrars, has resulted in tangible advantages for refugees. Those having been registered recently were more likely to state that their registration process was smooth than those having registered earlier. Time spent on registration has decreased.

This is despite the fact that, in the words of an Endabaguna ARRA registration officer, Ethiopia’s “accepting space” had become narrower recently. While all Eritreans used to be accepted as prima facie refugees, the peace process has meant that only those Eritreans with a legitimate and verifiable protection concern will now be granted refugee status. Determining whether criteria are met often requires many days of interviewing.

I completed the registration process in five days. That was really fast given how many refugees there were waiting to be registered. For two days it was confusing, I could not get clear information on where to go. But on the third day, an ARRA representative came and explained everything. They asked by about my name, gender, age, nationality, educational background, marital status... I gave them all the information and they sent me on to Hitsats camp, where I received my ID and ration card immediately. –Female refugee (vulnerable single mother, disabled), age 32, Hitsats

Figure 9: Process on refugee registration



Despite significant progress, a lack of a common data management system and ill-defined remits of ARRA and UNHCR hindered progress in building fully integrated systems. ARRA and UNHCR are closely linked, both financially and in terms of operational imperatives. Every year, ARRA produces a workplan outlining its activities for the year, which is shared with UNHCR, which in turn extends financial and technical support.

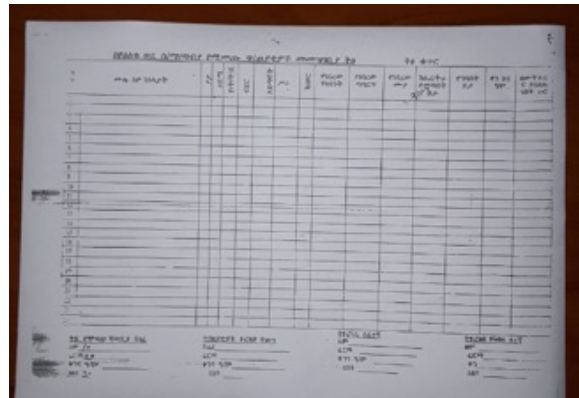
Despite these close links, the remits of the two are not clearly distinguishable in terms of refugee registration. A lack of clarity between the responsibilities of ARRA and UNHCR in the refugee registration space is felt not only

¹² OIOS, “Audit of the operations in Ethiopia for the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees,” 2020

by interviewed refugees themselves but lamented in the 2020 Office of Internal Oversight Audit of UNHCR operations in Ethiopia:

“The two entities had staff overseeing programme implementation without delineating roles and responsibilities, and thus accountability. The Representation implemented most activities in registration despite the Government partner having dedicated 171 staff members towards this area. The respective responsibilities were not documented.”

Figure 10: Refugee registration form filled by ARRA, sent to UNHCR, returned to ARRA and filed



Efficient data sharing will also remain ad hoc until the arrival of proGres v4. For the time being, both institutions have their own data management systems and data sharing is performed for specific purposes only, following a strict request protocol specified in the data sharing agreement. Gaps in updating refugee data in the ARRA system, after for instance a marriage, are common.

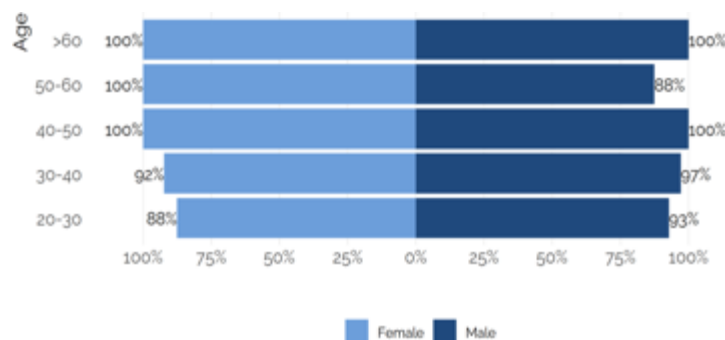
ARRA and UNHCR are not working with the same data. UNHCR have a centralised server in Geneva, and we are discussing how to integrate the systems, for us not to depend on them and for them not to depend on us. They have said that they will implement it soon. This is important. There are refugees who live in the urban areas and are living with the host communities, and they still receive monthly rations. There are refugees in schools, refugees needing service in the hospitals, etc. We have to be able to serve them, but it is difficult right now because it takes a very long time to find a file in hard copy from the archive. ARRA told UNHCR that we have to be able to access the server, and they said ok. But in practice, this is still not the case. –Refugee registration coordinator, ARRA, Endabaguna

4.1.3 Understanding the perceptions of refugees towards registration

Most interviewed refugees were registered with UNHCR, which was highly normalised among the population, but there were some differences based on key variables. The registration and verification of refugees across Ethiopia through biometric registration efforts and improved processes, discussed in the previous section, reached the majority of the population surveyed. There were key differentiating factors.

- **Gender and time since arrival** (Figure 11). 108 of the 121 Eritrean refugees and all 75 Somali refugees interviewed were registered with UNHCR. Women were slightly more likely to be registered than men, and interviewees who had been living in Ethiopia for a long time were found to be more likely to be registered with UNHCR than recent arrivals.

Figure 11: Refugee registration among interviewed sample by gender and age

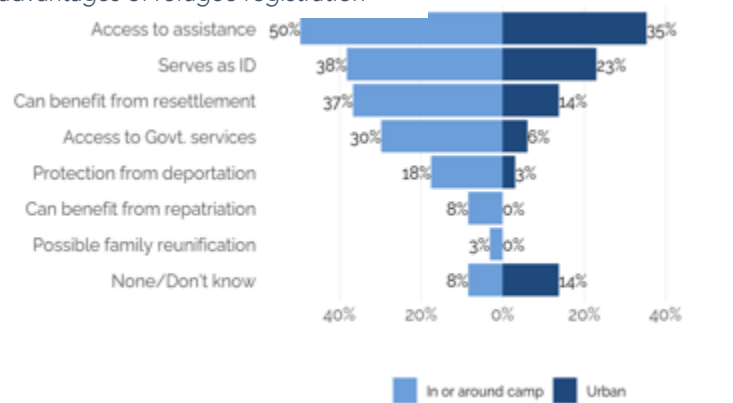


- **Household size:** Larger households were more likely to be registered with UNHCR, as seen through a regression analysis controlling by age, camp/urban setting, age, gender, and literacy.
- **Location and legal identity** (Figure 12). Camp dwellers saw the potential and link registration can provide to assistance. While urban refugees saw the potential in refugee registration as it supports and furthers in their view the possibilities of resettlement. However, urban refugees do not consider themselves likely to benefit from aid, and with plans to move elsewhere, are less likely to be registered than their camp-based peers. But, linking to the legal identity agenda, the provision of an accredited means of identification is highly valued, and more so in urban than in camp environments.

Hopes surrounding resettlement were frequently evoked in the qualitative interviews conducted for this evaluation and remained a strong motivator particularly in the urban context for entering the registration process.

I was not registered as a refugee because I did not know anyone who had any experience with this. I didn't know I had to register when I crossed the border, so I just headed to my final destination. I am considering getting registered now because I want to get resettled to another country. In other respects, a refugee registration would not improve my life in any way, I would not get any more support. –Female unregistered refugee, Addis Ababa

Figure 12: Perceived advantages of refugee registration



Box 1: Perspectives on benefits of registration by refugee leaders: Hitsats vs Addis Ababa

The research teams held FGDs with refugee leaders and elders in Hitsats camp and in Addis Ababa. For **leaders in Hitsats camp**, being registered was highly normalised and unquestioned as it was directly linked to receiving a ration card.

Here there is no one who hasn't registered with ARRA/ UNHCR living in the area. How could they get any service provided for refugees if not registered? – Male registered refugee, age 56, Hitsat camp

However, they more explicitly complained about bias and favouritism by UNHCR in the process and expressed concern regarding resettlement opportunities.

Urban refugee leaders mentioned being disconnected from the direct services offered by UNCHR and its partners due to living in an urban area. However, identification offered further integration into the host community through enabling access to a SIM card, bank account, and house rental. (Tellingly, a refugee ID was not mentioned as facilitating livelihoods). Yet several mentioned that they themselves were not registered and instead the refugee community supported one another. Many actively question the value of registration.

Because of the problems they face, Eritreans support each other. If I have registration ID, I can give shelter to the unregistered one. —Male registered refugee, age 31, Addis Ababa

While respondents were aware of advantages of registration, a number of issues lead to reluctance to go through the registration process. Despite progress in registration of refugee, respondents reflected on why either they or people they knew did not go through the process. This centred on three key themes:

- **Lack of awareness.** The most frequently mentioned reasons when asked what might dissuade refugees from seeking to officialise their status in Ethiopia were the complexity (and length) of the process, and a lack of awareness regarding one’s obligations with regard to registration and the steps to take. As will be discussed in the coming section, both of these were addressed by the AMIF actions, speaking to its relevance.
- **Procedural challenges.** For those who did not register immediately upon arrive, costs were identified as a reason for not undergoing registration, highlighting the still existing procedural challenges in an ostensibly free of charge service.

Some of my friends who are living in Addis Ababa are not yet registered mainly because of financial problems. If arrived In Tigray, and later you are elsewhere but you want to register with UNHCR, you have to go to Tigray. The travel expense via airplane is very costly and impossible. Besides, if they want to go by bus, there is no secured travel movement on the way to Tigray. –Female refugee, age 22, Addis Ababa

- **Onward migration plans** (Figure 14): For some, onward migration plans can result in a reluctance regarding registration for those who prefer to remain under the radar. In the sample interviewed for this research, we find that those who are planning to live elsewhere in five years' time are slightly less likely to be registered than those who plan on remaining in their current location.

The registration information keeps track of people crossing borders. Once you are registered in the UNHCR, you cannot change anything else including your name, age etc. That is why; I am not yet registered in the UNHCR. If I got registered in the UNHCR, I will have only one chance of going abroad. –Female unregistered refugee, age 23, Addis Ababa

Figure 13: Identified reasons not to register

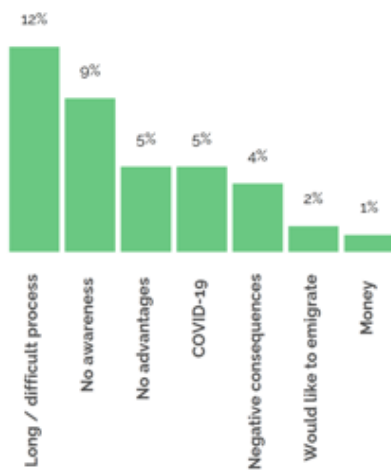
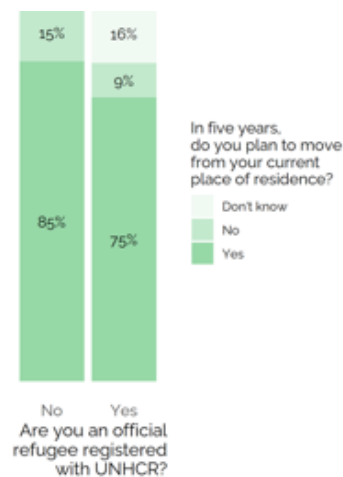


Figure 14: Registration and plans to relocate



Although awareness of the purpose of biometric data collection is low,¹³ the level of trust in the actors charged with refugee registration was high. This sets Ethiopia apart from many other contexts. As Schoemaker and al notes, personal data privacy is particularly important for refugees, who have often fled persecution and

¹³ Not dissimilar from their peers in Uganda as described in Nicolò Braggio, “UNHCR’s Biometric Registration in Ugandan Refugee Settlements: A Critical Assessment of Biometric Registration for Refugees Seeking Protection in Uganda,” 2020.

fear being targeted if identified, and who thus rightly be concerned at a time when “the increasingly digital nature of identification systems means it is easier for organisations to share data than ever before”.¹⁴

It is not important whether we trust them or not, we have not another options. Because if we are not registered, we couldn't get monthly rations, ID or revaluation cards which are important to fill case applications. But I personally do trust ARRA and UNHCR, and I don't think that they are using the data for something other than allocating the monthly ration and finding resettlement opportunities. –Male refugee, age 23, Hitsats

Only in rare cases did respondents voice concern that data might be used to “spy on them”. This was particularly hinted at in conversations with unregistered refugees in Addis. Fear of retribution by the Eritrean government was voiced by some:

We get nervous sometimes, because if they display our information in the media, our families at home might be attacked by the government. –Female unregistered refugee, Addis Ababa

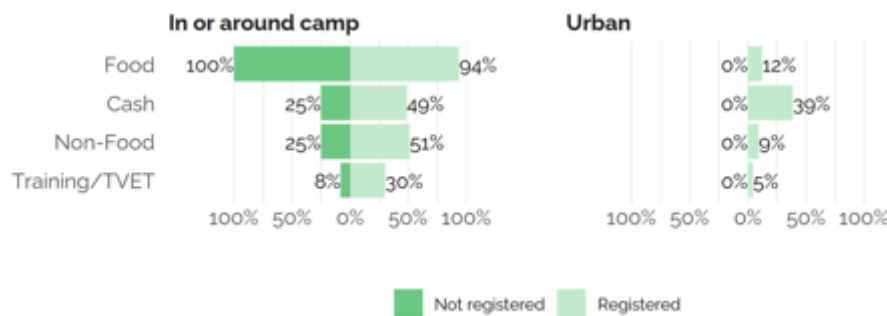
4.1.4 Effects on service delivery and protection outcomes

Opportunities exist to better target assistance delivery through improved refugee registration data. Accurate information about refugee populations facilitates the management of camps and addressing needs. It also enables resources to be distributed more precisely. For instance, improved refugee and vital events registration, and data integration between the two, is frequently mentioned by refugees as being crucial for shelter attribution. Married couples are allocated a house, while single refugees live in a shared space.

Registered refugees in both camps and urban contexts were much more likely to benefit from different types of support than their non-registered peers, and many note that registering vital events impacted their household's ration size and eligibility for different types of support.

One year ago, my relative's wife died. Her husband reported this to ARRA, then ARRA reported to UNHCR, and her ration was deducted from the household ration. — Youth refugee, Hitsats

Figure 15: Assistance and refugee registration



In the context of the out-of-camp policy, integration of refugee data into national systems has the potential to improve service provision by the Government of Ethiopia. Refugees in Ethiopia do not currently appear to be benefiting from livelihoods support based on registration-prompted referrals. Rather, as in the case of health-related vulnerabilities, refugees benefiting from training programmes by ZOA or Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) are identified through refugee representatives at the sub-block level. Interviewed youth recall many complaints regarding the nomination and selection process, another issue which should be improved with the activation of the proGres v4 system.

For now, livelihoods programmes for refugees are not effective. They are not properly documented. All data of educational and skills building programmes, from kindergarten to

¹⁴ Emrys Schoemaker, Dina Baslan, Bryan Pon & Nicola Dell, “Identity at the margins: data justice and refugee experiences with digital identity systems in Lebanon, Jordan, and Uganda,” Information Technology for Development, 2020

University or technical training, should be in an information management system in a systematic way. The current data does not show us who is engaged in livelihoods activities, what are the skills, needs and interests. This information will be needed for effective targeting. –ARRA Registration Coordinator

The impact of improved refugee registration on child protection remains weak for the time being but holds significant potential in terms of resettlement and family reunification. UNHCR has emphasised family tracing and reunification as the most protection pathway for unaccompanied and separated refugee children. The core principle is family reunification, provided it is in the best interest of the child. Registration is needed for UNHCR to reunite separated children with their families, be it within the country or across borders. A digital system is key here, as is the integration thereof with those of other important actors in this sphere and other countries of asylum. Finally, improved refugee registration can bring about a larger commitment from Western States to the resettlement option.¹⁵ Key informants note that many vulnerable individuals, such as the disabled, women-headed or child-headed cases benefited from resettlement opportunities in other countries.

The impact of improved refugee registration on service delivery in the domain of child protection remains weak for the time being – ARRA shares summary information with partners rather than detailed needs profiles.

We get high-level information only. For example, in Shire, we work with unaccompanied children. When requesting targeting information, we received the number of unaccompanied minors, that is all! –NRC Key Informant

The provision of health and education services should in the long run be strengthened by improved refugee registration. The research identified a number of individuals who had benefited from medical treatment due to information provided at registration, and who were aware of counselling services available to those with mental and psychosocial issues, and underage compounds.

Refugee registration data will become more useful in this regard following the arrival of proGres v4. For the time being, the referral process remains somewhat cumbersome and opaque to beneficiaries.

Those with a serious disability can get help through the following process: UNHCR will notify ARRA which will notify the Zone, Refugee central committee, down to the block and the subblock level. Then the community will come together, discuss and identify those who need urgent support. Their names will then be reported to the donor organisation. – Refugee youth, Hitsats

Within education, UNHCR is already working on a digital education platform to allow tracking of students to better tailor support.

In the absence of a harmonised data sharing system and OSS, improvements of service delivery remain limited for the time being for actors outside of UNHCR / ARRA. Potential users of the refugee registration data for service provision see the potential of registration data in this regard, but note that much needs to be done for the registration data to be guiding their activities:

You know we have what we call CCCM - camp coordination / camp management. In all countries, NRC is involved. But in Ethiopia, only ARRA manages the camp and we get limited information. The first entry point when you work in a camp should be the registration data! But we do not see the datasets. It is difficult to be an IP in this context. You raised the issue of planning. Well, let me tell you. When hundreds of refugees are transferred from Gambella to Benishangul Gumuz, more shelters are needed, right? We only get a call when refugees are on the plan ! This is not planning, this is reacting. Now, when we design our activities, we use data from the World Food Programme. – NRC Key Informant

¹⁵ Anna Bohlin, "Protection at the cost of privacy? - A study of the biometric registration of refugees," 2008.

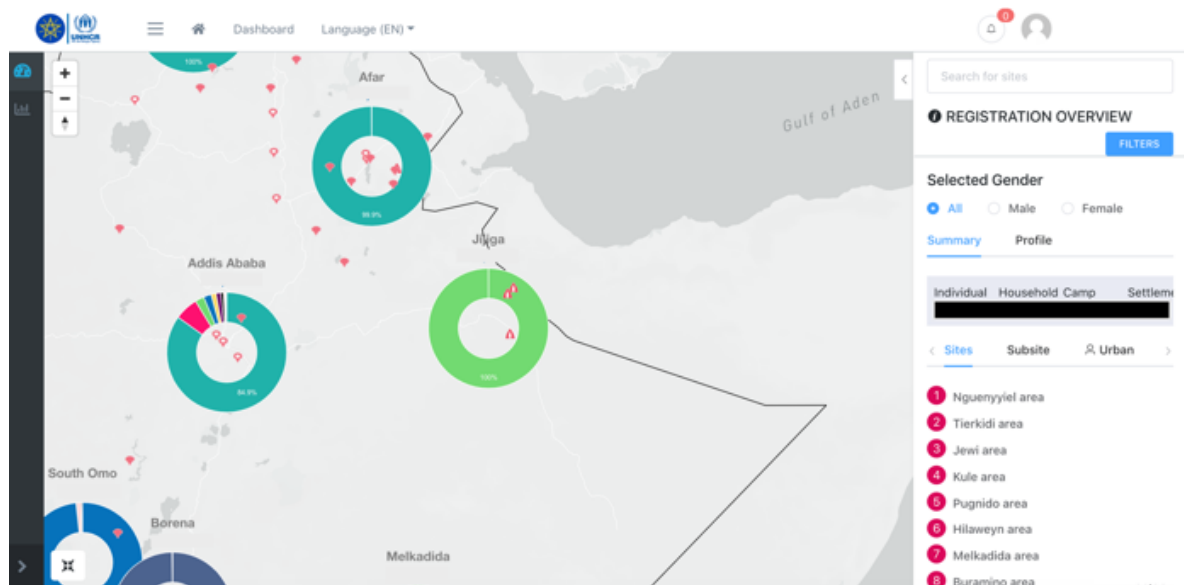
Data sharing with other actors remained ad-hoc but steps are being taken to improve information access. The same reasons that prevent ARRA from fully benefiting from UNHCR data kept other partners from doing so. Actors such as the NRC (on livelihoods), the Danish Refugee Council (DRC) (on protection) and DiCAC access registration data via formal and written requests.

We are very interested in this new portal! Is UNHCR going to give partners access to the data? Are you sure? Well, no one told us. For now, if you know someone at UNHCR, you can get some information. When that person leaves, that ends. There is no process. We need information on demographics, skill sets, disabilities! But we are always relying on second-hand information, on community representatives. All this because UNHCR does not share the data we need to work. –NRC Key Informant

Summary data on registrations was shared by UNHCR / ARRA with immigration and the Central Statistics Agency. A critical component funded by AMIF was the design of the data registration dashboard tool (Figure 16) to access refugee registration data with plans to open access to various partners, allowing them to conduct their own exploration and analysis of critical data on refugee demographics or vulnerabilities. However, data protection remains a valid concern.

What we are still working on is for any partner to access data and monitor where we stand, what is missing. This part is in transition. We need various tools to allow partners and donors to access the data using a stable tool and respecting all privacy issues. –UNHCR Ethiopia AMIF Focal Point

Figure 16: UNHCR registration data dashboard



Data generated through registration system has been linked to use for security purposes. UNHCR shares data with national governments who are expected to lead the registration exercises within their own borders and who are free to access, and possibly share, the information derived. ARRA was part of the Intelligence apparatus before until the creation of the Ministry of Peace, and still operates with specific security imperatives in mind, which were clear in certain interviews conducted for this research

ARRA and UNHCR share data which helps control practices by refugees which might be against the law and the regulation of the country. (...) Personally, I believe that there are gaps in data sharing and working collaboratively to prevent crimes. Refugees are much concerned that we may use the registration data for the benefit of the Ethiopian government, that vital events registration also could be politicised. –ARRA Vital Events Team Leader

Arguably the biggest impact as a result of AMIF actions was the contribution to the provision of an identity card, be it for refugees who benefited for the first time from an official ID (having only been attributed a refugee number in the past, but no document with their name on it), or for newly born children through a state-issued

birth certificate. For refugees, documentation is vital to ensure their freedom of movement, prevent refoulement and statelessness, and access durable solutions. Being registered with UNHCR refugees are provided with an opportunity to realise their rights such as e.g. the right to be recognised before the law. A baby born to South Sudanese parents in Ethiopia can now claim a birth certificate, mitigating the very real risk of statelessness. This improvement was acutely felt by interviewed displaced persons.

If I weren't registered by ARRA and UNHCR, no one would know who I was. Without ID, I could not move around, or access different services like transport, health, schooling. Without a revelation card, I could not apply to be resettled. Without this registration, I would be a fish out of water. –Refugee, Hitsats

Refugees have the right to their own bank accounts and driving licenses— rights which can only be realised if they can prove their identity. Having ID also has clear safety implications:

A month ago, I was just hanging out with some friends at night. It was around midnight. Some policemen came and asked us for ID. I showed them my refugee ID, they said nothing. Some friends of mine who did not have this ID were beaten and sent to prison. — Male Refugee, age 24, Addis Ababa

4.2 Vital events registration

4.2.1 Strengthening coordination at different levels within the system

Care was taken to embed efforts focused on vital events registration in national frameworks, and work with partners to ensure continued impact of advocacy and awareness-raising activities. With respect to VER, the implementation of the civil registration system in both refugee and host community contexts is embedded in the national legal framework governing vital events registration which now designates VER the responsibility of the federal and regional governments, including ARRA. The Government (both at the national and regional levels) has committed to allocating budget and assigning resources to sustain the system. Ethiopia has taken measures to strengthen coordination and collaboration in the multi-sectoral endeavour of CRVS systems. The important bodies set are: (i) the Federal Vital Events Council, the highest-level coordination and decision-making body, formed in 2012, and (ii) a National CRVS Steering Committee (NSC) has been formed with membership at highest substantive designation from key Federal Ministries, UN agencies and the academia to oversee the process. Demand creation activities appear to have lasting impact, supported by a widely operational communal system of advocates (at hospitals, schools, etc). Community awareness creates community awareness, meaning that the impact will potentially be amplified over time if the benefits of VER are proven.

Ethiopia is now preparing for a **comprehensive assessment of its CRVS systems** to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the systems and list prioritized recommendations to serve as input in the development of a the second 5-year strategy and action plan. Here again the government's commitment is reflected in the extent of pre-assessment preparation, mobilization of institutional support, and high-level declaration on the need for revamping the CRVS system.

AMIF-funding supported strengthen coordination by clarifying roles at different levels, but the context remains complex with an evolving stakeholder landscape. One of the guiding principles in the CRVS systems improvement process is national leadership and ownership. Ethiopia has ensured this by establishing a National CRVS Improvement Steering Committee (NSC) chaired by the Minister of Peace, with membership of senior management of key stakeholder ministries and agencies, and INVEA serving as the Secretariat. To support the civil registration system for refugees, UNICEF, the Ministry of Peace, INVEA and Regional VERA worked together to coordinate site supplies and technical capacity improvements. Similarly, INVEA, ARRA, UNICEF and UNHCR

Figure 17: Legal identity agenda, and its links to child protection



partnered to support the civil registration system for refugees. To foster accountability between INVEA and ARRA, the two agencies reached an agreement for INVEA to manage the overall coordination and implementation for Ethiopian nationals, while ARRA would be responsible for interventions in refugee camps. Data sharing for refugees' vital events remains challenging in the absence of an automated registration database and interoperability between the refugee component and the national systems. ARRA works with INVEA indirectly. Every month, ARRA submits vital events registered in the refugee camps in a given region to the regional VERA office, which then checks then and sends it to Addis Ababa INVEA.

The process for generating data of use to those who would need it for programming purposes remains cumbersome. Here again, the comprehensive assessment will provide input to ensure alignment with best practices in terms of data protection. Meanwhile, UNICEF and UNHCR undertook joint advocacy, including technical consultations and meetings with senior management of INVEA and ARRA, to prompt an amendment of the refugee vital events directive to align the system with international good practices. This remains a work in progress.

The federal and regional governments, UNICEF, ARRA, IOM and UN agencies are the primary beneficiaries of refugees' vital events data. But for the time being, the data sharing processes are cumbersome. It is impossible to share peoples' personal issues, we can only share aggregated data and statistical summaries. —Staff, INVEA

To improve coordination, vital events coordination systems were established at regional and woreda levels in all five target regions, comprising representatives from different government bodies¹⁶ and VERA. ARRA has become a member of the national Technical Working Group, established under the previous Federal VERA (now INVEA) to provide strategic guidance on reforming the civil registration system in line with international standards.

INVEA has the responsibility of ensuring coordination between stakeholders as concerns vital events registration and admits freely that the task has been challenging.

This coordination structure is included in the proclamation and supposed to exercise authority, and our office is in charge. We are cooperating with the stakeholders you have mentioned, but also health bureaus, the civic society, ministries, regional states. What makes our vital registration system from others is that we have to split tasks and share information with so many different stakeholders! This is so complex and tiresome – it requires time, organisational skills, money and trained personnel. We are working hard to implement the plans, using our authority and in a professional manner. But We have not done a remarkable, satisfactory job. Splitting similar activities with other people, institutions with different attitudes, is just too complex. So coordination is still in its infancy. There have been many obstacles and challenges. —Staff, INVEA

Aggregated vital events registration data can be shared with both national and international partners following a data sharing protocol. These include international organisations but also embassies. However, key informants stressed that this data is not currently used for policy making purposes.

¹⁶ Including, but not limited to, the Ministry of Education (birth certificates needed for school enrolment), the Ministry of Health (health centres crucial actors in birth and death notifications, important and reportedly effective messengers when it comes to VER administrative steps), the Bureau of Women and Children Affairs (charged with awareness raising), etc.

4.2.2 Addressing resource and capacity gaps

AMIF activities had a positive effect on the capacity of vital events registration staff. It has been noted in the past that human resource and technical capacity limitations have hindered VER service delivery.¹⁷ The AMIF actions looked to improve the process of vital events registration for both refugees and Ethiopian nationals at several levels. Capacity building formed an integral component.

INVEA and the regional VERAs conducted an assessment in 2018 to identify the technical capacity needs of existing and newly appointed civil registrars serving refugees and host communities in the five refugee-hosting regions. The assessment identified critical capacity gaps, including a limited understanding of the VER process by registrars, a lack of consistency in practices, gaps in filling even basic information in a harmonised fashion, and a lack of monitoring and evaluation. To tackle these challenges, the INVEA training manual was revised to address key knowledge and skill gaps identified by the assessment, and a series of training programmes were organised to improve the technical capacity of registrars with varying degrees of experience and educational backgrounds. ARRA officials also attended the training sessions, which covered processes as well as procedural safeguards. Initially (though not for long) provided every three months for three days, the trainings were met with enthusiasm.

- Short civil registrar test themes**

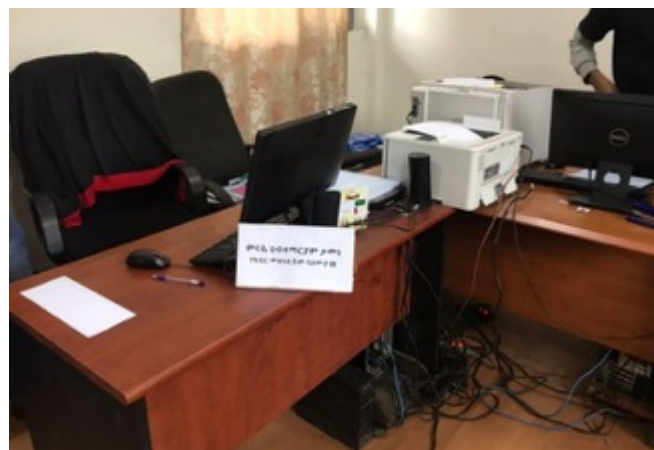
 - ✓ Duties and responsibilities of civil registrars
 - ✓ Legal grounds for VER
 - ✓ Types and characteristics of different vital events
 - ✓ Preconditions and supporting documents required for different types of VER

Of all the support we have received thus far, the trainings were by far the most impactful. (...) We were taught about the four vital events registration processes, and what were the requirements. For example, the process flow of getting a certificate of divorce is that those who get divorced at the community level get a notification paper from the court, and then have to come to our office within 30 days after the final decision. Both partners have to come with a valid ID, and they will get their certificate of divorce. –Civil registrar,

Based on the training manuals and post-training tests administered by UNICEF, Samuel Hall researchers administered short spot-check tests to five individuals having benefited from capacity-building under AMIF. All of them were found to have a good understanding of the duties of registrars, and procedures for different types of vital event registration. The legal basis for VER was less well understood but is arguably less relevant for their day-to-day performance of duties.

The working environment at registries improved through the provision of material support. Lack of equipment and poor infrastructure is known to be a supply-side limitation to large-scale and effective provision of vital events registration:¹⁸ many registration offices are not equipped to provide a comfortable environment to their clients. At the backend, a lack of safe boxes and shelves make it difficult to store documents safely.¹⁹ In addition to raising awareness and building capacity among registrars, UNICEF contributed very tangible material support to registration offices based on the needs assessment covering ten refugee camps, five ARRA zonal coordination offices, ten kebele civil registration offices adjacent to refugee camps, ten woreda VER offices, five zonal VER offices and

Figure 18: Computerised VER office in Addis Ababa, Addis Ketema, Sub-city, Woreda 10



¹⁷ Muhumad, A.A. "Impediments to Civil Registration: The Case of Somali Regional State in Ethiopia". Journal of Social Policy Conferences, 2020 77: 287-306

¹⁸ Berhane, A., Gebre-Egziabher, K.A. & Kassaye, K.K. "Vital Events Registration System in Tigray, Ethiopia: Achievements, Challenges and Prospects." Journal of Demography Africa, 2020 1(4): 61-77.

¹⁹ UNICEF and UNHCR, "Integrated Field Mission Report to Gambella," 2019

five RVERAs and the ARRA head office in Addis Ababa. After a competitive bidding process, UNICEF contracted local suppliers to deliver the items identified as critical gaps. The support was welcomed by recipients:

Computers, tables and chairs were offered to the target woredas. For me, the most impactful support thus far has been the provision of computers and other office facilities. This has created a more conducive working environment and improved the staff's efficiency. Frankly, it really has contributed a lot. We used to store the registration documents on a dusty floor, but now we have proper shelves. Document spoilage and tearing was common as documents were transported from the Tabya level to the woredas and up to the regional office. Now we can transport them in proper baggage. Before the support, some registrars were sitting on bricks and others on the floor, performing vital events registration on their knees, because there were no tables and chairs. All of this has made our job much easier. –Tigray region VERA, Mekelle

Right now, each form is checked and then digitalized by data entry staff. I believe we are very close to switching to a digital system, which is great because we are tired of paperwork! But I know it might take a long time because of the cost, and cumbersome procedures. – INVEA, Addis Ababa

Switching from a paper-based to a digital system remains a distant prospect for most VER offices but not all. At the time of writing, Addis Ababa benefitted from a more advanced system than the other regions in Ethiopia: Unlike elsewhere, there is an online VER system in place. This is undoubtedly due also to the fact that, prior to 2016, the capital was the only part of the country with a VER system in place. The INVEA is also still using a paper-based system, but UNICEF, funded by AMIF and other sources, and supported by Africa Programme on Accelerated Improvement of Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (APAI-CRVS), is working closely to facilitate progress to an electronic data management system (challenging in a context where electricity provision is spotty and forms which were not saved when electricity cuts occur cannot be retrieved) which would make reporting more accurate and timelier, and data sharing less cumbersome. The comprehensive assessment will inform a costed strategy which in turn will lay out revised and simplified business processes, and a plan for digitisation of systems.

Despite investments, the equipment and infrastructure built at civil registries across the country remains insufficient, particularly in light of rising demand. The increased demand has also resulted in a need for more staff, and INVEA is not currently equipped to handle a surge in demand. In Addis alone, VERA recruited 700 new staff over the past two months, none of whom have received training on VER processes. Finally, the high level of staff turnover also remains a major challenge to build capacity in a sustainable manner.

Box 2: Improving efficiency and effectiveness of the VER system via a national costed strategic CRVS Plan

The focus and objectives of the comprehensive assessment, among other things include: reviewing the legal and regulatory framework of the CRVS system; examine organization and functioning of the CRVS systems from the kebele to the federal level and across refugee and internally displaced population (IDP) settings; review the existing civil registration and vital statistics business processes and procedures for each vital event, including records management, transmission and archiving in all settings; identify enabling factors for increasing coverage and completeness of registrations; to review contents of registration records and certificates; examine coordinating arrangements at different level; generate clear recommendations on addressing identified weaknesses and gaps, and to maximize effectiveness and efficiency of the system.

The sustainability of the project's activities aimed at enhancing the institutional and technical capacity of registration staff is at risk by both staff turnover and increased demand. As demand grows, material supplies and financial envelopes will continue to be stretched. To the extent that trained staff can pass on the skills

In my opinion, the skills shared were built in a durable and sustainable fashion. However, our vital events registration agency is at its infant stage. Many of our people are not yet registered. We need to expand our services and hire new professionals. These professionals will be from various educational backgrounds. So, they need to have new knowledge and skills on the birth registration process and principles. –Vital events

transmitted to new hires in a self-sustaining system, the impact of UNICEF’s activities could last through the “generations” of new hires as teams grow to meet demand. The comprehensive assessment will further inform the future system with an eye to efficiency and cost-effectiveness, which in turn might reduce the number of staff needed to process VER. As a result of this assessment, supported by AMIF, procedures will be revised for greater efficiency and sustainability.

4.2.3 Progress in demand generation

AMIF-funded awareness raising activities around the process and benefits of civil registration made positive inroads in the national and refugee communities sampled. A critical gap addressed by AMIF actions under the UNICEF component was the limited awareness of communities, host and refugee alike, regarding the benefits of and requirement for civil registration. The lack of awareness was addressed both by targeting refugees and Ethiopian nationals directly via community awareness-raising interventions by INVEA and regional VERAs²⁰ and by targeting key institutions and actors at the community level. These included religious leaders, health extension workers and the women development army, who were all incited to disseminate messages on vital events registration, particularly birth registration. In addition, awareness raising was conducted via microphone announcements, public meetings, brochures, ads in magazines and the local media.

We have been raising awareness in the community through different mechanisms including training, magazines, brochures, local media and meetings. We also ran ads on television: Walta, EBS, Addis TV... hosts and refugees both benefited from this. ARRA is also raising awareness among the refugees specifically. This is working, demand has increased, here for instance numbers went up from 3,996 to 4,805. –VERA Research and Training Team Lead, Addis Ababa

ARRA counterparts concur on the success of this part of the AMIF-funded activities, in a context where a diverse range of reported exposure to some form of communication on vital event registration (Table 4).

Table 4: Reported communication about the importance of and process for vital events registration

	Ethiopian nationals		Refugees	
	Near Camp	Urban	Near Camp	Urban
Have you been exposed to communication regarding vital events registry?	52%	63%	52%	63%
If yes, who?				
International organization	14%	4%	14%	4%
Local authority	76%	41%	76%	41%
Media	59%	56%	59%	56%
Other	0%	0%	0%	0%

Providing awareness-raising on the birth registration process to professionals, community leaders and other stakeholders starting from the Woreda up to the central agency level was a major activity done by UNICEF and supported by AMIF. (...) We targeted teachers, principals, the whole school community so students would come get birth certificates. We targeted policemen, health extension workers, midwives, medical directorates... people at the bureau and sub-city levels. This has undoubtedly resulted in a better level of awareness. – Staff, Vital Events Registry, Addis Ababa

While UNICEF and UNHCR continue to stress that vital events registration cannot be a prerequisite for service delivery in a context where it remains very rare²¹, at other levels there does appear to be a trend towards making vital events registration a condition for certain services, adding to the demand narrative.

²⁰ The hiring of a Communication for Development (C4D) consultant by UNICEF was temporarily halted.

²¹ Much to the dismay of INVEA, where a key informant noted that they had pressed UNHCR to require VER in order to access rations to avail. “If we cannot force them, they are not interested in VER.”

They need an incentive to do it. When people go to (...) embassies, training centers... then they might be asked for their certificates. And that is when they come to register. We can say that they come when they need the certificates, not spontaneously because they are aware of the importance of VER. So we can say that there is still a gap in awareness. –Staff, Tabya Civil Registration Office, Hitsats

A Memorandum of Understanding is being discussed between the Ministry of Education and INVEA which might eventually lead to schools requesting birth certificates for registration. Linking vital registration with UNHCR food rationing system through a soft conditionality is being considered in some refugee camps to promote birth registration (although, as noted previously, this linkage may de-incentivize death registrations).²²

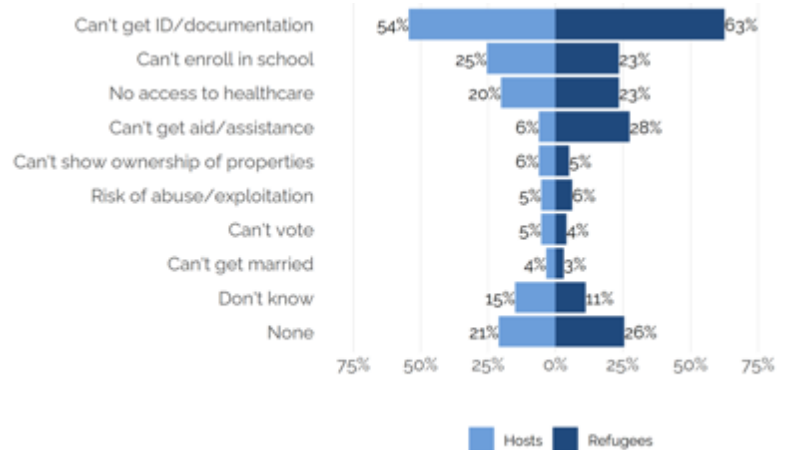
The demand for vital events registration was greater among the refugees sampled as compared to Ethiopian nationals, as it had a more direct linkage to their lives in Hitsats. For refugees, registering births and marriages was crucial to their ration allocation, but also family reunification and case applications for resettlement. ARRA key informants at Hitsats camp note that "there is nothing that does not get registered in the refugee community." This might not be entirely correct: Anthrologica/ Common Thread notes that "As of 2019, ARRA had assigned 44 civil registration staff (six at headquarters, 12 at zonal offices, 26 within refugee camps) to register all vital events of over 740,000 refugees."

But data collected for this study confirms a higher awareness of birth registration procedures among the refugee population, particularly in camps. Interviewed youth were aware of the nine pledges and their links to documentation, and rightly observed that birth registration was free of charge. Young refugee mothers see NGOs, UNICEF, UNHCR and individual countries [for resettlement] as the users of vital events registration data generated for refugees.

When asked about the consequences of not having an official birth certificate, the danger of not being able to obtain other forms of identification was the most frequent answer (Figure 19). This identification refers to refugee ID for children born to non-nationals, and, increasingly, passports for Ethiopian nationals. Indeed, birth registration has recently become a requirement for obtaining a passport, clearly impacting demand:

The requirement to bring a birth registration certificate issued by the vital events registration office to get a passport was added very recently. I got my passport ten years ago, I did not need to show a birth certificate, only a Kebele ID. So now it is essential to have a birth certificate. I think offices will increasingly require it for essential services. It is becoming more important. –Male host, age 32, Addis Ababa

Figure 19: Reported consequences of not having a birth certificate



4.2.4 Knowledge, attitudes and practices towards vital event registration

Vital events registration remained low overall, despite upward movement in numbers, according to the data collected. One example is the link between communication campaigns and death registration (Figure 20). Those having been exposed to campaigns were more likely to register a death in the family. They have also improved factual knowledge: Ethiopian nationals having been exposed to communication campaigns on VER were slightly less likely to assume, incorrectly, that birth registration is a legal obligation. In the sample for this study, refugees

²² UNICEF: *Enhancing access to birth registration for refugees in Ethiopia. Case Study*, 28 June 2019, quoted in final Inception report for "Formative research to inform the development of a national strategy to promote civil and vital events registration among refugees and the general population" (Anthrologica / Common Thread, October 2020)"

were less likely to own official documents such as national ID and passport (Table 5). Refugee children in camps were twice as likely to have birth certificates as refugee children in the city. Neither group needed the birth certificate for concrete purposes in the past.

There are three types of birth registration, 1) on time (within 90 days), 2) delayed (within one year) or 3) very delayed (after one year). The number of "on-time" birth registrations has increased a lot. Children are born in hospitals, hospitals provide birth cards, and the parents immediately come and register their children with the vital events registration agency. We had not in the past seen so many newborns. –Staff, Vital events registrar, Addis Ababa

Figure 20: Reported link between communication campaigns and death registration

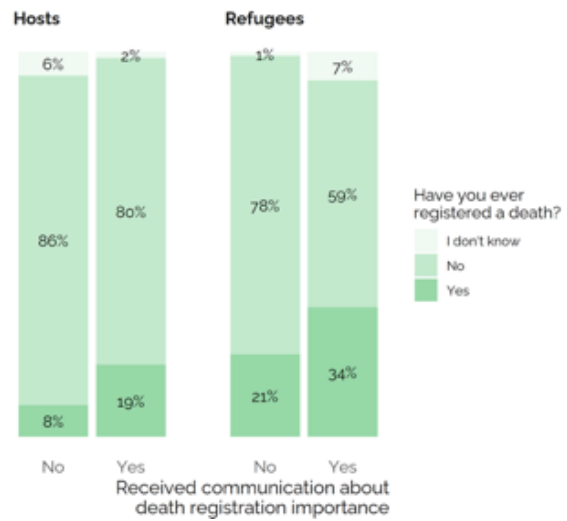


Table 5: Reported birth certificate by location

	Ethiopian nationals		Refugees	
	Near Camp	Urban	Near Camp	Urban
Do you have any type of birth certificate?	28%	58%	8%	20%
Do any of the children in the household have a birth certificate?	58%	56%	61%	31%
Have you ever needed to show your birth certificate to anyone?	11%	28%	5%	6%

Both perceived and actual impediments to vital events registration persisted among refugee and host populations sampled. The process as well as legal obligations with respect to vital events registration appears to remain ill-understood. The following were identified as factors causing reluctance among the interviewed target population:

- Costs:** The registration of vital events is free for both Ethiopian nationals and refugees, but obtaining the certificate has a cost for citizens. The direct cost of registration - including official fees, fees for court or medical-supplied documentation, and penalties for late registration can be a significant barrier for poor families, and UNICEF has been lobbying intensely against charging Ethiopian nationals for obtaining VER certificates. Further, while registration is free, other indirect costs, including the cost of paying for transportation to reach a registration office and the opportunity cost in terms of time spent.²³ For refugees, these services are free of charge. However, the official cost can be inflated by bribes necessary for accelerated processing.

Cost of different types of Vital Events Registration for Ethiopian nationals

- On-time birth registration: 45 birr
- Delayed birth registration: 75-150 birr
- On-time death/divorce registration: 80 birr
- Delayed death/divorce registration: 150-200 birr

There is no direct cost associated with birth registration. But bribes are needed to speed up the process. For instance, those who are coming from abroad to finish the visa process for their family members. They choose the easy way... –Female refugee, age 27, Addis Ababa

- Opaque process.** Despite extensive communication campaigns on the process, it remained opaque for some respondents (both refugees and Ethiopian nationals) and felt challenging, at times, to obtain the required information at the relevant offices.

²³ Adama Science and Technology University and Oromia Vital Event Registration Agency (2017). A Survey on Perception, Attitude and Practice of Vital Events Registration in Oromia National Regional State

The office is closed most of the time. I could not find an officer who would share information on birth registration. Impossible to find out what documents I needed to get a birth registration certificate. I do not know whether I need to be accompanied by my children. I assume that the husband and the wife should appear in person? Do you know? – Male host, Addis Ababa

- **Wrong understanding of what constitutes an official registration of birth.** While some parents know registration is important, they do not know what is considered official. Because of the presence of alternative certification systems in community-based institutions, religious institutions, hospitals and municipalities, many parents believe that they have already registered a vital event.²⁴ For example, some parents believe they have registered their child's birth if they note the birth in notebooks, holy books, or vaccination cards.²⁵ For Ethiopian nationals, the interest of vital events registration at the Kebele level was not obvious given the perceived presence of other registration options. This perception is inaccurate, the only valid birth registration is that carried out by civil registration officers.

There are various types of birth registration. One is the health centres. Another form is by religious leaders when someone is baptized. We, as a household, have registered our children in both of them. Everybody in this community is used to the registration of birth in health centres and religious institutions. But I have never heard of any community members who have registered their children in the vital events registration office. (...) I was asked to present a birth registration certificate for my son when he started school. We gave them the document from the hospital, and it was fine. The school accepts all certificates equally, whether a hospital one, a church one or a vital events registration office one. I have never had any problems because I didn't have a form from the vital events registration office. – Male host, Addis Ababa

- **Procedural barriers.** A major impediment to registration for certain individuals was that host women are more likely to give birth outside of health centres, particularly in the remote areas. Further, the obligation for both parents to be present for processing birth registration created vulnerabilities for single mothers or couples which are geographically separated. The requirement for both parents to be present or provide a parenthood certification from a court has been frequently raised as a barrier to birth registration.²⁶

Box 3: Summary of birth registration process

Birth registration is a legal obligation in Ethiopia. The process differs for refugees and Ethiopian citizens. The former requires notification paperwork, which can be replaced in some locations by testimony. Refugees register vital events in camps, while Ethiopian nationals register in Kebele offices. Birth registration is free for both refugees and Ethiopian nationals, but the latter have to pay for obtaining certificates and in the event of late registration. This is not the case for refugees. If a birth occurs in a health facility, this facility notifies the civil registry and prepares the paperwork. The new mother and father then travel to the nearest registrar office within 90 days. At the registration office, the parents must be able to show legal resident identification cards. Information pertaining to the child and parents is collected manually on carbon copy paper producing one original and three copies. The original register is retained at the registration office, one copy is filed either in the RVERA (in the case of Ethiopian Nationals) or ARRA headquarters (in the case of refugees). The remaining two copies are sent to INVEA which transmits one to the Central Statistical Agency (CSA). Upon completion of the registration, parents collect the birth certificate from the civil status office

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Plan International (2005). Perception and Practice: A review of Birth Registration by Plan in Addis Ababa and the regional states of Oromia, Amhara, and SNNPR Ethiopia.

²⁶ See for instance INVEA. C4D Training Report on Birth Registration, December 9-12, 2019.

4.2.5 Impact of improved vital events registration

Vital registration data is already used today by different public offices, as noted by the Vital Events Registration officer in Mekelle. For those who have it, it can avoid paternity disputes and underage marriages, and inform fair resource allocation following a divorce. A lost ID card can be replaced following due process.

The impact of increased vital events registration following improved processes cannot fully be appreciated in these early stages, but it is universally acknowledged that civil registration is needed to allow individuals to establish a legal identity, make claims of nationality, exercise civil and political rights. Ability to prove family relationships and status is crucial to children, to who it offers some protection from exploitation and hardship, and women’s empowerment and participation.²⁷

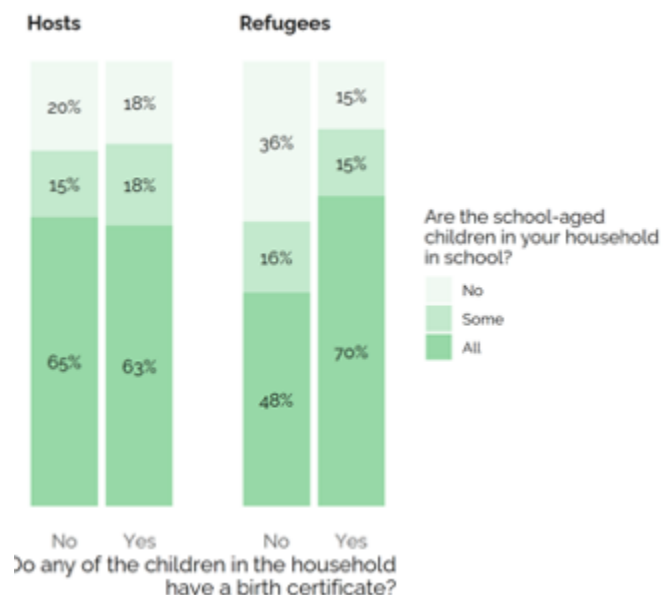
By formally reporting birth, death, cause of death, marriage, and divorce, well-functioning CRVS systems grant an individual identity, nationality, and begin the process of claiming rights to property, education, and access to health services. While Ethiopia is still far from having such a well-functioning system, the AMIF contribution thereto are undeniable.

While information provided at refugee registration informs service delivery by UNHCR and its partners, the birth registration data is still limited by low overall coverage. Children refugees in the city had significantly lower vaccination rates than those living in camps, and no relationship was found between civil/refugee registration and vaccination rates. Having an accurate understanding of the number of children should allow stakeholders to allocate the resources necessary to provide adequate schooling, and to provide support which can allow to raise school attendance.

Regression analysis shows that, controlling for refugee status, gender and age, children with a birth certificate were more likely to attend school. Fostering birth registration thus may, in the medium term, contribute to improved education planning, and school attendance, of both host and refugee children in Ethiopia.

That said, birth registration is not yet a conditionality for receiving services, and for good reason.

Figure 21: Reported link between birth certification and school attendance



We would like vital events registration to facilitate access to services. There is a lot of potential for it to ensure services are being provided, children are going to school at the right time, children are getting vaccinated... But the overall registration rate is still so low that it cannot be an obligation at this stage. We are just laying the foundational blocks for the future. –UNICEF AMIF Focal Point

Encouraging VER for refugees and improving procedures for recording both births and deaths contributes to creating accurate population figures to determine assistance requirements and design relevant protection programming. The more deaths and births are on the record, the more just and equitable ration allocation becomes. AMIF support has thus contributed to decreasing the amount of fraud in the distribution of aid,²⁸ in addition to saving refugees long waits in receiving benefits.

But beyond humanitarian and development programming targeting refugees specifically, reliable and up-to-date population data is crucial to the Ethiopian national and sub-national government entities, enabling them

²⁷ Carla AbouZahr et al, Civil registration and vital statistics: progress in the data revolution for counting and accountability, 2015 ; Carla AbouZahr, Don de Savigny, Lene Mikkelsen, Philip W Setel, Rafael Lozano, Alan D Lopez, Towards universal civil registration and vital statistics systems: the time is now, 2015

²⁸ The link between biometrics and fraud reduction is further explored in Lodinová, 2016

to plan, deliver and monitor health and social development programmes and to track progress towards international commitments.²⁹ Currently (August 2020), the registration of vital events is taking place in 90% of the total 18,986 registration centres across the country and in most refugee registration centres (29 out of 33). Even if, when compared to the expected occurrence of the events, the country has managed to register only 12% birth,³⁰ 7% death, 6% marriage and 5% divorce since 2016, AMIF can be credited with a 31% increase in the registration of new-borns in host communities between the beginning of the project and the spring of 2019.

In the context of 2020, it is more important than ever to strive for continuous and comprehensive monitoring of population data and health. The potential of CRVS systems to generate reliable data for levels and patterns of mortality is especially relevant to position health within the Sustainable Development Goals. Vital statistics derived from civil registration systems have been instrumental in guiding policies and priorities for health development. Vital statistics support a variety of epidemiological research, ranging from ecological studies and methods used in descriptive epidemiology, to analytical investigations based on registration records such as the National Death Index.³¹

4.3 Census

UNFPA worked with the Central Statistical Agency and other partners to ensure that the (first fully digital) census be implemented in accordance with international standards and best practices. Field cartographic activities were completed countrywide, enumeration instruments, materials and applications developed and tested, staff trained and publicity materials developed. Geopolitical challenges however led to an indefinite postponement of the census in March 2019. The value of the investments made will depreciate the longer it takes for the census date to be set, and UNFPA is engaged in lobbying for this to occur as soon as possible. Given the current political turmoil, this seems unlikely to be soon.

UNFPA staff were involved in coordination meetings with AMIF partners and the refugee census taskforce also including Central Statistical Agency, UNHCR, ARRA and the World Bank. Field monitoring visits allowed partners to observe the pilot enumeration activities, leading to increased awareness of procedures necessary for a successful refugee census. Communication approaches were studied to support the accurate enumeration of refugees and asylum seekers in Ethiopia via sensitization of leaders and the larger public.

The implementation of this census would indeed have complemented, and allowed to triangulate, data derived through the other components of the AMIF action.

If we had succeeded, we would have generated useful demographic and socio-economic information which could have informed different interventions and planning. If we had successfully conducted the census, we would have understood the potential contribution of refugees to the workforce. We would know what level of schooling they had, we would know how big the population of school-aged children is. We would know much more about the displaced people's migration background. All of this would have helped the government in their efforts to integrate refugees and host communities. –Programme Analysis, Population and Development, UNFPA

The budget for Phase II of the AMIF component, the actual implementation of the census, was re-assigned following the indefinite postponement of the exercise by the Government.¹ It is now being allocated to COVID response for refugees and their host communities as led by humanitarian partners, regional Women and Youth bureaux, and the Bureau of Health in Somali, Gambella and Tigray regions.

The sustainability of the UNFPA census-related activities is likely to remain limited as regards capacity building, but equipment procured, and strategies developed may yet be useful when the census does take place. Due to the indefinite postponement of the census, the planned results and deliverables were delayed -

²⁹ AbouZahr C, de Savigny D, Mikkelsen L, Setel PW, Lozano R, Nichols E, Notzon F, Lopez AD. Civil registration and vital statistics: progress in the data revolution for counting and accountability. *Lancet*. 2015 Oct 3;386(10001):1373-1385. doi: 10.1016/S0140-6736(15)60173-8. Epub 2015 May 10. PMID: 25971224.

³⁰ According to the country's national plan (GTP II), the country planned to register 50% of birth by 2020. This was an aspirational rather than a realistic target, and given the current situation, the target is not going to be attained. Source: https://docs.google.com/document/d/1ji1uvzVuPuTPPIhLrnS7rjZ_KvLF0qhb/edit#

³¹ Mahapatra, Prasanta & Shibuya, Kenji & Lopez, Alan & Coullare, Francesca & Notzon, Francis & Rao, C & Sreter, S. (2007). Civil registration systems and vital statistics: Successes and missed opportunities. *Lancet*. 370. 1653-63. 10.1016/S0140-6736(07)61308-7.

the census component of the project has yet to enable provision of better protection and durable solutions for refugees and asylum-seekers in Ethiopia through the improved collection and maintenance of national data.

Box 4: Impact delayed: COVID-19 and the AMIF activities

The impact of Covid was felt at all levels of the AMIF action in 2020. Borders were closed, de facto stemming the flow of refugees who in addition are now suspected of being carriers of the virus. Prices increased drastically, while service provision dwindled as many organisations' funding was reallocated. For the host community, vital events registration services continued in Addis, albeit at a drastically reduced rate (registrations were more than halved compared to the previous year). The vital events of refugees were no longer registered in camps or urban environments.

I gave birth seven months ago, but due to the pandemic the registration office is closed. I cannot get the birth registration. It may be months before this is possible again. – Young refugee mother, Addis Ababa

Refugee registration activities ceased, and resettlement procedures were halted.

Covid has brought great crisis. Registrations were delayed, monetary support was interrupted. Inflation is high, the cost of everything has increased. There are many who are shifting their lives to bad activities, especially our sisters. The situation is becoming very serious. Many refugees cannot renew their refugee certificates. There are many who risk losing their traveling documents, who had already finished all their processes to go abroad but now their documents are expired. I can only pray to God to grant us his mercy. – Refugee youth, Addis Ababa

Adapting to the new reality, UNHCR used AMIF funding to set up a helpline to allow refugees to access information and certain services. It is unclear what the reach of this helpline was – none of the individuals interviewed for this study had knowledge of this helpline. For UNHCR, the momentum towards Level 4 registration was drastically slowed.

Equipment procured will be transferred to the Central Statistical Agency, and the questionnaires which have been designed, tested and translated into various languages spoken by refugees will remain useful when the census does take place. The communication strategy developed may also well prove useful at a later time. The main activity supported by AMIF, however, the training of the personnel for the census, will likely need to be at the very least refreshed if and when the census does take place, though the materials can be re-used.

5. AMIF CONTRIBUTIONS TO RDPP

The goal of the RDPP in Ethiopia was to provide sustainable development and protection solutions for refugees and hosts, in the hopes of offering alternatives to irregular and secondary migration. RDPP placed a strong focus on social cohesion via better access to integrated basic services and aimed to improve livelihood opportunities through vocational training and access to finance. Protection activities focused on improving access to redress and legal services, as well as awareness-raising. As everywhere under RDPP, coordination and capacity building of local counterparts was a key ingredient of the programming vision. AMIF in Ethiopia inscribed itself in the broader logic of the RDPP via an important contribution to several of the RDPP results areas.

5.1 Improved protection

RDPP in Ethiopia aimed to improve protection mainly via fostering access to justice and setting up community-based conflict resolution mechanisms. At a wider systems level, RDPP worked in some areas to also improve existing judicial organs via training. This was very necessary in a context of generally declining protection levels, as evidenced by the RDPP effects evaluation which found that in Hitsats camp, for instance, the share of refugees feeling safe in their communities dropped from 94% to 68%.

AMIF added another important component to the protection equation in Ethiopia: Due to AMIF support, the number of refugees with identity documents increased from 2% to 76%, improving protection and opportunities for inclusion. By registering a number of refugees who had henceforth not been “in the system” and adding more detailed information on the needs of those who had already been accounted for, AMIF contributed to identifying those who are at risk. This in turn can inform referrals and resource allocation for the greatest protection impact. Another crucial contribution in this regard is the interoperability of the refugee database with ARRA and immigration systems, which should in time allow to facilitate out-of-camp solutions through the national system.

For hosts also, government-level protection planning should in the long run be strengthened by AMIF’s efforts to improve vital events registration: the foundations have been laid for improved processes and coordination at different levels in a complex stakeholder environment.

5.2 Integrated services

RDPP in Ethiopia worked towards better service provision (water, energy, education) to both hosts and refugees, with the added benefit of improved relations between groups. AMIF contributed to this effort, and future efforts in the same vein, by providing improved information on the potential beneficiaries of such programming.

The re-registration of refugees between 2017 and 2020 significantly improved data in Ethiopia, readjusting the estimated population numbers, reducing fraud, allowing for more efficient allocation of resource and improving planning for both national and international partners. This in turn will support increased coherence and alignment of all interventions, in line with the Ethiopia Country Refugee Response Plan (ECRRP). It is also a necessary condition for the planned shift to an out-of-camp model over the next decade.

5.3 Improved capacity building of local actors

RDPP in Ethiopia put a strong focus on strengthening multi-stakeholder coordination and building the capacity of local authorities with respect to integrated programming. E This filled an important gap - as noted in the effects evaluation for RDPP in the region, the lack of an exit strategy, and of capacity by authorities to take on the work of IPs, leads to a lack of sustainability in the medium term. A key lesson of this evaluation was that programmes at this scale and with such ambition required a strong advocacy component.

AMIF is an example of the type of alliances which can be built when the building of wide-ranging coalitions and strengthening of capacity is not an afterthought but an integral part of the project design. From the onset, the action worked closely with ARRA to improve capacity, data sharing and data management for refugee registration. For vital events registration, efforts focused on creating interoperability between the civil registration and health systems, while navigating a highly complex landscape of actors involved and conflicting protocols. AMIF was instrumental in lending momentum to the National CRVS Improvement Steering Committee.

Closer to the ground, the provision of technical and material capacity for registration service delivery was a crucial AMIF contribution which inscribed itself in the broader RDPP action, complementing efforts, in areas

ranging from Addis to Afar and Shire, of capacity-building trainings provided to woreda and zonal-level stakeholders on inclusion, Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) guidelines, core humanitarian standards, project planning, etc.

6. CONCLUSIONS AND LESSONS LEARNED

The AMIF initiative is in line with the Global Compact on Refugees which promotes the provision of common services and infrastructure for both refugees and local communities. Returning to the foundational evaluation questions, this section summarises the critical takeaway to draw deeper meaning from the research results outlined above.

6.1 Conclusions

Registration, monitoring and protection of refugees through improved data systems

The focus of AMIF 2016 and 2018 is on the support government in standardising and improving registration throughout the country by a concerted effort to register refugees and asylum seekers and by building awareness around and access to vital events registration. Very concrete steps have been taken to transform Ethiopia's refugee registration systems, improving the process and providing refugees with a recognised and biometrically linked identification card. AMIF contributed to the harmonization of documents across regions and actors, leading to the creation of a refugee ID recognized by all. Arguably the most visible cornerstones of this action, however, the adoption of the proGres v4 system and the one-stop shops, was critically delayed. PRIMES should eventually become the foundation of the unified registration system between the Government, UNHCR, and other actors, no longer requiring refugees to register separately with both UNHCR and ARRA, and resulting in improved security of registration data, improved data sharing and referrals procedures.

The vital events registration system in Ethiopia was revamped in October 2017, and AMIF has been a crucial partner in these efforts from day 1, providing supplies for vital events registration, capacity building and awareness-raising in partnership with UNICEF. The action aimed to enhance access to birth registration for nationals as well as refugees, integrate administrative data management systems, with the expected outcomes of increased birth and death registration, improved capacity of institutions, and, ultimately, more accurate and timelier VER data. While demand remains low overall, it seems likely that these activities will be sustainable, given that they are inscribed in a broader national agenda. With AMIF support, Ethiopia is now preparing for a comprehensive assessment of its CRVS systems to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the systems and list prioritized recommendations to serve as input in the development of a the second 5-year strategy and action plan. The results of this crucial effort will inform the way forward, including on needed capacity and infrastructure improvement.

From an AMIF perspective, the UNFPA activities, though cut short, inscribed themselves in an overall logic of contributing to better data on refugees living both inside and outside of camps, which in turn would allow the Government of Ethiopia to honour its pledges to improve the lives, and livelihoods, of refugees and their host communities. If results here were hampered by unforeseen circumstances, the groundwork was laid for an improved census at a future time. A swift reallocation of remaining resources to meet emergency demands caused by the COVID pandemic speaks to the flexibility of the programme, and ability to re-prioritize based on the realities on the ground.

Capacity of local and central authorities to maintain data systems

Fundamental to AMIF activities is ensuring sustainable outputs, including national partners' ownership over and willingness to maintain data systems and share data responsibly with relevant counterparts. The research team found close collaboration between implementing partners and various government stakeholders and clear efforts to embed efforts within national systems. Successful advocacy, capacity building and extensive training led to a facilitated access of refugees to birth registration.

The focus on building registration systems and processes included the technical and material capacity for service delivery. The capacity-building of registry staff and material support extended to registration centres thus far under AMIF were much appreciated by all stakeholders interviewed for this research. Yet risks exist if staff turnover and increased demand put strains on the budding systems.

Innovative outreach approaches proved effective, reaching refugees and hosts communities in remote locations for the first time. The awareness-raising activities coordinated by UNICEF with national counterparts at different levels resulted in increased visibility on the processes linked to vital events registration, and undoubtedly contributed to rising demand for VER in Ethiopia, especially by Ethiopian nationals.

Coordination and information management between the government of Ethiopia and the UN agencies on registration-related objectives and activities

To ensure full integration into national systems, AMIF-funded activities focused on the institutional setting to ensure interoperability with refugee databases and build standardised data management and sharing processes. Findings from the research showed that lack of clarity still existed between partners and, without the implementation of proGres v4, institutions continued with parallel data management systems. In terms of UNHCR's coordination with the main government partner, ARRA, responsibilities remain somewhat opaque, and work carried out not always up to standards, with registration carried out separately, using two different systems, and data sharing not yet digitalized and systematized.

Important coordination efforts between ARRA, UNHCR and UNICEF have focused on of vital events for refugees, making important strides. Yet multiple stakeholders within the entire civil registry system made coordination difficult. The ground is being prepared for interoperability between VER systems and other systems, but work is currently targeting the systems level via the APAI -CRVS approach which targets political commitment, country ownership, coordination between INVEA and the National CRVS Steering Committee including key ministries, UN agencies and academia.

Effect of each of the activities on the targeted beneficiaries

The goal of AMIF 2018 was to add to the refugee registration systems built through AMIF 2016 to facilitate stronger linkages between protection needs and possible actions and improve basic service delivery to refugees and host communities. From the perspective of refugees, possibly the most immediate effect in terms of protection was the creation of a unique refugee ID recognised by all actors at different levels. The provision of a recognised ID has already begun to have significant impact on refugees in terms of protection and access to services. Creation of a more efficient system built a level of trust in authorities, even though refugees may not understand the biometric aspects or even its value.

Overall, where awareness raising and practical benefits of registration reached target populations, AMIF-funded activities were successful in communicating the importance of registration activities. For vital events, specifically births, registration levels remain low despite awareness raising efforts largely due to cost (real or imagined) and the perceived complexity of the process, as well as lack of identified benefits, particularly among the host community.

Basic service delivery to refugees and their host communities

AMIF actions have added to the enabling environment for meeting the needs of vulnerable populations, through contributing to more reliable numbers and detailed data to target service delivery. Improved refugee registration processes has already started to address areas in education and health, while more is needed to address child protection needs. The impact of improved refugee registration on service delivery in the domain of child protection remains weak for the time being at the micro-level of individual referrals but holds significant potential in terms of resettlement and family reunification.

Delays have worked to the detriment of some of the more immediate results in the realm of protection and coordination gains. To date, future efficiency gains in humanitarian service provision seem likely given the updated refugee numbers which are the result of the L3 registration exercise. The introduction of proGres v4 appears to be imminent at the time of writing, and data sharing, eagerly awaited by partners ranging from ARRA to NRC, is being prepared.

Better planning for, and implementation of development projects by the government and their partners

AMIF-supported improvements to the refugee registration process have contributed to a more efficient system which should in the future benefit all those seeking to serve vulnerable refugees - but does not yet fully do so. With AMIF support, UNHCR has run a refugee verification exercise and upgraded registration to a biometric approach. The livelihoods of refugees and service provision for them by the government of Ethiopia, will be indirectly affected by better registration data, and the integration of refugee registration data systems in the context of the out-of-camp policy.

Government planning should in the long run be strengthened by the UNICEF component, but birth registration cannot yet be a conditionality for receiving services given the low overall coverage. The tangible impact on the target population itself, in particular the host population, in terms of protection and access to services thus remains subtle. At a systems level, however, the foundations have been laid for improved processes and coordination at different levels in a complex stakeholder environment.

6.2 Lessons learned

The final evaluation question for this study focused on identifying lessons learned valuable for improving the continuation of current activities, as well as for the replication of these activities in other contexts and for broader regional learning. The following provides three key lessons learned from the last several years of AMIF implementation:

1. Systems strengthening, whether for refugee registration or civil registration, requires a comprehensive approach and coordinating actions.

A comprehensive approach to system upgrade and refugee registration, verification and documentation transformed Ethiopia's basic infrastructure to handle refugee flows. This required extensive capacity strengthening and coordination with government counterparts, as well as advocacy and addressing legal and technical frameworks. For vital events registration, important achievements have been made from streamlining administrative processes and improving coordination mechanisms to building demand and access, particularly for refugees. AMIF actions have been setting the stage for what will likely be larger institutional and legal changes, highlighting the need for incremental and concurrent actions.

Government structure and infrastructure, human resources... parallel investment of AMIF was important and will last after the project. — UNICEF Ethiopia

2. The direct practical benefits in terms of service delivery and protection through improved registration systems are long-term outcomes for refugees and nationals.

Registration is an important protection tool to better target assistance. The generation of better data through the improved refugee registration systems have already allowed for improved planning and protection, including better monitoring and accountability. However, these have with limited immediate effects for targeted beneficiaries. As yet, translation of refugee or civil registry data into planning and implementing development projects by the government or its partners have not materialised. Integration of refugee data into national systems has the potential to improve service provision in the long term.

3. More efforts are needed to build on AMIF successes to date and ensure sustainability of achievements.

Actions taken so far have built the groundwork transforming registration systems. To build on existing momentum, further work is need on technological and capacity improvements; policy reform; regulatory updates, and systems integration and interoperability to fully capitalise on the promises of improvements in data management and partner coordination.

Most important [output of AMIF] is being a catalyst in terms of leading the launch of the registration system for refugees and helping us to put the necessary groundwork. — UNHCR Ethiopia

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommended next steps	
	<p>Help design a national strategy and address critical laws and regulations to ensure tangible outcome indicators and needed accountability. Coordinated effort to build the necessary strategy will push for ownership at the highest level, which remains necessary for sustainable action.</p> <p>Strengthen coordination between partners and build joint strategies. Duplication still exists between the remits of various partners, leading to inefficiencies in the process and missed opportunities for integrated systems. Intervention efforts and protection strategies must include linkages with development and humanitarian actors and key government ministries.</p> <p>Commence joint reporting among IPs. While AMIF is a consortium, partners were often working in silos. To reach the best results, more regular exchanges are needed to collectively build off progress made.</p>
	<p>Expand on alliances to increase demand and access. Demand generation for registration needs to continue by maximising on alliances built at the local level up to key institutions. This should include local authorities and community leaders, as well as the health ministry.</p> <p>Focus on the removing barriers to registration. Various laws and regulations create barriers to access to registration, from the excessive requirements on children born out of wedlock.</p>
	<p>Promote expansion of digital systems. Digital systems are necessary for data sharing and systems integration for full impact of AMIF actions. This includes proGres v4 for refugees and broader digitisation in vital events registration.</p> <p>Prioritise building integrated systems. The potential for improved protection outcomes and service delivery through integrated systems is significant. This requires necessary legal agreements and protocols, as well as concrete SOPs to translate this effort on the ground.</p>
	<p>Plan further capacity building and infrastructure expansions. Efforts to raise demand must proceed in parallel with ongoing technical capacity building, to account for staff turnover, and infrastructure improvement to reach remote populations.</p> <p>Rely on comprehensive assessments to understand and address existing barriers and inefficiencies in the system and identify systematic means for systems integration.</p>
	<p>Support innovative methods as a component of the AMIF learning agenda. There is an opportunity finance experimentation in innovative efforts, such a mobile apps for birth registration or bringing connectivity to remote locations.</p> <p>Continue donor funding to build on important progress made over the last several years. Systems change is a long-term investment. Further support is necessary to ensure gains and momentum create through AMIF actions are not lost</p>

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9. Annexes

9.1 Further breakdown of methodological approach

In Ethiopia, data collection focused on Tigray, which is served by the registration centre in Shire. The research team triangulated findings with the RDPP baseline and endline research also taking place in Hitsats camp. At the same time, in order not to bias the sample only towards the refugee demographic the most common in Tigray (young Eritreans in transit), additional quantitative data will be collected in the capital of Addis Ababa. Jijiga will be added as a third location given Samuel Hall’s network and footprint in the area, and the availability of phone numbers which can serve to boost the sample for the survey. The following data collection methods were employed (Table 6).

Table 6: Data collected by location and tool

	Primary Hitsats	Secondary Addis Ababa	Tertiary Jijiga area	Total
FGDs	4	4	0	8
Case Studies	5	6	0	11
KIIs ³²	5	9	0	14
Vital events registration observations and KIIs	2	1	0	3
Refugee registration observations and KIIs	1	1	0	2
Registration staff skills test	2	1	0	3
Quantitative survey (phone based)	140	108	62	310
TOTAL	159	127	62	

Given COVID-related access restrictions at the time of fieldwork, a **phone-based quantitative survey** was administered, and quality control measures adjusted to accompany this approach. In and around Hitsats camp, the research team used phone numbers collected for a related project two years prior. In Addis Ababa, the team relied on an existing database of refugee phone numbers and snowballed, requesting additional contacts from willing participants. Phone numbers from relevant population – both Somali living in Addis Ababa (around Bole Mikeale) and Addis Ababa residents living close to the Eritrean refugees — were randomly collected from relevant areas in Addis and called at a predetermined time. Refugees and Ethiopian nationals were also contacted from an existing database of numbers from the Aw Barre refugee camp and Shedder refugee camp, near the town of Jijiga in the Somali region of Ethiopia. The selection of nationals and refugees in this region provided an additional counterpoint to the Eritreans in Tigray region. 310 people were thus presented with a short phone survey, 196 refugees and 114 Ethiopian nationals. Of the 196 refugees, 121 were of Eritrean origin and 75 of Somali origin.

Using a phased approach to data collection, after preliminary analysis of the survey data, a small team of local enumerators was deployed to collect **qualitative data** in each location. Eight FGDs were held with refugee women, youth, elders and single mothers, with an eye to capturing the breadth of experiences in different contexts (urban and camp) and for different cohorts (Ethiopian nationals and refugees). In addition, 11 case studies (in-depth individual life-story type interviews) allowed to shed light on particular experiences and vulnerabilities (physical impairments, single young mothers, etc. (Table 7).

³² See list of current completed KIIs below

Table 7: Profile of case studies in Ethiopia

Addis Ababa	Hitsats
Female, unregistered refugee	Male refugee: Journey from unregistered to registered
Male refugee, Journey from unregistered to registered	Male refugee with disabilities (vulnerable)
Female refugee: Sex worker at risk of trafficking	Female refugee, blind
Female refugee, Journey from unregistered to registered	Female refugee: Single mother with child without birth registration
Male refugee with injured arm/ disability	Male Ethiopian national: Child without birth registration
Female refugee, divorced with two children	

Registration site visits were conducted in both Shire and Addis and used as an opportunity to administer skills test to individuals who had benefited from capacity building support. This information collected on the ground was triangulated via key informant interviews with implementing partners, government counterparts and international organisations who do, or might one day, benefit from the data improved via the AMIF-funded interventions.

9.2 KII List

Region	Tool	Participant type
Addis Ababa	KII	INVEA
Tigray	KII	Vital Event Registration at Endabaguna
Addis Ababa	KII	Addis Ababa Vital Event Registration
Tigray	KII	ARRA Vital Events Coordinator at Hitsats office
Tigray	KII	Refugee registration Delegate Coordinator at Endabaguna
Tigray	KII	Vital Events register at Mekelle
Addis Ababa	KII	Federal ARRA Refugee Administration and Vital Event Registration Team Leader
Tigray	KII	Vital event register at Hitsats
Tigray	KII	Researcher for the WB: "The Effects of Refugees on Child Health in Host Communities"
Remote	KII	UNFPA
Addis Ababa	KII	NRC
Addis Ababa	KII	DRC
Addis Ababa	KII	UNICEF
Addis Ababa	KII	IRC
Remote	KII	UNHCR

ABOUT SAMUEL HALL

Samuel Hall is a social enterprise that conducts research in countries affected by issues of migration and displacement. Our mandate is to produce research that delivers a contribution to knowledge with an impact on policies, programmes and people. With a rigorous approach and the inclusion of academic experts, field practitioners, and a vast network of national researchers, we access complex settings and gather accurate data.

Our research connects the voices of communities to change-makers for more inclusive societies. Samuel Hall has offices in Afghanistan, Kenya, Germany and Tunisia and a presence in Somalia, Ethiopia and the United Arab Emirates. For more information, please visit www.samuelhall.org



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