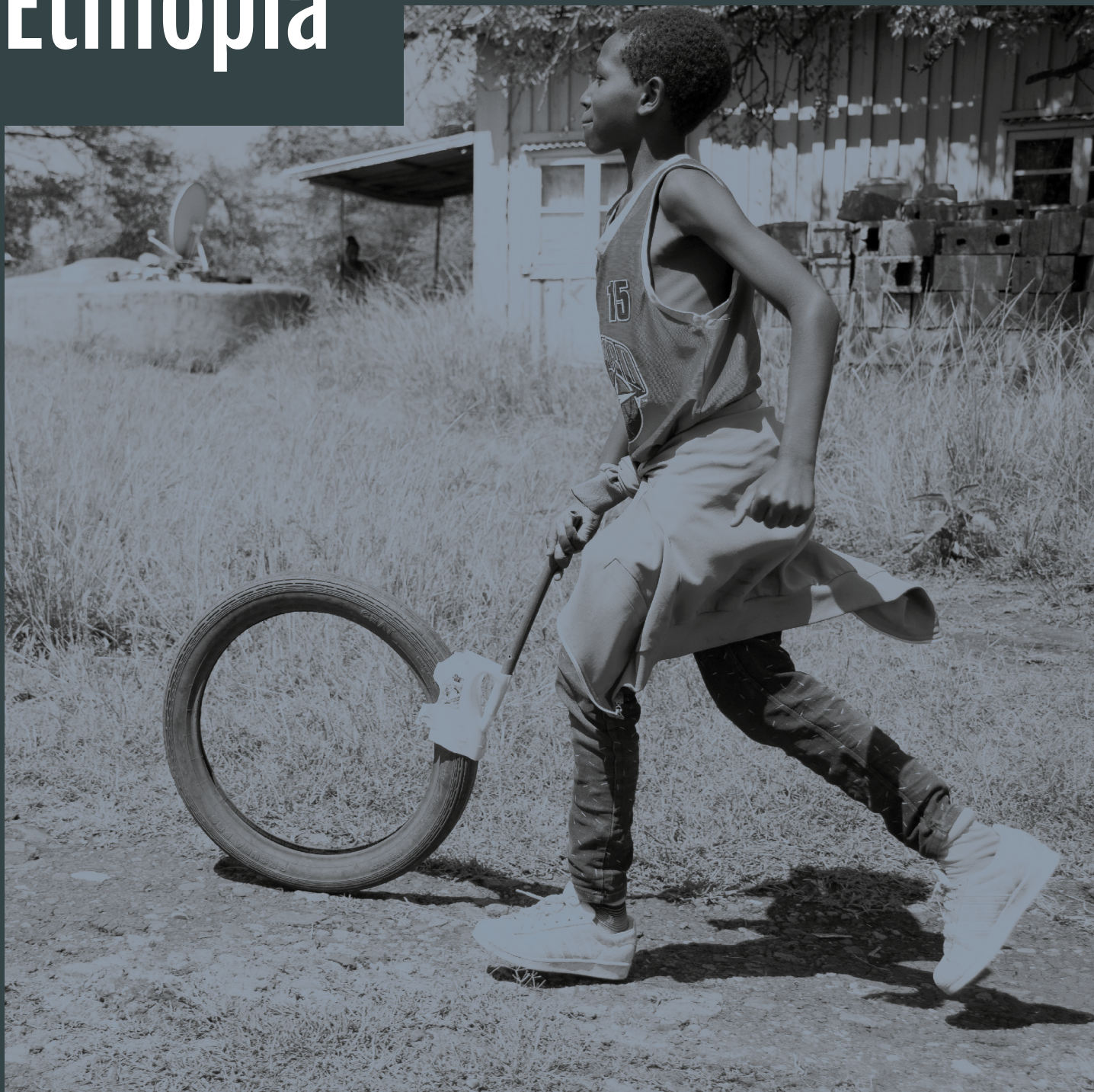


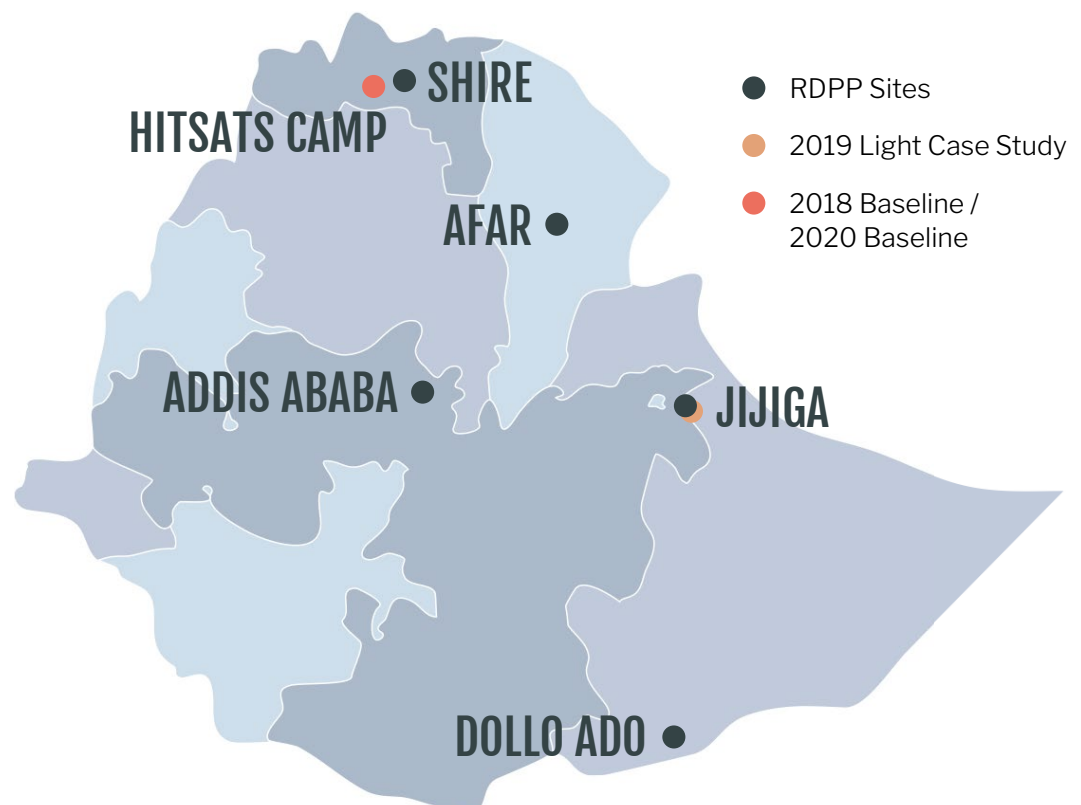
# Ethiopia



# RDPP in Ethiopia (Hitsats, Shire): Endline assessment

The Learning and Evaluation Team (LET) of the Regional Development Protection Programme (RDPP) presents its impact evaluation (2018-2020) of the integrated approach to refugee and host communities. The results of this endline evaluation build on the baseline evaluation conducted in 2018.

View summary video [here](#).



LET composition:

Co-leads: Samuel Hall & MDF Consultancy

Consortium Members: Maastricht University & ECDPM

This evaluation is supported and guided by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs and presented by the LET. The report does not necessarily reflect the views and opinions of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The report was authored by the research team at Samuel Hall, led by Nassim Majidi, Stefanie Barratt and Rebecca Frischkorn with contributions from Sonja Fransen and Melissa Siegel at Maastricht University and Anna Knoll at ECDPM. “Samuel Hall, MDF, Maastricht, ECDPM (2021) Progressive Effects Evaluation of the Regional Development and Protection Programme (RDPP): Uganda Country Chapter, funded by the Dutch MFA, Netherlands.”

Disclaimer: The data of the RDPP 2018-2020 evaluation in Hitsats, Shire preceded the Tigray crisis. The findings reflect the pre-crisis situation.

# Key Take-Aways

## 1. Relevance

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### **RDPP has paved the way for the CRRF and set an example for integrated approaches**

Ethiopia has made important strides in implementing new legislation to address the situation of refugees in the country: examples include the country's revised refugee law (January 2019), Ethiopia's pledge to the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF), and the country's Country Refugee Response Plan 2019-20. These have created an enabling environment which RDPP successfully leveraged despite challenging circumstances leading to delays in implementation. Partners will need to continue to raise awareness at the local and federal levels on the provisions of the CRRF and the government's pledges to improve refugees' wellbeing.

## 2. Coordination

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### **RDPP has faced challenges with coordination both internally among IPs and externally with local counterparts**

Despite being a key component of the RDPP programme, coordination between consortium partners with government actors at all levels and even across "lots" has been a struggle. A key lesson learned is that such a ground-breaking programme should include an advocacy component at the national level, in addition to the work being done locally, so that the size of the consortium and number of partners is used as an opportunity to get traction. At the local level, authorities in Shire felt the design of the project did not sufficiently take local community needs into account. Implementing Partners (IPs) even acknowledged that the programme would have worked better had the local government been more involved from the beginning. The coordination between IPs themselves has also been difficult. Although coordination meetings occurred every three months, respondents mentioned redundancies between interventions, partners working in silos and an unclear link between humanitarian and development activities. Disagreements arose over water infrastructure and funding allocation.

## 3. Effectiveness

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### **A positive impact in some sectors, together with missed opportunities in others**

The effectiveness of the interventions tends to vary significantly depending on the sectors. Access to water – a very scarce resource in Hitsats – appears to be an area where the impact of RDPP has been the most tangible as it has improved for both communities in the last two years thanks to the programme. Similarly, positive changes are noted in the education sector where an overwhelming majority of school aged children regularly attending school, despite complaints about the quality of education. However, under livelihoods and food security, refugees are faring worse than their Ethiopian counterparts. Both hosts and refugees in Hitsats have experienced improvements in legal assistance but feelings regarding safety and protection decreased in the refugee community, mainly because of the current political situation. Lastly, refugees still do not have access to electricity, which remains the biggest challenge locally.



# Key Take-Aways

## 4. Impact

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### **Integrated approaches have become a reality in some sectors and social cohesion has improved, although a stronger engagement is needed**

New platforms were established for RDPP, as this was the first time that a project brought together stakeholders working with the host community and those working with refugees. The creation of integrated services catering for both communities has become a reality to some extent for education, health and access to water. Respondents from both communities as well as key informants noted that sharing these services has contributed to strengthened ties between refugees and hosts.

Some disconnects between stakeholders persisted – local authorities felt that refugees benefited more than the Ethiopian populations and their perspectives were not adequately incorporated. Priorities in durable solutions programming need to be more closely matched with government priorities. Strong engagement with government and local authorities is required from the onset, along with displacement affected communities.

## 5. Sustainability

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### **Aligning durable solutions programming with the Government's priorities**

Amidst the COVID-19 crisis, the shifting political climate is a central point of concern for partners. These recent developments have raised tensions. The COVID-19 situation has impacted the provision of regular health services for refugees, as well as on employment opportunities for refugees in Ethiopia. The lack of exit strategy and capacity by authorities to take on the work of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) is the main cause for the lack of sustainability.



Hitsats health facility examination room



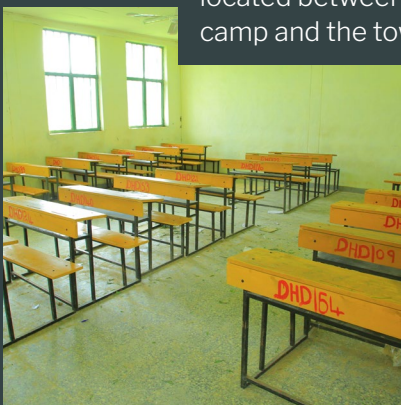
Health centre in Hitsats refugee camp

Hitsats high school



Hitsats refugee camp elementary school students trying to get registered for radio education

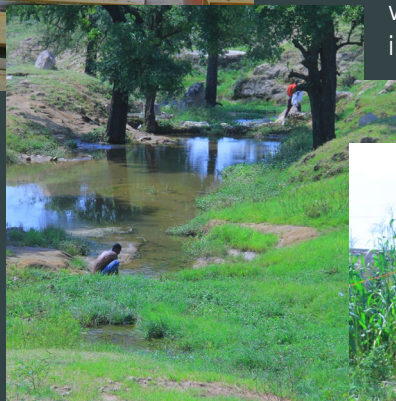
Hitsats high school located between the camp and the town



Hitsats refugee camp elementary school



Seasonal water pond inside camp

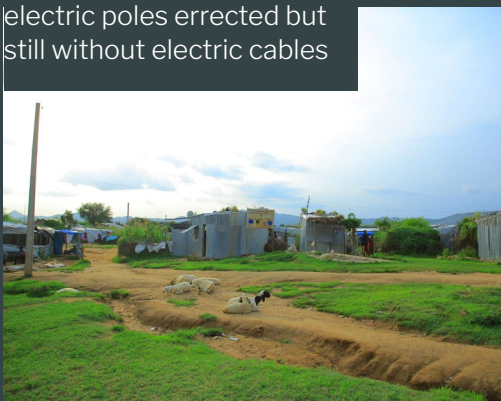


Market place in Hitsats town



Traditional baking stove that works by fire wood

Hitsats refugee camp demolished road and electric poles erected but still without electric cables



Open market in Hitsats town in normal days

Hitsats town donkeys used for transporting goods to market from different rural areas



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# Acronyms

<b>AMIF</b>	Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund
<b>ARRA</b>	Administration for Refugee and Returnee Affairs
<b>CRRF</b>	Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework
<b>COVID-19</b>	Coronavirus Disease 2019
<b>DIDAC</b>	Development and Interchurch Aid Commission
<b>DRC</b>	Danish Refugee Council
<b>ECDPM</b>	European Centre for Development Policy Management
<b>ECRRP</b>	Ethiopia Country Refugee Response Plan
<b>EIDDACE</b>	Enhanced Integration of Displaced and Displacement affected communities in Ethiopia
<b>FGD</b>	Focus group discussion
<b>IP</b>	Implementing Partner
<b>KII</b>	Key Informant Interview
<b>LET</b>	Learning and Evaluation
<b>IRC</b>	International Rescue Committee
<b>NGO</b>	Non-governmental Organisation
<b>NRC</b>	Norwegian Refugee Council
<b>RDPP</b>	Regional Development Protection Programme
<b>SSI</b>	Semi-structured interview
<b>TVET</b>	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
<b>UNHCR</b>	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
<b>VSLA</b>	Village Savings and Loan Association
<b>WHO</b>	World Health Organization

# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Overview

The Regional Development and Protection Programme (RDPP) is a European programme to create evidence-based, innovative and sustainable protection and development approaches for refugees and their host communities in Ethiopia, Sudan, Kenya, Somalia and Uganda. The Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs contracted the Learning and Evaluation Team (LET), co-led by MDF and Samuel Hall with Maastricht University and ECDPM, to conduct evaluations of RDPP over the three-year implementation period, 2018-2020. At the end of the programme, a combined quantitative and qualitative progressive effects evaluation was organised to assess progress and provide learning that will feed into policy making both nationally and regionally.

**This country report provides an overview of the results from Ethiopia with a specific focus on Hitsats camp in Tigray region – the site of implementation of Lot 1.** It can be read in complement to the full Final Regional Progressive Effects Evaluation, which synthesises learning from all five countries.

The RDPP in Ethiopia focused on the provision of sustainable development and protection solutions for refugees and host communities in order to provide alternatives to irregular and secondary migration movements. The programme’s targeted beneficiaries were in five geographic “lots” across the country: Afar, Tigray and Somali regions of Ethiopia as well as the cities of Shire and Addis Ababa where most of the country’s Eritrean and Somali refugees are hosted (Table 1).

Table 1. RDPP in Ethiopia

Full Project Name	IPs	Location
Enhanced Integration of Displaced Affected Communities in Ethiopia (EIDDAC) – <b>Lot 1: Shire</b>	Consortium: IRC UK (lead), DICAC, DRC, NRC	Tigray Region
Dollo Ado Improved Social Cohesion – <b>Lot 2: Dollo Ado Area</b>	Consortium: NRC (lead), DRC, OWDA, SCI, ZOA	Somali Region
Regional Development and Protection Programme in Ethiopia – <b>Lot 3: Jijiga</b>	Consortium: SC (lead), DRC, IRC, OWDA	Somali Region
Integrated Protection and Development Assistance for Eritrean Refugees and their Host Communities in Afar Region, Ethiopia – <b>Lot 4: Afar</b>	Consortium: DCA (lead), AHA, COOPI, EECMY-DASSC	Afar Region
Joining forces: multi-stakeholder action to offer young refugees and host communities a sustainable future in Ethiopia – <b>Lot 5: Urban Areas of Addis Ababa and Shire</b>	Consortium: Plan (lead), DICAC, IOM, MCMDO, ZOA	Addis Ababa and Shire

The €30M budget primarily aimed to serve 100,000 to 120,000 beneficiaries, made up of refugees and host community members, through improved access to integrated basic services (water, energy and education) and the promotion of livelihood opportunities – with an effort to build social cohesion and improve conflict prevention.



Under Lot 1 in Shire, EIDDACE's objective was to create evidence-based, innovative and sustainable development and protection solutions for refugees and host communities in Ethiopia, discouraging risky irregular migration, through:

- Improved social cohesion through improved access to integrated basic service delivery (water, energy and education)
- Improved livelihoods and employment opportunities
- Improved protection, with a particular focus on vulnerable groups; and
- Strengthened capacities of local authorities and multi-stakeholder coordination platforms.

This endline country report follows the [previous baseline evaluation](#) and builds on data collected at the field level. Even amidst COVID-19, the LET team's researchers and network of enumerators were closely involved in data collection in Ethiopia and remotely, exchanging daily with key local stakeholders.

The evaluation was guided by 12 key questions listed in Table 2.

Table 2: Key evaluation questions

Relevance	
<b>EQ1.</b>	How does the RDPP adapt to context dynamics?
<b>EQ2.</b>	To what extent have different sub-groups actively contributed to needs- and context assessments? What are mechanisms for feedback and influence of refugees and host communities on projects?
Coordination	
<b>EQ3.</b>	How does the RDPP coordinate with partners and authorities?
<b>EQ4.</b>	Did the RDPP help to strengthen the capacity of IPs and local authorities to develop and implement an integrated approach towards refugees?
Effectiveness	
<b>EQ5.</b>	To what extent and how did RDPP help to strengthen the legal protection of refugees, with emphasis on vulnerable groups?
<b>EQ6.</b>	What results have been achieved in integrated access to/use of energy, water, education and health, and employment?
<b>EQ7.</b>	Which factors positively or negatively impact the effectiveness of individual interventions?
Impact	
<b>EQ8.</b>	What is the impact on beneficiaries? What is the income effect? How is social cohesion influenced by the RDPP?
<b>EQ9.</b>	How do project and programme results impact potential future migration decisions of refugees?
Sustainability	
<b>EQ10.</b>	Which challenges hinder the successful implementation of projects?
<b>EQ11.</b>	Is it possible to elaborate on the sustainability of individual interventions? What are the main determinants for sustainability? Which challenges hinder the successful implementation of projects?
<b>EQ12.</b>	What are key governance factors for effectively implementing policies aimed at sustainable protection and development approaches for refugees and their host communities?

## 1.2 Changing Context

Over the course of RDPP implementation in Ethiopia, important changes have occurred related to government refugee policies. Following the adoption of the New York Declaration and the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF), the Government of Ethiopia made **nine pledges** to improve the rights and services for refugees in Ethiopia in early 2019. The law provides refugees with the right to work and reside out of camps, access social and financial services, and register life events, including births and marriages. Refugee protection in the country is provided within the framework of international and national refugee laws, as well as the core international human rights treaties ratified by the country.<sup>1</sup> UNHCR and Administration for Refugee and Returnee Affairs (ARRA) completed registration for all individual refugees and asylum seekers in 2019.<sup>2</sup>

The **Ethiopia Country Refugee Response Plan (ECRRP)** 2019-2020 outlines the collective response of 54 humanitarian and development agencies in support of all registered refugees in the country. The plan aims to ensure the increased coherence and alignment of all planned interventions supporting refugees against a common set of sectoral objectives and performance targets, to improve coordination and further timely and effective protection and solutions.<sup>3</sup> The ECRRP is expected to contribute to the National Comprehensive Refugee Response Strategy, which envisages shifting the refugee assistance approach to an **Out-of-Camp** model over the next decade. These developments are welcome changes in Ethiopia, given the limited opportunities previously afforded to refugees.

However, despite indisputable advances in the legal framework, recent developments in the **Tigray** region have undermined Eritrean refugees' protection. In early 2020, the Ethiopian government put an end to the *prima facie* refugee status recognition for Eritreans and announced the closure of Hitsats refugee camp – the primary location of data collection for this RDPP evaluation effects evaluation in Ethiopia. The decision was made without consulting with local communities, and the announcement was not followed by information regarding the adjustments made to relocate refugees. A few months later, following months of rising tensions between the Tigray People's Liberation Front region and the federal government, an armed conflict broke out in November 2020 and is still ongoing at the time of writing. Tesfahun Gobeze, director general of ARRA, announced the closure of Hitsats and Shimelba refugee camps which were destroyed by the conflict. In March 2021, aid workers from UNHCR were allowed to reach the camps for the first time and confirmed both camps had been destroyed and abandoned.

This endline data collection and analysis took place before the escalation of the conflict and will focus on the findings from the time leading up to this context.

<sup>1</sup> UNHCR (2019). Ethiopia Country Refugee Response Plan: The integrated response plan for refugees from Eritrea, Sudan, South Sudan and Somalia. UNHCR.

<sup>2</sup> UNHCR (2020). UNHCR Ethiopia Factsheet: July 2020. UNHCR.

<sup>3</sup> UNHCR (2020). UNHCR Ethiopia: Bi-monthly COVID-19 and Other Operational Updates – August 2020.

### 1.3 Methodology

Hitsats Camp and its surrounding villages were selected as the geographic focus of the baseline and endline data collection. The cluster of individual RDPP programs in the Tigray region covered all main outcome areas: capacity-building, protection, integrated services, and socio-economic development. In addition, refugees are principally of Eritrean origin, providing a more comprehensive look at various refugee groups when considering the refugee populations in other country cases (e.g. Somali refugees in Kenya; South Sudanese refugees in Uganda).

Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, research activities had to be adapted to account for the challenging context in 2020, utilizing both remote and minimum-contact methods. The endline data collection included a phone-based quantitative survey, as well as focus group discussions (FGD), key informant interviews (KIIs), semi structured interviews (SSIs) and tracer study by following WHO recommended measures (Table 3). Further, a desk review was conducted based on submitted IP reports, related reports and evaluations, and output indicators.<sup>4</sup> The LET team's researchers and network of enumerators were closely involved in data collection in Uganda, despite the challenges created by COVID-19, and remotely, exchanging daily with key local stakeholders.

Table 3. Data collection for the endline study in Hitsats

	Refugee	Host	Mixed	TOTAL
FGDs	5	4	-	9
SSIs	2	2	-	4
KIIs	-	-	-	12
Community Observations, including photos and video	-	-	19	19
Survey	403	411	-	814
Tracer Study	13	7	-	20

<sup>4</sup> LET objectives and approach are distinct from the ongoing monitoring and learning efforts by Altai Consulting across all projects (focused on EU Trust Fund (EUTF) Horn of Africa portfolio level).



## 1.4 Limitations and Constraints

The research team worked hard to adapt to the context of COVID 19 by following recommended WHO guidelines and adjusting research methods where necessary. This was particularly the case for the sampling approach used for the phone-based survey, which required different techniques for both refugee and host communities:

### **Hitsats Camp**

The research team began with the list of names from the baseline and continued snowballing with existing numbers. However, most of the phone numbers were out of service and some of the phone numbers were wrong, as more Eritrean refugees own their own SIM card compared to the baseline survey. The fieldwork relied heavily on the social workers of the camp, who could collect active phone numbers and send them to the research team. Refugees who had been participating in the training and livelihood activities by the IPs were specifically including. Newcomers - namely those who were new arrivals in the last 2 years - were excluded.

### **Nearby host community**

Similarly, the research team began with the list of names from the baseline and continued snowballing with existing numbers. However, the list of numbers was limited, and the host community members reached were more hesitant to share additional phone numbers. The research team collected additional numbers in person, which were called back the next day and then snowballed from there.

The team faced some additional challenges, which shaped the research approach, including:

### **End of project**

At the time of data collection, implementing partners of EIDDACE had completed planned activities and the project period had ended. Several key staff had moved on and were unavailable or difficult to track down for follow up interviews. The research team was able to supplement interviews with other relevant staff and partner organisations.

### **Elections in Tigray**

The data collection team was in the field in September 2020 while the Tigray region was holding its elections, which were deemed illegal by the federal government. The team paused fieldwork and resumed data collection one week later to ensure availability of respondents and safety of the team.

### **Closure of Hitsats Camp**

The planned closure of Hitsats Camp may have somewhat biased the results of the endline, specifically with respect to perceived prospects of local integration. This risk was mitigated, to the extent possible, by asking about improvements and evolutions over the course of the past years prior to and independently of the recent upheaval in the region.

## 2. Background: The RDPP Story in Ethiopia

The RDPP was launched in June 2015 and has been incorporated as one of the flagship initiatives of the broader *Valletta Action Plan* in support of the European-African migration dialogue. The Horn of Africa is host to the largest - and growing - refugee population in Sub-Saharan Africa, fleeing from conflict and drought. By the end of July 2020, UNHCR reported a total number of 769,310 refugees and asylum seekers, making Ethiopia one of the most important refugee-hosting countries in Africa. The majority of refugees are from South Sudan, followed by Somalia, Eritrea and Sudan.

Focused on sites hosting Somali and Eritrean refugees, the specific objectives of RDPP in Ethiopia were to:

1. Create greater social cohesion through improved access to integrated basic service delivery for Eritrean and Somali refugees (in and out of camps) and their host communities
2. Improve livelihoods and employment opportunities for Eritrean and Somali refugees (in and out of camps) and their host communities
3. Enhance protection, where needs are identified, of Eritrean and Somali refugees (in and out of camps) and host communities, with a particular focus on vulnerable groups
4. Strengthen capacities of local authorities and multi-stakeholder coordination platforms to cooperate in developing an integrated approach for refugees and host communities.<sup>5</sup>

Through these actions, the goal was that refugees and their host communities would benefit from a safer and more favourable environment, increasing sustainably their livelihoods opportunities, and decreasing the incentives for secondary movements. The following provides a high-level overview of actions implemented along these four key result areas within Ethiopia before proceeding with an assessment of Lot 1 in and around Hitsats camp.

### 2.1 Integrated Service Delivery

Under integrated service delivery, RDPP Ethiopia focused three specific sectors: Water, energy and education. Among the key project activities were the construction of a water facilities addressing both the needs of refugees and nationals, energy projects with goals to enhance livelihoods of refugees and hence create economic linkage with the host, youth centres to serve both the refugees and host communities, and various educational opportunities for refugees to enable them to integrate well within their hosting communities. **This resulted in over 292,000 people having improved access to basic services.**<sup>6</sup>

In Shire, Dollo Ado, Afar and Jijiga, the projects facilitated better and more reliable access to safe drinking water through water treatment plants, boreholes, wells and new pipelines. This not only addressed long-standing tensions between refugees and host communities around water shortages, but also reduced the time the energy previously used to collect water. Particularly women are no longer exposed to violence during the often-long journeys to fetch water.

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<sup>5</sup> Action Fiche for the implementation of the Horn of Africa Window: EUTF05 - HoA - ETH - 15 | <sup>6</sup> Altai indicator

The focus on energy sought to mitigate deforestation in some areas, which served as a source of conflict between refugees and host communities, as well as expand business opportunities and reduce household expenses. The element that sought to connect camps in Shire to the national grid stalled indefinitely, affecting implementation of streetlights and power supply. Distribution of solar lights and fuel-efficient cook stoves were more successful in Shire and Dollo Ado.

Integrated education services were provided to bring together refugee and host students, as well as minimise illegal migration and trafficking among youth. This involved community mobilisation and back to school campaigns in Jijiga, catch up classes and tutorial support in Shire, and capacity building around education planning and management in Dollo Ado. In urban areas of Addis and Shire, to improve access to education for refugees and host communities, including women and girls, three biannual ‘access to school’ campaigns were implemented, along with provision of school materials, knowledge sharing activities related to gender equality and hygiene, and peacebuilding trainings to build social cohesion.

## 2.2 Fostering Livelihoods

RDPP Ethiopia implemented a range of livelihood interventions with the primary intent to increase livelihood options and jobs, reach out to youths through vocational skill trainings, and avail financial services to ensure the self-reliance of the target participants (Table 4).

Table 4: Key livelihood indicators (Altai)

Output indicators	Ethiopia
1.1 Number of direct jobs created or supported	5,517
1.2 Number of Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprise (MSME) created or supported	284
1.3 Number of people assisted to develop economic income-generating assistance	13,343
1.4 Number of people benefiting from professional training (TVET) and/or skills development	6,445

In Jijiga, the livelihood package such as the business development support, skill development trainings (soft skills, literacy, numeracy, vocational skills), and the in-kind business start-up supports helped recipients to successfully run viable income generation activities. In some cases, recipients either expanded or diversified their businesses through hiring unemployed youth. The creation of voluntary savings groups (VSLAs) in Addis Ababa and Shire specifically focused on women and provided training on access to financial services and how to start a business. The construction of a market centre in Shire town and Dollo Ado were part of a broader effort to improve market linkages and job placements for refugee and host youth, once business and vocational trainings were complete.



## 2.3 Improving Protection

Activities in all locations focused on improving access to justice and rule of law services to refugees and surrounding host communities. In Shire and Addis Ababa, this involved partnering with universities to establish legal aid centres and deliver adequate counselling services to these populations. Trainings were conducted with key stakeholders at various levels on the protection of refugees, concept of legal services, referrals and dispute resolutions. In Jijiga, community orientation activities focused on raising awareness around access to legal services, while improving coordination among various legal and protection actors. Psychosocial Support (PSS) and follow ups were provided to children at risk including unaccompanied minors and survivors of violence in Afar.

In Dollo Ado, numerous awareness raising campaigns were conducted around protection related topics, such as gender issues, migration risks and local options. **Across all five RDPP sites, 71,479 potential migrants were reached by information campaigns on migration.**<sup>7</sup> Peace committees were also established and strengthened in Shire. Jijiga focused on building the capacity of dispute resolution committees, women associations and youth committees to identify major causes of conflicts and approaches to resolution. In total, **552 people participated in conflict prevention and human rights activities.**<sup>8</sup>

## 2.4 Coordinating with, and building the capacity of, local counterparts

The design of each 'lot' was to bring together implementing partners into a single cohort to ensure smooth and harmonised implementation of the project as a whole. Internal and external coordination platforms were necessary to ensure integrated and coordinated service delivery between refugee and host community. As in Jijiga, these often occurred at different levels, including 1) regular meetings with consortium partners, 2) regional coordination led by ARRA and Region Bureau of Finance and Economic Development with other relevant regional government bureaus and humanitarian and development actors, and 3) woreda level, which included local government administration and refugee and host actors in targeted areas. However, sustainability concerns have been raised around these multi-stakeholder coordination platforms due to high rates of staff turnover among key partners.

In Dollo Ado and Shire, various capacity building activities were held at woreda and zonal levels on strategic planning and management to improve joint planning and integrated responses. Many of the activities outlined above included strengthening structures and capacities of local authorities, such as providing training on providing primary and secondary education for refugee and host communities in Addis Ababa.

Table 5: Capacity building and coordination indicators (Altai)

Output indicators	Ethiopia
2.8 Number of staff from local authorities and basic service providers benefiting from capacity building to strengthen service delivery	6,900
5.1 Number of multi-stakeholder groups and learning mechanisms formed and regularly gathering	28

<sup>7</sup> Altai Consulting, output indicator monitoring | <sup>8</sup> Ibid.

# 3. Results Overview: Baseline to the Endline Comparison

A high-level analysis of key indicators in and around Hitsats Camp, both directly in the RDPP results framework and more broadly important contextual variables related to basic needs, shows a mixed picture with some improvements but also a number of areas where conditions have deteriorated. Not always did activities result in gains for both refugees and hosts – indeed, in a number of domains, conflicting evolutions can be observed.

## 3.1 A review of key indicators

Table 6 highlights key indicators and their evolution between 2018 and 2020 in and around Hitsats Camp.

- **Green:** rising values highlighting significant improvement
- **Red:** decreasing values between the baseline and the endline highlighting challenges

Table 6. Data comparison on key sectors and indicators – 2018 vs 2020 – for hosts and refugees

		2018		2020		p-value	
		Hosts	Refugees	Hosts	Refugees	Hosts	Refugees
<b>Food security</b>	Was never without food in past month	58%	14%	67%	19%	0.004	0.028
<b>Housing</b>	Owns or rents shelter	98%	1%	90%	5%	0.000	0.000
	Owns or rents land	25%	1%	22%	1%	0.155	0.500
<b>Water and WASH</b>	Tap as primary water source	35%	72%	48%	94%	0.000	0.000
	Borehole as primary water sources	64%	21%	29%	5%	0.000	0.000
	Access to private pit latrines	10%	78%	34%	43%	0.000	0.000
<b>Waste and Infrastructure</b>	Does not find that there is a lot of garbage outside	37%	97%	78%	97%	0.000	0.500
	Has grid access	89%	1%	88%	3%	0.327	0.022
	Has access to a generator (gov., private, community)	9%	26%	10%	18%	0.313	0.003
	Has solar (private)	8%	43%	5%	43%	0.041	0.500
<b>Health</b>	Children having received vaccinations (full or partial)	86%	60%	98%	96%	0.000	0.000
	Sought out treatment after suffering serious illness/ injury	91%	95%	96%	95%	0.002	0.500
	Judged treatment to be of high quality	72%	42%	48%	24%	0.000	0.000
<b>Safety and Protection</b>	Feel completely or mostly safe	87%	94%	94%	68%	0.000	0.000
	Sought out protection after a legal problem	82%	83%	69%	39%	0.000	0.000
	Content with the protection received	50%	40%	45%	83%	0.076	0.000

\* The p-value is the probability of finding the observed difference in sample proportions or greater if the underlying populations had the same proportion (the null hypothesis). In line with industry standards, this null hypothesis is rejected for p-values below 0.01.

### **3.1.1 Improvements and Challenges**

In Hitsats, significant improvements were observed for hosts in the domain of access to tap water and access to private pit latrines. Hosts were also considerably more likely to state that they were not bothered by the amount of garbage cluttering their living area. In terms of perceived safety and child vaccinations, hosts displayed better results than at the baseline stage.

Refugees generally noted fewer areas of improvement between the baseline and the endline investigation. They were more likely to own or rent their shelter, but numbers here remained at a very low level – unsurprisingly given the camp context and Hitsats circumstances. Great strides were made for interviewed refugees in the domains of water access via tap, and vaccinations of children. Refugees were much more likely to state they were satisfied with the protection services received in 2020 than in 2018, which reflects the success of the awareness raising actions.

There continues to be a **stark difference between the two communities regarding food security** – almost seven out of ten hosts reported never being without food, compared to only a fifth of refugees. Hosts are much more likely to own or rent land – almost a quarter of hosts reported owning or renting land compared to only one percent of refugees. This is due to the legal framework, which prevents refugees from owning property and participating in the formal labour market. The 2020 data reveals losses in the domain of access to a pit latrine in Hitsats for refugees, possibly due to the imminent closure of the camp.

Furthermore, hosts fared better than refugees regarding feelings of **safety and protection** – while hosts reported increased rates of feeling safe between 2018 and 2020, the number of refugees who reported similar feelings decreased by almost a third between the two years. Members of both groups were less likely to seek out protection after a legal problem. Although both groups were equally as likely to utilize protection measures in 2018, refugees were much more likely than hosts to look for protection in 2020. This could be explained by the wider political context, as Eritrean refugees expressed fears regarding the rapprochement between Ethiopia and Eritrea. Rumours of Eritrean spies infiltrating the camp have made refugees suspicious and reluctant to speak, while uncertainty regarding the closure of the camp has sparked concern that might have had an impact on refugees' well-being and can have affected their responses. The results presented in this report thus need to take into account the political factors that have contributed to limit the longer-term impact of the programme.



### 3.2 The RDPP Outcome Metric

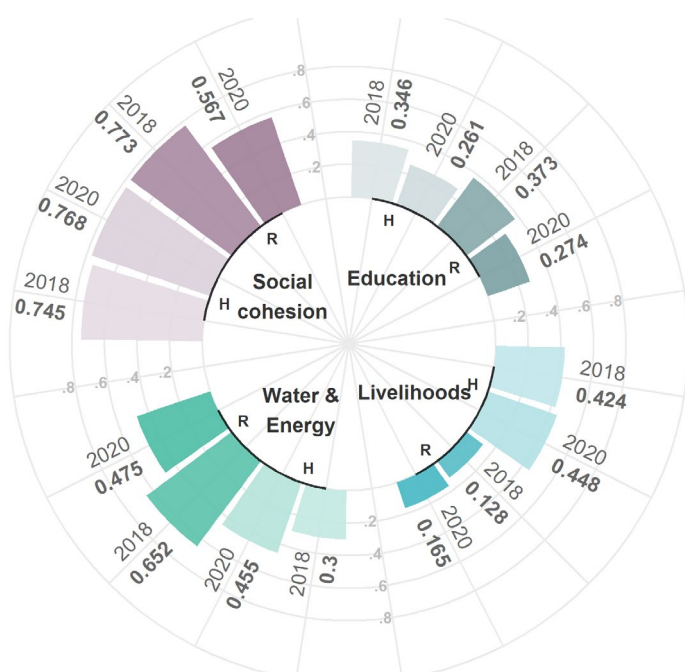
The LET set out in 2018 to build a RDPP outcome metric to assess the impact of programming on key outcomes.<sup>9</sup> The aim was to be:

- 1. Context specific:** focus on RDPP programming variables expected to influence durable solutions in Ethiopia
- 2. Targeted:** to identify gaps between hosts and refugees, and pinpoint areas of programming and dimensions most relevant for enhancing integration
- 3. Locally situated:** ascertain whether improvements in dimensions have taken place in each context

In the case of Ethiopia, this metric focused on the RDPP intervention areas of water/ energy, education, social/ legal aspects and livelihoods (See Annex 1 for further details). These are the areas in which one would expect to see changes in outcomes directly due to RDPP programming implemented by partners in Hitsats Camp.

A glance at Figure 1 illustrates that gains in the aggregate dimensions relevant to RDPP programming in Hitsats Camp between 2018 and 2020 are rare.

Figure 1. Ethiopia-specific RDPP outcome indicators – evolutions for Hosts (H) and Refugees (R)



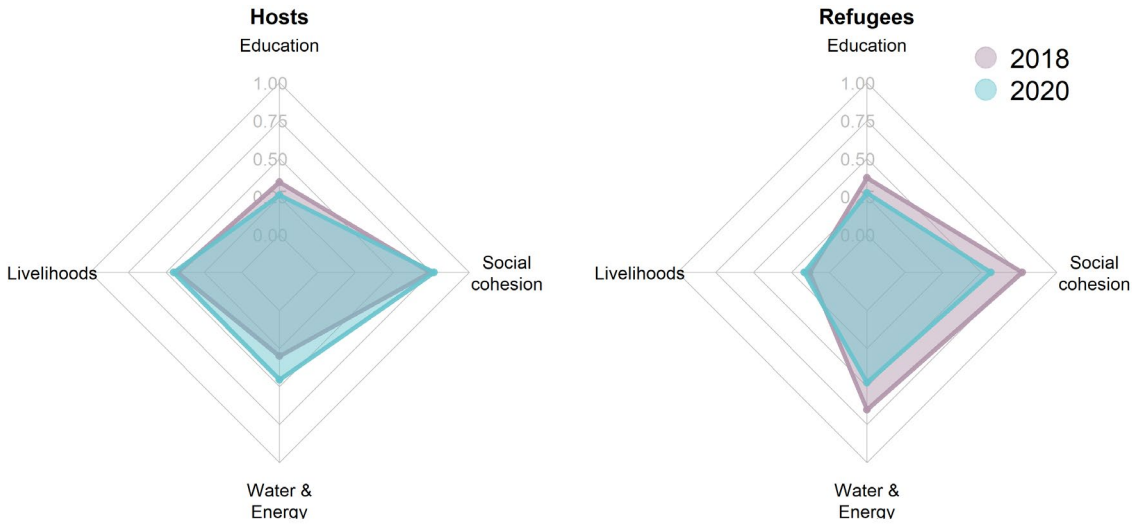
The assessment of outcome scores in Hitsats between 2018-2020 highlights number of key trends:

- 1. What has worked well:** Hosts have remained steady across key dimensions. Hosts' access to water and energy has improved between 2018 and 2020. However, it is difficult to know the extent to which this improvement has to do with RDPP or changes in the overall environment. Water and energy have been priorities for the government for the past years.
- 2. What has worked less well:** Refugees continue to fare significantly worse than hosts in the livelihood dimension, which reflects the constraints refugees face due to Ethiopia's legal framework. While they fared better in their access to water and energy, that difference is now gone, with both groups being at par. Refugees' scores under water and energy, as well as social cohesion (both social and legal) and education have dropped.

<sup>10</sup> See Annex 1 for a description of the indicators composing the metric.

A direct comparison of evolutions shows that the situation for hosts improved in the water & energy dimension. Refugees experienced the opposite trend, and also saw a deterioration of scores in the social cohesion dimension (Figure 2).

Figure 2. Evolution of outcome scores for hosts and refugee communities



When comparing the sort of refugees to their local peers, one can see that while they fared comparatively better in the water & energy dimension in 2018 (Figure 3).

Figure 3: Comparison of host and refugee outcome scores, 2018-2020



This is no longer the case. In 2020, hosts and refugees score similarly in this dimension. Hosts continue to display much higher scores in the livelihoods dimension and have also overtaken their refugee peers in the social cohesion dimension.

Some of these evolutions, or lack thereof, can be assessed in light of RDPP programming received, as outlined in Table 7. Despite, for instance, a much larger share of interviewed hosts in Hitsats having received TVET programming, this had not translated into higher livelihoods scores for this population. The fact that the majority of interviewees were happy with the TVET provided, and many requested more, speaks to gains from these training activities beyond a mere income-generating opportunity. VSLA, now more common than three years previously, was also both appreciated and coveted by hosts and refugees alike. Legal assistance appears to have become less available to the interviewed cohort, but also appears to be less in demand.

Table 7: Level of receipt and perceptions regarding support activities

		2018		2020	
		Hosts	Refugees	Hosts	Refugees
<b>Business Grants</b>	% received	4%	16%	5%	7%
	% happy with	83%	54%	62%	50%
	% requesting	48%	26%	72%	72%
<b>VSLA</b>	% received	2%	3%	30%	6%
	% happy with	33%	72%	68%	80%
	% requesting	12%	4%	21%	28%
<b>TVET</b>	% received	9%	41%	27%	37%
	% happy with	79%	57%	70%	85%
	% requesting	24%	3%	41%	37%
<b>Legal</b>	% received	10%	27%	6%	11%
	% happy with	73%	51%	71%	86%
	% requesting	4%	1%	2%	10%

# 4. Results Findings

The endline country reports focus on the needs on the ground and how those needs were met by RDPP activities. This section explores selected achievements and issues to monitor within critical sectors, beginning with key sectors for integrated service delivery – water, energy and education. As critical basic needs indicative of broader context for refugee and host populations, health and food security are also included though not a direct intervention area for RDPP. Livelihoods and protection are core sectors under RDPP, both as independent programmes and as vehicles to address social cohesion concerns.

## 4.1 Integration in Key Sectors

### 4.1.1 Water

#### Achievements

Water is an area where the impact of RDPP has been the most tangible. Water is scarce in Hitsats, but **infrastructure has improved in the last two years**, and this can be attributed to the programme. Due to several interventions - construction of treatment plants in Hitsats, drilling boreholes, rehabilitation and development of wells, construction of new pipelines, and extensions of existing pipelines - refugee and host communities experienced a significant increase in their water supply. This had led to improvements in the lives of the target communities. Both groups reported that the time and energy previously used to collect water can now be used in other ways, such as income generating activities. Particularly, women are no longer exposed to violence during the long journeys to fetch water, which will reduce irregular and onward migration of vulnerable youth and women.

**All refugees and the vast majority of host community respondents (94%) report having access to improved water sources** – which include boreholes, shared or private taps, and protected springs. 94% of refugee households and 46% of the host community reported shared taps as their main source of drinking water. The area appears better equipped with toilet facilities. In Hitsats, the number of hosts with at least one type of toilet infrastructure increased from 59% to 73%.

There has been some improvement in terms of host community water access. Prior to RDPP, locals used to drink water from the river. Now they access water through water pipes built by IRC. However, water supply remains irregular, as the amount of water available is insufficient for the community and many households do not have access to water at home and still need to fetch water at the water pumps. Despite real progress, access to water remains a challenge for many due to the arid environment of Hitsats, aggravated by the increase in population over the past years.

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About water, we've seen a small change through the work of IRC as there are 3 or 4 water pipes now. But we can't still call this a change. To call it a change, there must have been pipelines in households (...) Electricity just got fixed as there were interruptions. It is also the same for water. We can only say there's a significant change if pipelines reach households but now most of the people use water from the river as the pipes sometimes work and sometimes don't. there're 3 pipes and they interrupt most of the time.

## Issues to Monitor

Access to water has improved in the refugee camp and refugees are perceived as better off when it comes to water supply. In this regard, the local government considers that the project has not benefited hosts as originally planned. However, the amount of water that refugees are entitled to get daily has not increased (40 litres) and refugees stressed they also suffer from the lack of water, especially during the dry season, when water is scarce. The main difference over the last three years is that the water that used to be supplied by water trucks is now available via water pumps and taps. However, refugees complained that they are not always functioning and have limited opening hours.

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I did not see any improvement in accessibility and quality of water. Water is accessible for 30 minutes a day and there are long turns to fetch thus, many people left without fetching and its distance is the same as before at around 100M. It is not accessible for disabled people

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FGD49

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In the first place the program was designed to use a 70/30 ratio, refugee / hosts. However, the reality was totally different on the ground that made us feel uncomfortable. We, as woreda officials, have expressed this complaint to the NGO-IPs in every workshop we had together, especially regarding electricity and water issues. Consequently, small numbers of boreholes were constructed over the past year and there are no other significant changes made by the NGOs.

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KII65

RDPP has focused on access to water, without addressing sanitation. However, respondents stressed that the lack of sanitation facilities is a major concern in the refugee camp, leading people to throw their waste where they can. A few respondents stated there had been recent improvements since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic.



## 4.1.2 Energy

Interviewed donor representatives considered that water and electricity were the areas where RDPP has had the best results. Although this may be true for other RDPP locations, **in Hitsats refugees still do not have access to electricity and continue to cut down trees to cook. Refugees and hosts all agreed that this remains the biggest challenge locally**, which has been largely unaddressed by IPs. Beneficiaries have not yet benefited from the streetlights and power supply for the communal kitchens. The delay has aggravated household energy consumption expenses and deforestation of the area, which sometimes serves as a source of conflict between the refugee and host communities.

With respect to providing access to integrated and sustainable energy options, the RDPP implementing partners had planned three complementary activities: 1) to connect Hitsats and Mai-Ayni refugee camps to the national grid; 2) to distribute household solar lanterns; and 3) to distribute energy saving stoves. The first activity – connecting the refugee camps to the national electricity grid – was stalled due to delays and communication problems with the Ethiopian Electric Utility. Although the connection was to be made before the end of April 2020, it is unclear whether this has been established. For the second and third activity, 1,883 household solar lanterns and 460 energy saving stoves were distributed to refugees and host communities residing in and around Adi-harush, Hitsats, May-Ayni, and Shimelba refugee camps.

“

Nothing has changed with regard to alternative source of energy since we last spoke. Still deforestation is the problem in our area. Except a lot of promises made by ARRA I didn't see any progress with regard to access to energy for refugees. They are living in a dark area. Alternative sources of energy are critical in solving the twin problems found in our area: deforestation and the light problem of refugees.

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KII70

### Issues to monitor

As in most refugee camps in Ethiopia, lack of access to energy sources is the main problem faced by refugees, which also creates tensions with hosts. In the last 3 years, there has been no improvement in terms of electricity access in the refugee camp. In the host community, access to electricity has improved slightly, in the sense that there are less interruptions (because an additional transformer was installed in Hitsats). Refugees have no other choice but to cut down trees, which leads to deforestation of the area. This is a big concern for host community members, who complained about deforestation. However, they do not hold refugees responsible as they understand they have no alternative. Hosts and refugees found a sort of informal agreement - refugees can cut down trees in the forest, but not in the village.

Refugees have to pay to use generators (150 birr) or buy firewood from the market (between 200 and 400 birr), which represents a huge expense for individuals with limited or no income. Electrical poles were installed three years ago but are still not operational.

“

Electricity: this is the serious challenge here in the camp. We have been paying 150 Birr for one electric bulb because we are using the power from generators which belong to private owners. We are also exposed to high expenses for firewood, its price is around 200 up to 400 Birr which is too expensive given the economic status of the refugees. Because of this, we are forced to collect firewood from the host farmers land, and this leads to unnecessary disputes between refugees and host communities.

SSI28

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I rent light from persons that have generators in this area and pay 150 birrs monthly. I am tired of this question; we are talking many times about this problem; there are no changes in the case of electricity compared to the last three years. It is the same as before. We collect petitions and send it to the concerned body but, nothing is changed so far except the promises they gave us. It is the 1st problem of refugees in this area.

FGD45

NGOs have tried to address the issue but have not been successful. IRC staff explained that they provided refugees and hosts with free stoves and seemed very positive when mentioning the activity. IRC stated that replacing 50% of the fuel energy (diesel) by solar energy was one of the greatest achievements of the project. However, refugees stated that they sold the solar panels to gain some income, so solar panels are no longer being used in the camp. Respondents did not mention the stoves distributed by NRC planted mango trees under RDPP as part of the livelihood activities, but also contributed to reforestation. They also provided solar panels but admitted that they could be used only for charging electronics and light sources, not for cooking.

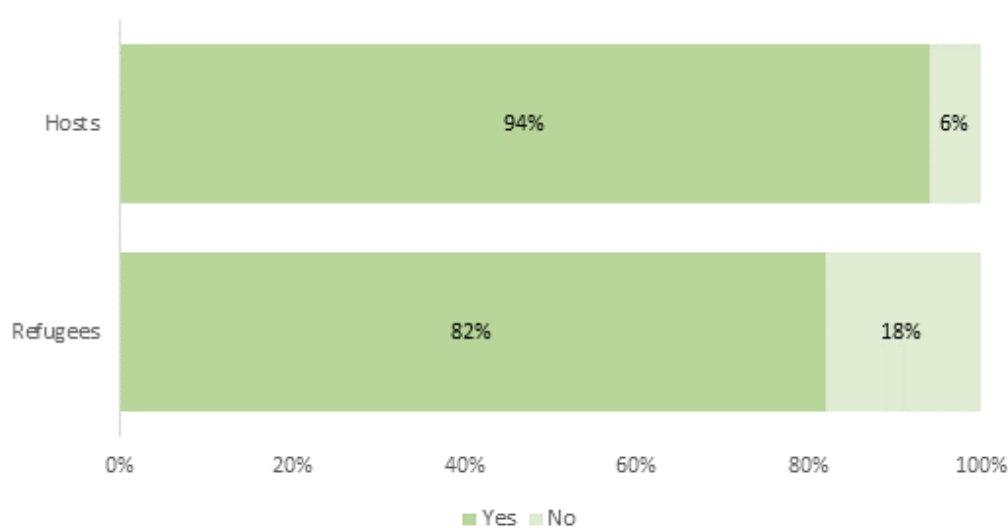
### 4.1.3 Education

Refugees and hosts benefit from the same services, from kindergarten to high school. Teachers come from both communities. For instance, Eritrean refugees who were teachers in Eritrea were hired by ARRA to teach in the school. The establishment of the high school in Hitsats – which was established under RDPP -has changed children’s lives. Previously, dropouts were very common because children used to travel 40 km to go to school, with the price of transportation acting as a significant economic barrier. Host community children account for 73% of the students, refugees for 27%, according to DIDAC.

The education system has been adapted to refugee students requiring catch-up on time and lost learning opportunities. For specific groups, tailor-made responses were provided, including catch-up classes for new arrivals, tutorials for university entrance exam takers, and transitional support for university students. DRC explained that the enrolment of refugee students has increased since these services were established for newly arrived refugees. As a result of this programme, more refugees are able to access tertiary education.

**Community members agreed on the significant progress in access to education, with an overwhelming majority of school aged children regularly attending school** (Figure 4). Over the last 3 years, new classes have been established, a high school was founded for both refugees and host communities, and host community members appreciated the positive impact on social cohesion driven by the integration between the two communities in schools. Refugees confirmed they have the same access to education as Ethiopians at all levels, including university if they have the required grades, as Aksum University is 30 km away from Hitsats.

Figure 4. Do all school-aged children in this household regularly attend school?



However, **as community members and teachers agreed, the problem is over the quality of education with frustrations growing over the last three years**

- they noted that the high school was too small to accommodate all children. Respondents said the school had around 150-200 students in one class, in lieu of the 80-90 initially planned. Teachers also stressed that sciences are not being taught because there are no skilled teachers, and that teaching materials were often outdated, with teachers having to rely on their own initiatives to use online resources to improve their teaching skills.

The concern about over-crowded classrooms is directly linked to **a shortage of teachers** and concerns over the quality of local education (Table 8). DIDAC further highlighted that the high turnover of teachers – a problem faced everywhere in Ethiopia – has remained an issue until the end of the project. At the heart of such concerns is the low salary that the government offers. Most teachers were recruited and trained by NRC, with an initial training on teaching methodology. However, temporary teachers hired by NGOs have felt discriminated against, compared to permanent teachers hired by ARRA. **Additionally, teachers lack teaching materials such as manuals and computers** – for example there are 5 computers for 30 students and teaching materials and manuals are in Amharic when most children attending schools do not speak Amharic.

Table 8: Perceptions of education

		2018		2020	
		Hosts	Refugees	Hosts	Refugees
Education	Fewer than 50 children per teacher	1%	18%	41%	15%
	Quality of education judged high or very high	31%	20%	21%	29%

“

There are frustrations that the project is phasing out. They complain as the weather and climate conditions have been worsening. Teachers' residence is inadequate – 10 rooms for 32 teachers, and there are no additional incentives to attract teachers to come to this area. There is no education upgrading opportunity and teachers' salary are lower than in governmental schools. We, as DICAC, have tried to find a solution, reporting the issue to UNHCR and to the municipality, and the Tigray education bureau – but the problems are continuing, and the solutions are null

KII63

**Despite efforts in expanding access to education, regression analysis shows that, after controlling for age and gender of head of household, refugee children are still significantly less likely to attend school than host children, while** the level of

education of the head of household appeared to not be significant towards school regular attendance. This can be due to the fact that classes are given in Amharic language, while refugees' mother tongue is Tigrinya.

**Families and teachers were concerned about the lack of visibility and the phasing out of the project** without a strategy to continue support locally through other means. The food provided for children at school had also expired at the time of endline data collection, which also fuelled families' concerns regarding the future of their children's schooling.

## 4.1.4 Health and Food Security

### Achievements

**The host community spoke of positive changes in terms of health and food security, especially for children.** Several respondents stressed that pregnant women were receiving better medical care locally. They used to travel to Ksad Gaba for pregnancy follow up and antenatal care. However, respondents mentioned that health services have deteriorated since Médecins Sans Frontières left the area 2 or 3 years ago, as they used to provide medicines and treatment that are no longer available due to their departure. There are now two health centres in Hitsats – in addition to the previously existing health centre, an ARRA hospital has been added. The ARRA-managed hospital used to serve mostly refugees (75%) and a smaller share of hosts (25%), but now caters to both communities equally. Nonetheless, respondents explained that the facility is constantly crowded, which has impacted peoples' ability to get service. As a result, ARRA sends patients to Shire.

Food security in Hitsats camp years seems to have massively improved for the host community over the last two years, which reflects the economic development of the area, which has created opportunities for locals. However, food security has worsened for refugee households, which has to do with the reduction and delays of rations, which refugees are dependent upon. As a result, refugee respondents often lacking food in the past month increased from 28% to 36% from 2018 to 2020. In the same period, host households who said to never suffer from food scarcity increased from 58% to 67%. The gap observed between refugees and hosts' lived experiences regarding food security reflects the fact that the opening of a refugee camp often triggers local development that benefit locals, while refugees face constraints that keep them away from these new opportunities and maintain them in a situation of dependency on humanitarian aid, which is increasingly scarce.

“

Provision of food has been minimized. In this year which we are in now, the refugee is receiving a lesser amount than the normal amount as they give 9 kgs when it was supposed to be 10 kg and the food also doesn't come on time. In general, food supply is something which the whole camp people are complaining about.

KII9 REFUGEE COMMUNITY LEADER



## Issues to Monitor

**Refugees were more sceptical regarding access to health care**, specifically in terms of the lack of medicines available in the health centre and the lack of efficient referrals. Refugees explained that lack of budget often led to interrupted health services, which was the case at the time of the data collection for this endline evaluation, in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic. When these ruptures occur, ARRA requires refugees to cover their medical expenses by themselves. Refugees also raised the issue of the competence of health workers working in the ARRA-managed hospital and complained about the quality of doctors. This reveals that interventions focusing on infrastructure are required, but that sustainable change needs greater attention to the structural constraints affecting the national health system, such as availability of medicines and skills of health personnel.

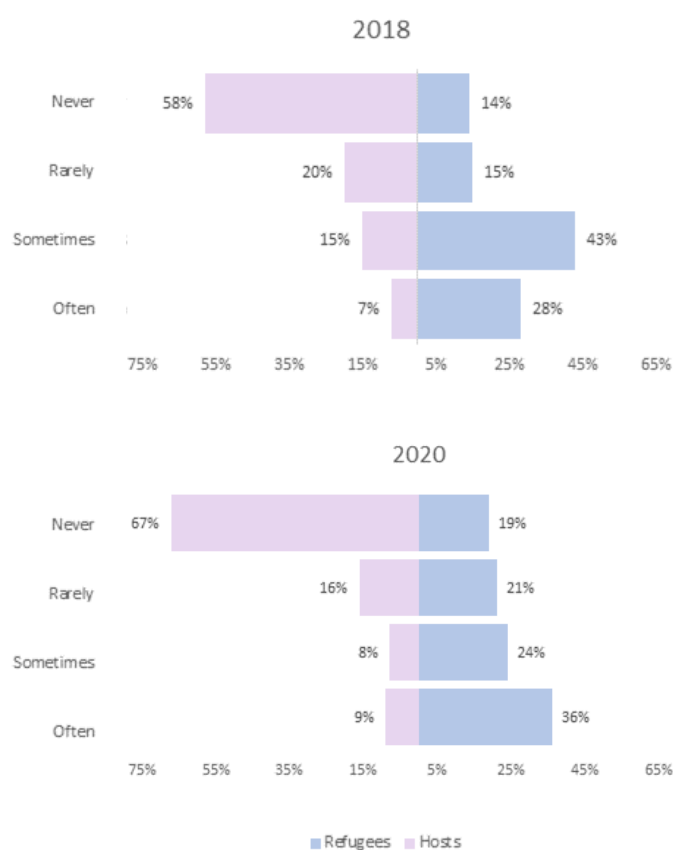
**Food security levels have experienced limited change** (Figure 5). Respondents in the host community explained that most farmers are able to eat daily in normal times but suffer food insecurity when there is a shock. They do not receive any kind of support when this occurs. This highlights that addressing food security of host communities requires to focus on building the resilience of the most vulnerable households, whose income is likely to vary. The nature of the problem is different when it comes to refugees: while the implementation of the CRRF aims to reduce refugees' dependency on aid, this has not yet materialised, and food security remains a challenge for refugees, especially as their rations have been reduced. Refugees used to receive 15 kg of wheat, but now receive only 10 kg. Refugees also stated that that the ration is actually only 9 kg, contrary to what they are told by aid agencies. They face regular delays in receiving food – up to 2 months – and inconsistencies in the quantity and type of food delivered. Despite RDPP efforts to improve food security, this reality has limited the impact of the programme in practice.

“

There wasn't a medical service here and people used to go to Ksad Gaba and other places but now pregnant women or anyone wounded can be treated nearby. It's been four years since I came here, and I think it's been three years since it was established.

FGD43

Figure 5: In the past four weeks, was there ever no food to eat in your household because of lack of resources?



## 4.2 Economic Well-being: Livelihoods and Resilience

### Achievements

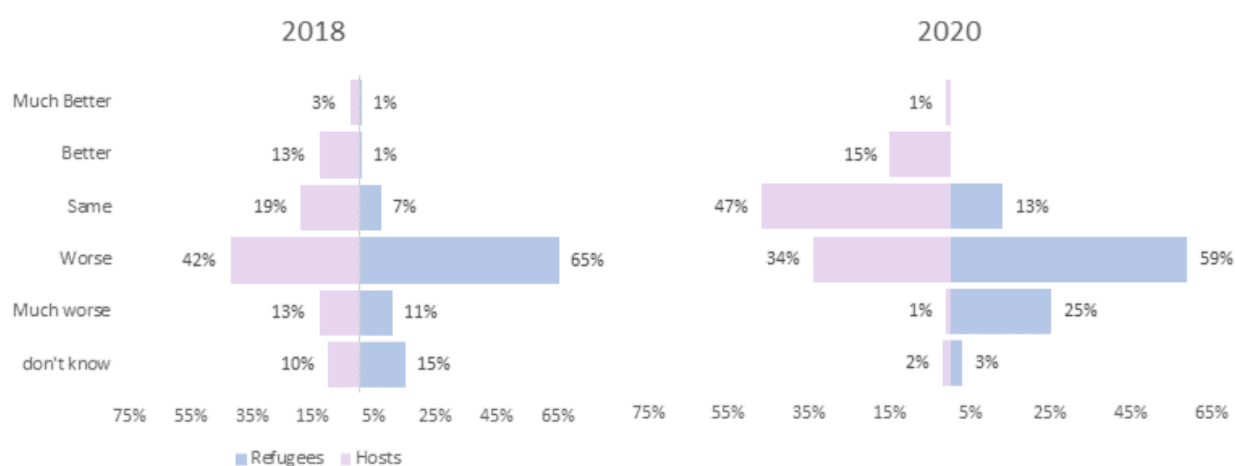
The perception of their economic situation has slightly improved in both refugee and host households (Table 9). There are still striking differences with refugees appearing more disadvantaged as they are not allowed to engage in the formal economy. Two-thirds of the refugee households do not have a source of income as a result of this restrictive legal framework.

Table 9: Perceptions of livelihoods

		2018		2020	
		Hosts	Refugees	Hosts	Refugees
<b>Livelihoods</b>	At least one income earner in household	95%	30%	95%	33%
	Earner redundancy (more than one income earner)	40%	5%	37%	15%
	Among working population, hosts working inside and refugees working outside camp	7%	1%	5%	23%
	Among working population, holds skill certification	27%	69%	20%	30%
	Average monthly expenditures*	\$113	\$37	\$78	\$25

The slight improvement in income earners in refugee households is reflected in hosts' perception of the refugees' living conditions (Figure 6). Hosts see a significant improvement – with many more rating refugees' living conditions equivalent to their own, while refugees still overwhelmingly consider themselves worse off. The disconnect between refugee and host perceptions should be monitored closely in the future, as this could lead to divisions between the two groups.

Figure 6. How are the living conditions of 'refugee' households different than 'host community' households?



**The issue of perceived economic benefits of the RDPP program may create rifts between refugees and hosts.** Under RDPP, NRC has provided different kinds of vocational skill training and start up kits - in kind (materials) and financial support. A training centre was established in Hitsats, with training programmes in the following - animal husbandry and health, metal work, furniture, hairdressing, Information Technology, leather making, food preparation, electronics, electricity, construction. Training included sessions on entrepreneurship and on conflict management, as businesses were established in groups.

**NRC's activities have focused on the agricultural sector – with potential to improve the well-being of all, hosts and refugees alike, and with noted support from the government:** provision of agricultural inputs (improved seeds and tools), support to specific sub-sectors like dairy, poultry, sheep and goat rearing, and apiculture. The support provided by NRC was mentioned by the woreda Bureau of Agriculture as a highly valuable addition to the area. In addition, NRC has supported self-help groups in the agricultural via short term training on entrepreneurship, including how to develop a business plan, as well as providing participants with start-up kits.

### Issues to monitor

**Local authorities felt that refugees have benefited more from RDPP aid than hosts.** While NRC confirmed that this has been the case at the beginning of the project, IPs have worked to address the discrepancies. Overall, NRC was satisfied with the results achieved through these activities. However, from NRC's point of view, some of the host beneficiaries were not interested in being part of the programme – pointing to an issue of beneficiary selection leading to skewed results and perceptions.

- The support was first designed for both the refugees and host community members with a 70:30 ratio respectively. However, at the beginning hosts were not able to fully benefit from the service as per the ratio planned. Host beneficiaries were using only 15-20% of the intended 30%. This has changed since mid-2018, when hosts started to fully utilize the offer, after they saw the impact of the programme on beneficiaries' livelihoods.
- Many beneficiaries are engaged in bakery, metal and wood works, food preparation and hairdressing, which has changed their lives. According to NRC, some have become self-reliant and others have been able to start building assets.
- Negative feedback includes a lack of engagement by some in the vocational training and income generating activities. Corrective measures were taken towards the end of the project to improve the selection criteria in order to resolve the problem.

**One of the problems faced by the training and business support was that beneficiaries could not establish their own individual business and had to engage in business groups between 5 - 12 people. This was partially due to the policy of the Ethiopian government, which promotes collective work.** However, conflict between group members has prevented livelihood progress - the root of which, according to informants, is that group work does not match the working culture among refugees. Hosts did not face the same level of difficulties, as they were already aware of the regulations established by the regional government when organizing their small and micro enterprises. NRC provided training and counselling on conflict resolution to solve this issue and foster teamwork and social cohesion between refugees and hosts.

**NRC also mentioned the lack of market opportunities for refugees who could not be legally registered, obtain trade licenses or contribute fiscally,** which prevented beneficiaries from generating an income from their businesses.

**For the UNHCR, the livelihood activities are RDPP greatest success – however, UNHCR’s vision of the activities is based on the rationale, not outcome, of activities.** The UNHCR representative interviewed did not appear to have received feedback from community members on the activities and seemed unaware of the gaps highlighted above, as his vision contrasts strongly with community members’ feelings.

**Local authorities feel the impact of RDPP livelihood activities was limited,** given that key issues preventing youth from doing business remain unaddressed, namely the lack of access to finance and infrastructure, and, as far as refugees are considered, work permits. When pressed about the gaps with microfinance institutions, local officials claimed that IPs have not worked to address the issue. This would entail holding them responsible for the poor performance of local economic actors and of outcomes dependent on structural factors.

“

The bureaucracy for getting loans is still challenging and, as the youth office, we cannot solve it. Providing immediate response in relation to the infrastructure for new businesses are still challenging because of different work cultures, the gaps in water, electricity and places of work. The proportion of youth who bring a significant change in livelihoods is very few compared to the potential that youth hold in this woreda. (...) There are no efforts done by implementing partners to solve this problem, with the exception of NRC providing 25,000 Ethiopian Birr for a group of 4-6 people for group-based business start-up support.

KII66

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I received two TVET trainings in IT in 2017 and leather processing 2019, the first with NRC and then with ZoA. I enjoy both professions. The training supported life skills, and gave us practical demonstrations as well. I received my certificate of accomplishment in level one, and while I was interested in continuing to level two, there is no level two here in Hitsats. I received material and financial support from NRC and started leather processing in a rental house. There is a lack of demand for our product and of basic inputs for the leather processing here. So, now, we are simply paying house rent, without making any profit. There is a problem in supporting TVET beneficiaries in a sustainable way. Instead of simply giving training for 50 individuals, they should be thinking of basic opportunities that can make businesses sustainable, providing inputs in a more sustainable way.

FGD50

**The same bottlenecks were raised by respondents** who acknowledge the positive skills-building but question the sustainability of the outcomes in a context where they do not have access to financing, or who may simply not be able to work with others in collective enterprises.

## Financial and Material Support

**Beneficiaries and community members explained that the amount provided after the training is insufficient to start a business** - respondents spoke of ETB 25,000 (\$675) for a group of six partners. Refugees are frustrated because they cannot establish a business in the camp as there is no access to electricity, and they need power for their machines. NRC provides material support to some beneficiaries, but it is not given to everyone. Those who did not get support said they did not understand the decision-making process regarding material support for TVET programme beneficiaries. Additionally, refugees and hosts explained that NGOs also provide different levels of financial assistance – for example, ZOA provides a higher financial envelope than NRC.

According to respondents, not all beneficiaries receive material or financial support after the training, despite lack of access to finance preventing youth from starting businesses. To get a loan, applicants need to have a stable income, or form a group of seven people, which is perceived as a risk if you do not trust your partners. Respondents felt there was not enough coordination between the NGOs, the local government and the financial institutions, which limited the potential of the programme and its impact.

When the existing financial support does arrive, it is often too late, as beneficiaries have forgotten the skills learnt by the time they received the money. Refugees also complained about the process to obtain the certificate, as processing time remains lengthy and they must travel to pick up the certificate, which is difficult for refugees. TVET students explained that the content of the training is too much focused on the theory, and not enough on practical aspects, and complained about the lack of job opportunities available locally (especially refugees).

According to the survey findings, **access to credit was significantly dependent on the year of arrival of the community member. People who arrived recently in Hitsats were less likely to have credit access than community members with a longer history in the community.** Community members with higher average monthly income were more likely to have credit access.

Trainees also complained about the lack of infrastructure which prevents them from getting practice and actual demonstration. The training centre has no access to electricity; therefore, instructors are not able to use the machines. The content of the training remains theoretical, with almost no practice at all. Furthermore, beneficiaries complained about the fact that they receive training, but no or limited in-kind support to help them establish and run their business. Nevertheless, community leaders of the host community highlighted the provision of skills training as the most important change in the area, because it was not available at all prior to RDPP implementation.



*Box 1: Results from the tracer study*

As part of the case study on RDPP skills training, jobs and livelihood activities in Hitsats (Tigray, Ethiopia) we conducted a qualitative tracer study between 2018 and 2020. As the overall objective of RDPP activities in this location is to “create evidence- based, [...] sustainable development and protection solutions for refugees and their host communities [...] and thereby discouraging risky irregular migration”, this study was carried out in order to better understand the effects of the following:

1. TVET participation - 4-6 months in food preparation/metal welding/short-term poultry course
2. Subsequent start-up support via kits/micro-loans
3. Self-reliance; and
4. Migration decisions of beneficiaries.

In April 2018, we conducted interviews with 68 individuals (both refugees and hosts), about half of which had at the time finalized TVET/business training and were waiting or had already received start-up support for small-scale businesses. In July 2019, we successfully traced and re-interviewed 33 individuals, with a 65% tracing success rate for those trained and a 29% for those not receiving training. We added 26 new beneficiaries of the same programme, for a total of 59 interviews in 2019. In 2020, we followed up with 19 of those already interviewed in both 2018 and 2019, with a 32% tracing success rate.

For most beneficiaries, the TVET training and subsequent start-up support has unfortunately not provided a transformative improvement of livelihood or economic opportunities. While newly learned skills were appreciated, for most, rather than leading to longer-term positive trajectories, it remained an activity in line with short-term humanitarian relief. Thirty-five individuals noted no perceived improvement, a worsened economic situation, or an increase of their incomes between 2018 and 2019. They were unable to meet their high expectations of being able to open businesses and put their skills to use after course completion. Most of them did not engage in activities related to their trained skill and reverted to other coping strategies - living on ratios, occasional work/labour - to generate income, which was not enough to improve their situation. Ten individuals reported a marked improvement of their lives and felt that there had been improvement in their

economic situation. Six of them ascribed this to the TVET skills training and the received start-up support, noting that through hard work and entrepreneurial ideas, they improved with the support provided. The rest experienced no or a very marginal changes but remained hopeful that they would be able to use the support. During the first follow-up visit in 2019, the main challenges related to the following:

1. Lack of finances
2. Lack of electric power to run businesses
3. Insufficient or inadequate business spaces
4. A general lack of a viable market in Hitsats
5. Lack of market access and possibility to register for refugees
6. Group composition
7. Lack of connections; and
8. Lack of timely follow-up support

Unfortunately, the situation did not change between 2019 and 2020. Interviewees did not note a change in approaches for support, nor was there a different livelihood outcome for those traced. Most experienced no change or a subsequent worsening of their livelihood opportunities, due to personal or contextual circumstances (e.g. Covid-19, changes in the political situation) leading to failures of their small-scale businesses. Only one local female beneficiary noted an improved situation from 2019 to 2020 due to start-up support, from which she was able to generate more income. 2020 interviewees highlighted increased levels of frustration regarding lack of sufficient opportunities in Hitsats.

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The profit which I got from my cafeteria is too insignificant... Yes there is change in starting new additional means of livelihood but its significance and contribution is invisible

YOUNG FEMALE ERITREAN  
REFUGEE (2019)

## Social and Moral Support

**Structural issues – notably access to finance and social factors – curtail women’s economic empowerment.** While there are economically active women in the area, women stressed that the community does not encourage women to work and that women need support from NGOs because they have limited access to finance. Women benefit from TVET opportunities but have the feeling that their lives will not change much following completion of the programme. Government representatives stated that the project has allowed women to get an income from a mill cooperative established with NRC’s support, and from a poultry house, although a respondent from the community said the chicken died.

**Instructors also reported that refugees often do not show up and miss class partly due to the fact that refugees suffer from anxiety and distress which prevent them from studying in good conditions.** This might explain why host community beneficiaries tend to perform better and are more committed to their training compared to their refugee counterparts. Some programmes, such as metal work, are not attractive for women, so all students in these programmes are men. Respondents also stressed that all TVET instructors are males.

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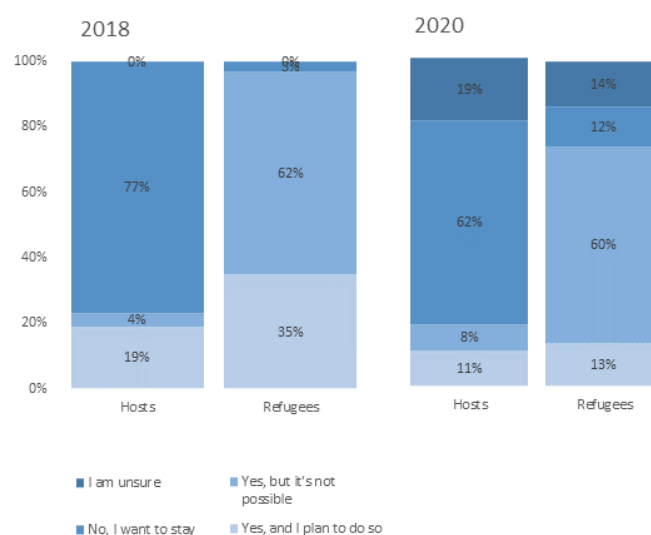
In vocational training, hosts are more careful and attentive than refugees. Refugees are not stable morally and psychologically. They are in class physically but, mentally, they are outside. The good thing is that both students sit together and work on assignments together. This helps them to become closer and help each other.

FGD47

## Migration Intentions

**This can have a potential impact on irregular migration.** While IPs and UNHCR are confident that livelihood activities have had a great impact on preventing irregular migration, Hitsats community is still a significant transit place for Eritrean refugees who intend to move onwards. Upwards of 85% of refugees surveyed would like to move away from their current location over the next 12 months, although only one fifth had concrete plans to do so (Figure 7). The announcement about the closure of Hitsats camp might have an impact on onward migration, as refugees would lose their networks and have to start from scratch. This decision, made at the federal level with no consultation with partners and local actors, therefore risks undermining the partners’ efforts in tackling irregular migration.

Figure 7. Do you want to move away from this community over the course of the next 12 months, either to another country (excluding returns) or within this country?



## 4.3 Protection and Social Cohesion

**While hosts were rather positive regarding protection issues, refugees depicted a more nuanced picture.** In particular, refugees spoke of theft and robberies inside the camp. Refugee women complained about the lack of support from the health centre if they are victims of violence - they are required to bring a medical certificate to the police station, which the health centre refuses to provide.

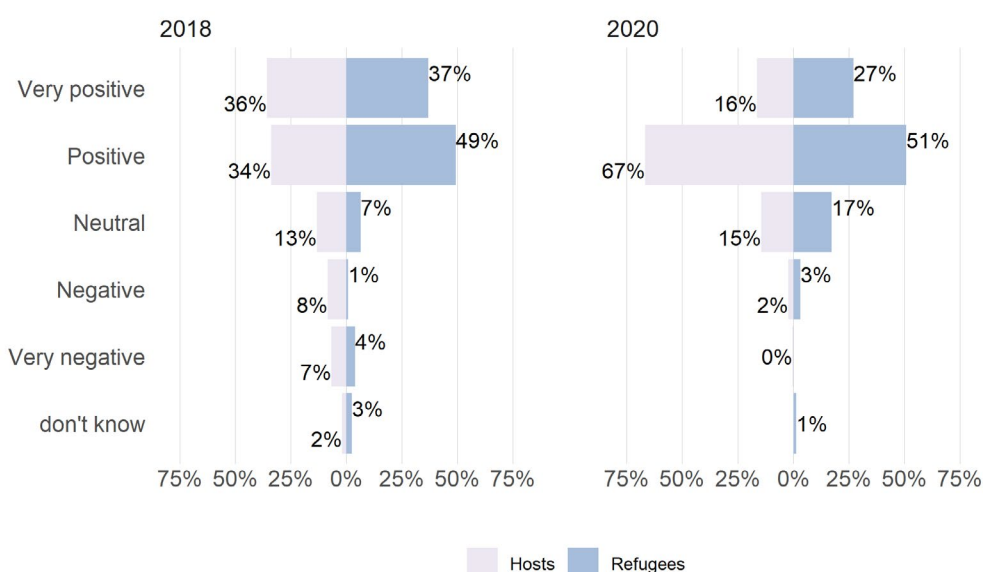
**Female refugees were very well informed about the different actors responsible for protection matters and were informed about DRC actions.** However, they also stressed they were not able to say whether there have been any improvements in terms of protection compared to the situation three years before. It is too early to make a judgement regarding RDPP's impact on protection levels, as protection is also part of the structural response, with security officials present in the camp until 11:00 at night. This has been helpful in decreasing theft, which was cited as one of the most significant changes in safety and security levels. DRC considers that the programme has been successful, as they reached

more beneficiaries than initially planned. DRC also claimed that gender-based violence has decreased thanks to the awareness raising activities but did not provide concrete evidence to support this claim.

However, these results on protection must take into consideration the changing context mentioned earlier in this report. The evolution of relations between the Ethiopian and Eritrean governments and the announcement of the camp's closure has raised a lot of concern and suspicion within the refugee community, which might explain why respondents were more nuanced than hosts regarding safety.

**Refugees and hosts have positive relationships overall. Except from tensions around resources** (land and trees), members of the two communities have strong relationships and interact regularly. They share the same language and a similar culture. Refugees and hosts do not only have economic interactions; they also have multiple social interactions, including intermarriage, celebrations, and friendships.

Figure 8. My perception of the 'refugee/host community' is...  
(host households asked about refugees and vice versa)



DRC has supported the establishment of peace committees, which bring together representatives from both communities. The peace committees act as mediators when conflict arises between hosts and refugees. They make suggestions that can prevent further conflict. Refugee and host community leaders meet during peace committees, which are composed of elders, religious leaders and youth associations representatives. The youth associations from both groups also meet once a month, and as necessary if any issue comes up. The presence of NGOs is benefitting the host community and host community members appreciate that refugees and locals share services. A huge majority of respondents from the host community were extremely enthusiastic when speaking about their relationships with refugees, who they called “brothers and sisters”.

“

Recently, there were signs of locust and the whole refugee community was deployed to tackle the locusts together with the host community. We were not informed in advance so no one was prepared. We cut the sorghum with our hands and teeth. If they had known before they would have prepared machetes but the refugee community did its best and that shows how we live in support of each other.

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 FGD48

**The quality of relationships between refugees and host communities is what refugee representatives value the most in Hitsats. They shared an anecdote about the recent locust plague to illustrate the strength of ties between refugees and host communities.** While host community members also described excellent relationships with refugees,

the refugee youth had reservations and mentioned cases of discrimination against refugees, such as being required to pay a higher price for public transportation. The youth was the only group that seemed less positive regarding social cohesion.

**POSITIVE TRENDS - Female refugees explained that the hosts and refugees have become closer over the 2 to 3 past years.** The integrated schools have played a role in fostering interactions between refugees and hosts, which has contributed to better understanding between the two groups. Refugees also have more interactions with host communities today compared to a few years ago, because many refugees now rent houses in the host community because of the poor living conditions in the camp.

**Relationships between refugees and hosts have improved significantly after the signature of the peace agreement between Ethiopia and Eritrea.**

Prior to this, there was more regular conflict between refugees and host communities. Respondents acknowledged that the protection, safety and security levels in Hitsats depend more on structural factors than factors directly related to a program like RDPP. **However, local officials stated that the sharing of services could be considered as having contributed directly to improving social cohesion in Hitsats.** UNHCR shares the same belief, and NRC recognized that there had been significant improvements in terms of social cohesion, although more cautious about attributing it to RDPP specifically.

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Before peace between Ethiopia and Eritrea, our relationship with the host community was not good. There were always fights between refugees and hosts in this area. But, after the peace agreement, a radical change in the interaction between the two countries could be felt.

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 FGD45

*Box 2: Results of protection activities under AMIF***Results of protection activities under AMIF**

This report focuses mainly on the impact of activities carried out under RDPP in Hitsats camp and surroundings. But RDPP's vision of protection goes beyond local impact to a broader system change. An example of this approach are the activities financed by the European Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund in the framework of the RDPP in the Horn of Africa. The activities financed by AMIF 2016 and 2018 direct grants (and co-financed by the Netherlands and other member states) in Ethiopia aim at strengthening the protection of refugees and their Ethiopian nationals through registration (for the former) and improved civil documentation (for both groups). Activities carried out under the AMIF component of RDPP in Ethiopia included

- Supporting the creation of a unified refugee registration system using biometric technology
- Promoting the digital identify of refugees by ensuring interoperability between the UNHCR and ARRA databases and issuance of refugee ID
- Enhancing the national civil registration system for refugees and hosts by strengthening administrative data management and the capacity of institutions
- Increasing demand for civil (birth) registration and understanding of the processes

A separate evaluation exercise of the AMIF component in Ethiopia specifically found that its activities had been a success in terms of systems building. For the **refugee registration component**, AMIF was instrumental in supporting the transition of UNHCR registration from manual to digital through investments in equipment, network and training. Training sessions led to better capacity of UNHCR and ARRA refugee registrars, and the process became smoother as acknowledged by refugees interviewed.

Possibly the main impact in terms of protection as directly felt by the population of concern was the creation of a unique refugee ID recognised by all actors at different levels. AMIF-supported improvements to the refugee registration process contributed to a more efficient system which should eventually, but does not yet, benefit all those seeking to serve vulnerable refugees. While the impact in terms of more tailored protection activities thanks to improved refugee registration data is not yet felt to the fullest extent, the actions completed with AMIF support are a necessary prerequisite to the next steps, be it the update to ProGres v4 or the One-Stop Shops (OSS).

As regards **vital events registration**, AMIF contributed to increasing birth registration rates in Ethiopia, and to a better understanding of the factors influencing demand. Activities had a positive effect on the capacity of vital events registration staff, and on the resources available at registration centres. The importance of the AMIF contribution is also acknowledged in improved coordination systems at the national and sub-national levels. Perhaps most importantly, 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) committed to allocating budget and assigning resources to sustain the system. While immediate protection outcomes thanks to the vital events registration component of AMIF / RDPP cannot yet be ascertained at the time of writing, it is the systems-building component which must be acknowledged. Encouraging VER and improving procedures for recording both births and deaths contributes, in the long run, to creating accurate population figures needed for programming and government planning as well as tracking progress towards international commitments.



# 5. Evaluation Conclusions

The following provides needed overarching conclusions regarding the results and impact of RDPP activities in Ethiopia along the key evaluation questions, asking the fundamental question, “how has RDPP interventions (projects, strategies, governance) strengthened durable solutions in Ethiopia?”

## 1. Relevance

### **RDPP has paved the way for the CRRF and set an example for integrated approaches**

*How does the RDPP adapt to context dynamics?*

*To what extent have different sub-groups actively contributed to needs- and context assessments? What are mechanisms for feedback and influence of refugees and host communities on projects?*

Looking back at the objectives of the programme, RDPP has undoubtedly achieved important results that have laid the ground for future interventions. RDPP was aligned with the government’s new refugee policy at the federal level and has contributed to a change of mindset. Bringing together stakeholders in charge of refugee and host communities in a common platform and vision for the first time, RDPP has contributed to introducing new ways of working that are now becoming a norm in the context of the CRRF. New platforms were established for RDPP, as this was the first time that a project brought together stakeholders working with the host community and those working with refugees. The project brought these stakeholders closer together, which fostered new outlooks and levels of understanding – which is one of the biggest achievements of RDPP in Hitsats.

## 2. Coordination

### **RDPP has faced challenges with coordination both internally among IPs and externally with local counterparts**

*How does the RDPP coordinate with partners and authorities?*

*Did the RDPP help to strengthen the capacity of IPs and local authorities to develop and implement an integrated approach towards refugees?*

RDPP has suffered from a general lack of coordination between NGOs and government. In practice, the main responsibility of the local government offices was identification of beneficiaries in the host community. However, local authorities felt the design of the project did not take community needs into account and woreda officials claimed that hosts did not receive their entitled 30% as originally planned. UNHCR confirmed that the programme would have worked better had the local government been involved from the beginning. While significant efforts have been made to involve the government during the implementation, local authorities stressed that they had not been consulted at the design stage. This not only limit the chances for the government to take ownership but also means that the project was designed without due consideration to the locally defined priorities. While the high turnover in government offices is a major issue for partners, the project has better chances to be sustainable if it is aligned with government’s plans.

### 3. Effectiveness

#### **A positive impact in some sectors, together with missed opportunities in others**

*To what extent and how did RDPP help to strengthen the legal protection of refugees, with emphasis on vulnerable groups?*

*What results have been achieved in integrated access to/use of energy, water, education and health, and employment?*

*Which factors positively or negatively impact the effectiveness of individual interventions?*

Access to water – a very scarce resource in Hitsats – has been one of the most tangible improvements for both refugee and host communities in the last two and significant success due to the programme. However, RDPP did not address sanitation directly; refugee respondents stressed that the lack of facilities is a major concern in the camp. Both groups also agreed on positive changes regarding health and significant progress in access to education, with an overwhelming majority of school aged children regularly attending school, despite complaints about quality of education. The perception of their economic situation has slightly improved in both refugee and host households, but refugees continue to fare worse than hosts in the livelihood dimension, which reflects the constraints refugees face due to Ethiopia's legal framework. This also impacts food security, where a stark difference exists between the two communities, refugees being much more likely to lack food. Both hosts and refugees in Hitsats have experienced improvements in legal assistance but feelings regarding safety and protection decreased in the refugee community, mainly because of the current political situation. Lastly, refugees still do not have access to electricity, which remains the biggest challenge locally.

### 4. Impact

#### **Integrated approaches have become a reality in some sectors and social cohesion has improved, although a stronger engagement is needed**

*What is the impact on beneficiaries? What is the income effect? How is social cohesion influenced by the RDPP?*

*How do project and programme results impact potential future migration decisions of refugees?*

The creation of integrated services catering for refugee and host communities has become a reality to some extent when it comes to education, health and access to water. However, local authorities felt that refugees have benefited more from RDPP aid than hosts, yet this is contradicted by the data presented in this three-year evaluation. Such evidence needs to be presented to local authorities to improve engagement on durable solutions and integrated approaches. In addition, setting priorities on key elements such as infrastructure (water and energy) with the government will improve engagement by aligning priorities and finding sectoral entry points.

On social cohesion, respondents from both communities as well as key informants noted that sharing these services has contributed to strengthened ties between refugees and hosts. While social cohesion is difficult to measure, reactions observed following the announcement of the camp's closure show the strength of ties between the two communities. In this regard, the integrated approach - which was a core piece of the programme - can be regarded as successful and has generated a series of key lessons learned that can be applied to new projects.

## 5. Sustainability

### Aligning durable solutions programming with the Government's priorities

***Which challenges hinder the successful implementation of projects?***

***Is it possible to elaborate on the sustainability of individual interventions? What are the main determinants for sustainability? Which challenges hinder the successful implementation of projects?***

***What are key governance factors for effectively implementing policies aimed at sustainable protection and development approaches for refugees and their host communities?***

Sustainability is one of the main areas where improvements are needed, which requires efforts from all stakeholders, government authorities in particular. As discussed in this report, the impact of the interventions has often been undermined because of unaddressed structural constraints, which RDPP partners alone cannot tackle. RDPP did not directly target or focus on improving the overall rights and situations of migrants and their possibilities for economic participation, including access to finance, labour markets, mobility rights. The promotion of durable solutions is simply not compatible with the restrictions that are still in place, despite Ethiopia's

new regulatory framework. Refugees do not enjoy freedom of movement, cannot access the formal labour market and financial services. This is even more difficult for refugees to be self-reliant when infrastructure is lacking: the absence of power in the camp is a major obstacle to both education and economic opportunities, in addition to affecting people's well-being. Therefore, the impact of the investments made by RDPP is limited by the regulations imposed by Ethiopian authorities.

While unanticipated developments (the pandemic, the announcement of the closure of the camp followed by the conflict in Tigray) have affected communities in 2020, jeopardising the progress achieved through RDPP, closer work with the authorities, from the design phase and at all levels (local and federal) could have improved the potential of the interventions. Priorities in durable solutions programming need to be more closely matched with government priorities. Any durable solutions approach requires a strong engagement with government and local authorities, from the onset, as well as with displacement affected communities.

# 6. Recommendations

Critical to the learning function of this evaluation is providing needed recommendations for future iterations of integrated approaches. The following summarises recommendations that can serve as a basis for future programming:

## 6.1 Overall

### Co-designing and monitoring

- **Involving local actors at the design stage:** While significant efforts have been made to involve the government, local authorities stressed that they had not been consulted at the design stage. This not only limits the chances for the government to take ownership but also means that the project was designed without due consideration to the locally defined priorities. While the high turnover in government offices is a major issue for partners, the project has better chances to be sustainable if it is aligned with government's plans. While RDPP was unmistakably aligned with the government's new refugee policy at the federal level, local sectoral offices should be engaged at the design stage so their needs and priorities can be taken into account. Initial consultations should take place prior to designing new programming for more efficiency and sustainability.
- **Using evidence to further common lessons learned and a common understanding of outcomes:** Local authorities felt that refugees have benefited more from RDPP aid than hosts, yet this is contradicted by the data presented in this three-year evaluation. Such evidence needs to be presented to local authorities to improve engagement on durable solutions and integrated approaches. The same use of evidence is required for instance on livelihoods where perceptions held by UNHCR vary from those held by NRC and local authorities. Using a common base of evidence to ensure common understanding is vital for both policy making and programming.

### Promoting durable solutions through advocacy

- **Advocacy:** RDPP did not directly target or focus on improving the overall rights and situations of migrants and their possibilities for economic participation (incl. access to finance, labour markets, mobility rights). The promotion of durable solutions is simply not compatible with the restrictions that are still in place, despite Ethiopia's new regulatory framework. Refugees do not enjoy freedom of movement, cannot access the formal labour market and financial services. This is even more difficult for refugees to be self-reliant when infrastructure is lacking: the absence of power in the camp is a major obstacle to both education and economic opportunities, in addition to affecting people's well-being. Therefore, the impact of the investments made by RDPP is limited by the regulations imposed by Ethiopian authorities. While the government has adopted a new refugee law and embarked on the CRRF, little progress has been made in practice regarding their implementation, which has affected RDPP expenditure efficiency. This experience shows that coordination throughout the project cycle is not only needed at the local level, but also at the federal level, where decisions are made. The partners should coordinate and speak with one voice in order to alleviate constraints that are dependent on regulations, such as refugees' freedom of movement, access to loans and authorisations to create a business. In this regard, the creation of a committee bringing together ARRA, the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs and the Prime Minister's Office could have allowed more impact.

## 6.2 By Sector

### Education

Addressing both access to and quality of education

- **Lack of classrooms:** Overcrowded classrooms appeared to be a major concern raised by a majority of respondents when pressed about education. While RDPP has enhanced access to education, the number of children per class remains a major issue affecting the quality of the service provided, which might in turn impact school attendance. Local authorities often lack financial resources needed to fill this gap and thus cannot adapt the infrastructure. Future interventions should prioritise this issue as building additional classrooms would have a strong and sustainable impact.
- **Quality of education:** While Ethiopia has made tremendous progress in expanding access to education over the past years, quality is an issue. The data collected for this evaluation, as well as literature on education in Ethiopia, shows that the lack of skilled and motivated teachers is a major problem. While addressing such structural issues greatly affecting the Ethiopian education system might be beyond the scope of future interventions, a durable solutions lens requires to take this into consideration. Interventions could include building the capacity of teachers and school leadership as well as promoting evaluations based on performances.

### Protection

Diversifying the activities targeted at protection

- **Addressing refugees' fears by facilitating access to information:** It is clear that refugees in Hitsats have suffered from confusion and lack of information around the closure of the camp, the implementation of the refugee law and the impact of the rapprochement between Eritrea and Ethiopia, which have all contributed to high levels of anxiety. This might explain why the data shows a significant difference of perception between hosts and refugees about feeling safe in Hitsats. This can be addressed by improving refugees' access to information, for instance by promoting regular community consultations where issues of common interests can be discussed and questions answered.
- **Improve infrastructure:** Distance to basic sanitation facilities such as toilets and lack of power have a negative impact on protection as it increases the risk of experiencing violence. The protection component should therefore be the subject of stronger collaboration with other sections (i.e WASH, energy, education).

## Basic Services

Considering structural gaps from the design stage

- **Electricity:** Lack of power remained an issue and has not been resolved despite RDPP efforts, which has undermined the impact of all interventions since it limits livelihood and education opportunities within the camp, contributes to environmental degradation and conflict between refugees and hosts and affects refugees' protection and overall well-being, which in turn might encourage irregular migration. The quality of training provided has been hugely affected by the lack of power, which has also prevented refugees from running a business in the camp if it involved electrical equipment. The alternatives found, such as solar panels, have also proved inefficient and unsustainable for various reasons. Future interventions should be preceded by a preliminary assessment of energy access and sustainable energy options.
- **Facilitate access to finances:** Access to finance is a major impediment to business development in Ethiopia, as financial service providers have conditions that are not adapted to the situations of potential customers. While RDPP has tried to address this issue, the start-up seed money is often inadequate and cannot cover start-up costs, equipment, rent, and access to a generator or electricity. Many businesses run out of money and are not sustained if no alternative means (such as remittances, loans or savings) can be accessed, which is not often the case. This obstacle affects both refugees and hosts and limits the impact of the livelihood activities implemented. This challenge is not specific to RDPP as it is faced by all actors involved in livelihood programming in Ethiopia. Ensuring sustainable impact requires innovative solutions to expand access to capital by working with partners who have a solid expertise in access to finance in such contexts and can identify the right entry points and assess the risks and opportunities associated with each option.

## Social Cohesion

Considering the evolutions of the wider social and political context

- **Design context relevant interventions.** Relationships between refugees and host communities in Ethiopia vary from one place to another, based on the characteristic of the communities themselves as well as the environment. In addition, social cohesion between refugees and specific groups within the host community might be greater than that between different groups of the host community. Future interventions should not look at refugees and hosts as two homogeneous communities but rather consider the wider social context, and potential tensions within these communities.
- **Enhance the adaptiveness of the interventions.** The situation of Hitsats showed that social dynamics might evolve rapidly as a result of political changes. Growing tensions between Tigray and Amhara regional states, or between Tigray regional authorities and the federal government, as well as the peace agreement between Eritrea and Ethiopia, have all affected social dynamics, which also meant that the interventions designed three years earlier were perhaps no longer relevant. In a political context as fluid as that of Ethiopia, interventions targeting social cohesion need to be regularly evaluated so they can be adapted.



## Livelihood

Creating synergies with local stakeholders and private actors

- **Market assessments:** The customer base within the refugee camp has remained low. While refugees are growing in numbers, their purchasing power is limited, and many buy goods and services in Hitsats town. There are also specificities for each market. NRC has reportedly conducted a market assessment, and rotates skills trained to avoid saturation. Information about the market is often what is lacking for young entrepreneurs, especially as business development service providers are scarce in Ethiopia. Supporting the local entrepreneurs and business ecosystem by facilitating access to market information is a key element to improve the local economic environment.
- **Facilitate linkages between local stakeholders:** in a context where the private sector is limited and where opportunities are limited, creating synergies between the local stakeholders is essential to create a conducive environment for business and improve the functioning of the labour market. Local TVET often do not link trainees with potential employers and have themselves limited knowledge about available opportunities. Government offices in charge of connecting job seekers and employers are in a similar situation, especially as connections are often informal, which can lead to situations of co-option. Livelihood interventions focusing on the ecosystem have a strong potential for impact as this is often ignored, while essential for improving economic conditions, for both individuals and businesses.
- **Entrepreneurial spirit, support and follow up.** Not everyone is an entrepreneur and can run a successful business, especially if adequate support is missing. Many entrepreneurs lack experience, which NGOs aim to bridge by offering business skill courses as part of the training and by assessing the proposed business ideas. However, interviews showed that most beneficiaries were not sufficiently prepared and did not receive the necessary guidance and accompaniment, especially with turnover in NGOs leading to a possible gap. Helping entrepreneurs succeed does not only require training sessions, but a longer-term mentorship and opportunities to share ideas. IPs could play a larger role in facilitating networks of business owners and entrepreneurs, which could take the form of local incubators or more informal platforms. This would not only benefit individual entrepreneurs but also the wider business ecosystem, who could benefit from knowledge sharing, skills transfer through regular guidance, ideas exchanges, follow up and network building.

# Concluding Remarks – COVID-19 and Camp Closure

Recent developments, namely the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic and the political decision to close Hitsats camp - have undermined progress achieved thanks to RDPP.

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a strong negative impact on **education**, since schools were closed, increasing the risks of school dropouts and weakened quality of education – both of which will require monitoring and addressing. On the latter, for instance, students from grade 1 were passed on to grade 2 without having finished their second semester courses. However, access to **water and sanitation measures** has increased in the camp in response to the pandemic, although overall the pandemic has a negative impact on **health** access, as health facilities have had to adapt and phase their interventions, with the nearest facility far away.

**TVET** beneficiaries have not been able to obtain their certificate or start a **job** because of COVID-19, while **local prices** of consumable goods have gone up. Households are using their savings to cope with the shock of the pandemic, and as movement restrictions in Tigray have been particularly severe, this has affected trade. The pandemic has a great impact on prices, especially for basic items such as food (the price for one kilo of tomato has been multiplied by four, sugar has tripled). Transportation costs have also doubled, an issue raised by the vast majority of respondents.

The research team notes a **strong impact on refugees' morale**. Respondents mentioned increased suicide attempts and cases of depression. The pandemic has had a dramatic effect on mental health and anxiety overall.

UNHCR has **interrupted resettlement processes** because of COVID-19, which is a source of frustration for refugees in Hitsats who all wish to be resettled in developed countries in Europe or North America. Furthermore, social distancing is not an option for refugees who share a flat with 10 people. Younger community members believe that COVID-19 is harmless unless they have specific vulnerabilities.

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Refugees' process to developed countries has expired because of the pandemic – they have become sick, and insane. Economic activities, business transactions have slowed down, and expenses are greater than revenues. Social interactions have decreased in markets, churches, and ceremonies. (...) We are living in one house like prisoners.

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FGD45

## HITSATS CLOSING – No Communication or Consensus

**The announcement of the closure of the camp has created a lot of confusion, for both refugees and locals. No clear information was communicated to refugees, hosts, local authorities or IPs about the closure of the camp.** The communication was informal, through refugee representatives, not from ARRA directly. No detail was given regarding the modalities of implementation and about the motives. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, this plan was put on hold, but no further information has been communicated to refugees, who do not know if the closure is still planned.

In the refugee community, the closure of the camp has added to refugees' anxiety and fear. Refugees have the feeling they invested in building a life in Hitsats, and that they will replicate this experience in a new place. Refugees are afraid, as moving locations will result in a loss of livelihood and their children will have to adapt to a new environment and change schools. Many refugees have started selling their assets at a lower price because there was no indication about the date for their relocation.

“

Besides, there is no need to violate their rights: we don't want anyone who tries to halt the right of Eritreans to live where they need to. We will protect them as both humans and as per international human rights declarations. Who knows? We might face the same problem tomorrow and we don't wish them what we don't want to be over us. Any act of human rights violation will not be accepted, under any circumstances.

KII67

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I don't exactly know how and why the federal government will close the camp. On our side, it is the regional government's final decision that there will be no authority who will be able to close the camp as far as our Eritrean brothers want to stay here.

KII65

Host community members were not consulted about the closure of the camp. They are concerned about the closure as refugees' presence brought increased economic opportunities and access to services. They believe the closure will have a negative impact on the local economy. Some think the reason for closing Hitsats is the lack of water in the area - the local administration promised host communities that they would get water for every house if the camp is closed. In addition, they have strong relationships with refugees and are saddened by the closing of the camp.

While the decision came from the federal level, local authorities were similarly neither consulted nor informed. Local officials see the decision as an infringement on refugees' rights and said the decision will be implemented only if the Tigray regional authorities approve this decision, which was initially made by the federal government. **The closure of the camp illustrates the political tensions between Tigray and the federal authorities in Ethiopia.**

IPs have no further information and were asked to transfer their budget to Mai Aini and Shimelba, other refugee camps in Tigray.

# Annex 1: RDPP Outcome Metric for Ethiopia

Outcome metrics were developed to focus only on variables RDPP programming would be able to influence. In Hitsats, these activities focused on education, livelihoods, social cohesion and water / energy. Based on these broad categories, the following indicators were selected as part of the Ethiopia RDPP outcome metric:

<b>Education</b>	Regular school attendance
	Teacher-student ratio of 50 or less
	Quality of teaching judged high or very high
<b>Livelihoods</b>	Working-age individuals in paid work or self-employed
	Households which have income redundancy (more than one earner)
	Main income earner works in and out of camp
	Main income earner holds a diploma or skills certification related to his work
	Individuals who have access to TVET to foster their skills
	Respondents who find their economic opportunities as good
	Respondents who never struggle to meet expenses
<b>Social cohesion</b>	Households who judge that economic integration is on the rise
	Households who judge that social integration is on the rise
	Trusting one's own community
	Trusting neighbouring community
	Has not experienced conflict in the past month
	Has a neutral, positive or very positive perception of the group
<b>Water &amp; Energy</b>	Access to an improved water source
	Household electricity from electric grid
	Household electricity from private solar panels
	No disputes over natural resources

**Method of calculation:** For each category, several binary (true/false) indicators were assembled representing the status of each respondent within the domain. Given the responses to these indicators of all host and refugee respondents in our sample, a multiple correspondence analysis was used to determine a set of weights that would maximise the variance of the weighted sum of these variables among the sample. These weights are then averaged with a set of uniform weights to ensure that variables with very little variance are considered. Such empirical indices are often used in the absence of an a priori set of weights based on an intimate knowledge of the underlying populations with respect to the themes. These weights were then used to compute a numeric score for each respondent household in each dimension.

The Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs contracted the LET - composed of Samuel Hall, MDF, Maastricht University and ECDPM - to conduct a combined quantitative and qualitative impact evaluation for RDPP in order to assess progress and provide learning for adaptation, feed a regional programme narrative and inform policy making and regional dialogues. Led by Samuel Hall and MDF, the evaluation team combines academic rigour and subject-matter expertise on migration, displacement, refugees, protection and integration.

