



EDUCATION ACROSS THE BORDER

Without proper planning for Education there cannot be repatriation in dignity

Closure of Dadaab Refugee Camp, 2016

WHAT IS THE FUTURE FOR RETURNEE CHILDREN?

According to UNHCR, more than 30,000 Somali returnees have been assisted since the start of the Voluntary Repatriation from Dadaab Refugee Camp, including 22,000 returnees in 2016 alone. By the end of 2016, it is expected that 50,000 will have returned home. Over 60 percent of the current population in Dadaab is aged under 18, with 42.8 percent being of school age (5-17) – **118,634 children**.

Somalia has one of the world's lowest gross enrolment rates for primary school-aged children with only 30 percent children at primary education level and 26 percent for secondary education. The number of **out-of-school children and youth aged 6-18 years is estimated at 3 million**¹ The majority of out of school children are found in Central and South Somalia, in the very zones where refugees from Dadaab are returning to according to the UNHCR intention survey.

BARRIERS TO EDUCATION IN SOMALIA

The primary barriers to education in these zones are the **lack of safe spaces for learning (security), insufficient teachers (both qualified and unqualified), limited oversight and outreach by Ministry of Education** among others. 14 percent of those wishing to stay in Kenya indicated this choice was motivated by inadequate access to education in their country of return (the second highest motivation after lack of security).²

The Ministry of Education has very limited control over education services in Somalia. At the moment there is **not yet a harmonized curriculum, there are no government supported teacher training institutes in Central South Somalia and only a very limited government supported teaching force**. This means that there are a wide variety of actors (civil society and private institutions) offering education which is outside of the jurisdiction and control of the government. This calls for Ministry of Education to take lead and engage these actors to ensure recognition of education obtained in Dadaab for learners as well as teachers.

THE RIGHT TO EDUCATION

Members of the Education Cluster therefore have to find very localized solutions in each area of return which can be done on a small scale, but it tends to be very dependent on the capacity

on ground in that particular area rather than being **rights based**, ensuring that all children returning will have access to education and support for their transition period. Somali children have had access to fairly good education in Dadaab and a lot of Somali teachers have been fairly trained and remunerated. Upon their return to Somalia education actors simply **cannot guarantee that the teachers and children will be able to continue** due to the current state of the education system.

SUSTAINABLE (RE)INTEGRATION

Ideally the returnees would integrate into the Somali society with the help of **good legal frameworks** and the repatriation package from UNHCR. Unfortunately many of the returnees end up in overcrowded IDP settlements and become a part of the humanitarian caseload with **very limited possibilities of a self-sustaining future**.



¹ Educational Characteristics of the Somali People Volume 3 UNFPA 2016

² Population Fixing Exercise Dadaab, UNHCR, July-August 2016



WHAT IS AT STAKE?

Failure to properly plan for the smooth reintegration of returnee children and adolescents in schools in Somalia will jeopardize the ongoing repatriation from Dadaab by sending the message that current conditions in areas of return are not conducive to repatriation. Children and youth who do not continue their learning are at great risk of joining the cohorts of out of school children and adolescents putting them at risk of harmful practices, especially child marriage, possible child labor and recruitment by armed groups. Conversely, a well-planned, adequately funded, effectively coordinated education program supporting the repatriation and (re)integration exercise will contribute to the realization of rights and the much needed stabilization that Somalia needs.

CALL FOR ACTION

- UNHCR and OCHA need to ensure effective cross border coordination, leadership and information sharing among partners involved in the process.
- Returnee learners from Dadaab Kenya should be included in the Somalia Ministry of Education's Sector Plan so that they become part of the development and not the humanitarian response together with IDP children and youth
- Adequate development funding will be required to ensure existing primary and secondary schools in the areas of return have adequate facilities (classrooms, furniture, teaching and learning materials, teacher training support, and WASH facilities) to be able to integrate returnees without compromising the quality of education and without further exacerbating tensions with host communities by putting additional strain on resources
- Adequate development funding will be required to ensure access to alternative education and technical/vocational education for out of school youth returning from Dadaab
- Sufficient funding will be needed to ensure that education fees are paid to the receiving schools in accordance with the agreed repatriation assistance package
- Refugee learners and their families in Dadaab should be properly informed on the availability of education services (including curriculum and language of instruction used) in the areas of intended return.
- Assessment and documentation of children's education attainment/level as they leave Dadaab is important to ensure that they can access education at the right level and have their achievements in school in Dadaab recognized
- Teachers who have volunteered for repatriation should be registered and assisted in (re)joining the Ministry of Education in Somalia (including recognition of qualification, inclusion in training plans and inclusion in payroll)
- The repatriation movements and planning should take into consideration the education calendar so that children and youth are able to complete their school year including the participation in the KCPE and KCSE exams before they return. In addition, provision for taking the KCSE exams in Somalia should be explored to allow children in grade 6,7 and 8 to complete their education in the Kenyan curriculum
- Community Education Committees (CECs) should be empowered to ensure the enrolment of all children (returnee, IDP and host community) in accordance with the holistic and community-based approach recommended by the Tripartite Technical Committee