



Refugee Teachers: A Quick Guide

This guide provides basic planning and programming recommendations for managing refugee teachers, and is geared particularly towards camp settings where teachers are being recruited directly from refugee communities. The guide is intended for anyone who is responsible for recruitment, management and/or training of teachers in refugee settings, including UNHCR, NGO, Ministry of Education or national refugee agency personnel.

Why does planning for refugee teachers matter?

Refugee teachers are critical actors in refugee education services and account for a significant proportion of “incentive” workers in UNHCR-managed camp settings. Effective planning for refugee teachers supports:

Access to education for refugee children:

Sufficient numbers of trained teachers are required to ensure broad access to education services for refugee children. Teacher shortages lead to limits on enrolment and large class sizes which compromise protection and quality in the classroom.

Safety and protection for refugee children:

Untrained, stressed teachers are a protection risk in schools. However teachers with clear roles and responsibilities, training and supportive supervision can ensure that schools are safe, protective spaces where children can regain a sense of normalcy following the trauma of displacement. Trained teachers can also ensure that children learn life-saving knowledge and skills like disease prevention, self-protection from environmental and sexual and gender-based violence risks, etc.

Learning for refugee children:

In many refugee settings untrained teachers are working in complex classrooms made up of large numbers of mixed age and ability learners with varied psychosocial needs. Teachers need strong support if children are to gain basic literacy and numeracy skills required for them to successfully complete primary education and transition to secondary school.

Professional skills for refugee teachers:

Investment in refugee teachers as professionals and as learners is an investment in durable solutions. Refugee teachers develop on the job professional experience and skills as teachers, which builds human capital for refugee communities.



Planning for refugee teachers in 4 steps

- 1 **ASSESS NEEDS:** Track and accurately budget for your teacher supply.
- 2 **RECRUIT:** Standardize and harmonize teacher recruitment and management policies.
- 3 **TRAIN:** Ensure that all teachers have access to orientation, training and ongoing in-service support according to their needs.
- 4 **MOTIVATE:** Find ways to support, motivate and reward teachers.

1 **ASSESS NEEDS: Track and accurately budget for your teacher supply.**

In order to ensure that children have sufficient numbers of quality teachers in their classrooms, you need to accurately track exactly how many teachers you have, how many you need now and next year, and how much it will cost to pay and train them. Although there may be several implementing partners recruiting and managing teachers, it's important to ensure centralized basic teacher data so that **UNHCR and partners can ensure sufficient numbers of teachers are available and that adequate funds to pay AND train them are factored into budget allocations.**

Key Questions

- Do you currently have sufficient numbers of teachers to meet acceptable teacher-pupil ratios? How many more teachers do you need?
- How many more new teachers will you need next year taking projected increases in enrolment into account?
- In which grades is your teacher shortage most acute (or which grades have the highest teacher-pupil ratio)?
- What is your average teacher turnover (on average how many teachers leave per term)?
- What kinds of teachers do you need most (female teachers and qualified teachers for example)? How and where can you get more of them?

Planning Recommendations

- **Maintain updated, disaggregated teacher data** in your education information management system including: number of teachers by level (ECD, primary, ABE, secondary), by sex (male and female), by qualification (qualified or unqualified), by status (refugee or national). Also track average numbers of teachers who leave each term. For primary, also include numbers of teachers per grade or by lower and upper primary.
- **Calculate teacher pupil ratio by grade OR by lower primary and upper primary.** Calculating teacher pupil ratios for primary can be deceptive because enrolment rates tend to be uneven, with large numbers of children in lower primary and decreasing numbers in upper primary. For a more accurate picture of teacher pupil ratios and to identify where teacher shortage are acute, ensure ratios are calculated per grade or by lower and upper primary.
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- **Use teacher data to budget costs of paying teachers AND training them.** All teachers, whether they are qualified or not need orientation and training on their responsibilities and how to manage complex, refugee classrooms. Unqualified, inexperienced teachers require additional periodic training and support to become effective teachers. Ensure accurate projections for teacher compensation and training are reflected in annual plans and budgets.

② RECRUIT: Standardize and harmonize teacher recruitment and management policies.

In camp settings, where education services are provided outside of the policy framework of a national Ministry of Education, it's essential that UNHCR and all partners recruiting, managing and training teacher come together to establish common, standardized teacher policies and practices. When teacher policies are mixed and determined by individual agencies we risk a lack of accountability amongst both teachers and partners, migration of teachers from one agency to another and dissatisfaction and confusion amongst teachers. Lack of transparency on teacher policies, particularly compensation, can result in harmful tensions between refugee and national teachers. **Use Implementing Partner agreements and coordination mechanisms to ensure that partners use standardized, harmonized teacher management policies and practices.**

Key Questions

- Are standardized, harmonized teacher management policies and practices in use by all partners?
- Are incentive and national teacher salary scales and other forms of compensation harmonized amongst implementing partners?
- Are these systems and policies transparent and clearly understood by teachers, schools and community members?
- What options exist to strengthen capacity for school based teacher management?

Planning Recommendations

- **Ensure that all agencies working with teachers use standard, common teacher policies and practices** including:
 - Common teacher recruitment criteria and process
 - Common teacher terms of reference/job description which outlines role and responsibilities, compensation, hours of service, leave terms, etc.
 - Common teacher code of conduct
- **Ensure that teacher compensation is harmonized between all agencies.** Also advocate for incentive increments that acknowledge the level of skill required for teachers and to recognize higher levels of skill amongst qualified and/or experienced teachers.
- **Ensure that teacher recruitment criteria and processes, terms of employment and compensation are transparent and clear to teachers.** This is especially important where refugee teachers and national teachers are paid differently on the basis of legal status and the right to work.

③ TRAIN: Ensure that all teachers have access to orientation, training and ongoing in-service support according to their needs.

If this sounds like a lot to do, you are right. However, particularly if your situation necessitates the recruitment of unqualified, inexperienced refugee teachers, then you will need to be committed to building teachers' capacity to keep children safe and help them learn in school. Teacher training is a technical area requiring good teacher expertise, so reach out to national partners to ensure quality professional development. **Use these two basic standards to plan teacher training (remembering that untrained teachers are a protection risk):**

- 1. All newly recruited, unqualified teachers have access to training in basic teacher competencies within the first three months of recruitment.**
- 2. All teachers have access to an initial induction, periodic training and school-based, in-service support to develop their teaching practice.**

Key Questions

- What is the profile of teachers' levels of education? Or what proportion of teachers are qualified, unqualified but with higher education degrees, secondary leavers, primary leavers?
- Do all partners use a standard initial training pack for all new teachers covering these foundational topics: teachers' role and responsibility; child protection; subject knowledge and curriculum; pedagogy?
- What options for teacher development other than short workshops exist?
- Which national teacher education partners might be able to provide technical support to train refugee teachers? (MoE, Teacher Training Colleges, Universities, UNICEF, local and/or international NGOs etc)

Planning Recommendations

- **Assess teachers' professional development needs and plan initial induction trainings according to these needs.** Use data on teachers' level of education and experience to plan trainings. Experienced, well qualified teachers may only require induction on their roles and responsibilities and child protection in refugee settings, while unqualified teachers will need a comprehensive basic training to get them started. Teachers with low levels of education will need special support to build basic content knowledge and skills in literacy, mathematics and science. National teachers need induction on the background and rights of refugee learners and preparation for challenges they may encounter including language and psychosocial issues.
- **Ensure that every new, unqualified teacher is provided with a common, basic training:** Develop a standard teacher training pack for all unqualified teachers which all partners use, which provides coverage of the most basic and essential knowledge, attitudes and skills required. The pack should cover key competencies in teachers' role and responsibilities, child protection and well being, curriculum and subject knowledge and pedagogy.
- **Use diverse strategies to continue to build teachers' capacity** Explore methods to support school based teacher development which could include: teacher observation, collaborative lesson planning, action research. Pedagogical advisors, qualified national teachers and/or experienced or qualified refugee teachers can be used to support school based development.

④ MOTIVATE: Find ways to support, motivate and reward teachers.

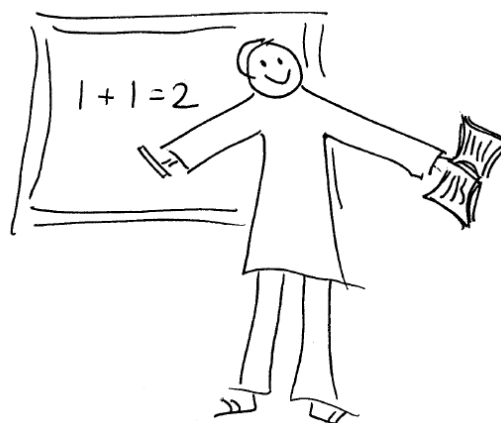
In many refugee settings, high rates of teacher turnover cause destabilization of the teacher supply and leakage of investment in teacher training. Low compensation or “incentive” pay combined with the strenuous workload of teaching large groups of complex learners contribute to high teacher turnover. Teacher motivation however, does not rely on compensation alone. **While efforts to increase or provide increments in teacher incentive pay should be pursued, other measures to help teachers feel like respected professionals, participate in decision making, improve working conditions and support substantial professional development and certification for refugee teachers can also contribute to the motivation, quality and professionalism of the teaching force.**

Key Questions

- What options are available to improve working conditions for teachers?
- What options are available to engage teacher participation in decision making?
- Who are potential partners at national level with whom to open dialogue on large-scale, in-service teacher training with options to progress towards qualification?

Planning Recommendations

- **Improve working conditions:** Efforts to improve working conditions should be part of broader education sector plans, and could include: provision of teacher furniture and teacher packs (basic teaching supplies provided each term); provision of teachers guides and texts; use of teaching assistants; use of two-schools-in-one to relieve congestion, etc
- **Engage and involve teachers:** Engaging teachers’ participation in education programme planning and implementation brings them in as problem solving partners rather than viewing them as part of a problem. Invite teacher representatives to coordination and planning meetings and consult them on a regular basis for feedback and planning purposes.
- **Widen access to teacher qualifications through negotiation with MoE and/or universities:** consider the following options as examples of what might be possible:
 - Increased numbers of scholarships to teacher training institutions
 - Negotiations with MoE or universities to open teacher training facilities on-site, through distance learning or mobile units
 - Negotiations with MoE or universities to allow for stackable credit for on-site, short term training or courses which can lead to qualification



National teachers in refugee settings

National teachers can be excellent resources in refugee settings. Typically they are university graduates or qualified teachers, and bring good knowledge of the national curriculum and education system. They can serve as leaders in schools, build capacity of unqualified refugee teachers and provide a much needed boost to quality teaching and learning. However, national teachers face many challenges working in refugee settings and also require support. Recommended actions include:

- Provide systematic orientation, mentorship and support in isolated camp settings with tough working conditions
- Ensure accommodation and security for teachers serving in remote camp locations
- Promote links with refugee teachers or community members to facilitate understanding of refugee communities' educational background, displacement experience and assist with language, culture, religion
- Provide training to respond to psychosocial issues and academically, linguistically and culturally diverse classrooms
- Provide training for teachers working with mixed groups of refugees and host community children to promote tolerance and address discrimination

A few useful resources:

INEE Guidance Notes on Teaching and Learning

<http://toolkit.ineesite.org/toolkit/Toolkit.php?PostID=1004>

INEE Guidance Notes on Teacher Compensation in Fragile States, Situations of Displacement and Post-Crisis Recovery

<http://toolkit.ineesite.org/toolkit/Toolkit.php?PostID=1006>

INEE Pocket Guide to Inclusive Education

<http://toolkit.ineesite.org/toolkit/Toolkit.php?PostID=1007>

UNESCO Toolkit on Teacher Codes of Conduct

<http://teachercodes.iiep.unesco.org/>

UNESCO Embracing Diversity: Toolkit for Creating Inclusive Learning-Friendly Environments

<http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0013/001375/137522e.pdf>

Refugee teacher management Checklist



① ASSESS NEEDS: Track and accurately budget for your teacher supply.

- Teacher data disaggregated by level (ECD, Primary etc); gender; qualification; status (refugee or national); per grade or upper/lower Primary available
- Data on teacher turnover rate available
- Accurate projections of numbers of teachers required to meet acceptable teacher-pupil ratios for this year and next year available and reflected in annual plans
- Annual plans include budget for compensation AND training of unqualified teachers

② RECRUIT: Standardize and harmonize teacher recruitment and management policies.

- All partners use standardized, common teacher policies and practices including:
 - Teacher recruitment criteria and process
 - Teacher terms of reference
 - Teacher code of conduct
- Teacher compensation is harmonized amongst all partners
- Teacher recruitment, terms of employment and compensation policies are transparent and clear to all teachers

③ TRAIN: Ensure that all teachers have access to orientation, training and ongoing in-service support according to their needs.

- Data on teachers' educational background and teaching qualification and experience available
- All newly recruited, unqualified refugee teachers are trained in basic teacher competencies within first three months of recruitment
- All national and qualified teachers are oriented to and trained on specific issues in refugee settings
- All teachers have on-going in-service support and periodic training is coordinated and planned as needed

④ MOTIVATE: Find ways to support, motivate and reward teachers.

- Working conditions for teachers are improved
- Opportunities for teachers to participate in decision making and planning available
- Opportunities for teacher qualification and certification with national training institutes or universities negotiated