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**NOKUT** 



**ETHIOPIA**

# Refugees Country Briefing

REACT aims to enhance the mobility, employability and access to further studies for refugees, displaced persons and persons in a refugee-like situation.



## Ethiopia

**Official name:** Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (FDRE)

**Location:** Ethiopia is located in the northeastern part of Africa, known as “the Horn of Africa”. It shares borders with Sudan and South Sudan to the west, Somalia and Djibouti to the east, Eritrea to the north and Kenya to the south.

**Population:** 108,386,391 (July 2018 est.)

**Ethnic groups:** There are more than 80 different ethnic groups in Ethiopia. The largest groups are Oromo, Amhara, Somali and Tigray.

**Languages:** The official language of Ethiopia is Amharic. Ethiopia has more than 80 different languages spoken within the country.

This country briefing – especially developed to help with the evaluation of credentials of refugees, displaced persons and persons in a refugee-like situation – should give orientation on the education system in Ethiopia in the light of recent political and economic developments in this country. It presents a systematised overview on its higher education system and links to the available information sources that are useful for the evaluation of qualifications of refugees coming from Ethiopia, even in cases where candidates present insufficient or lack of documentation.

**Source:** *Ethiopian Government Portal*  
*The World Factbook*

## History and current situation

The Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia is the largest and most populated country located on the Horn of Africa. Addis Ababa is the capital city, and it is also the home of the African Union's headquarters. The Ethiopian economy is currently one of the fastest growing economies in Africa. Although there has been a significant reduction in the amount of people living in poverty over the past decades, Ethiopia still remains to be one of the poorest countries on the continent.

Ethiopia has a rather unique history, as it apart from a short-lived Italian occupation between 1936 and 1941 maintained its freedom as an independent African country. As such, it has remained a symbol of African independence throughout history. Haile Selassie led the Ethiopian resistance against the Italian occupation, before he was forced into exile in 1936. British and Ethiopian forces secured his reinstatement as emperor in 1941. Opposition against Selassie's regime grew in the late 1960s, and his time as emperor of Ethiopia came to an end in 1974. Increased unemployment, political stagnation and a severe famine contributed to his fall. Selassie was replaced by Mengistu Haile Mariam, who was the leader of Ethiopia from 1977 to 1991.

The period after 1991 was marked by both economic reforms and border disputes with neighbouring country Eritrea. These border disputes led to the eruption of war between Ethiopia and Eritrea in 1998, which continued until the signing of a cease-fire in June 2000. Although a peace agreement was agreed upon between the countries in December that same year, their relationship remained to be dominated by tension and distrust.

In October 2016, a state of emergency was imposed after a great extent of protest in the states of Oromia and Amhara. Several thousands of protesters were arrested, but the protests raised again, when the state of emergency was lifted in August 2017. The Ethiopian prime minister resigned in February 2018, and a new state of emergency was imposed for six months. A new prime minister, who is an Oromo and a reformist, was in April 2018 sworn in. He has declared that he wants reconciliation and dialogue with all parties in Ethiopia. However, there is still uncertainty linked to the political development, and particularly how this possibly might affect the educational system in Ethiopia.

In 2003, the Ethiopian education system went through a major reform. The Ethiopian Higher Education Entrance Examination (EHEEE) replaced the Ethiopian School Leaving Certificate (ESLC). The introduction of 3-years long Bachelor Degree's, was a short-lived reform, and lasted only until 2006/2007.

In 2011/2012 the education system went through a smaller reform that defined the type of degrees the various education institutions could offer. Private HEI's lost the right to offer degree's in law.

**Addis Ababa is the capital city, and it is also the home of the African Union's headquarters**



# Education chart

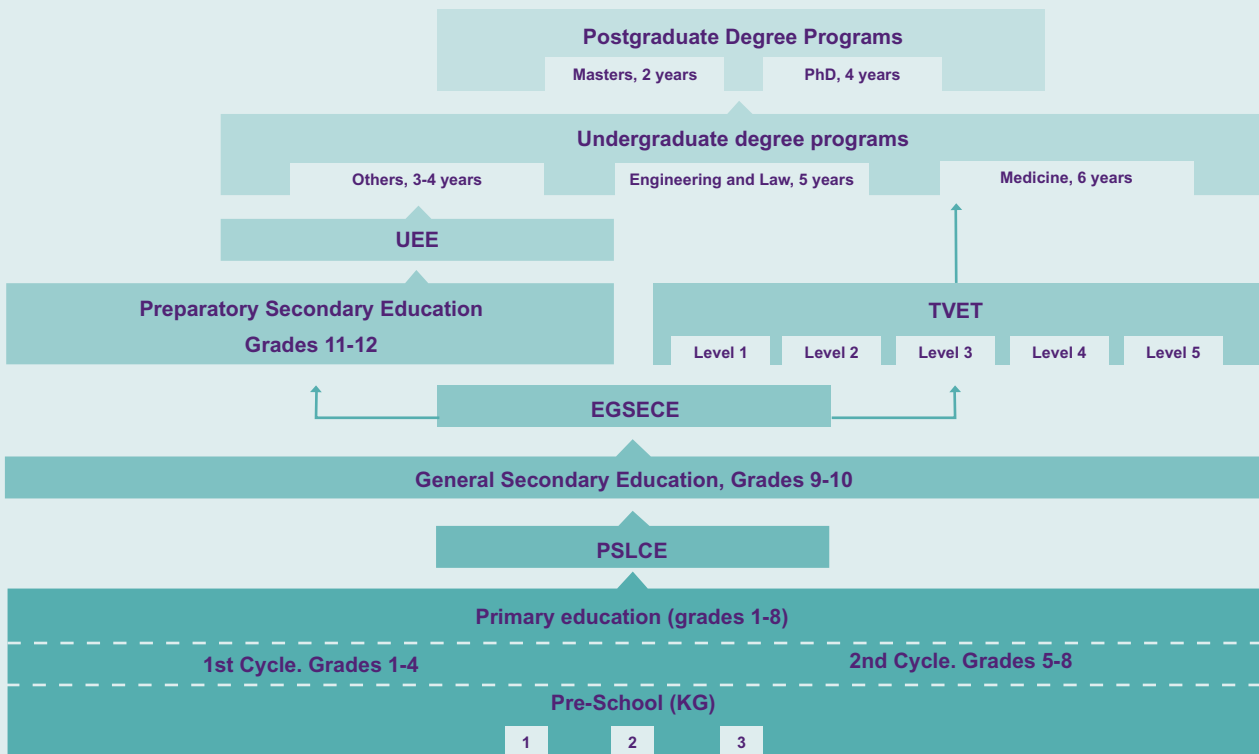


Figure: The New Education System (Source: MoE, 2012/13)

Note: PSLCE=Primary School Leaving Certificate Examination; EGSECE= Ethiopian General Secondary Education Certificate Examination; UEE= University Entrance Examination

## Education System

### Primary and Secondary Education

The Ethiopian Ministry of Education oversees both primary and secondary education in the country. Primary education is mandatory, but enrollment, teacher-to-pupil density and other systemic factors mean that children in rural areas end up with far fewer resources than those in the cities. These differences carry over into junior secondary (9-10 grade) and finally into Preparatory School. Only about 12% of the relevant age group enters grade 12, and only about 68% of secondary schools had access to electricity in 2016.

#### General and Preparatory Secondary Education

- General Secondary School grades 9-10, age level 15 to 16. At the end of grade 10 pupils sit for the Ethiopian General School Leaving Certificate Examination (EGSLCE)

- Preparatory Secondary School grades 11-12, age level 17 to 18. At the end of grade 12 pupils sit for the Ethiopian Higher Education Entrance Examination (EHEEE)

#### Technical and Vocational Qualifications (TVET)

- Official name: Levels 1-2 «education», 3-4 «diploma», level 5 is «attestation» or «Certificate» (Level I, II, III, IV and V)
- Access requirements and duration:
- TVET Level 1 education - one year (requiring the Ethiopian General Secondary Education Certificate (EGSEC) - grade 10 for entry)
- TVET Level 2 education - two years (requiring the EGSEC for admission)
- TVET Level 3 Diploma - three years (requiring the EGSEC for admission)
- TVET Level 4 Diploma - three years (requiring the EGSEC for admission)
- TVET Level 5 education— one to three years (requiring either level 3/4 or EUEEC)
- Access to further studies: Each level gives possibility of access to next level TVET. With 2-year work experience (and some CoC testing) admission to HE is said to be possible for Level 5

## Higher Education

Higher Education in Ethiopia has gone through a massification in the last 10-15 years, with the number of institutions growing from a handful of public institutions to around 50 today. In the private sector, almost 100 institutions offer undergraduate and graduate degrees. Due to the pressure on institutions to admit students almost half of all undergraduate students in the country are enrolled in non-full time classes. Admission to institutions and degrees are done by the Ministry of Education, not on the wishes of the student. Restrictions are in place as to what degrees can be offered in private institutions.

### Types of qualifications

- Language of instruction is English in all Ethiopian Higher Education Institutions
- Diploma programs (2-3 years). Before the reform in 2003/2004, diploma programs were considered higher education. After the admission year of 2003/2004, diploma programs were no longer considered higher education
- Bachelor's Degree (3-4 years\*)
- Speciality degrees (Law, Engineering, Dentistry, Medicine etc.) are 5-6 years
- Master's Degree (2 years)
- Doctor of Philosophy (4 years)

*\*There are no clear national guidelines for what degree should have 3 or 4 years' duration.*

## Education institutions

- List over public universities: [www.neaea.gov.et/university/](http://www.neaea.gov.et/university/)
- List over non-government HEI's: [www.herqa.edu.et](http://www.herqa.edu.et) - if page is down, use <http://archive.org> and the waybackmachine for access to previous information: <https://web.archive.org/web/20180808153115/http://herqa.edu.et/>
- List over accredited colleges of teacher education: <http://info.moe.gov.et/ctes.shtml>
- The Ministry of Education: [www.moe.gov.et/](http://www.moe.gov.et/)
- Link to information on secondary education and schools: <http://info.moe.gov.et/ates.shtml>
- Accreditation bodies:
  1. Ministry of Education, for public institutions
  2. The Higher Education Relevance and Quality Agency (HERQA), for private institutions

## Certification

- Diplomas and transcripts are issued in English
- Transcripts are not considered to be official unless they are signed and stamped by the educational institution
- The norm is that a Temporary Certificate of Graduation is given immediately upon graduation. The final degree certificate may take as much as two years to be issued
- The principal calendar used in Ethiopia is the Ethiopian calendar (EC). The New Year starts around September 11th or 12th in the Gregorian calendar (GC), and there is a gap of 7-8 years between the two calendars. Year 2000 EC = year 2007 GC. Dates in education documents sometimes follow EC and sometimes GC
- 15-20 credit hours per semester is the norm if enrolled in a day-time degree course. 9-12 credits per semester if enrolled in a part-time degree program

### Grading system:

- A = Excellent
- B = Good
- C = Satisfactory
- D = Unsatisfactory
- F = Fail



## Useful sources and links

- WES: <https://wenr.wes.org/2018/11/education-in-ethiopia>
- Swedish National Agency for Higher Education: [www.uhr.se](http://www.uhr.se)
- UK Naric: [www.naric.org.uk](http://www.naric.org.uk)
- Nuffic (The Dutch organisation for internationalisation in education): [www.nuffic.nl/en/subjects/education-and-diplomas-ethiopia/](http://www.nuffic.nl/en/subjects/education-and-diplomas-ethiopia/)
- ENIC-NARIC Net: [www.enic-naric.net/africa.aspx?country=Ethiopia&c=121](http://www.enic-naric.net/africa.aspx?country=Ethiopia&c=121)

## Evaluation tips and recommendations

It is recommended to have transcripts and certificates sent directly from the HEI to the institution who is validating the documents. The Ethiopian authorities distinguishes between official copies and student copies. The transcripts or official student record bears the annotation "Not valid if transcripts is handled by applicant/student". A document stamped "Student copy" is not an official copy, and has not been sent directly from the HEI.

If the applicant cannot comply with the requirement of asking his/hers HEI to send documents directly to the evaluating institution, a good example of best practice could be NOKUT's interview-based evaluation method:

- [www.nokut.no/en/foreign-education/Recognition-Procedure-for-Persons-without-Verifiable-Documentation/](http://www.nokut.no/en/foreign-education/Recognition-Procedure-for-Persons-without-Verifiable-Documentation/)
- In the case of missing documents which extra documents can be asked for? Transcripts are usually easy to get. Note that non-payment in cost-sharing scheme might hinder issuance of documentation
- English is the medium of instruction in secondary schools and in higher education
- Ethiopian naming system: Own given name + father's given name + grandfather's given name
- Grandfather's given name is taken as the family's surname
- Calendar converter: <https://www.funaba.org/cc>
- Links to good practices: <http://eurorecognition.eu/manual/>
- Suspicion of fake documents: Attempt verification directly with the institutional registrar
- WaybackMachine: <https://archive.org/>

### REFERENCES

- Ministry of Education, Ethiopia: [www.moe.gov.et](http://www.moe.gov.et)
- Report on recognition of higher education in Eritrea and Ethiopia (Gulliksen, A.K. and Audensen, E., NOKUT, 2013) [https://www.nokut.no/globalassets/nokut/artikkelbibliotek/kunnskapsbasen/rapporter/ua/2013/gulliksen\\_anne-kari\\_audensen\\_erik\\_report\\_on\\_recognition\\_of\\_higher\\_education\\_in\\_eritrea\\_and\\_ethiopia\\_2013-1.pdf](https://www.nokut.no/globalassets/nokut/artikkelbibliotek/kunnskapsbasen/rapporter/ua/2013/gulliksen_anne-kari_audensen_erik_report_on_recognition_of_higher_education_in_eritrea_and_ethiopia_2013-1.pdf)
- The Norwegian Country of Origin Information Centre – Landinfo: <https://landinfo.no/en/>  
<https://landinfo.no/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/Etiopia-temanotat-Protestdemonstrasjoner-og-politisk-utvikling-fra-mai-2016-DAP-08062018.docx.pdf>
- Amnesty International: [www.amnesty.org/en/countries/africa/ethiopia/report-ethiopia/](http://www.amnesty.org/en/countries/africa/ethiopia/report-ethiopia/)
- Swedish Council for Higher Education: [www.uhr.se/globalassets/naricportal/landmanualer-hsv/etiopien---hogskoleverket.pdf](http://www.uhr.se/globalassets/naricportal/landmanualer-hsv/etiopien---hogskoleverket.pdf)
- Ministry of Science and Higher Education: [www.moshe.gov.et](http://www.moshe.gov.et)
- Public HEIs: [www.neaea.gov.et/university/](http://www.neaea.gov.et/university/)
- EDUKANS report on TVET: <https://edukans.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/Mapping-Report-Ethiopia-2012.pdf>
- Educational statistics on Ethiopian educational sector: [www.moe.gov.et/statistics](http://www.moe.gov.et/statistics)
- Ethiopian Private Higher Education & TVET Institutions Association: <http://epheia.org/>

# What is REACT?

**REACT (Refugees and Recognition – Toolkit 2) is an Erasmus+ supported project, which aims to establish a more efficient and consistent approach to the recognition of refugees' qualifications in Europe. The project builds on the recently completed Erasmus+ project «Refugees and Recognition», which developed a toolkit for the recognition of refugees' qualifications. The project takes place between 2018 and 2020.**

## Goal

The overall goal of REACT is to enhance the mobility, employability and access to further studies for refugees, displaced persons and persons in a refugee-like situation – including those without official documentation of their educational background. Through undertaking testing of the toolkit in cooperation with higher education institutions from across Europe, the objective is to identify the needs of the institutions and develop best practice cases that illustrate possible pathways for admission of refugee students to further studies.

In addition to the testing of the toolkit, five refugee country briefings will be developed to help with the evaluation of credentials of refugees, displaced persons and persons in a refugee-like situation. The country briefings will present a systematised overview of the educational systems in Iran, Ethiopia, Somalia, Venezuela and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). The content will also be presented in webinars held by experienced credential evaluators.

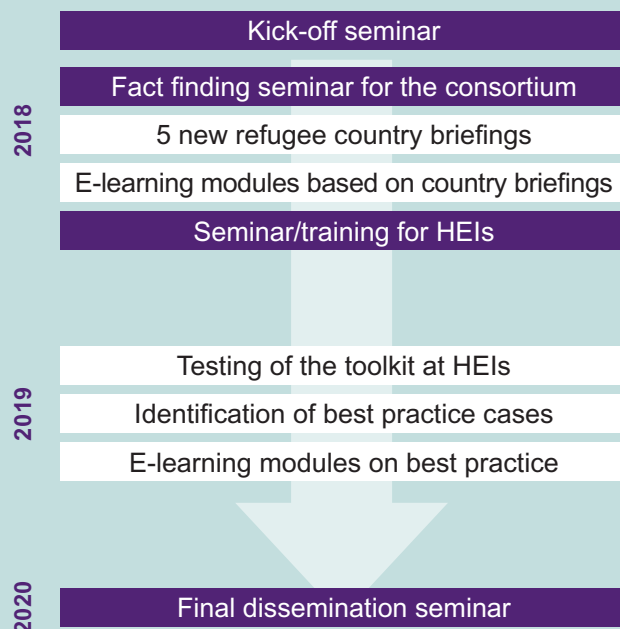
## Activities

The project is structured around nine work packages, developed to ensure a knowledge-based approach to the assessment of refugees' qualifications.

### MAIN PROJECT ACTIVITIES

- Testing and adaptation of the toolkit, in close cooperation with higher education institutions from Norway, the Netherlands, Germany, Italy and Ireland
- Provide recommendations to higher education institutions and identify best practice cases that illustrate pathways for admission of refugee students to further studies

### TIMELINE



- Compilation of e-learning modules presenting best practice cases on admission of students with refugees' qualifications to further studies
- Development of five refugee country briefings on the educational systems in Iran, Ethiopia, Somalia, Venezuela and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)
- Development of e-learning modules based on the five refugee country briefings

## WANT TO KNOW MORE?

To enable the accessibility and transparency of the project's work, the results will be made available on the project's website on a continuous basis.

### Website:

[www.nokut.no/en/about-nokut/international-cooperation/erasmus-projects/react--refugees-and-recognition](http://www.nokut.no/en/about-nokut/international-cooperation/erasmus-projects/react--refugees-and-recognition)

### Email:

[project-react@nokut.no](mailto:project-react@nokut.no)

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The REACT-project is a cooperation between National Academic Recognition Information Centres (NARICs), higher education institutions and interest organisations working closely with refugees and their educational qualifications.



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