

Recruiting Teachers with Lived Experience of Displacement

EiE Community Monthly Call | 10 January, 2023

About the Education in Emergencies (EiE) Community Calls

Staff, alumni and participants from across the Teach For All network come together regularly to share ideas, solutions and resources to support students and communities impacted by emergency situations. If you'd like to become a Member of the EiE Community and receive invites for future calls, please complete this [short form](#)!

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INSIGHTS ON VISION FOR REPRESENTATIVE RECRUITMENT



The Power of Lived Experience in the Classroom

Teach For Uganda shared their reflections that to further live into their vision and mission, they'd like their teacher cohorts to better represent the mixed communities that exist across Uganda. As a backdrop to this, Uganda has an extremely welcoming national refugee policy and enabling environment for integrating displaced communities into their society.

Teach For Uganda shared that focusing on community representation is enabling them to develop teachers who have gone through similar inequities that their students have, which shows up in their classrooms as empathy, high expectations, agency and a sense of possibility. For example, refugee teachers can deeply understand challenges that students face, and be a role model who has gone through similar adversity and come out the other side. This can be a powerful source of connection, relationship building and inspiration for students.

They also discussed the power of teacher diversity, which is not just helpful for the students in their classrooms, but also for the broader cohorts of teachers - as they all work together to better understand communities' challenges, brainstorm solutions and better think about what the system needs when they become alumni.



Adopting an Organizational-Wide Approach

Their ambition to increase refugee representation in their fellowship has been enabled by adopting an organizational-wide approach. Teach For Uganda shared that representation is increasingly important for them, so that the voices and experiences of those who have experienced educational inequity can lead and guide their work.

Across the Teach For All network, partners have seen that more progress is made when the entire organization is committed to recruiting teachers with lived experience of inequity, compared to when this is driven by just the Recruitment Team. Teach For Uganda reflected that they have been having organizational-wide conversations about who they want to join, guide and lead their work as staff, participants and future leaders. By aligning on this across their multiple teams, Teach For Uganda aims to have across their entire programme spectrum an orientation, appreciation and understanding of the unique contributions refugee graduates will bring to their programme.

Partners across the Teach For All network have also learned that representative recruitment requires examining bias. Everyone holds biases that they must understand in order to truly be effective in this work, and open themselves up to diverse candidates who have fantastic attributes they would bring to their classrooms. For example, a recruiter who has not explored how they might be biased to a specific accent or way of answering a question will not be effective at finding the right teaching talent. Or for example, a selector who is not considering the cultural implications of how someone is answering a question may score them lower for something that has nothing to do with skills or experience.



Leveraging a Feasibility Study

In 2022, Teach For Uganda engaged a team of local consultants to conduct a 'Refugee Education Feasibility Study'. Their goal for this scoping exercise was to explore opportunities to expand their programme into refugee-hosting communities, and make recommendations on how to adapt their operations to refugee settings, including: fellow recruitment, training, placement and potential partnerships. The three research questions that guided the study were:

- What are the current education challenges affecting refugee-hosting communities in the areas of study, and how could the Teach For Uganda programme offer solutions to address these challenges?
- What are the existing legal structures and parameters for running education programmes in refugee-hosting communities, and who are the key partners that Teach For Uganda would need to work with to successfully scale to refugee-hosting schools?
- Who are the main champions funding refugee education programmes in Uganda?

Teach For Uganda reflected that the findings of this Feasibility Study helped them better understand the 'Education in Emergencies' sector in Uganda, and align internally if and how their work could add value to this space. From the study they decided to embark on bringing refugees into their fellowship, through this small pilot with UNHCR and Windle International, to see if it was something Teach For Uganda wanted to further pursue and scale. The research also helped them understand the roles of the key gatekeepers in refugee education, including the Office of the Prime Minister, the Ministry of Internal Affairs, and local authorities.

INSIGHTS ON RECRUITMENT PROCESS ADAPTATIONS



Setting Recruitment Targets

Teach For Uganda shared that once they started having org-wide discussions about teacher cohorts being more reflective of Uganda's diverse classrooms, this informed their vision for the types of teachers they wanted to identify and recruit. Some Teach For All network partners have found it helpful to set specific diversity and representation targets for recruitment and selection. Teach For Uganda set themselves goals on how many DAFI refugee graduates they wanted to recruit for their 5th cohort, which they found helpful to move them along in that direction.

For their upcoming 6th cohort they have set themselves a target of 5% of the cohort to be from a displacement background, which will equate to placing 10 refugees into classrooms. Using their recruitment funnel calculations, Teach For Uganda anticipate that if 105 refugees submit an application, 63 are likely to be invited to the assessment centre, of which 32 are likely to attend the assessment centre, from which 13 offers could be made, in order for 10 to show up at the pre-service Institute training.



Adapting Recruitment Strategies

Teach For All network partners who have built targeted and specific strategies have been successful in increasing representation. These can include: hiring recruiters from the target

communities, sourcing talent from networks within those communities, developing recruitment messages and cultivation experiences that are tailored for their needs, and designing programmes to meet their unique needs.

Following their successful small pilot in cohort 5, Teach For Uganda shared their plans to adapt the recruitment process for cohort 6. They intend to do targeted in-person engagement with universities where refugees are enrolled, including meeting with the Deans and campus leaders. They will also: hold tailored information sessions for refugees residing in Uganda; share testimonies from the teachers with lived experience from cohort 5; engage with refugee leaders at different levels; and develop marketing materials specifically targeting refugee candidates with tailored messaging and language.



Designing More Inclusive Selection Processes

Following their pilot with representative recruitment, Teach For Uganda reflected on the inclusivity of their selection process. They shared how they are looking step-by-step, to make sure each portion of their process is inclusive for refugee candidates. Adaptations they made during their pilot in cohort 5 include: revising eligibility criteria and specifically naming refugees on their materials; increasing the age limit to 35 for refugee applicants; editing some checkboxes on their application forms; deciding to broaden the eligibility to beyond UNHCR-DAFI refugee graduates to all refugees.

Teach For Uganda have also decided to decentralize their selection processes. They found that refugee settlements were geographically far from their assessment centres, which was a major barrier to displaced candidates being able to be assessed and selected. They also found that there was low visibility, and therefore understanding, of their programme within the refugee settlements. By conducting assessment centres in East and Central locations, Teach For Uganda hopes to overcome this logistical barrier for applicants.

Attendees dialled in from:

Enseña por Colombia; Teach First; Teach For Afghanistan; Teach For Armenia; Teach For Austria; Teach For Bangladesh; Teach For Ethiopia; Teach For India; Teach For Kenya; Teach For Lebanon; Teach For Nigeria; Teach For Qatar; Teach For Uganda; Teach For Ukraine; Teach For Zimbabwe; UNHCR.