

REGIONAL BUREAU FOR WEST & CENTRAL AFRICA

EDUCATION NEWSLETTER



Read the full article [here](#).

Celebrate the leadership of teachers in crisis in West & Central Africa

Since 1994, October 5 marks the celebration of [World Teachers' Day \(WTD\)](#) and shines a light on those on whom our education systems largely rely. This year's theme **Teachers: Leading in crisis, reimagining the future** was an opportunity to relay the voices of all teachers working in emergency, displacement and conflict situations who are going the extra mile to make sure no one is left behind.

Teachers have been on the front line in the response to the COVID-19 pandemic, which has significantly added to the already immense challenges they face in sub-Saharan Africa. Despite these many challenges, in the WCA region, teachers in emergency and displacement settings have worked hard to find [innovative solutions](#) and create [new learning environments](#) for their refugee and displaced students to ensure that learning could continue amidst school closures. With UNHCR's support, nearly [35,000 children](#) were thus supported in the region since March.

Read the testimonies of refugee teachers [here](#).

In many countries, where refugee-hosting areas have poor or no connectivity preventing access to e-learning programs, teachers have prepared [take-home packages](#) for their students in and out of camps. Some have regularly checked-in with their students through WhatsApp, while others have proposed [home tutoring](#) to students in exam classes. In Chad for instance, refugee and community teachers have set up [small learning groups](#) in the camps in order to keep children engaged and learning.

But this daily work carried out by teachers to ensure the right to education and a future for refugee and displaced children is [too often endangered](#) in many countries in the region, where they are threatened, kidnapped, or killed for the simple reason that they are teachers.

We need to remember that teachers are the leaders we need to reimagine the future of education in times of crisis and that they need our support to continue to be [essential role models](#) for all refugee children around the world who strive to learn regardless of the obstacles.

UNHCR'S SUPPORT TO TEACHERS IN WCA

[CHAD] A step forward in the inclusion of refugee teachers



Refugee teachers with the JRS Project Manager @UNHCR/HEINDAYE

For the first time in Chad, 12 refugee teachers (one in each of the 12 camps hosting refugees from Sudan) participated in the evaluation of the national Baccalaureate exam.

Aboubakar, a 35-year-old Sudanese refugee who has been teaching history in Chad for over 5 years, says participating in the correction helped him understand the process: *“We thought that copies of camp candidates were lost or attributed to others when we*

received poor results. But not anymore; being ourselves actors in the process will allow us to bring back to the camp a testimony of how things worked and are organized”. It was not only an [experience of exchange and learning](#) for these teachers, but also an opportunity to question their teaching practices in order to [better prepare their students for exams](#).

When in 2014, the decision to fully integrate the camp schools into the Chadian education system was taken, measures included the assignment of Chadian teachers to the camp schools as well as the inclusion of refugee teachers in the national teacher training curriculum. This new breakthrough is a real [step forward in the inclusion process](#) and a [recognition of the quality of the refugee teachers](#) working in the camps in the East of the country.

[MALI] Support to teacher professional development

As part of UNHCR’s education interventions, teachers in Central and Northern Mali are trained, with the support of the local education authorities, in Covid-19 prevention in schools, psychosocial support and mental health, and education in emergencies.

Teachers are the most important school-level factor for student learning. Investing in their professional development is thus essential for a [quality and inclusive education system](#). This is particularly true in crisis-affected settings where a teacher may be the only resource available for students to learn. Yet they frequently lack the support, training, and resources they need to provide quality education for their students.



Teachers receiving training in WASH, MHPSS and EIE in Mali’s Gao region @UNHCR/SALAZAR

In October, 36 female and male teachers and school principals from the Gao region participated in a six-day training, facilitated jointly by the regional education authority and UNHCR Mali’s education unit. A total of [120 teachers](#) will benefit from this week-long training by the end of the year, thanks to the financial support of [Education Cannot Wait](#) and the [Japan Ministry of Foreign Affairs](#).



EXPERIENCE SHARING

Teachers and peace promotion in Mali

'Teaching has always played an important part in my personal and professional life. From my first teacher back in pre-primary to my adult years in university, and my own experience as a language teacher in Colombia and France, it has shaped the way I think and perceive this world. Through teaching, I learned to be mindful of the others and I discovered the important role education plays in every society, making the education sector my battlefield and people's learning my life goal.'

At UNHCR Mali, we place a special focus on teachers' capacity development in our education interventions in conflict-affected zones. We understand how important it is for communities to have well equipped, motivated, committed, inspiring female and male teachers as role models for the current and future generations. For displaced communities, it means an opportunity for children to find safety and protection as we strengthen teachers' capacity to address stress and trauma through mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) in safe, friendly and inclusive learning environments. For the country, it means the promotion and preservation of a peaceful nation, in which youth are essential actors contributing to peacebuilding processes.

During our last training, I had the chance to hear the stories and good practices the teachers had to share, and the sessions became the right place to exchange about challenges and ways forward. I witnessed the commitment of each of them in giving their best to maintaining children at school safe and learning, and to contribute to maintaining peace in their communities. Teachers in Mali showcase an intrinsic motivation towards the profession despite the various challenges they face, mostly in terms of security, threats, attacks against them, and limited resources.

Through an education, I was able and continue to fulfil my own life goals. Refugee, internally displaced and host community children deserve the same fate, and teachers in Mali are doing all it takes to make that become a reality. To all of them, my sincere admiration and unconditional support.'

Leandro Andres Salazar-Lievano, Education Officer UNHCR Mali



Leandro Andrés Salazar-Lievano
@LeandroSalazar

During six days, a total of 36 teachers & school principals of #Mali's Gao region received training in WASH in schools, MH/PS & EIE.

@UNHCRMali had the honour to contribute, in this way, to the professional development of these inspiring women & men.

@Refugees @EduCannotWait
Traduire le Tweet



"What motivates me most in my profession is the love for children. I love what I do" – Maria, Malian teacher, during UNHCR training in Gao.
@UNHCR/SALAZAR

[NIGER] Teachers and refugees prepare together for the new school year



Teachers receiving teaching kits in Ouallam (Tillabéri)
@ADES Niger

Teachers from refugee reception areas in the Tahoua and Tillabéri regions met with refugee communities to discuss the theme: **Knowing and understanding the teacher to better appreciate him.**

Under the moderation of ADES (UNHCR's education partner), participants discussed preparations for the start of the school year. In addition, teachers received teaching kits from UNHCR and its partner.

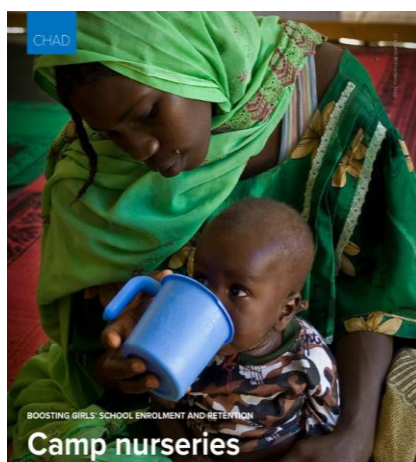
The importance of Teacher leadership for Girls' education



"Girls' education is very important because it participates in the development of the community, the nation, and even the world", says Kadiatou, teacher in Mali's Kayes region.

As we celebrated the [International Day of the Girl Child](#) on October 11, the Covid-19 crisis continues to threaten to keep millions of refugee girls out-of-school. Even before the pandemic, the situation of refugee and displaced girls in the West & Central Africa region was already dire, and their education journey too often ended with the displacement, leaving them at increased risk of violence and exploitation, forced marriage and early pregnancy.

Girls have the same rights as boys to a safe and quality education, yet they often face **additional barriers**, especially in crisis and conflict-affected contexts, and thus need **extra support** to uphold their right to education today and access a more equitable and prosperous future tomorrow. Teachers and especially female teachers have a great role to play as they can help girls to feel more comfortable in the classroom, and, most important of all, can be **inspiring role model** for girls to complete their studies, and even motivate them to become teachers themselves.



In [Chad](#), in the camp schools, 95% of teachers in pre-primary are female, while they are only 33% in primary and 12% in secondary.

UNHCR, thanks to its partnership with *Education Above All* through the [Educate a Child](#) programme, is supporting girls' school enrolment and retention by setting up **nurseries in the refugee camps** to help more mothers continue their education but also their careers as teachers after the birth of their child. There are currently 22 of these nurseries across 8 camps in Eastern Chad, allowing more girls into school and more women into teaching careers.



Success Story: meet Faida

Faida is a bright refugee from Rwanda who graduated among the top 3 students of her Economics class this year in Chad. Faida completed her licence with a [DAFI scholarship](#) and is set to start her Master with a **scholarship from the French Embassy** in Chad (@UNHCR/GOMES).



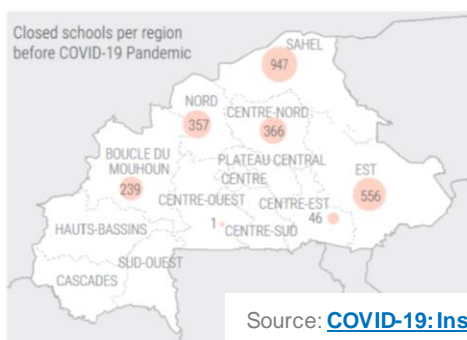
Listen to [Kadiatou's testimony](#), a teacher in the Kayes region of Mali, who explains the importance of educating girls (@UNHCR Mali/SALAZAR).

EDUCATION IN EMERGENCIES



Teachers under attack in the Sahel

In 2020, in the Sahel region, thousands of teachers had to abandon their students following attacks by armed groups and the closure of nearly 4,000 schools. Attacks and terrorist threats continue to severely disrupt education in conflicted areas, while as the displacement crisis grows, schools in host communities are frequently used as emergency shelters and the influx of new children overwhelms local educational infrastructures and teaching capacities.



Source: [COVID-19: Insecurity and education in Burkina Faso](#) (ACAPS, Oct 2020)

On September 6 in Burkina Faso, a school director was killed by gunmen in the Centre-Ouest region, while in Mali on September 29, a teacher was abducted in the Mopti region (source: [Education in Danger](#), September 2020). On October 16, the lifeless body of a primary school principal was found on the Gorom Gorom-Markoye axis in the Sahel region, just days after school started.

In addition, the combined effects of a long period without schooling, marginalization, ethnic tensions and limited humanitarian access create an environment that increases the [potential for child recruitment](#), particularly among the most vulnerable such as refugees and IDPs.

Coordinated, targeted, and sustainable support is required to [ensure safe and continuous access to education for displaced children in the Sahel region](#). This includes prioritising and funding measures to prevent, mitigate, and respond to attacks on education within humanitarian response and development plans and programs.

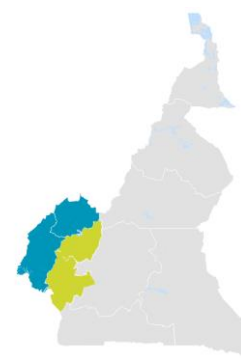
Read and listen to testimonials from teachers in Burkina Faso and Mali [here](#), [here](#) and [here](#).

The dire impact of the Cameroon Anglophone Crisis on education

On 24 October, armed men attacked a private school in the city of Kumba (Southwest region), killing at least eight children aged between 12 and 14, and injuring a dozen more.

[Kidnappings of children, attacks on teachers and destruction of schools](#) are common since the start of the conflict that agitates the two English-speaking regions of Cameroon (Southwest and Northwest regions).

While the school year in Cameroon started on 5 October, over 80% of schools in these two regions are closed and [80% of children are out of school](#). Past trends indicate that attacks on schools, teachers and students increase the weeks before and after the start of the school year (source: [ACAPS crisis update](#), 29 October 2020).



In September 2018, Cameroon announced its endorsement of the [Safe Schools Declaration](#), but more need to be done to ensure children can return to school safely. Continuous [support to alternative forms of education](#), including teaching by radio, the internet, or television, is also needed for those students who cannot yet return.

Read the UN article [here](#).

RESOURCES



[BLOG] Teachers shoulder the burden: improving support in crisis contexts

By Yasmine Sherif, Dean Brooks and Mary Mendenhall



The authors of this blog explain the [multiple and essential roles that teachers play](#) in situations of crisis and displacement and give concrete recommendations to national governments, donors, education actors and teachers themselves to work together to [improve teacher policies and practices](#).

To respond to teachers' needs, Education Cannot Wait and the Inter-agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE) have forged a new partnership to build a toolkit that focuses on teacher well-being, particularly in emergency settings – a resource that will be developed in collaboration with teachers. The toolkit will further supplement the [INEE Minimum Standards for Education: Preparedness, Response, Recovery](#) and the work of [INEE's Teachers in Crisis Contexts Collaborative](#).

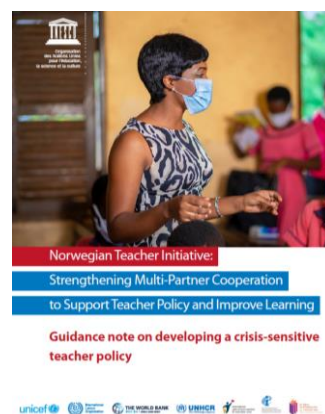
TiCC | Teachers in Crisis Contexts

Better support for teachers working in crisis contexts will help ensure that millions of children receive the right to inclusive and equitable quality education, and that global commitments - such as the [Sustainable Development Goals](#) and the [Global Compact on Refugees](#) - are fulfilled.

Read the Blog [here](#) and watch ECW video [The Power of Teachers](#).

[NTI] Improving coordination for stronger teacher policies

As part of the multi-partner [Norwegian Teacher Initiative](#), member Organizations, including UNHCR, have jointly developed a [Guidance note on developing a crisis-sensitive teacher policy](#), intending to complement existing teacher policy development guidelines with the key provisions needed to ensure that a teacher policy will also be a crisis-sensitive policy. UNICEF and UNESCO also organized a joint webinar on [Inclusion and Equity in Teacher Policy, Teacher Development and Pedagogy](#) (recording available on the NTI webpage, under the 'NEWS' section).



Learn more about NTI and access related documents [here](#).

[EdTech Hub] Characteristics of effective teacher education in low- and middle-income countries: What are they and what role can EdTech play?



This brief includes a summary of the state of current evidence on teacher education, an overview of 12 characteristics of effective teacher education, case studies on the use of EdTech to support teacher education, and an annotated list of key sources.

Read the full report [here](#).

CAPACITY-BUILDING



[LEGO Foundation] Coping with Changes: Social Emotional Learning through Play



COVID-19 means children around the world must adjust to school closure, social distancing, school reopening (but looking different), and the probability of more school closures in future. These changes will impact children's academic outcomes as well as challenge their mental health and socio-emotional wellbeing, which forms the basis of their ability to learn.

On this online course, you'll explore the [practical and emotional challenges](#) facing children and discover [learning through play and stress management strategies](#) that can help.

Join now [here](#).

EVENTS

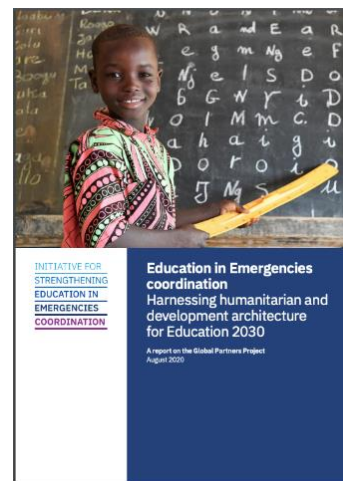


[GEC, UNHCR, INEE] Launch of the Initiative for Strengthening Education in Emergencies Coordination (ISEEC)

The launch of ISEEC marks the continuation and formalization of a partnership between the [Global Education Cluster \(GEC\)](#), [UNHCR](#) and the [Inter-agency Network for Education in Emergencies \(INEE\)](#), initiated by the [Education Cannot Wait](#) funded [Global Partners Project](#) (2017-2020) to strengthen education sector coordination during emergencies.

The final report of the Global Partners Project was launched during the last meeting of the Global Education Cluster's Partners Forum. During the meeting, partners reflected on how to achieve greater alignment between different coordination modalities and colleagues in [Chad](#) shared their experience [working across the Education Cluster and the Refugee Education Working Group](#).

Consult the report [here](#) and the [Chad case study](#) [here](#).



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