Globally, 90% of refugees under UNHCR’s mandate and 70% of people internally displaced by conflict are from countries that are among the most vulnerable to climate change. The COP 26 held in Glasgow in November brought parties together to accelerate action towards the goals of the Paris Agreement and the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change.

Climate change may not be seen as a direct catalyst for conflict, but it is often the root cause, leading to forced displacement or exacerbating conflict dynamics. Climate change undermines the ability of vulnerable communities to enjoy their basic rights, such as the fundamental right to education, and thus to cope and adapt as best they can. All the adverse effects of climate change directly and indirectly affect the provision and accessibility of quality education, particularly for displaced children. The impact is likely to be seen most immediately in disruptions to education provision.

This is already the case in the region where periods of excessive heat already prevent students from attending school, as do increasingly more common floods, and where severe weather can also damage school infrastructure. While the cumulative effect of these disturbances on students’ education performance is not well known, it is certain that interruptions in attendance, exacerbated by displacement, can only have detrimental consequences for learning outcomes, reducing the likelihood that young people – especially girls – will be able to break the cycle of poverty.

Yet, education is also part of the solution. While building up the resilience of education systems, it is critical to focus on the role education itself plays in adapting to climate change. During a webinar on Climate Education Crisis organized during the COP 26 by FCDO, ECW and UNHCR, panellists have all emphasized the crucial role that education can - and must - play in climate action.

Refugee Education and Climate Action in the West & Central Africa Region

Refugees can contribute to being part of the solution – locally and globally. It’s important to invest in refugee education and livelihoods.

Yves Umuhiza
Refugee Student
UNHCR’S EDUCATION INTERVENTIONS

[CAMEROON & CHAD] Educate a Child Programme: Strengthening Access to Quality Primary Education for Refugee Children

Since 2012, the UNHCR-Educate A Child (EAC) Programme, supported by UNHCR and the Education Above All Foundation (EAA), has greatly contributed to enhance access to quality primary education for displaced children around the world.

The programme helps UNHCR and its partners improve the quality of teaching and learning, ensure safe learning environments for children, promote awareness and advocacy on the importance of education, and strengthen capacity and partnerships with ministries of education and others to enable more refugee children to attend school in 14 countries, including in Cameroon and Chad for the West & Central Africa region.

During the 2020 implementation period, a total of 18,951 refugee children were newly enrolled in targeted primary schools in the two countries (3,248 in Cameroon and 15,703 in Chad), while over 1,100 teachers and 2,400 community members were trained.

Read Raising the Bar: Promising Practices for Refugee Education from UNHCR and Educate A Child, a compilation of innovative practices in education in 14 countries receiving Educate a Child funding.

[CHAD] Quality and Certified Vocational Training for Young Refugees

In Chad, 45 students, including 25 refugees, at the Don Bosco vocational training centre in N’Djamena have received their diplomas. These graduates were enrolled in various courses: cooking and pastry-making, computer maintenance, building electricity, sewing and secretarial work.

"My greatest satisfaction is to have a degree in my country of asylum. This means that you can succeed anywhere." - Murielle, refugee student at the Don Bosco vocational training center in N’Djamena.

The training of 25 refugees was supported by UNHCR, thanks to the partnership agreement between UNHCR and the Don Bosco Centre through the vocational training and socio-professional integration programme for young refugees in Chad. A total of 49 refugees have graduated since the agreement was signed.
[NIGER] Improving Refugees’ Access to Higher Education through Connected Learning

Aiming at improving refugees’ access to higher education across West and Central Africa, UNHCR will organise in February 2022 a regional roundtable on Connected Higher Education. In preparation for this roundtable, a mission from UNHCR’s Regional Bureau and HQ visited Niger from 8 to 14 November, to meet with key actors working in the field of distance learning and digital inclusion. UNHCR met with the Minister of Higher Education and Research and the Rector of the Abdou Moumouni University in Niamey to discuss opportunities and challenges for the implementation of connected higher education in national public universities, and ways to increase refugee enrolment through distance learning.

On Friday 19 November, UNHCR Niger and its implementing partner for the DAFI programme, the International Committee for Emergency Relief and Development (CIAUD), organised an advocacy ceremony aimed at increasing partners’ engagement for the financing of higher education for refugees in Niger. During the ceremony, the Minister of Higher Education and Research of Niger made a commitment to discuss with the heads of private institutes to offer a reduction of 25% to 50% on school fees for young refugees living in Niger. Following the Minister, the heads of private institutes also committed to granting scholarships to eligible refugees for Bachelor and Master cycles.

[LAGOS] How Investing in Tertiary Education of Refugees can Improve the Situation of their Communities

Like many refugees in Nigeria, Rose and Ochang fled Cameroon leaving behind their dream of pursuing university studies. After being selected for a DAFI scholarship, their lives as refugees changed significantly: they became university students and regained hope that one day they would be able to work in their dream job.

Financed by the governments of Germany, Denmark, and Czechia as well as UNHCR and private donors, the DAFI programme is currently supporting over 650 young men and women in the West and Central Africa region.
[EDUCATION RESOURCES]

[IDMC] Impacts of Displacement: Displaced by Violence in Nigeria

The International Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC) conducted a study in 2021 to measure the impacts of internal displacement on the livelihoods, housing, health, education and security of people displaced by violence and on the non-displaced local community in Jos, a city in Nigeria’s Plateau State. The study aims to inform more comprehensive and inclusive assistance to affected populations. This report presents its key findings.

Access the Report here.


The new 2021/2 Global Education Monitoring Report on non-state actors in education, Who chooses? Who loses? is now available. The report shows the extent to which non-state actors are engaged in education, revealing that 350 million children and youth are now educated in non-state schools worldwide. The report invites policymakers to question relationships with non-state actors in terms of fundamental choices: between equity and freedom of choice; between encouraging initiative and setting standards; between groups of varying means and needs; between immediate commitments under SDG 4 and those to be progressively realized, and between education and other social sectors.

Access the Report here.


Five case study reports were produced to document the Return to Learning process during the first 14 months of the COVID-19 pandemic in Colombia, Georgia, Lebanon, Nigeria, and Zambia. Each case study was completed over the course of five months of interviews with education stakeholders in the respective countries to examine, describe, and analyze the specific localized processes and decision-making of education system stakeholders. Additionally, a synthesis report was prepared that both summarizes the Return to Learning plans and processes from the five case studies, and also examines how, based on those findings, USAID’s Education and Resilience Conceptual Framework can be understood in relation to pathways of resilience and vulnerability.

Access the Resource here.
[WEBINARS] Teacher Well-Being and Teacher Professional Development in Crisis Contexts

INEE’s Teachers in Crisis Contexts (TiCC) Collaborative, in partnership with the LEGO Foundation, Education International, Oxfam, UNESCO, and the International Task Force on Teachers for Education 2030, have come together to support a Call to Action to transform sector-wide support to teachers in crisis contexts.

Part of this work is to share examples of promising approaches and persistent challenges across policy, practice, and research related to four thematic areas: teacher well-being, teacher management, teacher professional development, and school leadership and governance.

The first two webinars focused on teacher well-being and teacher professional development and saw the participation of education practitioners from various crisis contexts across the world. The panelists shared good practices, lessons learned, and opportunities for change to better support the well-being and professional development of teachers doing extraordinary work amidst extraordinarily challenging settings.

The TiCC event series will continue in 2022, with the aim to contribute to a growing evidence base on how to improve the ways that we support teachers in crisis contexts.

Watch the recording of the webinars on TWB here and on TPD here.

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