APRIL 2021

REGIONAL BUREAU FOR **WEST & CENTRAL AFRICA**

EDUCATION NEWSLETTER

Refugees and Cameroonian children studying together at Nabemo school, eastern Cameroon. @UNHCR/Xavier Bourgois

Why is Education in Emergencies lifesaving?

Emergency humanitarian response still often considers food, shelter, health and water as the only 'lifesaving' services. But just as lifesaving for children, particularly in the longer term, is education.

During emergencies and conflicts, education is the only way to provide children with **hope**, **stability**, and sense of **normalcy**. This is particularly true for refugee and displaced children who have suddenly lost all their bearings and sometimes their families.

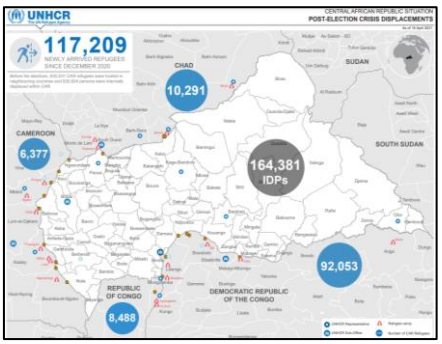
The West and Central Africa region is severely affected by poverty, climate change, regular natural disasters, economic crises and the disastrous impacts of the Covid pandemic on livelihoods. The recurrence of humanitarian emergencies adds to already precarious contexts and prolonged crisis situations, leaving little hope and opportunities for the youth, who make up **65 per cent** of the population in the region.

In this context, **access to continuous, equitable, inclusive and quality education is life-sustaining**. It provides a safe place for children to learn and play, and protection from further violence and exploitation such as forced labour, sexual abuse, early marriage, and recruitment into armed groups, while giving them the essential tools to lead dignified and self-sufficient lives. UNHCR's education strategy aims to ensure that refugee boys and girls spend no more than **three months** out of school when they arrive in their country of asylum. Adopting policy and practices that result in **meaningful inclusion in national education systems** within this time requires **coherence between humanitarian and development** partners.

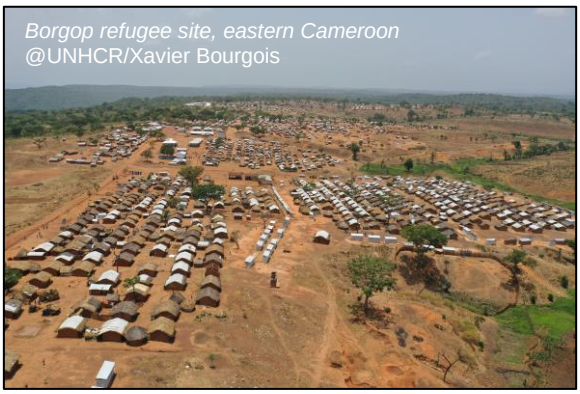
Across the region, UNHCR supports governments towards this greater coherence to ensure effective inclusion from the outset of displacement.

UNHCR'S EDUCATION INTERVENTIONS

[CAMEROON - CHAD] CAR Emergency: Meeting the Educational Needs of Newly Arrived Refugee Children



The Central African Republic (CAR) has been facing an ongoing political crisis since 2014, which has led to several refugee influxes into neighbouring countries. Since December 2020, over 160,000 persons have been displaced within the country, while almost 120,000 have sought refuge in Cameroon, Chad, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and the Republic of Congo. This brings the total number of Central African refugees in neighbouring countries to nearly 750,000.



Borgop refugee site, eastern Cameroon
@UNHCR/Xavier Bourgois

In the East of Cameroon and South of Chad, the new arrival of refugees from CAR has contributed to increasing the demand for education, in places where services were already sarce and overstreched. Together with partners, UNHCR has been immediately mobilized and supporting national authorities in enabling newly arrived refugee children and youth to get enrolled in schools and have access to quality education. Massive sensitization campaigns and continous registration activities for newly arrived refugees are conducted to ensure that all of them access education in safe and protective learning environments. While the positive impact of these activities has been tangible, several challenges remain, especially with regards to youth's access to secondary education and enrollment of girls.

Host community school, eastern Cameroon
@UNHCR/Xavier Bourgois

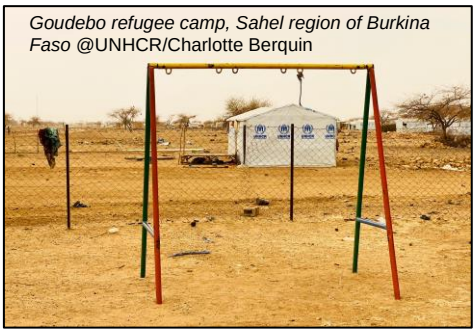
Education Cannot Wait (ECW) is supporting UNHCR's education response through First Emergency Response grants in both countries. Thanks to this funding, UNHCR's education response is expected to provide over 10,000 refugee children and youth with access to safe learning environments. Over 3,500 host community children are also going to benefit from that support. To get refugee girls and boys to school, mobile registration teams will be deployed to identify, register and provide documentation to refugee children, 40 new classrooms will be constructed with appropriate water and sanitation facilities, and learning materials, hygiene kits and other school equipment will be distributed. Teachers will be trained to provide newly arrived refugees, including unaccompanied children and survivors of gender-based violence, with the psychosocial support they need to learn, grow and thrive. Remedial classes will be organised to prevent children who have missed school for an extended period of time from dropping out.

*Read ECW press releases on its First Emergency Response funding in Cameroon **here** and in Chad **here**.*
*Check UNHCR's website on the **Central African Republic Situation**.*

[BURKINAFASO] Thousands of Displaced Children craving for Education

The rising spiral of violence and repeated attacks in Burkina Faso, especially in the border regions with Mali and Niger, has forced more than 1.14 million people to flee their homes in search of safety in just over two years. The country also continues to host more than 20,000 refugees and asylum-seekers, mostly from Mali.

In the Goudebo refugee camp, in the Sahel region of Burkina Faso, hosting more than 10,000 Malian refugees, less than 1 in 4 children are enrolled in school. Over 3,000 children, most of whom have been out of school for several years or have never even had the chance to go to school, are in need of flexible and quality alternative education opportunities, including through certified technical and vocational training, so that they can regain hope for a dignified, independent and self-reliant future.



Goudebo refugee camp, Sahel region of Burkina Faso @UNHCR/Charlotte Berquin

Nearly 60 per cent of internally displaced persons in Burkina Faso are children. In the Central-North region of the country alone, 200,000 internally displaced children are out of school, waiting for support to continue their education. UNHCR and other education partners are supporting the Government to improve the conditions of schools in the most secure areas so that they can accommodate displaced children, but there are still many gaps to be filled, in terms of infrastructure, teaching and learning materials, school canteens and teacher training.

IDP and host community children in a temporary classroom at a primary school in Kaya, Burkina Faso @UNHCR/Charlotte Berquin

IDP and host community children in front of temporary classrooms at a primary school in Kaya, Burkina Faso @UNHCR/Charlotte Berquin

What do you want to be when you grow up?

Talking to displaced and host children in schools in the town of Kaya, in the Central-North region of Burkina Faso, which alone hosts more than 40 per cent of the country's IDPs, one realises that despite the very difficult conditions in which they study, they all have a very clear idea of what they want to do later on. What do they have in common? They all want to help their community. They need support to keep hope alive, to build their future and to realise their dream.

*Access the latest UNHCR press releases and operational updates on Burkina Faso **here**.*

[NIGER] New School Feeding Programme for Refugee and IDP Children

Students in Abala School, Tillabery region, Niger @UNHCR Niger

Following the recent attacks and subsequent displacements that have increased the concentration of refugee and IDP children in the reception sites in the Sahel region of Niger, UNHCR has concluded a new partnership with the World Food Programme (WFP) that has led to the inclusion of five schools hosting IDP and refugee children in the Tillabery region in the existing national school feeding programme. The lack of school canteens or food supplies is often one of the main obstacles raised by children, parents and teachers to attending school.

As a result, this action should lead to increased attendance and improved school results of nearly 20.000 children in Abala, Ayoru and Ouallam.

Students in Ouallam School, Tillabery region, Niger @UNHCR Niger

[NIGER] School Solidarity Day: Uniting Refugee and Host Children

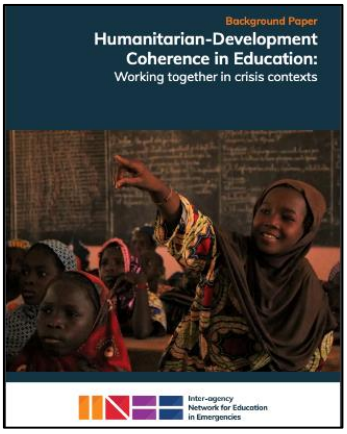
On the occasion of the School Solidarity Day, the students of the Catholic School of Maradi (EMCM) collected various household items such as soap, clothes, shoes and various food items for the refugee children of the Garin Kaka hosting site. On their return to Maradi, the EMCM students made a stop at the UNHCR office to share their experiences with UNHCR staff. They shared their hope for a "*world of peace with zero refugees*".

Students from the Maradi Catholic school visiting refugee children in Garin Kaka @ UNHCR/Pascal Nahishakiye

This initiative is part of UNHCR's ongoing efforts to raise awareness about peaceful coexistence in the area. These actions give full meaning to the concept of the 'village of opportunity': solidarity and integration.

EDUCATION RESOURCES

[INEE] Humanitarian-Development Coherence in Education



INEE recently launched a new background paper titled Humanitarian-Development Coherence in Education: Working together in crisis contexts. The purpose of this report is to demystify the concept of humanitarian-development coherence. Using the New Ways of Working definition, or working over multiple years toward collective outcomes based on the comparative advantage of a diverse range of actors, this paper recapitulates the concept of humanitarian-development coherence and why it is critical, provides an overview of barriers to coherence in the education sector and identifies illustrative examples of coherent action.

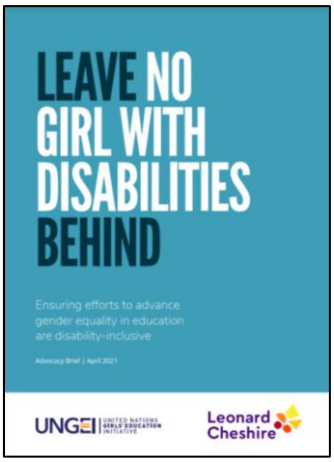
*Read the report **here**.*

[Save the Children] Action towards increased Quality Education for Internally Displaced Children

At the end of 2019, at least 13.4 million school-age children were internally displaced due to conflict or violence. These numbers are likely an underestimate with many internally displaced children unaccounted for due to lack of data. The periods of internal displacement are becoming longer, and internally displaced children are spending the majority of their schoolyears displaced without having access to quality, safe and inclusive education due to discrimination, financial, legal, and insecurity barriers. The five country case studies in this report have resulted in 12 recommendations to the High-Level Panel on Internal Displacement to ensure that the education and wellbeing needs of internally displaced children are urgently addressed.

*Access the document **here**.*

[UNGEI] Leave No Girl with Disabilities Behind

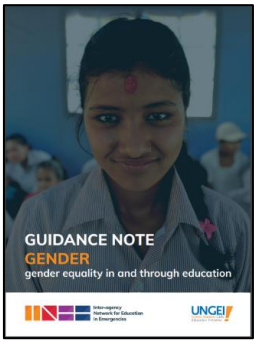


The UN Girls' Education Initiative (UNGEI) has launched a new advocacy brief and video, developed in partnership with Leonard Cheshire. In the lead up to the 2022 Global Disability Summit, the brief provides an overview of the current status of global education for girls with disabilities and calls for gender-responsive and inclusive education for all. Case studies from Leonard Cheshire, Humanity and Inclusion and Sightsavers highlight some promising strategies to overcome the key challenges and barriers to inclusive and gender-responsive education. The brief concludes with targeted recommendations to rebuild better, fairer, and more inclusive education systems that support all learners, including girls with disabilities.

*Access the advocacy brief **here** and the video **here**.*

CAPACITY BUILDING & EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES

[INEE] E-course: Introduction to the INEE Guidance Note on Gender



The Inter Agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE) launched a course designed to help education practitioners understand the content and structure of the INEE Guidance Note on Gender: Gender Equality in and through Education.

The course enables practitioners to use the key messages from the Guidance Note to inform education in emergencies programming and create advocacy messages on gender and education.

*Click **here** to learn more.*

[AUF] Open and Distance Learning Diplomas

The Agence Universitaire de la Francophonie (AUF) supports a wide range of open and distance learning diplomas in French.

Around 100 university degrees at all levels (bachelor's, master's, DU, etc.) are offered in several fields:

- Public health & medical studies
- Education & training
- Engineering
- Law, economy & management
- Environment & sustainable development

Inscriptions for the 2021-2022 academic year are now opened.

*Consult the course catalogue and register **here**.*

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