REGIONAL BUREAU FOR **WEST & CENTRAL AFRICA**

EDUCATION NEWSLETTER

International Day of Education 2021: Reimagining Education for All

January was all about education! Beside the celebration of the third International Day of Education which highlighted the pandemic's opportunity to reimagine and revitalize education, this month also saw the launch of the Geneva Global Hub for Education in Emergencies, aimed at being a catalyst to accelerate progress towards SDG4 in crises and displacement contexts and help fulfill the commitments set out in the Global Compact for Refugees.

Nevertheless, in particularly vulnerable regions such as the central Sahel and the Lake Chad basin, the right of children to education is constantly challenged, due to insecurity, attacks and forced displacement.

In this context, UNHCR West and Central Africa recently commissioned a regional study (*Connectivity 4 Communication*) on the importance of digital inclusion on the protection of refugee, internally displaced and stateless persons, which clearly shows the need to invest more in **education** and **digital culture**. The study highlights, for example, that the lack of digital skills and the digital gender divide are a barrier to access to technology and therefore to online educational resources, particularly for girls and for people with disabilities.

Now more than ever, we must come together to ensure that **financing education for ALL** is made a priority, especially in conflict- and displacement-affected countries.

UNHCR'S EDUCATION INTERVENTIONS

[BURKINA FASO] Continuity of learning above all

Primary students gathered to follow the radio education program in Bobo-Dioulasso, Burkina Faso @UNHCR Burkina Faso

Out of the 10,000 school-age refugee children hosted in Burkina Faso, less than 2,000 were in school before the pandemic. Due to repeated attacks in the Sahel region, schools in the refugee camps had to be closed and children relocated to other villages or urban areas. The closure of schools due to Covid-19 once again disrupted the educational continuity of these children.

In response, almost 2,000 solar radios have been distributed by UNHCR, with the support of its partner the Danish Refugee Council (DRC), to ensure the continuity of learning, allow students take their exams and support the gradual return to classrooms.

The radio education program also enables children living in areas where schools remain closed due to insecurity to continue learning.

[CHAD] Safer learning environments for the new school year

In Chad, over 100,000 refugee children attend school, thanks to the active inclusion policy pursued by the government since 2014.

Poster on hygiene measures to be observed at school @UNHCR Chad

To prepare and support the safe return to school and to prevent further closures as much as possible, UNHCR and its partners have strengthened sanitation and hygiene facilities in camp schools and trained teachers in health education and Covid-19 prevention.

As part of the Covid emergency response, 143 latrines, 22 water points and 210 handwashing stations have been installed in schools, and 35,000 masks distributed to students and teachers.

Young boy washing his hands when arriving at the primary school in Djabal camp, in eastern Chad @UNHCR Chad

[NIGER] Bring the children back to school

In January, UNHCR handed over 12 new classrooms, equipped with sanitary facilities, to the education authorities of the commune of Oualam, in the region of Tillabéri, enabling the re-schooling of 319 refugee and host community children.

In the Maradi region, 1,026 school-age children, including 677 refugees, have now access to education under better conditions in the villages of Garin Kaka, Chadakori and Dan Daji Makao, thanks to the construction of 7 new classrooms by UNHCR and its partner the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC).

Children sitting in their new classroom at Sakaraoua Primary School @NRC Niger

EDUCATION IN EMERGENCIES

[COVID-19] Back to school for all, but worried about a second wave

Ghana, Liberia and Mali are the last three countries in the region to have started the new school year. Relief but also worry among students, parents and teachers.

Students gathered in the courtyard of their school for the first day of reopening in Accra, Ghana, on January 18, 2021 @AFP

Millions of children in Ghana, Liberia and Mali have returned to school this month for the 2020-2021 school year, delayed due to closures decided to fight the Covid -19 pandemic.

A return expected in many countries, considering that in West Africa, particularly in the Sahel countries, the Covid-19 has accentuated the effects of the crisis that the education sector has been going through for years, due to insecurity that has become endemic. Many players in the sector have also explained that distance learning options, initiated by some governments to ensure the continuity of education, are unfortunately far from having provided the dream solution.

While this reopening is a relief for students and teachers, the recent increase in Covid cases in the region has families fearful of the eminence of a second wave that could lead to further school closures.

Read also: 'Urgent, Effective Action Required to Quell the Impact of COVID-19 on Education' (World Bank).

[Attacks on Education] Increased violence in Niger

Insecurity and attacks on schools are worryingly increasing in the west of the country, leading to an acceleration in school dropouts.

Since attacks on 2 January 2021 in three villages in the department of Ouallam in Niger, there has been an increase in school dropouts, with about 544 students having quit four schools. Additionally, on 7 January, armed groups threatened teachers in four schools in the Dargol district, leading to their closure.

According to local education authorities, as of August 2020, 325 schools out of 4,021 (8%) had been forced to close in the region due to persisting insecurity, which has also led to the displacement of over 100,000 Niger citizens. This region also already hosts nearly 70,000 refugees from Mali and Burkina Faso.

These school closures are affecting about 29,011 students, including refugees and IDPs, who are thus deprived of education. This exacerbates the already dire situation in the country, as more than 50% of children aged between 7 and 16 years are not going to school.

Sources: *UN News*, *OCHA Weekly Regional Humanitarian Snapshot*.

RESOURCES

[SAVE THE CHILDREN] Progress Under Threat: Refugee education one year on from the Global Refugee Forum and the impact of COVID-19

The report reviews progress made on Global Refugee Forum education pledges for the top ten refugee-hosting countries where Save the Children has a presence. The case studies cover Jordan, Lebanon, Turkey, Palestine, Colombia, Peru, Bangladesh, Ethiopia, Sudan, and Uganda and complement prior report Save our Education: Protect every child's right to learn in the COVID-19 response and recovery report with an analysis of the impact of COVID-19 on refugee education.

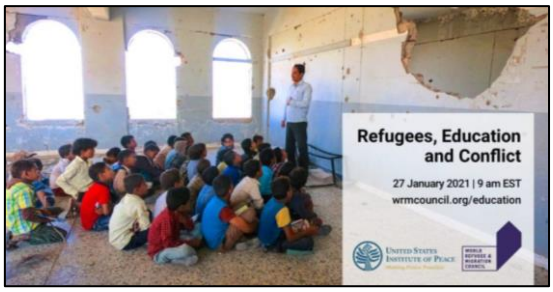
*Read the report **here**.*

[GIRLS' EDUCATION CHALLENGE] Quality Teaching Framework: A focus on marginalised girls

The Quality Teaching Framework (QTF) outlines some of the factors that determine the quality of teaching for marginalised adolescent girls. It is a learning tool to help practitioners and policy makers working with marginalised girls to think through and adapt their approaches to teacher professional development (TPD). It aims to prompt and guide thinking on areas of consideration such as: the organisation and delivery of TPD, the content and the support mechanisms.

*Access the resource **here**.*

[WEBINAR] Refugees, Education and Conflict



The World Refugee & Migration Council partnered with the US Institute of Peace for a panel discussion to explore links among refugees, access to education and conflict. Three panelists — international consultant Marc Sommers, Sarah Dryden-Peterson of Harvard University's School of Education, and Suha Tutunji, academic director of Jusoor in Lebanon — discussed refugee education policies and practice, and the implications of limited access to education for refugee youth.

*Watch the recording **here**.*

[AEWG] Guidance Documents on Return to Learning

The Accelerated Education Working Group developed two practical short guides to support the return to learning post-Covid: COVID-19: Pathways for the Return to Learning and COVID-19 Pathways for the Return to Learning: Guidance on Condensing a Curriculum.

*Access the resources in French **here**.*

CAPACITY BUILDING

[Carey Institute] Refugee Educator Academy (REA)

The Refugee Educator Academy is a program of the Center for Learning in Practice at the Carey Institute for Global Good striving to increase the number and accelerate the preparation of qualified refugee educators and service providers around the world.

The Refugee Educator Academy seeks to build upon the existing partnerships, the open exchange of ideas and content, and the movement of refugee educator and service provider learning into a virtual community space. The academy provides an integrated system that includes courses, certifications, practice communities, and an online support platform.

*Learn more about the REA **here**, and check the **2021 REA Webinar Series** as well as the **Refugee Educator Micro-credentials**.*

CENTER FOR LEARNING IN PRACTICE
AT CAREY INSTITUTE FOR GLOBAL GOOD

Refugee Educator Academy

CONTACT US

Charlotte Berquin, Education Officer
Regional Bureau for West and Central Africa, Protection Service
berquin@unhcr.org

LINKS

West Africa | Global Focus
Twitter: UNHCR West & Central Africa
Facebook: UNHCR West & Central Africa