REGIONAL BUREAU FOR **WEST & CENTRAL AFRICA**

EDUCATION NEWSLETTER

Global monitoring of school closures caused by COVID-19

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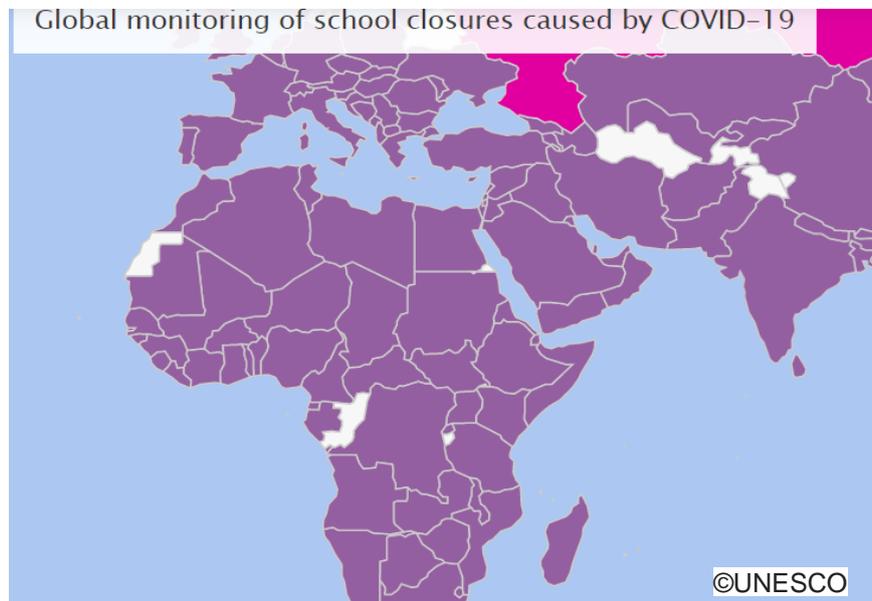
COVID-19: Education Impact & Response in WCA

In West and Central African countries, all governments have temporarily closed educational institutions in an attempt to contain the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic. These nationwide closures are impacting 140 million children across the region. This is 81% of the world's student population and an unprecedented situation in the history of education.

The closures pose great challenges for education systems throughout the region while being likely to exacerbate pre-existent learning inequalities as the impacts will fall disproportionately on the poorest countries and most marginalised communities, who are likely to be hit the hardest.

To support the Governments' response, UNESCO launched the Covid-19 Global Education Coalition, rallying international, regional and civil society organizations and private sector partners to help countries scaling up their distance learning practices and reaching children and youth who are most at risk. This open partnership, of which UNHCR is an active member, aims at supporting countries implementing inclusive, equitable, innovative and context-sensitive solutions to provide education remotely, mixing hi-tech, low-tech and no-tech approaches.

In the WCA region, many governments have already launched distance education initiatives (see examples on the following pages). The African Union also shared several local educational solutions to deal with COVID-19, available on the AEIN[1] platform.

In this context, UNHCR Regional Bureau for West and Central Africa is working with both regional education groups (the Regional Coordination Group on SDG4 and the EiE Regional Working Group) and UNHCR Country Offices to ensure that refugee and forcibly displaced children and youth affected by school closures will continue to have equitable access to education.

At country level and under the lead of the Ministries of Education, UNHCR actively participates in the development of COVID-19 education response strategies jointly with national education stakeholders to ensure the continuity of learning in a protective environment and to prepare for the reopening of schools, through the establishment of distance education programs (radio, telephone, television, digital), the distribution of pedagogical materials adapted to distance learning and aligned with national programs, and the diffusion of prevention messages and provision of hygiene kits.

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[1] Africa Education Innovators Network

COVID-19 COUNTRY INITIATIVES

Senegal: House-bound school children take classes from TV

In Senegal a television channel has launched daily lessons to prevent children falling behind with their studies and to educate them about the virus. The programme could provide a template for other countries in the region, where many households do not have ready access to the internet, but where TV ownership, although not universal, is widespread.

Read the full article here.

Cameroon: *EduClick*, a platform to compensate for school closures

Launched in 2018, this meeting platform between teachers and learners was intended to enable disadvantaged people to have access to education. But since the appearance of the COVID-19 pandemic in the country, the registrations have exploded.

Read the full article here.

Sierra Leone & Liberia: What education ministers can learn from Ebola crisis to inform the COVID-19 response

These two GPE blogs look at some practical and sensible lessons from the education response in Sierra Leone and Liberia during the Ebola outbreak and share reflections on how lessons learned from the Ebola crisis can apply to the Coronavirus pandemic.

*Read the article on Sierra Leone here and on Liberia here.*

Burkina Faso: UNICEF calls on rapper to silence rumors

Burkina Faso is one of the countries most affected by Coronavirus in sub-Saharan Africa. To prevent the spread of the virus, UNICEF has given the floor to a hip-hop figure in the country. Smarty expressed himself in music to raise awareness among Burkinabè first, but also throughout Africa.

Read the full article here and watch the video clip here.

Nigeria: COVID-19 Guidance for schools
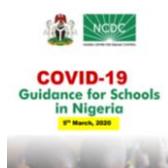
The document which is published by the Nigeria Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) is to serve as a guide to education stakeholders on the recent outbreak of Covid-19 pandemic globally.

Consult the full document here.

COVID-19 EDUCATION RESOURCES

[UNHCR] COVID-19 Guidance Material

UNHCR developed a guidance page for Operations on its Intranet, with a dedicated section to education. The page contains a lot of resource documents and UNHCR guidelines for education response to COVID-19.

Consult the page here.

[INEE] COVID-19 Resource Collection

A list of resources to support the provision of education in places affected by COVID-19, with particular focus on distance learning, alternative education, e-learning, and psychosocial support.

Consult the page here.

[THE EDTECH HUB] 5 things to think about for out-of-school learning during the COVID-19 outbreak

This post looks at lessons from pre-COVID-19 EdTech efforts in low-resource settings and how they can inform the current crisis, and also tries to pull lessons from higher-resource settings and discuss their applicability to lower-resource settings.

Read the post here.

[GPE] 4 options for distance education to continue teaching during COVID-19

This blog by Mary Burns (Education Development Center) takes a look at the four most common distance technology for educators who find themselves needing to explore distance-learning options, with a particular focus on sub-Saharan Africa.

Read the blog here.
Read also: Education in the time of COVID-19.

[TTF 2030] COVID-19 Call for Action on Teachers

Teachers are the backbone of education systems and the key to reaching learning goals, regardless of context and situation. Within the COVID-19 crisis, they are on the front line in ensuring that learning continues. The International Task Force on Teachers for Education 2030 calls on all governments, education providers and funders to recognise the critical roles that teachers play in the COVID-19 response and recovery.

Read the call for action here.

REFUGEE EDUCATION

Journal on Education in Emergencies: Special Issue on Refugees and Education, Part 2

INEE JEiE | March 2020

This second part of the JEiE double issue on refugees and education presents five research articles and three book reviews that focus on opportunities and outcomes in refugee education as they connect to rights, funding actors, literacy, belonging, and teacher development.

Download the [PDF version](#).

Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan

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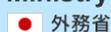
Promising Practice from the Region
Partnership UNHCR-MoFA of Japan in Mali

UNHCR Mali has been awarded funding for 1.7 million USD from the Japanese government for emergency education, protection and CCCM interventions in crisis affected regions of Mali. The project aims to provide a multidimensional protection response to Malian internally displaced persons (IDPs), refugees, and other vulnerable populations located in the central and northern regions.

The project will ensure access to quality inclusive education in a protective learning environment for displaced girls and boys in the Mopti, Timbuktu and Gao regions through the construction, rehabilitation and equipment of 30 classrooms in 10 official schools of the targeted areas; distribution of learning materials for 1,500 school age children; and, in collaboration with the regional Education Offices and the Ministry of Education/Teaching Resource Centres (CAPs), 31 teachers and education personnel will receive training on inclusive education, psychosocial support (PSS), peace education and education in emergencies (EiE), and consequently monitored on their pedagogical practices within classrooms.

The project aligns closely with UNHCR education priorities for the Sahel and the Education Cluster's strategy regarding the support to the reception and teaching capacities of hosting schools, the prevention of radicalization and recruitment of children and youth, and the creation of protective learning environments in areas that demand urgent support from all actors.

Read the press release [here](#).

HIGHER EDUCATION

Response to COVID-19

Ivory Coast: On 17th March 2020, an information and awareness session for the refugee community leaders was held in Abidjan on the measures taken by the Government in the framework of prevention against the COVID-19 pandemic.

Chad: Students organized a door-to-door awareness campaign against COVID-19.

Cameroon: An inventory of the 128 DAFI scholars (49 women and 79 men) began with a working session bringing together Plan International and UNHCR as well as visits to Universities in Yaoundé and Douala.

DAFI scholars and Plan International Cameroon staff on their way to home visits
©UNHCR Cameroun, Ruth Muto Ekwe

UNHCR Education Section developed a COVID-19 guidance document for DAFI Programme to ensure appropriate and timely response to the changes facing academic institutions, students, their families and their communities and ensure the continuity of assistance to scholars during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Achievements & Highlights

Benin: The election of the DAFI club members took place on 31 March 2020 at the National Commission for Refugees (SP/CNR). Five members of the club were voted including two women.

Commemoration of International Women's Day (IWD 2020)

Ivory Coast: On March 8, a panel discussion for UNHCR staff in Abidjan on the theme "*I am of the equality generation, stand up for women's rights*" was held with three personalities including Ms. Pervenche Aliman, banker and member of LEADAFRICAINES, an association for the promotion of gender equality, leadership and female entrepreneurship, Ms. Paule Marie Assandre, social entrepreneur, artist and woman committed to the cause of women's rights and M. Kafana Nafo Songrofohl Kevin, influencer.

Cameroon: The DAFI students commemorated the IWD 2020 through home visits to 30 vulnerable refugee women and distributed symbolic gifts, consisting of a bucket, towels and soap.

Chad: The French language training program for the benefit of 111 Arabic-speaking refugee students with DAFI scholarships, including 51 women (46%), was launched at the French Language Learning Center (CALF).

The role of Higher Education in women's empowerment

This blog post is the third in a series of collaboration between the Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA) and the GPE.

Read the blog here.