

REGIONAL BUREAU FOR WEST & CENTRAL AFRICA EDUCATION NEWSLETTER



© UNHCR/Roberto Valussi

The emoji: two hands linked together in the shape of a heart, symbolizes solidarity and diversity.

Ivorian graphic designer O'Plérou Grebet makes the shape of his design for the World Refugee Day 2020 emoji.

World Refugee Day 2020: Spotlight on Education

World Refugee Day was celebrated this year under the theme *Everyone can make a difference, every action counts*. Despite restrictions due to the COVID-19 pandemic, celebrations have placed education at the centre of the festivities in many countries.



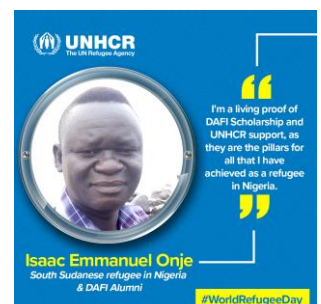
School children at Fetentaa Refugee Camp took it upon themselves to embark on a sensitization exercise among their peers on how to protect themselves against #Covid19. This was part of activities to mark #WorldRefugeeDay @UNHCRWestAfrica @UNinGhana



In **Ghana**, refugee children decided to organize a COVID sensitization campaign. They demonstrated to their peers and parents how to properly wash hands to keep the virus away. They also used the community radio to propagate their message. The children said that the pandemic is raging on relentlessly and so must education and sensitization.

In **Mali**, WRD saw the launch of radio distributions for distance education, accompanied by community awareness sessions to improve support for children. In **Chad**, the renewal of the partnership between UNHCR and the French Embassy is strengthening refugees' access to the second cycle of higher education. In **Niger**, awareness-raising sessions on the importance of girls' education were organized in Ayoru, while the celebration of the **Day of the African Child** in Diffa also highlighted the importance of education.

In **Cameroon**, UNHCR's partner Plan International has posted on its Facebook page the [video](#) of the **#ForYou campaign** against COVID-19 involving DAFI students, while in **Nigeria** DAFI students launched their own communication campaign.



UNHCR'S EDUCATION INTERVENTIONS

[SAHEL] Improve school infrastructure for safe and quality education



In Burkina Faso, UNHCR is building **additional classrooms and WASH facilities** in 4 schools in the Sahel region to welcome displaced children fleeing insecure zones.

In Mali, thanks to the support of the Japan Ministry of Foreign Affairs, UNHCR has initiated the construction of **30 classrooms** that will benefit access to education and learning for **1,500 children** in central and northern Mali.



[CHAD] Expand higher education opportunities for refugees



On 17 June, the French Ambassador in Chad confirmed his support to refugee students by funding **5 new Master's scholarships**, which will enable the laureates to pursue their second cycle of higher education.

Born three years ago, this **partnership between the French Embassy and UNHCR** has enabled to support 9 scholarship students during their two years of Master's studies. These new scholarships will bring the total number of beneficiaries to 14 and 4 of them will graduate this year.

Watch the testimonies of scholarship holders [here](#).

[CHAD-MALI] Support school reopening and exams in safe environments



As schools reopen in many countries of the region, students need to learn how to keep themselves and others safe from COVID-19.

In Mali, the distribution of **handwashing stations** has allowed **135 schools** to provide a safe environment for learners resuming classes.

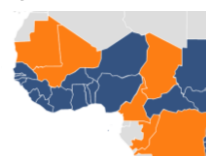
In Chad, over 3.000 refugees have returned to classes under strict COVID-19 prevention measures to **prepare the national exams** set for August. Teacher training, physical distancing measures and provision of hygiene material and personal protective equipment are part of UNHCR's support allowing a safe return to school.



[GPE] Enhance inclusion of refugees in national response plans



The **Global Partnership for Education** has mobilized more than \$500 million to support partner countries with planning and implementing their response to the pandemic. UNHCR is working with strategic education partners (including UNICEF, AFD and the World Bank) to ensure that **refugees are included in all country response plans**.



Read more about the GPE's COVID-19 response [here](#).

COVID-19 EDUCATION RESPONSE

[GPE] Education is crucial to Africa's COVID-19 response



The education sector plays an important role in [supporting the health sector's pandemic response](#). For example, lifesaving health messages, from proper hand-washing techniques to wearing facemasks, can form part of national distance-learning programs.



And while the negative impact of COVID-19 could be absolutely devastating to marginalized out-of-school children, some examples of [initiatives can help turn this crisis into an opportunity](#) to transcend the ongoing challenges, shake up the system, and build back better.

Read the full GPE blogs [here](#), [here](#) and [here](#).

[REGION] The COVID-19 pandemic has aggravated inequalities but is also a time to think about the future of education

The pandemic, which is causing unprecedented disruption in education and creating [social and digital divides](#), could further weaken those traditionally left out of education: the poorest children, young girls and the disabled. In 2018, [sub-Saharan Africa](#) was home to the largest number of [out-of-school youth](#): 19% of school age children, 37% of lower secondary and 58% higher secondary school age children.

The COVID-19 crisis has also revealed how urgent and important it is to [rethink pedagogical methods](#) and to reflect on [new tools to ensure access to education](#) to build the future of the continent, in particular by emphasizing African specificities in education and by investing in the education of young girls.

Read the full articles [here](#) and [here](#).



[KORANIC SCHOOLS] Will the COVID-19 pandemic help reform West Africa's Koranic schools?



The coronavirus pandemic has relaunched a debate on the treatment of [children in Koranic schools in West Africa](#). The pandemic has made them even more vulnerable. But very little has been done so far to support them.

Read the full article [here](#).

[REGION] How is the reopening of the schools going?

- **Benin:** [Benin is organizing all its national examinations for the year 2019-2020](#)
- **Cameroon:** [Gov't criticised for reopening schools and airports](#)
- **Mali:** [Reopening of Malian schools immediately disrupted by teachers' strike](#)
- **Senegal:** [Senegal delays reopening schools after new COVID-19 infections](#)
- **Togo:** [Togolese schools distribute masks and reduce class sizes](#)



EDUCATION RESOURCES

[UNHCR] Supported continued access to education during COVID19 (2)



The prolonged school closures in the region risks [reversing many of the gains made in refugees' access to education](#), especially for girls in conflict-affected countries who are 2,5 time more likely to be out of school.

UNHCR recently released the second issue of *Emerging Promising Practices in Education during COVID19*, focusing on UNHCR's actions to support refugees' continued access to education during this pandemic.

Download the document [here](#).

[GEM REPORT] Inclusion and education: All means all

The newly launched 2020 Global Education Monitoring (GEM) Report, *Inclusion and education: All means all*, calls on countries to widen the understanding of inclusive education to [include all learners](#). It identifies the practices in governance and finance; curricula, textbooks and assessments; teacher education; school infrastructure; and relations with students, parents and communities that can unlock the process to inclusion. It provides policy recommendations to [make learner diversity a strength to be celebrated](#), a force for social cohesion.

Access the full report [here](#).



[INEE] Don't let COVID-19 stop progress on refugee education



INEE aims to fulfill the pledges it made at the [Global Refugee Forum](#) in order to enable the [right to education for all forcibly displaced](#) and host community children and youth.

To prevent a major educational fallback due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the signatories of the Global Refugee Forum pledge urge the international humanitarian and development community to [prioritise education](#) and to do so [in coordinated fashion](#).

Read the *INEE* blog [here](#) and the joint statement [here](#).

[UNESCO] Learning through radio and TV in the time of COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic has been one of the biggest disruptions to education the world has ever known affecting more than [90% of the world student's population](#). Many countries turned to [online based distance education](#) to ensure that learning never stops. However, some [826 million students \(50%\) kept out of classrooms by the pandemic do not have access to a computer at home](#), according to a recent study by the UNESCO Institute of Statistics (UIS) and the Teacher Task Force.



Read the full article [here](#).

CONTACTS

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](#)