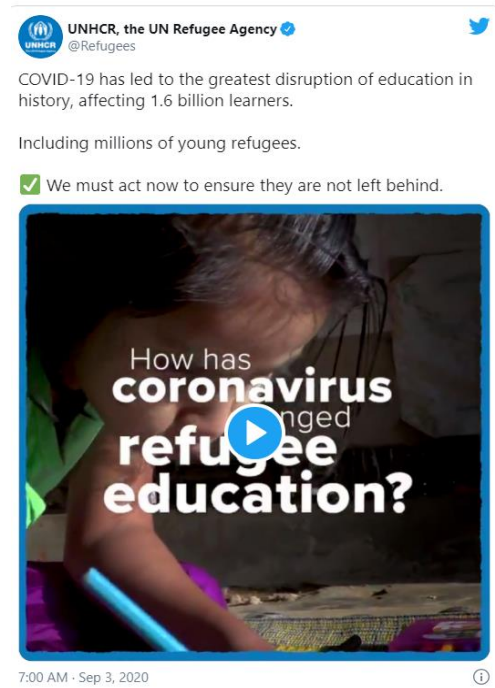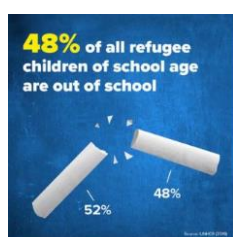# REGIONAL BUREAU FOR WEST & CENTRAL AFRICA EDUCATION NEWSLETTER

UNHCR Education Report 2020: Coming Together for Refugee Education

While children in every country have struggled with the impact of COVID-19 on their education, UNHCR's fifth annual education report, **Coming Together for Refugee Education**, finds that refugee children have been particularly disadvantaged.

Before the pandemic, a refugee child was twice as likely to be out of school as a non-refugee child. This is set to worsen - many may not have opportunities to resume their studies due to school closures, difficulties affording fees, uniforms or books, lack of access to technologies or because they are being required to work to support their families.

Refugee girls already have less access to education than boys and are half as likely to be enrolled in school by the time they reach secondary level. Based on UNHCR data, Malala Fund's report, **Girls' Education and COVID-19**, has shown that as a result of COVID-19, half of all refugee girls in secondary will not return to school. For countries where refugee girls' secondary enrolment was already less than 10%, all girls are at risk of dropping out for good, a chilling prediction that would have an impact for generations to come.

As part of its emergency response and in order to mitigate the risk of permanent school dropout, UNHCR has supported **34,868 children and youth** with **distance/home-based learning** in the West & Central Africa region.

UNHCR'S EDUCATION RESPONSE IN WCA

[MALI] Safe education environments in displacement and return areas

A new block of classrooms in Gao.
@UNHCR Mali

In preparation for the new school year, UNHCR has built 30 classrooms in the central and northern regions of Mali, thanks to emergency funds from Japan. In addition, classrooms in the return area of Timbuktu have been rehabilitated, in partnership with the Luxembourg Red Cross, to ensure that all Malian refugee children returning from Mauritania can resume their education with dignity.

[CHAD] Support to refugees taking annual exams

516 refugee candidates obtained their Baccalaureate in Chad this year (241 girls and 275 boys), 120 more than in 2019. The success rate is also up to 43.3% - 14.9 points more than last year (28.4%). The success rate of refugees is also higher than the national rate of 38.5% and refugees have received 54 mentions including one "Very Good". 1,244 refugee candidates, 58% of whom were girls, also obtained their end of junior high school exam, against 1,132 in 2019.

Throughout the school year, UNHCR Chad has supported high schools students preparing for their exams by organizing: tutoring by university students in urban settings, home exercises and small group support classes in the camps, and mock exams in real conditions. Chadian teachers also supported the camp teachers to improve exam preparation.

Ahmat Ali Abderaman, 23-year-old Sudanese refugee from the Iriba camp high school, is among the 10 best Baccalaureate candidates in Chad this year with outstanding honours. @UNHCR Chad

[NIGER] Scholarships for refugees in Niger

Abdou and Rony arriving at Paris airport.
@Corentin Fohlen/ UNHCR France

Abdou and Rony, both refugees in Niger, have obtained a scholarship to pursue their studies at the Higher School of Business and Development in Lyon, France, thanks to the support of Forum Réfugiés-Cosi and UNHCR Niger.

Their projects? Helping develop green energy in Africa, support vulnerable populations in the Sahel and volunteer with refugees.
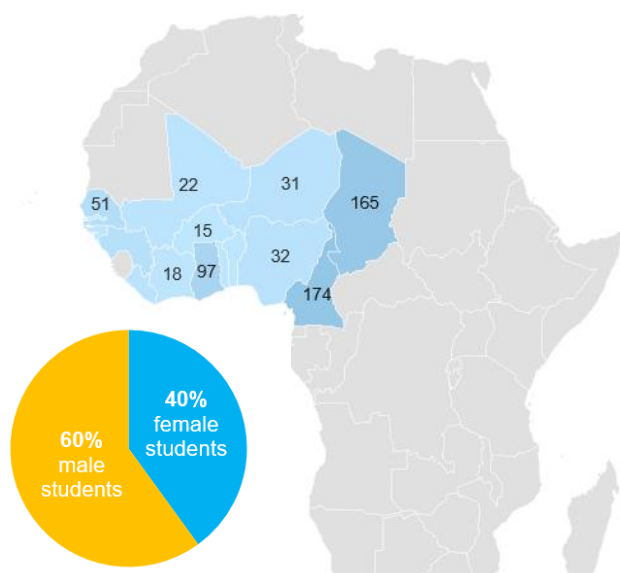
*Learn more about Forum Réfugiés-Cosi **here**.*

REFUGEE HIGHER EDUCATION

Urgent support needed to withstand impact of COVID-19 pandemic

In a recent **Briefing Note**, UNHCR shared its worrying finding that unless support is urgently boosted, one of the consequences of the COVID-19 emergency will be the reversal of some of the hard-won gains in refugee tertiary enrolment rates. To date, only 3% of refugees in the world have access to higher education. We go down to 1% in the West and Central Africa region.

In **Refugee Education 2030: A Strategy for Refugee Inclusion**, UNHCR has set a tertiary education target at **15%** of college-eligible refugees enrolled in tertiary, technical and vocational education and training (TVET) or connected education programmes in host and third countries. It also aims at achieving equitable gender representation across tertiary enrolments. Raising the level of refugee participation in higher education to 15% over the next ten years represents an ambitious goal that will require an increased access to third country scholarships, education pathways and national inclusion, along with the continued engagement and commitment of partners and host countries.

In West & Central Africa, the main support offered to refugees wishing to enter university is UNHCR's higher education scholarship scheme known as the **DAFI programme** (the Albert Einstein German Academic Refugee Initiative), which is largely funded by the German government with the Government of Denmark as a new partner. Aiming to support national education systems, the program prioritizes refugee enrolment in public, higher education institutions. Scholarships are provided to refugees through a competitive selection process and cover tuition and other associated costs. As of December 2019, UNHCR was supporting **732 students with DAFI scholarships** in the region:

*Find more data on refugee tertiary enrolment, including detailed country factsheets, in UNHCR's DAFI Annual Report **Refugee Students in Higher Education**.*
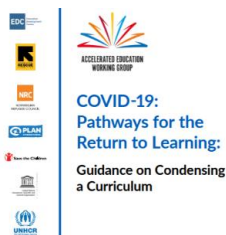
*Check also UNHCR's new platform, **Scholarship Opportunities for Refugees**, providing verified information on higher education programs available to refugees worldwide.*
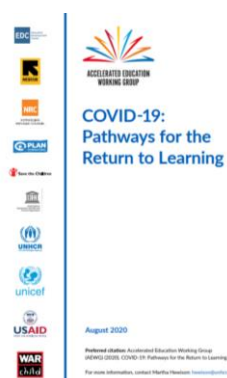
EDUCATION RESOURCES

[AEWG] COVID-19: Pathways for the Return to Learning

The Accelerated Education Working Group (AEWG) has developed two guidance documents on the return to learning post COVID-19:

COVID-19 Pathways for the Return to Learning: Guidance on Condensing a Curriculum: A practical short guide on how to condense a curriculum to support learners in catching up because of missed time due to COVID-19. The goal of this document is to provide a broad overview of best practices that can guide decisions about condensing a curriculum in a way that best meets the needs of learners and teachers in the local context.

COVID-19 Pathways for the Return to Learning: As education systems start to reopen and support students to return, it is essential to identify the most appropriate education response to ensure learners return, stay in, and complete school, and so programmes can be most effective. Four responses are most relevant in the return to learning: extended instructional time, catch-up programmes, remedial education, and accelerated education programmes (AEP). This tool includes the definition and rationale behind each response and has a useful decision tree to help you identify what response is most appropriate for which learner.

*Both tools are on the **INEE Accelerated Education page** as well as in the **COVID-19 Resources page** and will soon be available in French.*

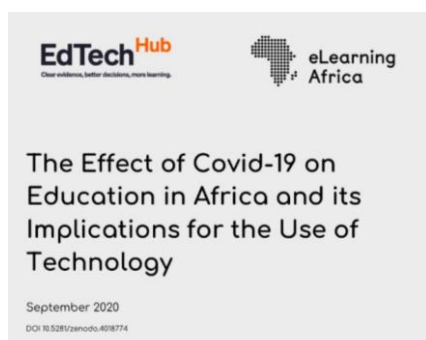### [UNESCO IIEP] Distance education in the context of COVID-19

This note examines concrete measures put in place in sub-Saharan African countries to ensure educational continuity during the COVID-19 pandemic. It also analyses the challenges that have arisen when it comes to maintaining quality education for all students, in order to reflect on other solutions for the future and to consider how actions could be improved.

*Read the full document **here**.*

[EdTech Hub] COVID-19 and use of technology in Africa

This report, and the survey findings behind it, provides a unique insight into the perspectives of EdTech experts regarding the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on education in Africa.

It is based on the findings of a survey of the eLearning Africa network, which attracted approximately 1,650 responses from respondents in 52 countries in Africa.

*Read the full report **here**.*

UPCOMING EVENTS

[October 5] World Teachers' Day

In 2020, World Teachers' Day will celebrate teachers with the theme **Teachers: Leading in crisis, reimagining the future**. The day celebrates the teaching profession worldwide and draws attention to the voices of teachers, who are at the heart of efforts to attain the global education target of leaving no one behind.

*Read UNESCO Concept Note **here**.*

To mark this day, **UNHCR Regional Bureau for West & Central Africa** will publish a series of portraits of refugee teachers and teachers in refugee reception areas, who will share their experiences and testimonies. Stay tuned!

[October 12-14] Mobile Learning Week (MLW)

The online edition of **Mobile Learning Week 2020** will be held from 12 to 14 October 2020, on the theme **Beyond Disruption: Technology Enabled Learning Futures**.

MLW 2020 is set against the backdrop of COVID-19 education disruption and response and will shine a light on prospects for technology-enabled futures of learning.

Event registration and a call for workshop, symposium and innovations presentations are open.

*Visit the MLW website **here**.*

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