

REGIONAL BUREAU FOR EAST, HORN OF AFRICA AND GREAT LAKES JULY-SEPTEMBER 2023



Ayen Malith, 19, a South Sudanese student at Morneau Shepell Girls Secondary School in Kakuma, Kenya. "In future, I want to be an accountant." © UNHCR/Charity Nzomo

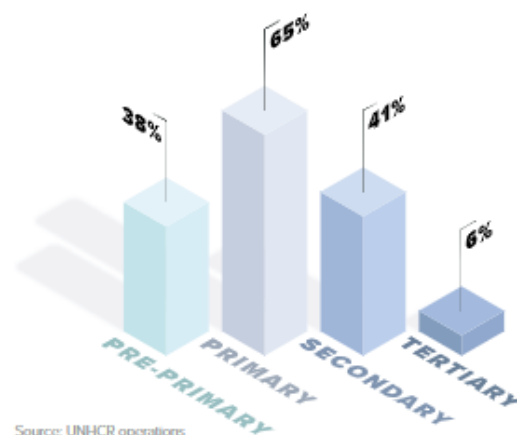
UNHCR Global Education Report 2023

UNHCR's 2023 Global Education Report "[Unlocking Potential, The Right to Education and Opportunity](#)" was launched. The bulk of the report is focused on data related to refugee enrollment, although as highlighted by the UN High Commissioner for Refugees in his foreword, "*this is not just about statistics and targets. It's about development, opportunity, unexpected connections, opening doors, setting off chain reactions.*" Despite areas of progress, more than half of the world's 14.8 million school-aged refugee children are out of formal education. Gross enrolment rates remain low.

In 2022, there were 2.17 million school-aged refugee children in the East, Horn of Africa and Great Lakes region. **1.11 million (51%) of them were out of school.** Gross enrollment stands at **40%** for pre-primary, **67%** for primary, **21%** for secondary and **2.1%** for tertiary education. While pre-primary and primary data are in line with the global trends, secondary and tertiary enrolment rates remain much lower.

Refugee enrollment rates

Average reporting countries, 2021–22



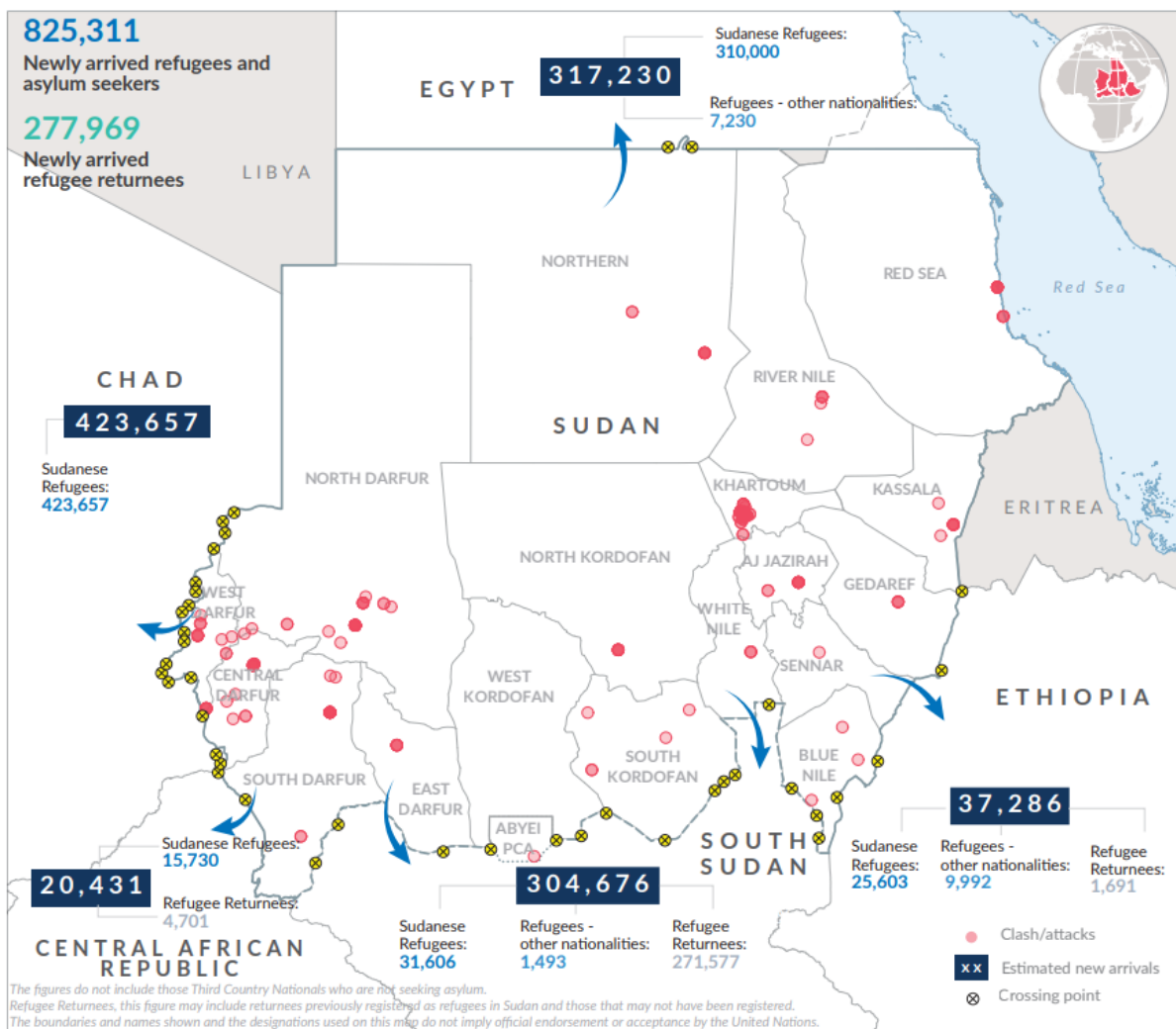
COUNTRY UPDATES

SUDAN: Our education response

Following the armed conflict that erupted in Sudan on 15 April, millions of civilians, including refugees and asylum seekers have been displaced seeking safer locations both within the country and beyond its borders. It was reported that, as of 5 October 2023, 4,425,083 individuals had been internally displaced across the country with the majority having fled to Gazeera, River Nile, South Darfur, East Darfur, Northern, Sinnar, and North Darfur states, out of which **1.6 million are school-age children**.

SUDAN EMERGENCY Population Movement from Sudan

as of 5 Oct 2023



The conflict has affected education delivery in the whole country. 10,400 schools (54% of the total number) have been forcefully closed and in areas such as Khartoum and Darfur the Ministry of Education could not finalize the school year for all grades. The ongoing crisis is also negatively impacting education for refugees and asylum seekers hosted in the country, who even prior to the conflict were facing many challenges in accessing learning opportunities. At the basic education level, the out-of-school population exceeded 70%, while at the secondary level, it surpassed 90%.



South Sudanese returnees board a bus at the UNHCR transit centre in Renk, Upper Nile State, South Sudan, where they have been staying after fleeing the Sudan conflict. They are being transported to board a barge that will take them further inland. © UNHCR/Samuel Otiemo

A number of issues are jeopardizing the start of the new academic year in refugee-hosting regions where a majority of the refugees children attended host community schools:

- The suspension of teacher salary payments since the onset of the crisis;
- Government funds are no longer reaching the schools thus affecting all activities: for instance, access to teaching and learning material and the provision of school feeding programmes;
- Secondary certificate exams could not take place during the past academic year, leaving thousands of students in a state of uncertainty;
- Schools are being occupied by displaced people. For example, in Gedaref State 171 schools were occupied, including 58 schools hosting refugees either in the camps or in the host communities;
- All the universities were closed and UNHCR could not pay the monthly allowances to students supported through the DAFI programme, managed by Windle Trust International. It was reported that 86 DAFI students had to flee seeking safety in other parts of the country, while other 53 reached neighbouring countries.

UNHCR remained on the ground, supporting refugee education through advocacy, awareness raising and resource mobilization. In particular, UNHCR supported and ensured the administration of primary exams: in White Nile 3,263 children (1,777 males and 1,486 females) sat the exam with a pass rate of 89.8 % for male and 83.6% for female; in Kassala 623 (341 female) were supported with a pass rate of at 71,3% for female and 66.3% for male. UNHCR is working with partners and local authorities, despite the challenging environment to ensure the continuation of education activities, however as a result of the emergency, the number of out-of-school children, within the national and refugee populations, is expected to increase during the next school year. **The gains made over the past few years by Sudan regarding the inclusion of refugees in the national education system are bound to be reversed**, putting at risk the fulfilment of global and regional commitments (such as the Djibouti Declaration) and pledges made at the 2019 Global Refugee Forum.

Kassala, Sudan: University Dream Cut Short

In April 2023, 24 year old Yusra Adem, an Eritrean refugee living in Sudan was just beginning her third year pursuing a degree in Medicine at the Ahfad University in Khartoum, with support from UNHCR's DAFI programme when conflict broke out. Leaving everything behind, including her studies, she was forced to leave Khartoum with her parents and seven siblings. The journey was extremely difficult and very harrowing, having to cross various checkpoints. They finally found safety in Kassala in one of the refugee camps, east of the country.

"I loved my university because of the good curriculum and teaching in English," she said. "We had a strong relationship amongst the students, teachers and school administration. Sometimes in the holidays, we would go and visit the parks together," she added. "But because of the war, the university had to be closed as we all had to run for our lives. I am sad, angry and frustrated that I am unable to continue with my education. I fear for my future," said Yusra.

Despite this major setback, Yusra still hopes to finish her degree and become a doctor treating those especially affected by chronic diseases. She also hopes that information about the university possibly resuming classes through E-learning will actually happen.

"I will take any opportunity to complete my education so I can achieve my dream of being a doctor," said Yusra.

KENYA: Evidence-Based Policy Development for Inclusion of Refugees in the National Education System

As of 30 September, Kenya was hosting approximately 644,000 refugees with 68% of the population being under the age of 18 years. The majority of refugee children access education through more than 100 schools in refugee camps, which are currently managed and financed by UNHCR and its partners. Over 164,000 refugee learners are enrolled in early childhood, primary and secondary schools, which implement the Kenya national curriculum along with recent education reforms. 23,400 learners are set to take national examinations in 2023.

Camp schools remain under-funded, overcrowded, and face severe shortages of basic school inputs including classroom space, textbooks, and teachers. It is worth noting that 75% of the teachers in the camp schools lack formal qualifications. Furthermore, a number of children and youth remain out of school due to both insufficient supply of education services, as well as a range of complex socio-economic barriers. With such a stressed system, **the most sustainable pathway to strengthen the capacity and quality of education services is**

inclusion of refugee learners and schools in the national education system.

Some progress has been made in this direction, with references to refugee education issues in the national sector plan, and development of a national policy and a costed plan for refugee education, which is yet to be finalized.

The **Shirika Plan is a government-led approach that could transform the way refugees are supported in Kenya.** It aims to move from encampment towards integrated refugee and host community settlements and is set to be launched at the Global Refugee Forum in December 2023. This policy shift has refreshed the Ministry of Education's (MoE) commitment to inclusion of refugees in the national education system.

Recently, the Ministry called for development of a comprehensive situation analysis of refugee and host community education and training in Kenya. The report will be comprised of a secondary data review and primary data on key education inputs and issues from a sample of both camp and public host community schools, as well as an online



Marian Mayi, a student at the Morneau Shepell Secondary School for Girls which is now a beacon of hope for the refugees of Kakuma. Marian wants to be an actress when she grows up. "I want to be rich and famous like Rihanna when I grow up. That way I will be able to help the less fortunate. Rihanna inspires me so much because she takes her work seriously and helps the needy."

survey to better understand the statistics and issues related to refugee learners enrolled in host schools. The situation analysis exercise is being supported by UNHCR and a range of both implementing and operational partners. A recent mission of MoE officials to Kakuma and Dadaab to collect primary data from camp and host

community schools included consultation with learners, teachers, community members, as well as national and international partners.

The report is expected to serve as an evidence base for updating policy direction and targets and will serve as the basis for GRF 2023 pledges.

SOUTH SUDAN: Significant Increase in School Enrollment in Maban and Jamjang

As of September 2023, the number of refugees enrolled in national education system in the refugee hosting areas of Maban (Upper Nile state) and Jamjang (Ruweng Administrative Area-Unity State), stood at 68,996 (33,099 females and 35,897 males), a **21.5% increase** from the 56,787 (27,217 females and 29,570 males) enrolled as of March 2023. This is largely attributed to the influx caused by the Sudan crisis.

The Gross Enrolment Rates (GER) in both locations stand at 43.19%, 61.61% and 19.19% respectively, for pre-primary, primary and

secondary levels. Despite the progress recorded a number of challenges persist:

- Secondary enrolment remains much lower than the global GER of 41%;
- The pupil-to-teacher ratio is high at 1:77, exceeding the standard of 1:50;
- The teaching force lacks the necessary qualifications;
- Infrastructures do not offer an enabling learning environment; and
- School supplies are inadequate.

The overall education funding continues to dwindle, despite increasing education needs due

to the new **arrivals**. UNHCR and partners, in collaboration with the Ministry of General Education and Instruction (MoGEI), facilitated the registration of refugee school candidates for the 2023 national examinations. 1,518 (577 females and 941 males) candidates were registered for the Certificate of Primary Education (CPE) Examination while 887 (270 females and 617 males) candidates were registered for the Certificate of Secondary Education (CSE) Examination slated for end of the year.

The Minister will engage the Sudan government in relation to the recent cancellation of primary and secondary school examinations. In the past Sudan allowed students to take national exams outside the country (including in South Sudan) and this may be the only way forward to make sure that

Sudanese students who fled the country can get their certification.

With regard to higher education, UNHCR conducted a high-level meeting with the Minister of Higher Education, Science & Technology, which is currently looking into ways of accommodating South Sudanese returnees, who were in Sudan universities/tertiary institutions, into South Sudan public universities.

UNHCR supported the graduation of 10 DAFI connected scholars (3 females and 7 males) from Jamjang refugee camps. The 10 students were enrolled at UNICAF University and benefitted from connected learning opportunities through the Instant Network of Schools (INS) supported by Vodafone Foundation.

TANZANIA: Access to examinations remains a challenge, particularly for Burundian Refugees

In Tanzania, as of June 2023, there were 82,309 (84%) refugee children enrolled in 56 schools. This represents a slight increase of +0,92% compared to the previous academic year.

Refugees are not included in the national education system and despite advocacy efforts, a complete parallel system is in place in which Burundian and Congolese curricula are used, depending on students' nationality. One of the major challenges is the access to certified examination. For the academic year 2022/2023 the Congolese exam is the only exam organized so far.

The Government of the Democratic Republic of Congo released results for Grade 6 and Grade 8 examinations conducted in June 2023. The grade 6 exam results show that 1,860 (982 females) out of 2,322 (1,174 females) refugee students passed. This represents an overall pass mark of 80.1%, an 11.1% increase compared to last year.

Similarly, the Grade 8 exam results show that 892 (426 girls) out of 1,223 (589 females) refugee students passed. This represents an overall pass mark of 72.9%, a 18.5% increase compared to last year. **Burundian refugees on the other hand are still waiting to have their exams administered**, both at the basic education and

secondary levels. This delay is mainly caused by the lack of funds. UNHCR continues looking for resources and advocates for the reduction of examination costs for the 860 (312 females) Burundian candidates.

The National Examination Council of Tanzania (NECTA) has already agreed to reduce the exam cost by 15%, amounting to USD 115 per student (a total of USD 98,900). However, this amount is still considerably high compared to fees charged to Tanzanian nationals and covering these costs is not sustainable.

With regard to access to university, only few opportunities are available. The selection of the 40 new DAFI scholars is ongoing. Out of the 350 applicants, 160 candidates have been shortlisted, including 35 female candidates. This will increase the total number of DAFI scholars enrolled in universities in Tanzania to 121.

Additionally, 20 students were selected to pursue their studies abroad: 6 (2 females) recipients of the Mastercard Scholarship, 2 male recipients of the DAAD German scholarship in Kenya, 1 male student going to the University for Refugees in France, and 11 (4 females) students awarded scholarships by World University Service of Canada.

UGANDA: Breaking Barriers: Ensuring Access to Education for Children with Disabilities

Leticia Kanyere, a 14-year-old deaf student joined Sweswe Special Needs Education (SNE) Unit in Kyaka II refugee settlement after her family heard about its inclusivity scheme. She now stays at the boarding school facilities with her friends and thoroughly enjoys her experience.

Children with disabilities living in refugee settlements face heightened vulnerability to stigmatization, exclusion, isolation, and violence. These challenges limit their access to education, essential services, relationships with their peers, and the nurturing of their psychosocial well-being.

“I like the school because it’s easy to make friends. We easily understand each other because we use the same language. In my village, only a few people understand sign language so it’s hard to communicate,” says Leticia, who is doing well in class.

In 2022, to provide inclusive education, Finn Church Aid (FCA) constructed a fully-fledged **Special Needs Education Unit at Sweswe Primary School** in Kyaka II refugee settlement. The unit was a big undertaking and came together through the generous contributions of several donors, in particular the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Finland and the U.S Department of State, Bureau for Population, Refugees and Migration (PRM). The blocks at the facility have been constructed with ramps and rails and are accessible by wheelchair. The classrooms are also brightly lit for the visually impaired.

Teachers are trained in special needs education and management, such as Living Businge, a sign language teacher at the SNE Unit with 12 years’ experience, who encourages adolescents and children with disabilities to attend school and exercise their right to quality education.

The support provided to the SNE unit enhances closer supervision, opportunities for safeguarding, and the ability to identify and address children’s psychological, social, and medical needs. The inclusive environment at the school enables learners with special needs to access quality education.

“Inclusive education provides learning opportunities to all individuals and caters to the diversity among learners. Among people with physical, sensory, mental, and intellectual disabilities, exclusion from education is most pronounced. The SNE unit at Sweswe presents a chance to eliminate the obstacles to participation and learning for students with severe disabilities that mainstream education cannot accommodate” says Filbert Idha, the Education Technical Lead at Finn Church Aid.

Refugee children commonly face disabilities related to mobility, cognition, vision, but most notably, anxiety and trauma-related disorders.

According to Uganda’s national Education Response Plan (ERP) for refugees and host communities, only 2% of learners with disabilities are enrolled in school. Nationally, only 172,864 children with special needs (approximately 2% of total primary level enrollment) were enrolled in primary schools in 2022.

REGIONAL ACTIVITIES

POLICY: Djibouti Declaration on Refugee Inclusion in National Education System – What Progress has been made?

Working in collaboration with The Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), the UNHCR commissioned an evaluation on progress against the Djibouti Declaration on the inclusion of refugees

in national education systems adopted in December 2017. The evaluation has three specific objectives:

- **Document progress and achievements** at country level and critically assess and analyse drivers of and obstacles to progress;
- Identify good practices and draw recommendations and lessons that may **inform future planning** and implementation in relation to the joint commitments made; and
- Establish the **conditions and type of environment** that facilitate inclusion in national education systems, and the role of the international community.

The evaluation, conducted by Meraki Labs - Key Aid Consulting is expected to be published in the second quarter of 2024.

TERTIARY EDUCATION: Direct Aid to support 40 Scholarships

On 18 September 2023, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between UNHCR Kuwait and Kuwait Direct Aid (DA) to provide educational opportunities for 40 refugee and returnee youth in Kenya, Somalia and Tanzania.

The MoU entails full scholarships for refugees and returnees to pursue higher education at DA universities. The signing ceremony was virtually attended by the EHAGL Regional Bureau Director and the Special Envoy for the Horn of Africa, who expressed gratitude to Direct Aid for their generous contribution in supporting education for refugees.

KENYA: Refugee-Led Research Festival 2023

UNHCR took part in the Refugee-Led Research Festival 2023, Roadmaps for Transformative Leadership, which took place in Nairobi from 11 to 15 September 2023. The event was organised by [Refugee-Led Research Hub](#) and brought together researchers, academics, artists, practitioners, and others from throughout East Africa to promote refugee leadership in universities and in forced migration research and practice. This year's five-day programme included a mix of interactive panel discussions, lectures and presentations, trainings and workshops, movie screenings, socials, and more. UNHCR participated in a panel on "Strengthening graduate-level pathways for refugee students". A good opportunity to remind the audience of the various gaps along the education continuum from pre-primary education all the way to post graduate.

REGIONAL WORKSHOP – Teachers in Refugee Settings

A Regional Knowledge-Sharing Workshop on "Promising Policies for the Effective Management of Teachers in Refugee Settings" was held in Uganda (Kyaka II) from 25 to 27 July 2023. The workshop was organized by the [International Institute of Education Planning \(IIEP- UNESCO\) and Education Development Trust \(EDT\)](#) in collaboration with UNHCR, following a number of [studies](#) conducted in the region focusing on refugee teachers' management with the support of Dubai Cares.

The workshop was attended by governmental officials from Kenya, Uganda and Ethiopia and colleagues from IGAD and was the occasion to discuss and exchange experiences and approaches on refugee teacher management, their inclusion in the national education system and explore solutions for their professional recognition, recruitment and remuneration.

IMPACT STORIES

SOMALIA: Education as a Game Changer - An Impact Story of a DAFI Alumna



Safa (left) on her graduation day at the City University of Mogadishu, on 13 July 2023.

Safa's journey from Yemen to Somalia is a testament of her **resilience and courage**. She had witnessed the devastation of war and the hardships of displacement, but never gave up on her aspirations. After a competitive process, Safa was awarded a DAFI scholarship.

"I was ecstatic and grateful for the opportunity to pursue my dreams as a DAFI scholar."

She enrolled for an IT course at City University in Mogadishu, eager to acquire new skills and knowledge. She hoped to use her education to help other refugees and make a positive difference in the world. This was her drive and motivation throughout her studies. At the University, she was highly regarded by her course-mates and lecturers.

"Throughout my university years, I encountered numerous challenges. I had to balance my studies with household responsibilities, being the only female. There were moments of stress and

insecurity, yet I never gave up. I came to realize that I've conquered countless hurdles to arrive at this juncture, and nothing would hinder me from chasing my dreams."

Safa graduated in a colorful ceremony in July 2023. This accomplishment was not only a personal success but also a tribute to the resilience of refugees around the world. Safa's story inspires many others who face similar difficulties. Safa now works for a local organization in Mogadishu that collaborates in supporting refugees.

The DAFI programme has been active in Somalia since 2019. Since its inception, 33 students (20 male and 13 female) graduated. There are 186 students (111 male and 75 female) currently enrolled in Universities thanks to DAFI. They represent 78% of refugees enrolled in tertiary education.

UGANDA: A Story of Hope: Teenage Mother Returns to School

Christine Muhindo, 19, is the first born in a family of eight. She fled the war in Congo with her mother and siblings in 2013. She currently lives in Kyaka II Refugee Settlement. Christine was attending secondary school when she found out she was pregnant.

"The father was a fellow refugee who was studying in Uganda's capital, Kampala. We met

during the school break when he had returned to Kyaka II Refugee Settlement for holidays," Christine says. "When I told him I was pregnant, he left the village and I have never seen him again." the mother of a now four-year-old son continues.

"I was very scared. I lost all hope of completing my education. Fortunately for me, a countrywide

lockdown was declared in March 2020 following the Covid-19 outbreak and this gave me a chance to raise my baby.”

When schools re-opened in 2022, Finn Church Aid (FCA) conducted specific back-to-school campaigns to encourage teenage mothers to return and complete school. “I was encouraged to return to school but didn’t have school fees. My mother couldn’t afford to take me back to school. In fact, I stayed out of school for some time because I didn’t have fees.” Christine adds.

Her hope was restored when she received a scholarship from FCA as well as scholastic materials such as mathematical sets, books, pens, and school uniform. She is currently studying in senior six – the final grade before

graduation – at Bujubuli Secondary School and is very excited to be back in school.

Christine expresses her gratitude to FCA and UNHCR staff, who regularly check in on teenage mothers such as herself and discuss the benefits of staying and completing school. Christine says the regular contact has kept her strong and motivated.

Christine also attributes her stay in school to her fellow students and teachers whom she says have not discriminated against her. She is now a member of the Girls Empowerment Club where she holds the responsibility of mobilizing her fellow students for club meetings and other activities. She aspires to become an Information Technology (IT) specialist.

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