


# EDUCATION NEWSLETTER

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## From Hope to Uncertainty: How Funding Shortfalls Are Threatening Learning

### Region

Hawa, an 18-year-old Sudanese refugee, has spent her entire life in Farchana camp, Chad, where her parents sought refuge after fleeing the Darfur conflict in 2004. She has always been a dedicated student, passionate about Biology, and dreams of becoming a doctor. But today, her future hangs in the balance.

In Farchana, where close to 55,000 Sudanese refugees have sought safety, the secondary school has been a place of hope for 500 students. That hope is now fading. The school is not closing because students have stopped attending or teachers have given up, but simply because there is no longer enough funding to pay teachers' salaries.

This crisis is not unique to Farchana. Across eastern Chad, 8,500 refugee secondary school students risk losing access to education. For now, dedicated teachers have kept lessons going—even without pay. But how long can commitment alone sustain learning?

If the funding freeze continues into 2026, the consequences would be catastrophic. In Chad alone, 155,000 refugee children could be left without schooling, and across West and Central Africa, more than 300,000 children may lose access to education.


→ **Read more:** [Aid cuts shut down critical services for Sudanese refugees in Chad](#)

## Geneva Global Hub for Education in Emergencies' members call for urgent action to protect education in crisis

Global funding cuts are putting millions of vulnerable children at risk, with 234 million school-aged children in crisis-affected areas needing urgent education support—35 million more than just three years ago. Already chronically underfunded, the education in emergencies sector is now at a breaking point, forcing delays and suspensions of critical programmes.

Beyond learning, schools provide essential services such as food, healthcare, and protection. Without access to education, children face heightened risks of violence, exploitation, and child labour, while long-term consequences threaten incomes, resilience, and prospects for peace.

The Geneva Global Hub for Education in Emergencies and its members call on governments, philanthropy, and donors to sustain and increase funding, prioritize inclusive and quality education, and support local communities and educators delivering learning in crisis settings.



**Statement by the Members of the Geneva Global Hub for Education in Emergencies**

**Funding cuts threaten education in crisis contexts, with nearly one quarter of a billion school-aged children needing support**

Geneva, 24 February 2025

Humanitarian and development funding is under unprecedented strain, with donor cuts reshaping global aid and putting millions of vulnerable children, youth, and their families at risk. Essential services including education are being halted or pushed to the brink in fragile and crisis-affected contexts such as the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Gaza, Sudan and elsewhere.

A staggering 234 million children in crisis need urgent support to access quality education—35 million more than just three years ago—and over 85 million children are out of school.<sup>1</sup> With growing needs, the urgency to sustain existing, and mobilise greater financial resources, has never been more critical.

Education in emergencies was already chronically under-funded and the sector is now at crisis point. Funding shortfalls are directly impacting country-level operations, forcing the delay or suspension of critical education support for hundreds of thousands of children and youth affected by armed conflict, violence, disaster, and displacement.

In this critical time of shrinking aid budgets and escalating crises, the global community cannot afford delays or inaction.

Without schools and learning spaces in fragile and crisis contexts, children and youth lose safe spaces that provide not only learning but also food, health care, mental health and psychosocial support, water and sanitation, and protection. In times of crisis, the absence of education leaves children and youth vulnerable to violence, exploitation, and child labour, depriving them of their rights and safety. In the long term, a lack of education threatens incomes,<sup>2</sup> weakens resilience to crises—including the climate crisis—and undermines prospects for peace.<sup>3</sup>

Education is not a privilege—it is the foundation for lasting change and a fundamental right for children.

Without urgent action, an entire generation of crisis-affected children and youth faces losing access to education, opportunities for growth, and the hope for a brighter future.

We, Members of the Geneva Global Hub for Education in Emergencies, remain committed to serve the world's most vulnerable children and youth.

**We call on governments, philanthropy and other donors to stand with us to:**

- **Sustain and increase humanitarian and development funding**, and prioritize education for its critical capacity to facilitate other life-saving and life-sustaining interventions such as health, water and sanitation, food, and protection, while also enabling resilience-building and self-reliance.
- **Ensure safe, inclusive, and quality education for all crisis-affected children and youth**—girls and boys, children with disabilities, refugees, and displaced children and youth must not be left behind.
- **Support local communities and educators**—frontline teachers and local organisations are key to delivering education in the most challenging contexts and must be adequately supported.

### Central African Republic, Chad

## Sudan crisis marks two years with no end in sight and urgent needs ahead

The Sudan emergency has become one of the world's largest displacement crises, with nearly 13 million people forced to flee, including 8.6 million internally displaced and 3.8 million refugees and returnees, mostly in neighbouring countries. Today, 1 in 3 Sudanese is forcibly displaced, and 1 in 13 refugees worldwide is from Sudan. Chad has received the most refugees in West and Central Africa, with over 773,000 arrivals since the conflict began in 2023.

The humanitarian needs are more urgent than ever. Ongoing fighting continues to kill civilians, destroy infrastructure, and force thousands to flee daily. Two years into the crisis, the emergency remains active, with displacement rates as high as at the start of the conflict.

As the conflict nears its two-year mark, education partners in Chad and the Central African Republic will continue to prioritize the inclusion of Sudanese refugees in national education systems, working closely with authorities to ensure access to quality, inclusive education for refugee and host community children.

Despite its scale, the Sudan crisis is one of the world's most underreported and underfunded emergencies. In 2025, humanitarian partners require **US\$1.8 billion** to assist 4.8 million people including refugees, returnees, host communities, and third-country nationals across seven neighbouring countries.



Sudanese refugee students attend school in Farchana, eastern Chad.  
© UNHCR/ Ala Kheir



## UNHCR'S EDUCATION INTERVENTIONS

### 📍 Central African Republic

## Sudanese refugees begin French language immersion for university access in the Central African Republic



Sudanese refugee university students with their instructors from University of Bangui's Laboratory of Sociolinguistics and Plurilingual Education and representatives from the National Commission for Refugees in CAR © UNHCR/Elizabeth Coco

Nearly two years since the conflict in Sudan, the Central African Republic has welcomed over 42,000 people displaced from Sudan, including nearly 36,000 refugees and more than 6,000 returnees. Among them are hundreds of young people who were forced to abandon their university studies when campuses across Sudan closed. Now, in early 2025, a group of young Sudanese refugees is finally resuming their education in CAR. Thanks to support from the Mastercard Foundation, UNHCR and the Ministry of Higher Education have launched a new French-language bridging programme for 30 university-level Sudanese refugees. The students have arrived in Bangui, where they are beginning an intensive academic journey to learn French and be integrated into the national university system.

This initiative, delivered through the University of Bangui's Laboratory of Sociolinguistics and Plurilingual Education (LASEP), is the first formal language immersion programme linked to higher education support for refugees in the Central African Republic. It is also the first fully funded university scholarship for refugees in the country, complementing partial education assistance already provided to more than 100 refugee students enrolled in Bangui's universities.

For these students, reaching Bangui was no easy journey. Most were selected from the remote town of Birao in Vakaga prefecture, over 1,000 kilometres from the capital, where most Sudanese refugees are hosted. With poor roads and insecurity making land travel impossible, the students were flown to the capital with support from the United Nations Humanitarian Air Service (UNHAS). For many, it was their first time on an airplane, marking the start of a new chapter filled with hope and possibility.

At the Laboratory, a dedicated team of professors and linguistics experts is helping students build French fluency while introducing them to the Central African curriculum and academic culture. "These students are incredibly motivated and very wise," says Professor Bendot Gueguet Yaka. "They know what it means to have their education interrupted, and they work hard every day to seize this new opportunity. Their progress in French has been remarkable. They are learning quickly, and their confidence grows daily. The goal extends beyond academic success to long-term inclusion. By learning French, the students will be better prepared to continue their studies, engage with local communities, and contribute to their host society.

*Continued on next page →*

“Back home I dreamed of becoming a lawyer, but the war took that dream away,” shared Mounia, one of the eight women in the programme, who was in her second year of law studies at a university in Khartoum when the conflict erupted. “Now I’m learning French so I can return to university. Even though it is challenging, I finally feel hope again. Every day I feel closer to my goals.”

These young scholars are opening doors for future generations of refugees in CAR and across the region. The programme is a key step towards overcoming language barriers in education, advancing inclusion, and empowering displaced youth to rebuild their futures through learning.

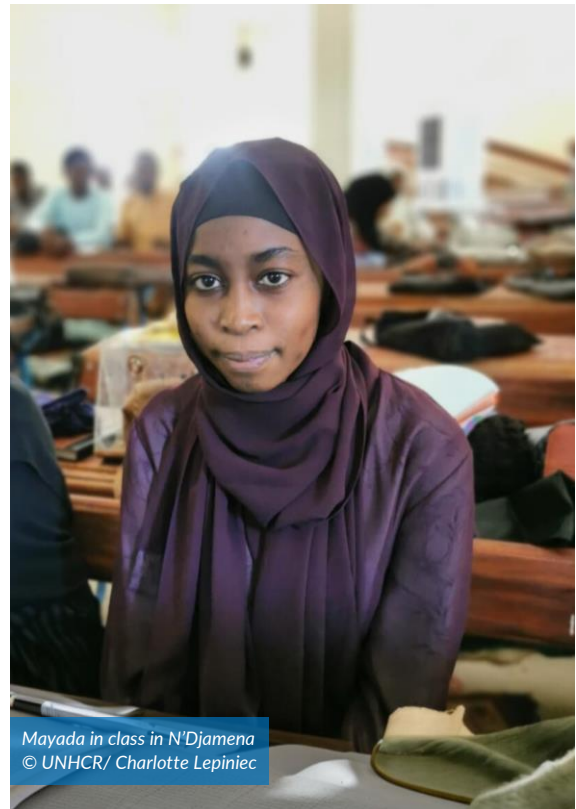


## A scholarship and a dream: Mayada’s path to becoming a doctor

When war broke out in Sudan, 22-year-old Mayada’s life changed overnight. As a first-year medical student at the University of Adjinene, she had to leave behind her home in Tinere and the future she was building. Now, as a refugee in Chad, Mayada is rebuilding her life and continuing her studies, determined to pursue her dream of becoming a cardiologist.

Mayada grew up in a supportive family. Her mother worked as a primary school Arabic teacher, and her father ran a small business. Life in Tinere was stable and full of promise. “I was living a normal student life, focusing on my medical studies,” she recalls. But when violence escalated in mid-2023, armed groups looted her family home and forced them to flee for safety.

The journey to Chad was long and exhausting. Mayada and her family crossed into eastern Chad through Adré, travelled to Abéché, and eventually reached N’Djamena with the help of her aunt, who had already found refuge there. Arriving in a new country brought many challenges, including extreme heat, a different language, and the emotional toll of displacement. Yet the warmth of the Chadian community brought some comfort. “I feel very grateful for the kindness we have received,” Mayada says.



Mayada in class in N’Djamena  
© UNHCR/ Charlotte Lepiniec

Starting over in N’Djamena has not been easy. Mayada’s father remains in Adré and is unemployed, while her mother is teaching Arabic to support the family. Although they have managed to rent a small house in the city centre, financial pressures remain constant. Despite this, Mayada stays focused on her education. “Even with all the difficulties, I am thankful for the chance to continue studying and to experience a new country,” she shares.

Before the conflict, Mayada had only just begun her journey to become a doctor. Thanks to the support of a UNHCR “Mixed Mouvements” scholarship, she has resumed her studies at the University of Roi Fayçal in N’Djamena. Her motivation to specialise in cardiology comes from a deeply personal experience: the sudden loss of a close family friend to cardiac arrest. That tragedy left a lasting impact and strengthened her resolve to pursue medicine.

Scholarships like the one Mayada received are vital in giving young refugees the chance to rebuild their futures. For students who have lost almost everything, these programmes provide more than tuition fees. They restore hope and open paths to new opportunities. “I learned about the scholarship through social media,” Mayada explains. “It gave me the opportunity to continue my studies and to dream again.” Since 2017, over 1,300 students, including 19 percent Chadians, have received support through the national “Mixed Mouvements” scholarship programme. The current cohort is supported by funding from Italy and the Mastercard Foundation.



 **Mali**

## Accelerated learning programme opens doors for displaced children in Mali



Hawa in class in Koro  
© ACEF-Mali

In Mali, where nearly 2,000 schools have closed in 2024 alone due to insecurity, thousands of children have been forced out of the classroom. To address this urgent challenge, UNHCR is supporting the government-accredited *Scolarisation Accélérée Passerelle (SSA/P)* program, an accelerated learning initiative offering a lifeline to out-of-school children.

This intensive nine-month programme condenses three years of primary education, enabling children aged 8 to 12 to catch up and transition into CE2 (grade 4) in the formal education system. Community-based learning centers deliver the programme under the supervision of the Ministry of Education, which trains facilitators and ensures quality standards. Crucially, the certificates awarded at the end of the program are officially recognized, allowing children to continue their education anywhere in the country.

Since its launch in 2021, UNHCR has established 134 centers, supporting 4,013 children, with 60 per cent being refugees and 35 percent internally displaced. With a 85 percent of graduates

integrating into formal schooling, the program continues to expand. For the 2024–2025 school year, 443 students, including 178 girls, are enrolled across 15 centers.

One of these students is 10-year-old Hawa, a young refugee from Boukéré village in northern Burkina Faso. Forced to flee to Koro with her family in September 2022, Hawa faced bleak prospects of returning to school. "We had limited means to enroll her," her father recalls. But with support from UNHCR and its partner ACEF-Mali, through the SSA/P project, Hawa found her way back to education. She is now proudly attending fourth grade at Siaka Dama D School in Koro. Hawa and her family remain hopeful and ask for continued support so that refugee children like Hawa, who have returned to school, can thrive in formal education.

 **Niger**

## Primary schools in Hamdallaye equipped to improve learning conditions

In February, UNHCR, officially handed over essential school equipment to two primary schools in Hamdallaye Centre and Béri Koira, thanks to funding from the European Union. The donation included 422 student desks and benches, as well as 17 desks and 14 chairs for teachers.

The handover ceremony brought together the Acting Administrator of Hamdallaye, the Regional Director for Civil Registration, Migration, and Refugees of Niamey, representatives from the Hamdallaye Primary Education Inspectorate, members of the parents' association, UNHCR, and partners from NGOs ADES and ADKOUL.



Delivery of tables, benches, chairs, desks to  
Hamdallaye primary school  
© UNHCR/ Nourratou Oumarou Hegu

According to local education officials, before this support from UNHCR, students had to sit directly on the floor or crowd three or more to a single bench. With this new equipment, two students will be able to share each desk, significantly improving their learning conditions.

Speaking on behalf of the national authorities, the Secretary to the Acting Administrator of Hamdallaye expressed his deep gratitude to UNHCR and its donor. He highlighted that UNHCR's strong support to the the Hamdallaye community in critical areas such as education, health, water supply, flood management, and energy.

 **Nigeria**

## UNHCR Nigeria marks International Day of Education in Ogoja

To celebrate the International Day of Education, themed “AI and Education: Preserving Human Agency in a World of Automation,” UNHCR Nigeria brought an inspiring awareness session to Government Secondary School Ukende, Ogoja. Led by DAFI (Albert Einstein German Academic Refugee Initiative) scholars, the session reached 152 students, highlighting the power of education and the growing role of AI in learning.

Students were eager to engage, drawing inspiration from the DAFI scholars’ personal stories. Neville Obendi, a Public Administration student, shared how “education is a beacon of hope for a better and brighter future. When my education was disrupted by conflict, I had lost all hope, but now my hope is renewed.” Anabel Mbat, a Cameroonian refugee studying Health Education, emphasized that “education is an eye-opener that develops creativity and productivity. Through the knowledge I have gained in school, I sensitize women and girls on reproductive health, personal, and menstrual hygiene in my community.”

Furthering its sustainable response efforts, UNHCR continues to strengthen partnerships with Refugee-Led Organizations (RLOs). In Ogoja, the Greater Love Sustainable Initiative donated textbooks covering 28 secondary school subjects, to enhance their ongoing library project across the three settlements of Adagom 1, Adagom 3, and Ukende. These resources aim to support both refugee and host community students, particularly those preparing for critical exams such as the Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE) and the West African Senior School Certificate Examination (WASSCE). These resources will help both refugee and host community students prepare for key exams, with students encouraged to make full use of the libraries and invite their peers to do the same.



Refugee and host community students.  
© UNHCR/ Lucy Agiende

 **Burkina Faso**

## Graduation ceremony highlights digital skills training for displaced youth in Burkina Faso



© UNHCR

In March, UNHCR Burkina Faso celebrated the closing ceremony of the "Digital Referent" project, a joint initiative with the Agence Universitaire de la Francophonie (AUF) and Simplon Co. The project aims to strengthen the digital skills of forcibly displaced youth, equipping them to create their own employment opportunities or enhance their competitiveness in the job market.

Over the course of seven months, 14 young learners, including 11 refugees, three internally displaced persons, and six women and girls, received training in a dedicated classroom at the AUF Francophone Digital Campus in Ouagadougou.

Throughout the programme, participants acquired a range of valuable skills. They learned to develop websites and applications using existing platforms. They gained experience in project management and discovered strategies to improve their organisation and productivity. They were also trained in effective online communication and outreach, and developed practical know-how in installing digital equipment and providing IT and office support services.

The impact of the programme is already visible. Eight trainees have secured professional internships, while one has launched their own self-employment venture.

 **The Gambia**

## Refugee students thrive with DAFI scholarships in The Gambia



Benita at her graduation  
© Tallblaqben Photography

“As a refugee girl, the odds seemed stacked against me, and higher education felt like an unattainable dream,” says Benita Osango, a 2023 law graduate from the University of The Gambia and DAFI scholarship recipient. Originally from Congo, Benita fled to The Gambia in 2005 with her mother and sister due to war. Education became her hope for a brighter future.

“The scholarship was more than financial aid; it was a lifeline and validation of my determination,” she says. “It made me feel seen, valued, and empowered.”

Benita is one of 18 beneficiaries who, with support from UNHCR, the Gambian government, GAFNA, and the DAFI programme, have attained higher education since 2019. UNHCR continues to advocate for higher education, providing recipients with opportunities for workshops, capacity building, and leadership training.

Beyond financial assistance, Benita values the emotional support from mentors and fellow refugees during her university journey. She believes that her refugee status does not define her and views education as the key to rebuilding her future. Her degree has opened doors for internships, volunteering, and networking, helping her work toward her career goals.

→ [Read the full story by Edwina Mapenzi Ayuko Ochieng on UNHCR.org](#)

 **Chad**

## From conflict to classroom: Sudanese teachers rebuilding hope in Chad

When war erupted in Sudan in 2023, Mohamed, a math and English teacher in Niala, suddenly saw his peaceful life collapse. As violence spread, his school became a refuge for trapped students. Alongside fellow teachers, Mohamed did everything possible to keep the children safe, but the fighting intensified. Between April and October, his family remained stranded in Niala, cut off from basic supplies.

Determined to escape, Mohamed, his wife, and their four children undertook a dangerous journey toward Chad. They arrived in Adré in late October and were later relocated to Kerfi, near Goz Beida. Life in exile was harsh. At first, they built a makeshift shelter, only receiving proper housing with UNHCR support months later. Mohamed took on exhausting manual work such as making bricks and farming to survive, but he longed to return to teaching.

In October 2024, Mohamed finally returned to the classroom, teaching at the primary school in Kerfi. He received training to adapt to Chad’s education system and essential supplies provided through UNHCR and JRS thanks to support from Education Cannot Wait and ECHO. “These trainings improved our methods and gave us the confidence to better support our students,” he says. Mohamed also highlights the crucial teaching materials provided, including textbooks, notebooks, and teacher guides.

Despite the hardship and separation from his extended family, who remain in Metche (another refugee site in Chad) Mohamed is still hopeful. He dreams of returning home and reuniting with his loved ones. His story, like that of the 472 Sudanese refugee teachers recently integrated into the Chadian education system, shows the resilience of refugee teachers, who, when provided with the right tools and even in the face of conflict and displacement, continue to inspire hope and build brighter futures for their students.



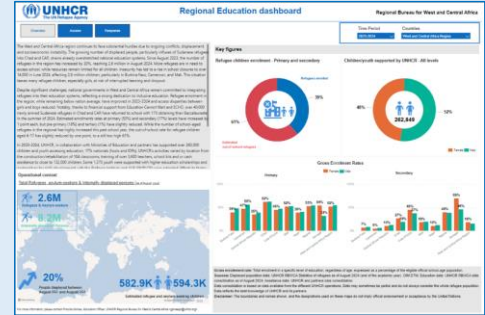
Mohamed in his classroom  
© UNHCR/Charlotte Lepiniec



# REFUGEE EDUCATION DATA

## → UNHCR Regional Education Dashboard

UNHCR's regional education data **Power BI** compiles data from the last four school years and covers all major UNHCR operations in the region, as well as provides a regional compilation for each year. Over the three pages, you will find data on refugee enrolments at all school levels as well as UNHCR's key interventions figures, targeting forcibly displaced and host community children and youth.



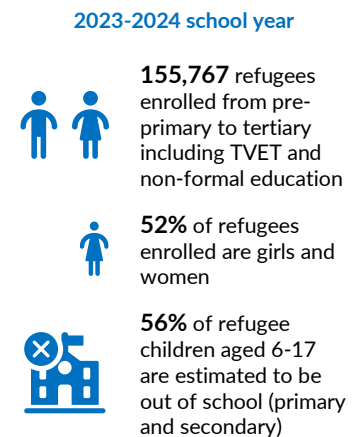
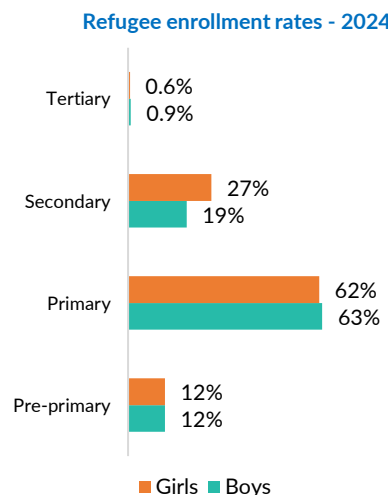
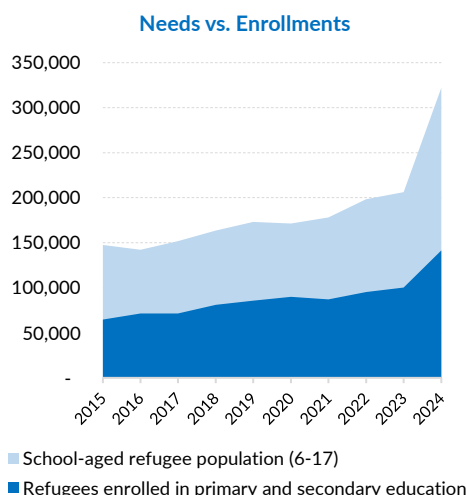
## Country Spotlight: Chad – Community-led data collection

In Chad, as across West and Central Africa, education remains a foundation of refugee protection and resilience. Despite limited services, UNHCR works closely with the Ministry of National Education and Civic Promotion (MENPC) to implement the national **Refugee Education Strategy 2030** to ensure that all refugees can access the Chadian education system on the same terms as nationals. Today, over 155,700 refugee children are enrolled in schools in Chad, representing a 118 per cent increase over the past decade.

A critical part of this progress lies in a strong data collection system. While refugee hosting schools are included in the national Education Management Information System (EMIS), UNHCR and partners conduct monthly data collection to monitor needs and track progress in real time. Data is collected on students, teachers, and schools, and is disaggregated by location, education level, status, and gender to inform evidence-based decisions.

Since 2014, with the inclusion of Sudanese refugee children in the national curriculum, data collection has been standardized across all levels. Over the years, bilingual tools have been revised to better suit the context. UNHCR and partners have introduced tablets for digital data collection and linkage with UNHCR's data base, trained education officials and refugee community members, and established community-based data collection systems. Refugees actively participate in gathering and compiling data, building ownership and improving accuracy. All data is verified and validated by local education authorities ensuring alignment with national standards.

### Key refugee enrolment statistics



→ [More data](#)



## EDUCATION RESSOURCES

### UNHCR EDUCATION

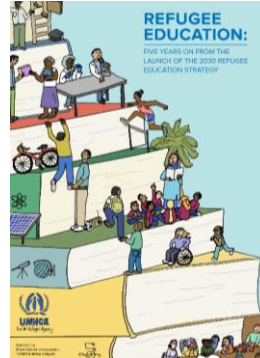
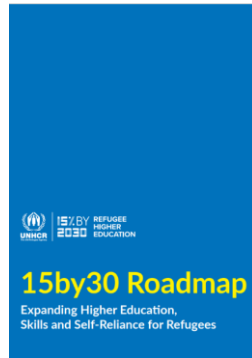
2030 Strategy

15by30 Roadmap

2024 Report



**Education Pledges**



- Securing Sustainable Futures: Towards a Shared Responsibility to Uphold the Right to Education and Include Refugee Children in National Education Systems
- 15% by 2030: Global Pledge on Refugee Higher Education and Self-Reliance
- Expanding Connected Education for Refugees through the Refugee Connected Education Challenge

### RECENT RELEASES



#### Plan International, Secondary Education Working Group (SEWG), UNHCR

**On the precipice of progress: National policy openings that increase forcibly displaced adolescent and youth enrollment and retention in secondary education**

National policies are critical to expanding access to secondary education for forcibly displaced adolescents and youth. Strong education systems, inclusive frameworks, and clear legal commitments can improve enrolment, support self-reliance, and strengthen outcomes for young refugees and migrants. This [report](#) draws on experiences from Colombia, Iraq, Nigeria, and Rwanda, offering insights and recommendations to increase access and retention in national education systems.



#### UNHCR

**The learning divide: Understanding the state of learning in forced displacement contexts - Mexico and Mauritania**

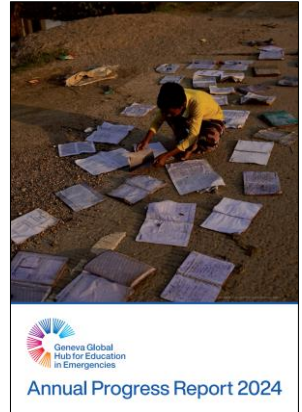
This [data story](#) sheds light on the disparities in education outcomes for forcibly displaced children in Mauritania and Mexico. The study reveals significant gaps in literacy, numeracy, and socio-emotional skills, highlighting the ongoing challenges faced by refugee learners in these countries. With education being a crucial tool for protection, empowerment, and resilience, these findings underscore the urgent need for targeted interventions to bridge these learning gaps. The report also emphasizes the importance of comprehensive learning assessments in crisis-affected areas to ensure that all children, including those displaced, have access to quality education.





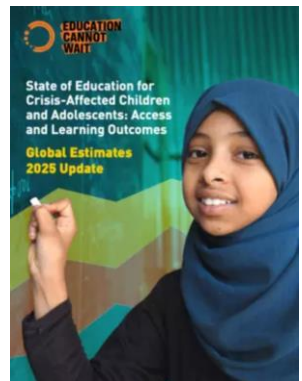
## Geneva Hub for Education in Emergencies Annual Progress Report 2024

2024 marked a year of significant efforts and progress in advancing education in emergencies. The Geneva Hub for Education in Emergencies' Annual Progress Report showcases the collective impact of its community, the milestones achieved by its members, and the lessons that are shaping the way forward. Explore the stories and outcomes that defined the year and learn how momentum is being built for 2025.



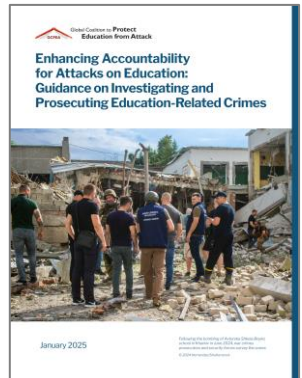
## Education Cannot Wait State of Education for Crisis-Affected Children and Adolescents: Access and Learning Outcomes, Global Estimates 2025 Update

The report reveals that 234 million crisis-affected children now need urgent support for quality education, an increase of 35 million over the past three years. Growing conflicts, climate disasters, and other crises are driving this surge, with refugees, displaced children, girls, and children with disabilities among the most impacted. The report warns that rising needs are outpacing education funding and calls for urgent action. Now in its third edition, the study provides crucial data to guide policymaking and strengthen global education responses in emergencies.



## Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack Enhancing Accountability for Attacks on Education: Guidance on Investigating and Prosecuting Education-Related Crimes

This guide aims to support accountability for attacks on education that qualify as crimes under international law. It offers practical guidance to national and international mechanisms to improve their capacity to investigate and prosecute these crimes effectively. While international bodies play a key role, States hold the primary responsibility to investigate and prosecute such crimes or extradite perpetrators for prosecution. The Safe Schools Declaration (SSD), signed by 120 countries as of September 2024, commits States to investigating attacks on education and holding perpetrators accountable under both international and domestic law.



## Education Cannot Wait & Global Partnership for Education Complementarity Note

The Complementarity Note explains the rationale for having two global education funds: one for emergencies and protracted crises (ECW) and one for long-term system strengthening (GPE). It highlights how the two work together across all levels to support children and adolescents, with complementary strengths that address the full range of needs in fragile and conflict-affected contexts.

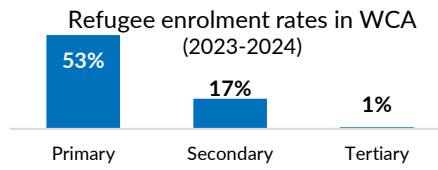




## UNHCR REGIONAL BUREAU FOR WEST AND CENTRAL AFRICA

**55%**  
Of refugees are children

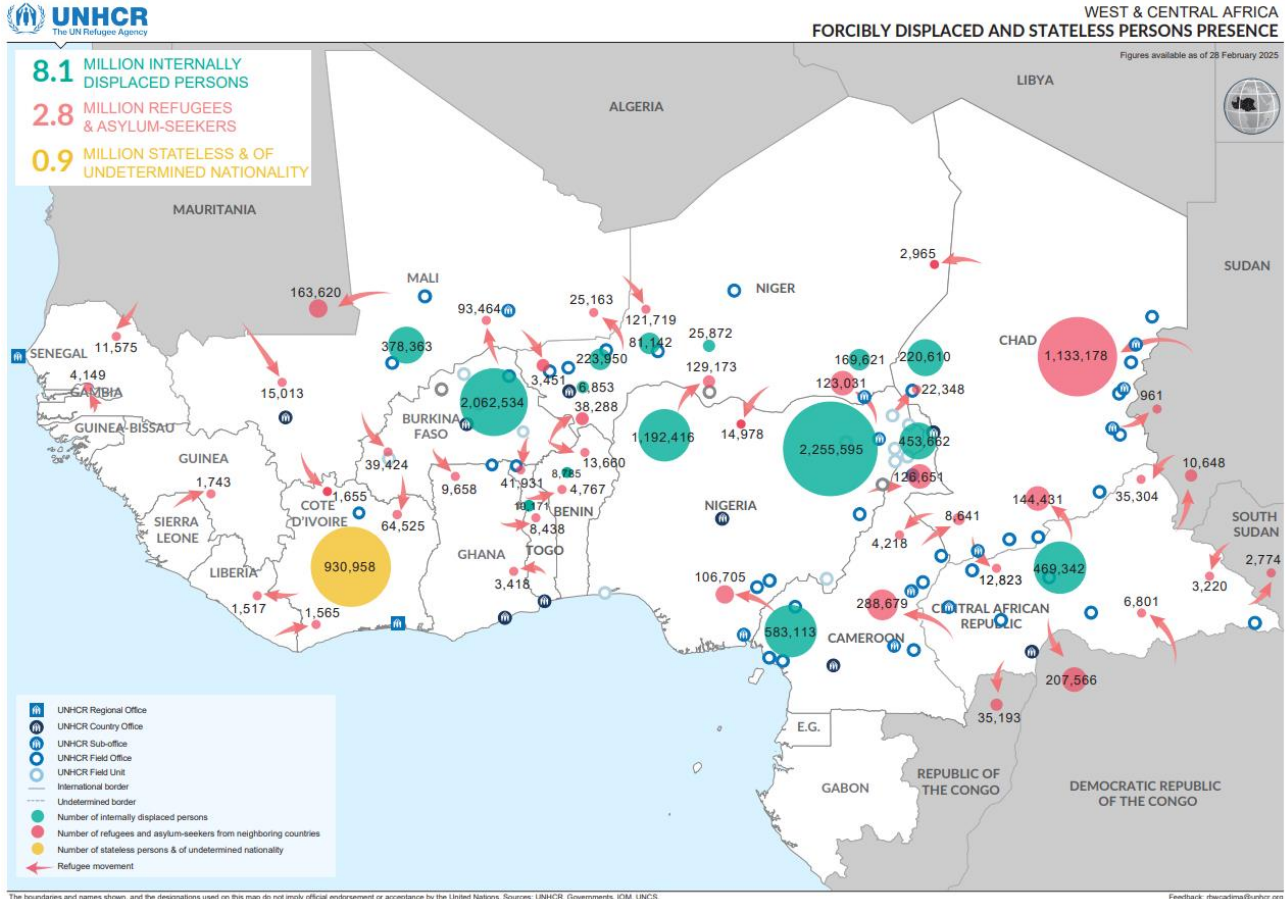
**61%**  
Of refugee children (6-17) are estimated to be out of school



More statistics on UNHCR's Regional Education Dashboard



### Forcibly displaced & stateless persons as of 28 February 2025



→ [More statistics](#)

UNHCR West and Central Africa is grateful for education partners in 2025:



UNHCR West and Central Africa is grateful for flexible funding and partnership from:



UNHCR Regional Bureau for West & Central Africa  
Contact: Priscilla Gomes, Education Officer – gomespr@unhcr.org

