

REGIONAL BUREAU FOR **WEST & CENTRAL AFRICA**

EDUCATION NEWSLETTER



Protecting Education from Attack in the West & Central Africa Region

From 25 to 27 October 2021, the [4th International Conference on the Safe Schools Declaration](#) was held in Abuja, hosted by the Government of Nigeria, together with the Governments of Argentina, Norway, Spain, as well as the African Union Commission and the [Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack](#) (GCPEA).

The three-day Conference was an opportunity for states to galvanize action on protecting education in armed conflict by taking stock of progress by states in endorsing and implementing the [Safe Schools Declaration](#) and its related [Guidelines for Protecting Schools and Universities from Military Use during Armed Conflict](#), sharing good practice in advancing the commitments in the Declaration, and encouraging greater collaboration across borders to

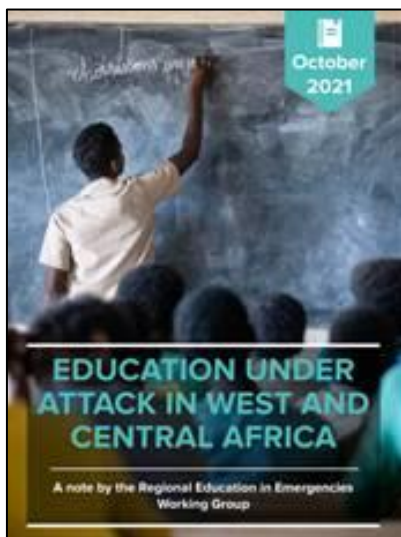
ensure that all students and educators can learn and teach in safety. A major outcome of the Conference was the adoption by the UN Security Council of a first of its kind resolution - [S/RES/2601\(2021\)](#) - strongly condemning attacks against schools and urging safeguarding of right to education.

In preparation for the conference, the [Regional Education in Emergencies Working Group](#) prepared an [Advocacy Note on Attacks on Education in WCA](#), providing a comprehensive overview of the regional situation, the impact on schooling and learning for children and youth (host community, internally displaced and refugee children) and outlining a number of recommendations to improve the protection of education and the continuity of learning in conflict situations.

EDUCATION IN EMERGENCIES



[R-EiE WG] Education Under Attack in West & Central Africa



The [Regional Education in Emergencies Working Group](#) (R-EiE WG) has developed an advocacy note on the protection and continuity of education in the WCA region.

The note clearly highlights how the **surge in armed violence** across the West and Central Africa region, in Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Mali, Niger and Nigeria, is having a **devastating impact on children's survival, education, protection and development**. On top of the general insecurity and increased violence leading to mass displacements, deliberate attacks and threats on schools and against teachers and students, in school or on their way to school, are becoming more and more common, which further worsens the situation of children and jeopardizes their future.

Download the Brief in French and English [here](#).

[NIGERIA] 4th International Conference on the Safe Schools Declaration

From 25 to 27 October 2021, the [4th International Conference on the Safe Schools Declaration](#) was held in Abuja, hosted by the Government of Nigeria, together with the Governments of Argentina, Norway, Spain, as well as the African Union Commission and the [Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack](#) (GCPEA).

A major outcome of the Conference was the **adoption by the UN Security Council of a new resolution** strongly condemning attacks against schools and urging safeguarding of right to education. Through [resolution 2601 \(2021\)](#), delegates emphasized the invaluable role education plays for individuals and society, including as life-saving safe spaces. They noted that providing, protecting and facilitating the continuation of education in armed conflict, should remain a key priority for the international community. The Council also urged countries to develop domestic legal frameworks to ensure respect for their relevant international legal obligations - including comprehensive measures to prevent attacks against schools, children, teachers and other related civilians.



Read more [here](#) and access the UNSC Resolution S/RES/2601 (2021) [here](#).

The [World Bank's Education Strategy for Western and Central Africa \(2022-2025\)](#), which is under development, will put a strong focus on tackling attacks to educational facilities, understanding that the effects on education caused by violence and conflict have long-lasting consequences for children, youth, and the region – read more about the upcoming strategy in this [WBG Blog](#).

UNHCR'S EDUCATION INTERVENTIONS



UNHCR's Support to Teachers in West & Central Africa

Quality and inclusive education for crisis-affected students will not be achieved without improving support for teachers and ensuring that they are supported in the way that is most helpful to them in their specific context. One and a half years into the COVID-19 crisis, the [2021 World Teachers' Day](#) focused on the support teachers need to fully contribute to the recovery process under the theme **'Teachers at the heart of education recovery'**.

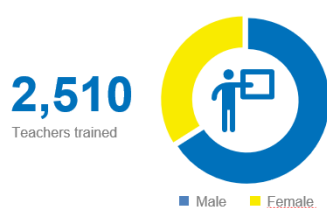
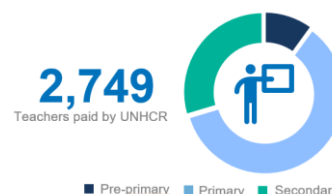


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Years of disruption, delays and late starts have not stopped a young refugee family in eastern Chad from making school a priority.

Read their full story in [UNHCR Education Report 2021: 'Staying the course' - The challenges facing refugee education](#)

Supporting teachers who are the first responders and providers of quality and protective education for all students is essential. During the 2020-2021 school year, UNHCR financially supported **2,749 teachers** across the region, and trained, in collaboration with Ministries of Education, **2,510 teachers** on Education in Emergencies, Child Protection, and Psychosocial Support in seven countries (Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Ghana, Mali, Niger, Nigeria) to improve the care and learning of refugee and internally displaced students.



In all displacement contexts, UNHCR promotes the **creation of protective learning environments** for all learners through inclusive pedagogical approaches, including the integration of psychosocial support and socio-emotional learning, and the establishment of referral systems to appropriate child protection services, in order to improve the protection, well-being and learning conditions of all teachers and learners.

[CHAD] Young Refugee Graduates Ready to Teach!

Thanks to the mixed movement scholarship program funded by UNHCR Chad, **23 young Sudanese refugees** have graduated from the Abeche Normal University (ENSA) in Chad. They are now ready to teach History, Geography and Arabic at secondary level. This is a great achievement for these young refugees who will be able to teach in turn to many refugee and host children in Chad.



"Through the opportunity to pursue higher education, Chad, JRS and UNHCR are giving us the chance to gain knowledge that can open us the doors to the job market." - Ibrahim Mahamat, ENSA laureate delegate.

This **higher education scholarship program** for refugees, initiated in 2015 by the **Jesuit Refugee Services** in partnership with UNHCR, aims at contributing to the empowerment of refugees through a professional qualification. Since the launch of the program, 65 young people have benefited from the scholarships. 45 of them have just completed their

third year and are waiting for an internship to complete their studies.

DAFI Refugee Scholars engaged in Education and Development



"I would like to be a teacher to help younger generations"

Since 2019, the Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) Chad collaborates with UNHCR on the [DAFI higher education scholarship program](#). Since its implementation in 2012, the DAFI program in Chad has enabled more than **200 refugee students** to

study in 12 universities and higher institutions in the country.

➡ Read all the testimonies here: [Young refugees overcome barriers to higher education \(JRS\)](#)

"Since I was in elementary school, I was impressed by my teachers. I would like to be a teacher to help younger generations. The day I was selected into the DAFI scholarship, I was so happy. I was still in high school and thought I was not going to go to university."

- Marcel, 25 years old, recently graduated with an Education Sciences degree.

A Look Back at the Commitment of Teachers during COVID-19

Abdallah is a 39-year-old Maths teacher at the secondary school of **Djabal refugee camp** in Chad. During the school closures due to the pandemic, he and other teachers raised awareness about COVID-19, and quickly adapted lessons via **WhatsApp groups**, making sure the students without smartphones worked in groups with students who had access to them.



➡ Read more about how Abdallah managed to continue its work during the closure of camp schools due to COVID-19: [A community's commitment to education during COVID-19 \(JRS\)](#)

[MALI] Strengthening the Inclusion of Refugee, Returnee and Internally Displaced Children in the National Education System

This month, UNHCR Mali inaugurated new **Accelerated Education Centers** in the regions of Gao and Timbuktu, hosting refugee, internally displaced and returnee children.



The Accelerated Education centres are dedicated to **children aged 8-12** who have dropped out of school, or are not in school, to follow an accelerated education program (the national SSA/P curriculum) for 9 months before being (re)included into the national education system. In 2021, with the financial support of **Education Cannot Wait**, UNHCR Mali has built and equipped **40 Accelerated Education Centres**, located in the localities hosting refugee, internally displaced and returnee children.

UNHCR Mali also organized several **training sessions for teachers and headmasters** in schools hosting refugees, internally displaced and returnee children, in Kayes, Mopti and Gao regions. The aim of these training sessions was to strengthen teachers, headmasters and school management committees' capacities on **child protection** and **education in emergencies**. At the end of the training, participants expressed their satisfaction but also additional training needs in psychosocial support, risk reduction plan development, large group pedagogy, and building learning communities.



[BURKINA FASO] Refugee Students Return to Secondary School after Months of Absence

The **secondary school of the Goudoubo refugee camp**, in the Sahel region of northern Burkina Faso, closed in March 2020 following an attack on the camp by armed groups, and had not reopened since due to the Covid-19 pandemic and insecurity in the region.



More than 18 months later, the rehabilitation and security work undertaken by UNHCR Burkina Faso has enabled the school to reopen and welcome **78 refugee students**, including **17 girls**, enrolled in the lower secondary grades.

In Burkina Faso, which hosts more than 20,000 refugees and almost 1.5 million internally displaced persons (of which more than half are children), access to secondary education is a major challenge for all displaced children and youth.

In the 2020-2021 school year, **71%** of refugee children were **out of school** and only **8%** of school-aged refugee youth were **enrolled in secondary school**.

[CHAD] Improving Young Refugees' Access to Higher Education



The King Faycal University of N'Djamena and UNHCR Chad have signed a **3-year memorandum of understanding** that will allow refugee students in Chad to enjoy the same conditions as national students (registration fees, application process, etc.), but will also grant five **fee exemptions** each year for Bachelor's and two for Master's degrees. As an Arabic-speaking public university, King Faisal University is particularly appreciated by Sudanese refugee students. There were

102 refugee students enrolled in 2020/2021, 50% of whom were women.

Refugee Students organize a Socio-Cultural Day in N'Djamena



Refugee students beneficiaries of the French Embassy's Master's scholarship organized a **socio-cultural day** on October 29, in collaboration with JRS and UNHCR. Under the theme: '*Cultural diversity, an asset to create, innovate and entrepreneurship*', the activity saw the participation of over 60 people.

The **French Embassy's Master's Scholarship Program** is the result of a partnership established in 2018 between the French Embassy in Chad and UNHCR to provide opportunities for young refugees in Chad to pursue their higher education. Since 2018, a total of 233 refugees have applied for the scholarship, and 14 of them have been selected.



For Bello Mamadou, laureate and president of the Refugee Student Committee, this activity aims to encourage **sharing between young refugees and Chadians** but is also an opportunity to **appeal to partners and donors to further support refugees' access to higher education**. The need is great and the French Embassy's Master's scholarship is currently the only Master's level scholarship for refugees in Chad.

[CONNECTED HIGHER EDUCATION] Virtual University Corridors through Distance Learning Scholarships for Refugees



Building on its [partnership with UNHCR](#), the AUF (Agence Universitaire de la Francophonie) is committed to improve refugees' access to higher education, including through the attribution of scholarships for the Open and Distance Learning Courses (FOAD), provided by the AUF Institute of the Francophonie for Knowledge Engineering and Distance Learning (IFIC). These courses are offered in many universities around the world and in several fields of training, enabling students to obtain recognised university diplomas at different levels.

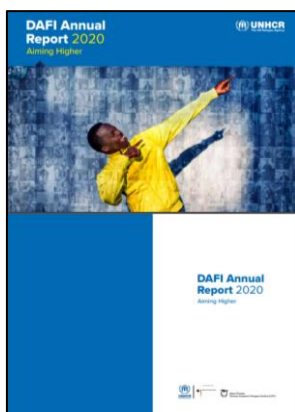
In 2021, **16 scholarships were funded by the AUF for refugee students** (including 4 women) in Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Guinea and Senegal, for Licence and Master's studies in universities in Madagascar, Maroc, France, Senegal, and Cameroon.



EDUCATION RESOURCES



[UNHCR] DAFI Annual Report 2020: Aiming Higher



UNHCR released its [2020 DAFI Annual Report](#), entitled [Aiming Higher](#) in reference to UNHCR's global fundraising campaign for secondary and tertiary education, which was launched in 2020. In the pursuit of 15 per cent enrolment of young women and men refugees in higher education by the year 2030, we are together Aiming Higher.

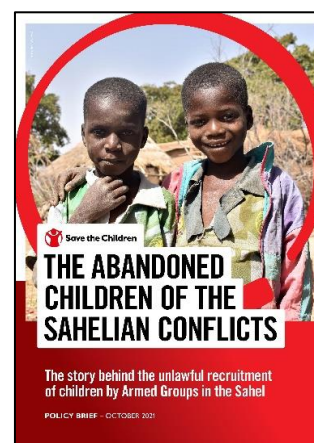
As we move forward towards the **15 per cent milestone**, the [DAFI programme](#) remains the cornerstone of UNHCR's investments in tertiary refugee students, redoubling its efforts to achieve parity among women and men enrolled in the programme, and to amplify the voice of all refugee students who strive to enter and complete tertiary education and to benefit from the opportunity and promise it carries with it.

Access the Report [here](#) and learn more about the 15by30 Roadmap [here](#).

[Save the Children] The Abandoned Children of the Sahelian Conflicts

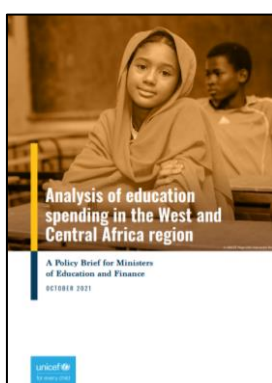
Save the Children launched a policy brief on children's recruitment into armed conflict, [The Abandoned Children of the Sahelian Conflicts: The story Behind the Unlawful Recruitment of Children by Armed Groups in the Sahel](#). The brief takes a hard look at the extremely volatile context of the central Sahel and the emerging new phenomenon of children being recruited by Non-State Armed Groups into Sahelian conflict.

This policy Brief is based on a new and very detailed research commissioned by Save the Children and published by the Migration Studies and Research Group, and it confirms that **more and more children are being abducted, killed and maimed and recruited by NSAGs** in the central Sahel region.



Access the Report [here](#).

[UNICEF] Analysis of Education Spending in the WCA Region



Covid-19 has highlighted and compounded the **inadequacies of education systems in the region**, and urgent funding is needed to train more teachers as well as give children access to quality education.

The policy brief provides i) a snapshot of the situation in the education sector in the region, focusing on key challenges that countries are facing to improve learning outcomes for children, ii) an overview of government spending in the education sector across the region, looking at trends, size, composition and type of public spending; and iii) key recommendations for ministries of Education and Finance aimed at accelerating education outcomes through better use of public resources allocated to education.

Access the Policy Brief [here](#).

CAPACITY BUILDING & EVENTS



[WEBINAR] Crisis-Sensitive Teacher Policy and Planning in Emergency and Displacement Situations

UNHCR and the International Task Force on Teachers for Education 2030 jointly organised a [webinar on Crisis-Sensitive Planning in Emergency and Displacement Situations](#). The webinar built on the [Guidance Note on Developing a Crisis-Sensitive Teacher Policy](#), jointly developed by UNESCO, UNHCR, ILO, and UNICEF in 2020 under the [Norwegian Teacher Initiative \(NTI\)](#).

The webinar also highlighted some of the key provisions needed to ensure that a teacher policy is also a crisis-sensitive policy, with concrete examples and good practices shared by Representatives of Ministries of Education and teachers working in displacement settings in **Burkina Faso** and **Uganda**.

Watch the Replay in [English](#) and [French](#).



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