REGIONAL BUREAU FOR **WEST & CENTRAL AFRICA EDUCATION** NEWSLETTER

@UNHCR Chad/Aristophane Ngargoune

Language Considerations in Refugee Education

February is the month in which we celebrate International Mother Language Day.

In the field of refugee education, this day has particular significance as language is often one of the first obstacles faced by refugee children who have to adapt to a new school environment without mastering the **main learning medium**.

Policies and provision of language instruction for refugees vary across countries. Current practices of inclusion within national education systems only partially attend to **refugees' linguistic needs** and many countries struggle to provide appropriate **language support** for new arrivals. Language-of-instruction issues thus impact millions of refugee children, contributing to low academic achievement and high drop-out rates.

In response to refugee influxes, host country education systems are forced to use whatever learning resources are readily available. In such contexts, **refugee teachers** are a key resource, and it is essential to support them as they have the potential and most often an incredible will to contribute to the education of children in their community - and in the host community - to support their integration (see next page: Cameroonian refugee teachers in Chad).

Fluency in the local language not only impacts the ability to learn, but also influences the pace and degree of **social and cultural cohesion** with the host community that is so essential to adapting to a new context. It is therefore the cornerstone of an effective **inclusive refugee education policy**.

UNHCR'S EDUCATION INTERVENTIONS

[CHAD] Refugee Teachers trained in Chadian Curriculum help Children Return to School

Following violent inter-communal conflicts in northern Cameroon in December 2021, over 40,000 Cameroonian refugees arrived in Chad, the majority of them women and children, for whom it is essential to ensure a rapid **return to school**.
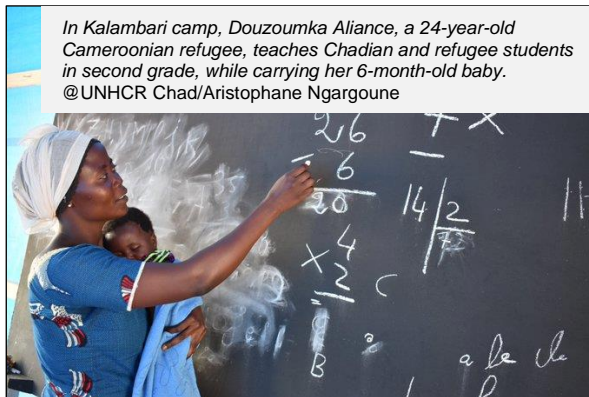
In Kalambari camp, Douzoumka Aliance, a 24-year-old Cameroonian refugee, teaches Chadian and refugee students in second grade, while carrying her 6-month-old baby.
@UNHCR Chad/Aristophane Ngargoune

One of UNHCR's first actions to ensure the rapid return to school is to ensure the availability of a **trained teaching workforce** to enable refugee children to continue their learning, while increasing the intake capacity of the national system. To this end, **refugee teachers** are the primary resource available. In collaboration with the Ministry of Education, UNHCR Chad and its partner JRS organised the training of over 60 Cameroonian primary school teachers on the **Chadian curriculum**.

With this training in hand, they will be able to teach the Chadian curriculum to refugee and host community children in the new and existing local schools in the hosting areas, thus facilitating their rapid **inclusion in the national system**. Thanks to the Chadian government's inclusion policy, refugee teachers are given the tools to integrate into local schools and help refugee students transition to the national curriculum. The involvement and commitment of refugee teachers is essential for the education of the whole community.

"Education is the key to success. I am committed to educating refugee and Chadian students living in Kalambari", Daitchouwe Garandi, refugee teacher.
@UNHCR Chad/ Priscilla Gomes

*Watch our video **here**.*

[MALI] New Classrooms for Displaced Children in Eastern Mali

One of the new classrooms handed over to the authorities by UNHCR.
@UNHCR Mali

In the Gao region, where children face increasing barriers to attending school due to growing insecurity and a lack of **adequate facilities**, UNHCR, with the help of **Japan's emergency fund**, has helped build classrooms in several schools in the safest areas hosting a growing number of forcibly displaced children.

Latrine blocks for students accompany the new classrooms. @UNHCR Mali

From the People of Japan

New classrooms and latrines have been handed over to the authorities and will allow hundreds of displaced and host community children to study in better learning and protection conditions.

[SENEGAL] Awa, Refugee Woman and Activist for the Education of Refugee Children in Senegal

Refugee children in their classroom.
@UNHCR Senegal/Gosia Courtay

Since 2017, a small refugee village in eastern Senegal, about 700 kilometers from Dakar and on the border with Mauritania, has opened a primary school.

This school is the result of constant advocacy by Awa, a 60-year-old refugee woman living in the village. Awa has always had the **education of refugee children** at heart:

"I always see those educated in front and those uneducated behind. School is an opening to new horizons. So, I made a commitment to help refugee children to have freedom and openness to the world through education."

It took Awa a year to convince the departmental inspector of national education to open a school in her village. The school was established in 2017. At the beginning, classes were given only in Pulaar, then, a year later, they started in French. The **community built the school's only classroom** itself with wood and straw. Today, the primary school has a single class of 45 students. Awa's dream is now to **build a proper school** building with two classrooms to accommodate more pupils and create better learning conditions. Professor Djouf, the teacher, feels that the decision to establish the school in the village was important for the integration of refugee children in Senegal. The pupils now have a good level in French and in other subjects as well. He is particularly impressed by one young boy, Ibro: "*He loves to learn. Although he has to work as a shepherd on weekends to help his family, he takes his books with him to the fields. He is very motivated."* Yet, he says, the children are cramped in the classroom and as the classroom is rapidly deteriorating, the village would benefit from a building with walls, windows, and a roof.
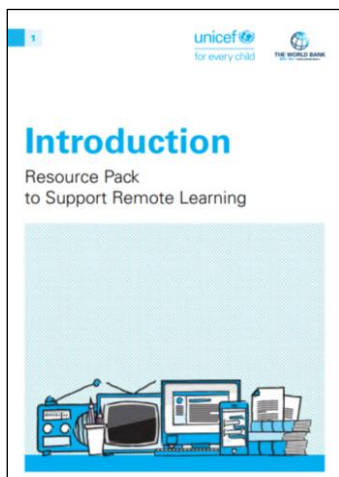

Awa, a Mauritanian refugee, sitting with the children of the school she managed to open in her village.
@UNHCR Senegal/Gosia Courtay

EDUCATION RESOURCES

[INEE] Remote Learning Packs

In response to the challenge to education systems presented by the global COVID-19 pandemic, UNICEF and the World Bank, with funding from GPE, have created a set of global public goods in partnership with Cambridge Education to support the delivery of quality remote learning.

The **seven Resource Packs** are designed to support government officials and staff in national and international agencies tasked with designing and implementing **effective remote learning opportunities** for children in development and humanitarian contexts as well as strengthening existing remote learning programmes. Each pack is meant to cover early learning, primary and secondary with approaches for the **most marginalized**. They also include guidance and tools to support localized deployment.

*Access the resources **here**.*

[ROUNDTABLE] The Role of Technology in Refugee Education

The global education community has witnessed increased attention on **education technology** (EdTech) to adapt to learning from home and mitigate the effects of learning loss of COVID-19 school closures. The pandemic has had a disproportionately harmful impact on refugees around the world, exacerbating already existing participation challenges.

Against this background, the Abdulla Al Ghurair Foundation for Education, Save the Children, and EdTech Hub has developed a joint paper, highlighting **7 calls to action** to ensure we provide refugee education by leveraging evidence-based effective practices in EdTech.

*Read the joint paper **here**.*

[PODCAST] An Education that Protects

On the Roads of Exile, UNHCR in France new podcast, hosted by its Spokesperson Céline Schmitt, features a number of guests committed to the cause of refugees and forcibly displaced people in France and around the world.

In Episode 4, **Charlotte Berquin, Education Specialist for UNHCR Regional Bureau for West and Central Africa**, presents the situation of refugee children in the region and why it is essential to ensure their access to protective education, but also to training opportunities leading to durable solutions.

*Listen to the podcast **here**.*

CAPACITY BUILDING & EVENTS

[E-COURSE] Child Safeguarding in Coordination of Education and Other Clusters/AoRs

This module provides clarification on what **child safeguarding (CSG)** is and how it differs from child protection (CP) and protection from sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA), explores the child safeguarding responsibilities of cluster coordination teams and provides an overview of the responsibilities of individual organizations.

This module is primarily aimed at **education cluster/EiE working group** coordination teams but is relevant to those working in all clusters/ sectors/ AoRs.

*Access the free course **here**.*

[WEBINAR] Teacher Management in Crisis Contexts

INEE's Teachers in Crisis Contexts (TiCC) Collaborative, in partnership with the LEGO Foundation, Education International, Oxfam, UNESCO, and the International Task Force on Teachers for Education 2030, have come together to support a Call to Action to transform sector-wide support to teachers in crisis contexts.

This webinar was the third in a series to contribute to a growing evidence base on how to improve the ways that we support teachers through prioritizing **teacher management policies and practices**. In this webinar, teachers and EiE actors shared their reflections on the challenges and opportunities of teacher management policies and practices in crisis contexts.

Through a moderated discussion, these actors came together to share good practice, lessons learned, and opportunities for change to improve teacher management for teachers doing extraordinary work amidst extraordinarily challenging settings.

*Webinar recording available **here**.*

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