

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



Higher Education Pathways for Refugees

Higher education has many advantages for refugees, both in terms of personal development, socio-professional integration, and self-reliance, and in terms of their contribution to the society of their country of asylum and/or origin. However, **higher education opportunities** remain very limited for most young refugees worldwide, particularly in West and Central Africa.

UNHCR is committed to achieving enrolment of **15% of young refugee women and men in higher education by the year 2030 – [the 15by30 target](#)**. Based on current population data, achieving 15% enrolment in 2030 will mean that approximately **half a million** young refugee women and men will be participating in an enriching academic life, compared to only 90,000 today.

To support progress towards the 15by30 target, UNHCR has developed a [strategic roadmap](#) built around **five higher education pathways**, to offer strategies for optimizing, coordinating, and expanding opportunities: (i) national university enrolment; (ii) technical and vocational education and training (TVET); (iii) connected higher education programmes; (iv) tertiary education scholarships; and (v) complementary education pathways for admission to third countries.

Among initiatives to improve refugees' access to higher education, [connected learning](#) holds great promise for durable solutions for refugee youth.

➡ Join the [Refugee Connected Education Challenge](#).

UNHCR'S EDUCATION INTERVENTIONS



[WCA] Regional Roundtable on Connected Higher Education

UNHCR and the [Connected Learning in Crisis Consortium](#) hosted a roundtable discussion on increasing access to **higher education for refugees** in West and Central Africa through connected learning. The roundtable was held on 29 and 30 March in Dakar and included participants from ministries of Education and local universities from Cameroon, Chad and Niger.

The current enrolment rate of refugees in tertiary education in the WCA region stands at just 1.2 per cent, which is well below the regional access rate for non-refugees, which averages 10 per cent, and the global access rate for refugees which averages 5 per cent. Refugees face many challenges in accessing tertiary education, and access to **quality and certified connected learning** programmes presents an opportunity to overcome some of these challenges.

For **Xavier Creach**, Head of Protection at UNHCR Regional Bureau for West and Central Africa, refugees need opportunities to start their lives again, to become self-reliant and to regain their dignity. “*Connected learning presents a unique opportunity to provide young refugees with access to quality higher education courses,*” he said at the opening of the roundtable.

Various education partners also attended the roundtable including representatives of the [Agence Universitaire de la Francophonie \(AUF\)](#), who started to support refugees access to connected higher education degrees in 2021, and members of the Connected Learning in Crisis Consortium, including Arizona State University and the University of Geneva.

“*AUF and UNHCR collaborate on several innovative projects aimed at improving refugees access to higher education but also employability in West and Central Africa, initiatives by which AUF and UNHCR aim at renewing university, training and professional prospects offered to young refugees in the region,*” said **Ouidad Tebbaa**, AUF’s Regional Director for West Africa.

The meeting resulted in a **commitment to expand access to higher education opportunities**, that are innovative and linked to existing needs in the labour market, for young refugees in the region. A joint roadmap for the next three years was developed by each country delegation to translate these commitments into concrete actions.

Read the Press Release of the Roundtable [here](#).



Participants at the Roundtable on Connected Higher Education held at the AUF Regional Direction in Dakar.

[BURKINA FASO] UNHCR and AUF Collaborate on Digital Training for Refugee Students



"This training is beneficial to me, because if I manage to design applications, I will be autonomous and able to create my own company and hire other people."

- A. D-Benit. @UNHCR Burkina Faso

UNHCR, the [Agence Universitaire de la Francophonie \(AUF\)](#) and [Simplon.co](#) have developed a digital training tailored for refugee students in Burkina Faso. Within the AUF Digital Campus in Ouagadougou, **13 students** will be trained during 8 months by SIMPLON experts to acquire specific **digital skills**. This project is the result of a joint reflection between UNHCR and AUF to improve **refugees access to higher education** but also facilitate their **transition to employment** thanks to trainings which meet the needs of the market.

Thanks to the AUF's support, this pilot project launches UNHCR's collaboration with SIMPLON in the region, with hope to offer similar opportunities to many refugee youth.

Read the Press Release [here](#).

[GAMBIA] DAFI Students Commemorate International Women's Day

As part of the commemoration of **International Women's Day**, celebrated on 8th of March, the Gambia **DAFI Club** organized a cultural event to raise awareness on the need to promote **gender equality** for sustainable development. The event was marked by speeches, poems lecture and drama portraying the theme of this year's celebrations "*Gender Equality Today for a Sustainable Tomorrow*".

The event was attended by DAFI students, UNHCR's partner GAFNA, and distinguished personalities, included the Political Attachee at the German Embassy, and representatives from the Gambia Commission for Refugees.



DAFI students during the IWD. @UNHCR Gambia

[GHANA] Support Refugee Students Transition to Senior High School



Refugee students receiving their items in Krisan camp. @UNHCR Ghana

In November 2021, Junior High School (JHS) students in final year sat for the Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE). The results were released in February 2022. A total of **89 refugee students** sat for the exams with 100% pass mark. In March, all the students were placed in various **Senior High Schools (SSH)** across the country by the Ghana Education Service (GES) through the Computerized Selection and School Placement System (CSSPS).

To support their installation and help them start SSH in good conditions, refugee students have received essential items from UNHCR for the boarding house. The items included mattress, trunk, bedsheets, chop box, electric pressing iron, scientific calculator, as well as stationery for school. This support will help vulnerable refugee families to encourage **education continuity** and **prevent dropouts**.

EDUCATION IN EMERGENCIES

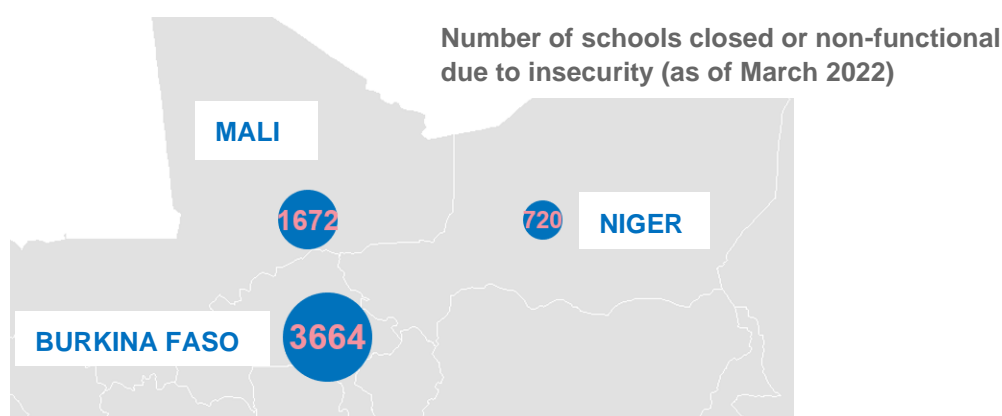


[SCHOOLS CLOSED] Increased Attacks on Education in Central Sahel

Disruption of school activities by ongoing violence continues to dramatically affect boys and girls in the Central Sahel region: deliberate **attacks on education** are on the rise, impacting schools, students, and teachers. According to the Education Clusters in **Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger**, the number of schools closed because of insecurity as of March 2022 was **over 6,000**, against just under 5,000 at the end of 2021.

The most affected country is Burkina Faso with **3,664** schools closed. It is also the country with the fastest increase in closures since the beginning of 2021. Next is Mali with **1,672** schools closed, followed by Niger with **720** schools closed (of which 681 in the Tillabery region).

Children and youth, especially **refugees and internally displaced**, are therefore at increased risk of exploitation and abuse, and there is a rise in reported cases of child recruitment, child marriages and early pregnancies of school-age girls in areas where the schools are closed.



[PROTECTION MONITORING] Increasingly Difficult Access to Education for Displaced Families

Data from the **Regional Protection Monitoring (Project 21)** for the period of March 2022 indicate that access to education remains a major concern for the displaced populations. **Formal education** is still inaccessible for many children, both boys and girls, as more than half of the children do not attend school regularly (51%). Access to formal education is reported to be more important in primary school (59%) and Koranic school (57%), than in secondary school (30%), vocational training (14%), and university (10%). In addition, opportunities to access **non-formal education** and alternative education programmes remain extremely limited.

Furthermore, half of the respondents say that the **school environment is unsafe**, mainly due to regular threats from armed groups (27%), lack of secure infrastructure (25%) and the absence of a contingency plan in case of an attack (21%). Growing insecurity has a very negative impact on access to school. In addition to the increasing number of closed schools, the lack of financial resources to cover the costs of education is highlighted by 27% of households as one of the main reasons for not attending school.

Access the Protection Monitoring Dashboard [here](#).

EDUCATION RESOURCES



[INEE] Distance Education in Humanitarian Settings



The INEE has launched a new podcast series: [Reimagining Education: Distance Education in Humanitarian Settings](#).

This series presents a range of experiences and perspectives of various stakeholders - teachers, implementing actors, donors, academics - working to deliver distance education interventions in crisis contexts. Episodes are hosted by members of the **INEE Distance Education Reference Group** and highlight the unique contributions of those working on the ground and the challenges they face. As the

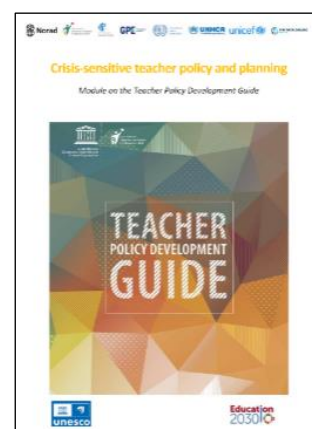
COVID-19 pandemic forces education actors to reorganize delivery mechanisms, this series shares the perspectives of those responding to changing needs.

Listen to the podcast [here](#).

[TTF 2030] Crisis-Sensitive Teacher Policy and Planning

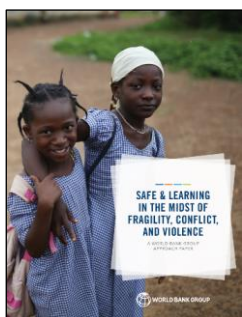
The **UNESCO IIEP** and the **International Task Force on Teachers for Education 2030**, in partnership with **UNHCR** and other partners, have developed a new module to promote the development of crisis-sensitive national teacher policies, in recognition of the important role played by teachers in preparing for and responding to crisis and emergency situations.

This [new module](#) complements the [2019 Teacher Policy Development Guide](#) (TPDG). It highlights the importance of **crisis-sensitive teacher policies** to increase the resilience of education systems by ensuring that education stakeholders are able to prepare for and respond to crises. It addresses the various dimensions of teacher policies and puts forward new measures to support teachers as they work to prevent, mitigate, and recover from conflicts and disasters. The module also includes country examples, highlighting effective policies and practices for teacher management in crisis settings.



Access the resource [here](#).

[WORLD BANK] Safe and Learning in the Midst of Fragility, Conflict, and Violence: A World Bank Group Approach Paper



Education is one of the most powerful forces we have for creating a more peaceful and prosperous future. Yet the children most in need of a good education are also at greatest risk of having their **learning disrupted**, whether by **conflict, violence, pandemics, climate**, or other **crises**.

This approach paper lays out the World Bank's policy approach for how to **deliver education services** so that children are safe and learning.

Access the resource [here](#).

CAPACITY BUILDING & EVENTS



[IIEP-UNESCO] Knowledge-Sharing Forum on Ministry of Education Leadership during Crisis



How can ministries of education play a leadership role during crises, what are the opportunities and obstacles? Drawing from several experiences, IIEP hosted a **three-part knowledge-sharing forum** to discuss opportunities for ministries of education to exercise leadership in the provision of equitable, quality education for all in times of crises.

UNHCR participated in the third webinar during which participants explored how **multistakeholder partnerships** can support ministries of education in exercising leadership in crisis settings.

Access the recording of the webinar series [here](#).

[WEBINAR] School Leadership and Governance 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 fourth and final in [a series](#) to contribute to a growing evidence base on how to improve the ways that we support teachers through prioritizing **school leadership policies and practices**. Through a moderated discussion, school leaders and EiE actors working across several contexts shared good practice, lessons learned, and opportunities for change to improve leadership and governance of teachers doing extraordinary work amidst extraordinarily challenging settings.

Access the recording of the webinar [here](#).



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