

REGIONAL BUREAU FOR EAST AND HORN OF AFRICA AND THE GREAT LAKES

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Somali refugee girls attending their English class at Melkadida Primary School in Melkadida refugee camp, Ethiopia. © UNHCR/Tiksa Negeri

INTRODUCTION

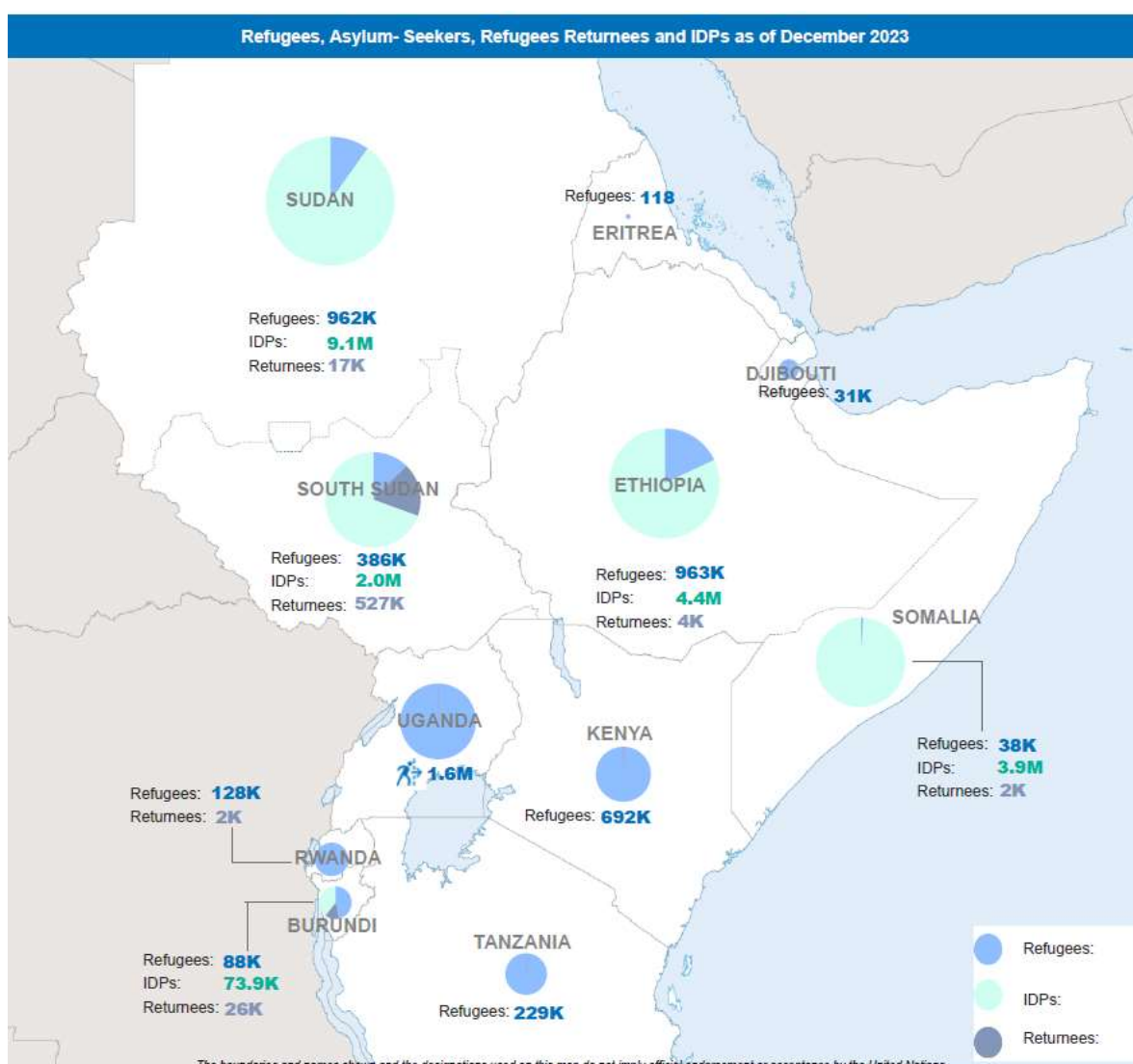
In the Education Sector, refugee inclusion means that refugee children attend schools that are part of the host country's national public system, funded through government channels, and attended by both refugee and host community children. In line with [Refugee Education 2030](#), the [Global Initiative on Education in Situations of Crisis](#) and the [Call to Action on Financing Education](#), agreed at the 2022 Transforming Education Summit, that achieving refugee inclusion requires international cooperation and support to accelerate the mobilization of diverse resources, expertise, and innovative solutions from all stakeholders. With this approach, it is possible to strengthen service delivery and improve education outcomes for both refugees and host populations, in particular in underserved areas where refugees are often located.

This end of year newsletter highlights new partnerships in the East and Horn of Africa and Great Lakes region (EHAGL), and how they are contributing to better education and training opportunities for refugees, asylum-seekers, returnees, and host communities.

Over half (51 per cent) of the 2.3 million refugee children in EHAGL are out of school, with significant challenges for girls, children with disabilities, and other vulnerable groups. Those that are enrolled reside mainly in camps or managed settlements and attend schools that are managed and financed by the international community, in parallel to the national system of the hosting country. Only 1 in 10 refugee children are enrolled in public schools in the countries that host them. Only 1 in 5 refugee children attended secondary school in 2023, with 2 in 100 able to pursue tertiary education.

KEY FIGURES

- **2.3 million** refugees of school-going age (4-18 years)
- Gross enrolment rate of **49%**
- **Less than 1 in 2** girls are enrolled in school
- **22%** of refugees are enrolled in secondary school
- **2%** of refugees enrolled in tertiary education



GLOBAL REFUGEE FORUM 2023

The Second Global Refugee Forum took place between 13-15 December 2023 in Geneva, Switzerland. First held in 2019, the GRF is an opportunity for States and stakeholders to announce concrete pledges and contributions, to support the practical implementation of the objectives set out in the [Global Compact on Refugees](#). Intending to convene diverse expertise and unique strengths, several multi-stakeholder commitments were made at the GRF with the aim of generating tangible and reliable assistance in 2024 and beyond. Certain pledges, like those pertaining to secondary education, underscore crucial deficiencies in service delivery, while others are forward-looking, promoting new and innovative teaching and learning approaches. This newsletter highlights newly formed partnerships in 2023, while connecting them with some of the new commitments. The Regional Bureau looks forward to further engagement with all partners in 2024.

The Global Compact on Refugees (2018) emphasizes international responsibility-sharing that underpins the protection, assistance and ultimately pursuit of solutions for refugee situations. It has four key objectives:

- 1) Ease pressure on host countries.
- 2) Enhance refugee self-reliance.
- 3) Expand access to third country solutions, and
- 4) Support conditions in countries of origin for return in safety and dignity.

EMERGENCY RESPONSE

GRF Pledge: Multistakeholder Pledge on Education in Emergency Contexts: **Short-term action for long-term benefit: Promoting rapid access to learning opportunities for recently displaced refugee children and youth.** Pledge brief can be found [here](#).

Education in emergencies is vital for safeguarding well-being, offering psychosocial support, and building resilience in affected individuals and communities. Education plays a crucial role in both immediate relief and lasting recovery efforts during crises by preventing lost generations, empowering individuals, and contributing to long-term development. In 2023, this was exemplified in the region's emergency response to new displacement as a result of conflict in Sudan and in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), and flooding in Somalia as well as the continued impact of the Horn of Africa drought.

Sudan, Supporting Education in Emergencies

As the conflict expands to more states in Sudan, the Ministry of Education is no longer able to consistently pay teachers and sustain education services. As a result, schools remain closed, leaving 19 million children out of school ([UNICEF and Save the Children, 2023](#)). Similarly, most refugee schools are not in operation. The emergency has halted progress and is likely to reverse past achievements on access, learning outcomes, and the inclusion of refugees into the national education system in Sudan. In the five main countries of asylum (Ethiopia, South Sudan, Chad, CAR, Egypt), education systems, some of which were already overstretched, are struggling to respond to this new influx of refugees. In Chad, 60 per cent of refugee children were out of school in 2023, in comparison to 52 per cent in 2022 and in Central African Republic, 68 per cent of refugee children were out of school in 2023, compared to 60 per cent in 2022.

A total of \$30,433,183 is required to respond. To date, UNHCR South Sudan has secured \$ 500,000 from Education Cannot Wait (ECW) under their First Emergency Response window to respond to the new influx of refugees and returnees from Sudan. These funds will provide critical learning and psychosocial support in the refugee-hosting areas of Jamjang and Maban. An additional \$ 500,000 was secured for Ethiopia, \$ 3 million in Chad and \$ 2 million in CAR. The five operations have also benefited from INTPA and the African Development Bank contributions. However, the total raised represents only 5 per cent of the education needs.

Tertiary Education

UNHCR Sudan, in collaboration with Windle Trust International, are working to identify the whereabouts of tertiary students from the DAFI and Urban Refugee Tertiary Education programmes affected by the conflict and forced to flee both within the country and across borders. To date, 400 of the 426 students, have been traced with 205 having fled Sudan (154 of whom are now in South Sudan), and 195 students displaced within Sudan. UNHCR is working with academic partners in Sudan and South Sudan as well as institutions of connected higher education to support the re-enrolment of the students.

TEACHER MANAGEMENT

GRF Pledge Multistakeholder Pledge on Teachers: Supporting Teachers and Teaching in Forced Displacement Situations. Pledge brief can be found [here](#).

The Typology of Teachers Study, Efforts to Improve Teaching Quality and Promote Workforce Sustainability

Recognizing refugee teachers as professionals is a critical pillar of the refugee inclusion agenda. The Typology of Teachers of Persons of Concern (PoCs) study was developed in 2023, with the aim of developing a framework that can be used by UNHCR and other international and national organizations to improve teaching quality and to promote workforce sustainability in contexts of forced displacement, noting that some teachers may also be people we serve. The study is further situated within ongoing discussions and debates about the push for national inclusion of refugees, including teachers. The typology and its conceptualization of different teacher profiles examines the situation for teachers across the dimensions of teacher management, teacher professional development, and teacher well-being. The study incorporates findings from 16 countries globally including seven in the EHAGL region (Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Uganda, South Sudan, Sudan) with a case study developed for Uganda as part of a more extensive study on Teachers in Refugee and Displacement Settings: Policies, Practices, and Pathways for Improving Teacher Management and Professional Development. The Uganda case study aims to capture the complexity of the national education systems and teacher policies and practices related to teacher management, professional development, and well-being; implications for improving quality, promoting workforce sustainability, and advocating for the inclusion of refugee teachers into the national system; and recommendations for the way forward. The full report will be available in early 2024.

Kenya, Teacher Professional Development supported by the LEGO Foundation and Grundfos Foundation

The International Rescue Committee, LEGO Foundation and Grundfos Foundation have launched a \$ 27 million investment in innovative teacher professional development, mental health, and essential water and sanitation facilities, promoting resilience among refugee and host community teachers in Kenya. Supporting the implementation of Kenya's Competence-Based Curriculum, the initiative focuses on nurturing critical thinking and problem-solving skills through "learning through play," contributing to mental health and psychosocial support in line with the Global Refugee Forum and Global Compact for Refugee goals. In collaboration with governmental, non-governmental, and research organizations, TeachWell aims to enhance socio-emotional skills and well-being in children facing adversity and complements the LEGO Foundation's \$ 10 million contribution to the Global Partnership for Education's multiplier facility for national teacher professional development. TeachWell will be implemented alongside continued efforts for the recognition of refugee teachers as professionals in Kenya, incorporating aspects of registration, recruitment, and registration as well as recognition of prior learning across borders.

Further reading:

[Policy Insights - Refugee Teachers: The Heart of the Global Refugee Response | NORRAG Network and Library](#)

TERTIARY EDUCATION

GRF Pledge: 15by30 Refugee Higher Education: leveraging expertise, innovation, and financing to demonstrate actual gains in refugee student enrolment in higher education and greater support for higher education institutions (HEIs) hosting refugees in their first country of asylum. More information can be found [here](#).

UNHCR and partners in the EHAGL region have been working to expand education and training opportunities for displaced people in 2023 through partnerships with higher education institutions, academia, international agencies, and the private sector to increase enrolment opportunities through scholarships for in-person study both in host countries and in a third country, as well as through online and distance learning initiatives, and that connect students to the world of work.

The Türkiye Burslari Scholarship Programme

In 2023, the Presidency of Turks Abroad and Related Communities (YTB) expanded the Türkiye Burslari scholarship programme to include refugees in Kenya. Responding to a request from the UNHCR Special Envoy for the Horn of Africa, YTB initiated a pilot project for the EHAGL region by accepting ten refugees into the scholarship programme. As of October 2023, these ten refugees, including two females, have



John, Magaret and Nyuok at the Kakuma airstrip in Kenya, ahead of their departure to Turkey on undergraduate and postgraduate scholarship. © UNHCR/Charity Nzomo

commenced their studies in Türkiye. They are pursuing degrees in diverse fields such as Civil Engineering, Biomedical Engineering, Computer Science and Political Science among others across various universities in Türkiye.

The African Higher Education in Emergencies Network (AHEEN) Refugees and Displaced People Pathways Project

AHEEN launched a new programme supporting 3,450 refugee and host community youth in Kenya, Somalia, Burundi, South Sudan, and South Africa to access and complete accredited higher education. This programme includes essential support to secondary education retention and completion, as the pipeline to tertiary education, through teacher professional development, mentorship, guidance and counselling and the Athletics and Education initiative. The programme also provides support to transition to online and offline work including the development of partnerships with ILO, the private sector, social impact and jobtech platforms. Funded by the Mastercard Foundation, the Refugee and Displaced Persons Pathways Project, contributes to the 15by30 multi-stakeholder pledge to expand refugee access to higher education to 15 per cent by 2030.

Additional scholarships in the region were secured from:

- DAFI Albert Einstein Scholarship Programme: 3,497 students
- Campus France (scholarships in Caen and Lille): 2 students

National level advocacy:

- UNHCR Tanzania secured a 10 per cent cost reduction of fees for refugees at the University of Iringa and access at the same rate as nationals for the Open University of Tanzania.
- UNHCR South Sudan secured the nomination of a team of 2 members from the Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Technology to support the coordination with UNHCR on the profiling and placement of students in institutions of higher learning.

CONNECTED EDUCATION

GRF Pledge: Refugee Connected Education Challenge (RCEC) building on SDG4 and the Transforming Education Summit (TES) [Call to Action on Digital Learning](#), calling on partners to commit to closing the digital divide to achieve universal access to high-quality connected education for refugees on par with nationals by 2030.

Instant Network Schools by the Vodafone Foundation

37,286 refugee and host community children in Kenya, Tanzania, and South Sudan have benefitted from the Instant Network Schools project by the Vodafone Foundation (VF) in 2023. The Instant Network Schools (INS), a global flagship, launched by VF and UNHCR in 2014, is intended to enhance teaching and learning for refugee learners and their hosting communities. It provides digital content and connectivity supported by trained coaches with the aim of overcoming learning barriers associated with geographical isolation and insufficient textbooks and other teaching and learning materials. At the Global Refugee Forum, the VF committed to invest €13 million in cash, €5.6 million in connectivity and leverage partner support of €1.2 million by 2025 across six countries. The programme will continue to be implemented with the support of a dedicated team at VF including staff and 55 specially trained volunteers as well as Vodafone employees with the local support of Vodafone as a company in country.

The Vodafone Foundation is also expanding to Ethiopia, the fourth country to benefit from their support in the EHAGL region, committing to invest \$20 million at the GRF. Connected Education for refugees has remained a challenge in Ethiopia and this project will expand opportunities for engagement with the Government and the private sector including Safaricom, in supporting connectivity and digital learning for refugees.

REFUGEE INCLUSION IN NATIONAL EDUCATION SYSTEMS

GRF Pledge: Mega-pledge: Securing Sustainable Futures - Towards a Shared Responsibility to Uphold the Right to Education and Include Refugee Children in National Education Systems. Link to pledge brief [here](#).

Including refugee children in national education systems is the most sustainable way to achieve quality education and training opportunities for all children. It represents a long-term investment and a more socially inclusive approach than through parallel provision as investing in national education systems has the potential to increase overall access, quality and resilience for the benefit of all learners, regardless of status. Recognizing the considerable efforts that States have already made to include refugees, donors and other partners must commit multi-year support to cover the additional costs related to including refugee children and/ or to help strengthen national systems. Where circumstances do not allow for the full inclusion of refugee children in national

Key Indicators:

- 10% of children attend schools in the national education system.
- All IGAD member states have costed education plans at various levels of approval.

systems, temporary (certified) education programmes which support transition must be sustained. These actions may be global, regional, national or community-led.

Third Inter-Ministerial Stocktaking Meeting of the IGAD Support Platform on the Nairobi Declaration and Action Plan, 23 November 2023. Ministers from Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, and Uganda convened with humanitarian and development partners to conduct the third review of progress made in the implementation of the Nairobi Declaration as well as subsequent Declarations on Refugee Education, Health, Jobs, Livelihoods and Self-reliance. Partnership between IGAD Member States and humanitarian and development partners represented in the IGAD Support Platform, and the provision of technical and financial support has resulted in the adoption of the Regional Education Policy, the regional TVET Strategy, the IGAD Teacher Training Initiative, the IGAD Scholarship Program, and the IGAD Qualifications Framework, as well as the increased engagement of the private sector in creating jobs and livelihoods in displacement settings. The IGAD Support Platform reaffirmed its commitment for the inclusion of refugees, returnees, and host communities in national education systems in its GRF pledge on solutions and called for the acceleration of the implementation of the Djibouti Declaration on Refugee Education. Preliminary findings from the ongoing Evaluation of Progress of IGAD Member States against the Djibouti Declaration were shared by the IGAD Secretariat with detailed recommendations anticipated in early 2024.

BURUNDI: Developing a strategy for refugee inclusion and returnee reintegration in the national education system.

The Government of Burundi initiated the development of a strategy for the inclusion of refugees and reintegration of returnees in the national education system in November 2023. This signifies a considerable shift in approach toward refugees in particular, as Burundi is one of the last countries in the EHAGL region where refugees follow the curriculum from the country of origin rather than that of the hosting country. UNHCR and UNESCO's International Institute of Education Planning (IIEP) are supporting the Joint Technical Committee, led by the Ministry of Education, to develop the strategy with the aim that refugees and returnees have access to quality education that is relevant, equitable and inclusive, and that promotes social cohesion and integration.

The development of the strategy is a collaborative process involving government officials, partners, refugee and returnee representatives and other stakeholders. The Norwegian Refugee Council's NORCAP has pledged additional support to the strategy development and to the alignment of existing education programming to the new approach in 2024.

KENYA: Developing the implementation modalities to advance refugee inclusion in the national education system.

Kenya has renewed its pledge to systematically include refugees in the national education system at the GRF 2023, this time with a focus on strengthening access, quality and addressing structural barriers to inclusion for young refugee learners (GRF-00506). While political will and commitment from the Ministry of Education is strong, implementing this ambitious pledge will require a well-planned burden-sharing approach that leverages complementarity as well as common frameworks for action among government and partners.

Partnerships are the most important tool UNHCR has to sustain essential education services for young refugees, and support progress towards inclusion, in the context of the direct funding constraints in years. For example, the last quarter of 2023 saw around 25,000, a record number, of refugee learners sitting for national primary and secondary examinations. Heavy rains and flooding in parts of the camps exacerbated an already challenging logistical operation in the face of resource constraints. Examinations were delivered in line with national standards through a joint effort including the leadership of the Kenya National Examinations Council, and UNHCR's implementing and operational partners contributing financial resources to cover costs of

invigilators, fuel, etc. as well as material resources such as tents.

Partners have also worked together to support important steps towards policy dialogue with the government and development of a national strategy on inclusion of refugees in the national education system. The process, starting with the development of a situation analysis report on refugee education in Kenya has engaged Ministry of Education departments including Basic Education, TVET and Higher Education State Departments and the Department of Refugee Services. It has leveraged the technical expertise as well as financial support of key partners throughout, and been underwritten by flexible, tactical funding from a key donor.

Partnerships have been successfully driving both service delivery and policy dialogue for refugee education in Kenya and will be critical to navigating another tough year of lean resources. However, working in partnership requires enhanced coordination and communication capacity to build trust and structured approaches to collaboration and problem solving that leverage the complementary strengths of government, partners, refugees, and donors. In 2024, UNHCR Kenya expects to develop a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Ministry of Education to support a structured approach to burden-sharing, to engage refugee youth in policy dialogue and to improve communication with partners and donors to promote more efficient, harmonized service delivery.

SOUTH SUDAN: Providing capitation grants and cash transfers to refugee girls. The Ministry of General Education and Instruction (MoGEI) is supporting refugee and forcibly displaced girls as part of its Girls' Education South Sudan (GESS) project. This project includes the provision of capitation grants in three primary and two secondary schools, facilitating school development, and cash grants to girls from Primary 5 to Senior 4. The cash grants support female learners in purchasing personal effects and scholastic materials, promoting retention and completion. This project is a partnership between the Government of South Sudan, UNHCR and Windle Trust International (WTI) and Food for Hungry (FH), the implementing partners in

Jamjang and Maban refugee hosting areas respectively.

At the 2023 Global Refugee Forum, the Government of South Sudan pledged to “increase access to inclusive quality education for refugees and host communities, enhance access to education, and reduce the out of school children rate by 2027” (GRF-07253). The Minister of Education, Awut Deng Achuil, also co-hosted a Roundtable Dialogue with the Hon. Joyce Moriku Kaducu, Minister of State for Primary Education of the Republic of Uganda, and other national leaders to explore solutions for more inclusive education systems focusing on the transition from non-formal to formal education systems in emergency settings. According to the convenor of the roundtable, [Education.org](https://www.education.org), among the challenges raised were the current aid arrangements, which may unintentionally work against national education systems.



Senior Four (S.4) Secondary School candidates taking Certificate of Secondary Education (CSE) Examinations at Kaya Secondary school – Maban, South Sudan. © UNHCR/Lokiri Luk

TANZANIA: Sustaining temporary education programmes for continued learning.

Refugee students in Tanzania continue to follow the curricula of their countries of origin. This leads to challenges in certification of studies, requiring partnership, coordination, and funding from different actors to administer the examinations. For the academic year 2022/2023, the Congolese refugee students were able to sit for their exams thanks to partnership between the National Examination Council of Tanzania (NECTA) and the Democratic Republic of Congo Ministry of Education. On the other hand, due to the scarcity of financial resources, Burundian refugees are still waiting since June to have their exams administered. In December, the Embassy of Switzerland in Tanzania confirmed a generous

contribution of CHF 125,000 (\$143,700) to support the examinations for refugee students. This contribution represents the first ever earmarked funds for education in Tanzania (along with EU Cross-border funds from 2023-2025 (1,140,167 EUR); Primary Impact for 2023-2027 (5,000,000 USD). The Swiss contribution will allow 825 Burundian students to sit for their examinations in January 2024 and at the same time will cover the costs of examinations fees for 2,162 Congolese students. This timely donation will prevent the negative impact that the cancellation of examinations could have had, such as decrease in enrolment, cases of early pregnancy and marriage, and child labour. Examinations in the two refugee camps in

Tanzania represent a significant recurring cost, with an annual expense of approximately \$530,000. UNHCR will continue to work with all stakeholders to find more sustainable solutions, including for eventual refugee inclusion.

In alignment with the UNHCR-UNICEF Joint Plan of Action, UNHCR Tanzania also signed an UN-to-UN agreement with UNICEF to support the management and distribution of scholastic materials for refugee school children in Nyarugusu and Nduta camp, as well as the implementation of back-to-school campaigns, community outreach support, sport, and extra-curricular activities.

Further reading:

[Refugee education: Financing what matters \(worldbank.org\)](https://www.worldbank.org/)

[The-Price-of-Hope-Report-2023-1.pdf \(inee.org\)](https://www.inee.org/)

IMPACT STORY

Abdullahi Mire, 2023 UNHCR Nansen Award Winner

"In the camp, everything is temporary.

The only thing that is a passport out of the challenges is education".

The region celebrated Abdullahi Mire, journalist, and former refugee, who won UNHCR's Nansen Award in 2023 for championing refugee education in Kenya. A fierce advocate for refugee rights, Mire has used his journalism skills and social and professional networks to raise awareness of, and fundraise for, refugees in Dadaab, Kenya and across the region. Among his many achievements are his work with the Refugee Youth Education Hub (RYEH), a youth-led organization that supports refugee students in Kenya's Dadaab camp with books and other learning materials, and the provision of life-saving information about the virus during the COVID-19 pandemic.



Mire in one of the libraries he established in Kenya's Dadaab refugee camps. The books were donated at Abdullahi's request by education charities, the Somali diaspora, local youth groups in Kenya, and other donors. © UNHCR/Anthony Karumba

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