

## REGIONAL BUREAU FOR WEST & CENTRAL AFRICA EDUCATION NEWSLETTER



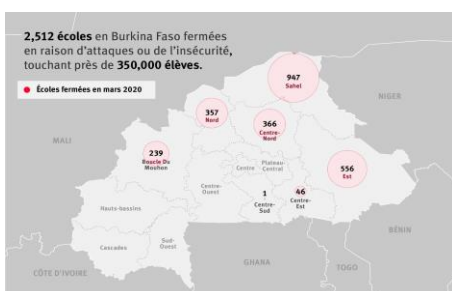
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Students sit crammed up to five at desks meant for two, in overcrowded classes of up to 125 students, at a primary school in Kaya, a town hosting tens of thousands of displaced people in the Centre-Nord region of Burkina Faso.

### Central Sahel: COVID-19 and insecurity, a combination with devastating effects on education

Closed due to the Coronavirus, the reopening of certain classes is scheduled for early June in [Burkina Faso](#), [Mali](#) and [Niger](#). But will they really be able to reopen in a region plagued by growing insecurity?

According to a [Human Rights Watch report](#) released on May 26, Burkina Faso was the country in the area before the pandemic to have the most schools closed due to the growing number of jihadist attacks and threats: **2,512 establishments closed** mainly in the north of the country compared to **1,261 in Mali** and **354 in Niger**. Schools are threatened, burned, looted<sup>1</sup>.



Their War Against Education, HRW Report, May 2020.

[Escalating violence](#) and [lack of schooling](#) deprive children and youth of access to a protective learning environment, WASH facilities, and school feeding and put them at higher risk of being recruited by armed groups and child marriage. Even when national [distance learning alternatives](#) are being deployed, as most governments have done during the Covid pandemic, there are significant [challenges of access](#).

In these low connectivity areas, where very few households have access to electricity, TV or internet, UNHCR and its partners are working with governments to enable emergency education for displaced children and youth. This support includes access to [radio education](#), [health training for teachers](#) and [community awareness-raising activities on COVID-19](#), as well as upgrades to [water and sanitation facilities in schools](#).

For more information on UNHCR's response to the Sahel crisis, read our latest [Sahel operational update](#).

<sup>1</sup> Read also [Education in Danger Monthly News Brief – April 2020](#).

## UNHCR'S EDUCATION INTERVENTIONS IN WCA

### [CAMEROON] Impact of the COVID-19 crisis on refugee students



**DAFI**

In **Cameroon**, an evaluation was conducted by UNHCR's partner **PLAN INTERNATIONAL** to assess the **impact of the COVID-19 pandemic** on the life of DAFI and other refugee students across Cameroon who are pursuing higher education and to identify appropriate **solutions** to address encountered difficulties. **142 refugee students** (including 128 DAFI scholars) were surveyed and results were analyzed and published in a report.



### [CHAD] Home tutoring to help refugees get their Baccalaureate



In **Chad**, 25 national and refugee students are giving home **tutoring sessions** to refugee candidates to the **Baccalaureate exam**. All tutors have been trained and are followed up on by UNHCR to ensure they get the support they need. *"I've always been passionate about teaching. Sharing my experience while respecting COVID-19 prevention measures, it's improving the chances of those young refugees to succeed in the national exam."* - Mahamat, Chadian student.

### [MALI] Radio education to continue learning



**EDUCATION  
CANNOT  
WAIT**

UNHCR has received funding from **Education Cannot Wait** through their **First Emergency Response window** dedicated to the **COVID-19 response in Mali**, to ensure pedagogical continuity.

In **Mali**, 5,500 **solar-powered radios** are ready to be deployed to support children's **distance learning** in the central and northern regions. In these low resource/low connectivity areas, where very few households have access to electricity, TV or internet, **radio education** is one of the few ways children have to continue learning. This intervention will ensure learning and protection to **11,000 refugee, IDP and host community children** affected by COVID-19 school closures.



### [NIGER] Teacher training on COVID-19



In **Niger**, in the Diffa region which hosts more than 120,000 Nigerian refugees, UNHCR's partner **COOPI** has conducted several **capacity building activities** for education staff in schools attended by refugees. Several information-discussion sessions on the transmission of the virus and the barrier measures were carried out and the staff thus trained has been in charge of raising **awareness within the refugee communities** scattered in the region including in *Sayam Forage* camp.

## [NIGERIA] Community-based initiative to continue education



In Nigeria, in the Ogoja region hosting most of the 60,000 Cameroonian refugees currently in the country, a [refugee community-based organization](#) (*Save the Woman and Protect the Girl Child*) is responding to the need for [continued education](#) amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. Collaborating with another refugee CBO for the provision of locally made soap and water during lessons, volunteers are teaching both refugee and host children so they can catch up with the [national curriculum](#).

## [SENEGAL] Ensuring continuity of learning for the most vulnerable children and youth in Senegal

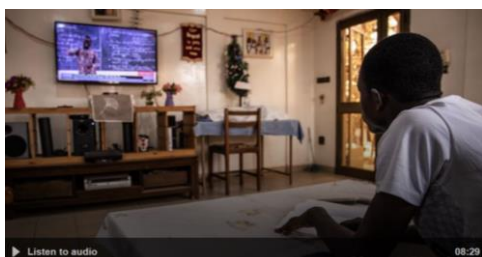
To assist countries in coping with the COVID-19 pandemic, the United Nations System established a [Covid-19 Multi-Partner Fund](#) in April. In Senegal, UNESCO, UNICEF, UNHCR and ITU have developed a joint project to support the Ministries of National Education and Technical and Vocational Education COVID-19 response plans.

This project aims to remedy the consequences of the closure of educational establishments by deploying a series of [distance learning solutions](#) adapted to different contexts and conditions, and in particular to the learning needs of [most marginalized children and adolescents](#), such as those living in rural and remote areas with limited connectivity, in refugee hosting areas, and those with disability.



## EDUCATION IN THE NEWS: COVID-19 COUNTRY RESPONSES

### [REGION] Coronavirus Special Podcast #13 | Why COVID-19 school closures in Africa mean more than just missed classes



When COVID-19 started taking hold across Africa, governments responded by closing schools to stop the spread among burgeoning young populations. But aside from the missed lessons, the break in education has far-reaching effects for the young people. And adapting to home-based schooling in many areas is simply not feasible.

Listen to the podcast [here](#).

Read also [Africa's education crisis: millions of children locked out of school](#).

## [BENIN] Return to school – with a mask – for students in Benin

The country has reopened its schools, closed since March 22, with strict instructions on physical distance and the launch of a teacher screening campaign. But students are worried. "*The virus is still present, and we are forced to come to class*, complains a secondary student in a Cotonou high school. *We could have been left at home longer.*"

Read the full article [here](#).



## [CHAD] Chadians launch radio and television education for confined students, without believing too much



The government has designed a special program in French and Sciences which is broadcasted on national radio and television channels. Many students do not have a television at home, but simply listen to the radio without visual support.

Read the full article [here](#).

## [COTE D'IVOIRE] The urgency is to maintain educational continuity

Designed to allow access to online courses, the *Calschool* platform was implemented in Côte d'Ivoire during the confinement. It makes available to teachers, pupils, and parents a digital tool for the management of daily school life.

Read the full article [here](#).



## [MALI] Uncertainty about the reopening of classes

The persistent strike by teachers in Mali, demanding higher wages, and the failure of schools to enforce barrier actions heighten the threat of a compromised academic year. From October 2019 to February 2020, schools only opened for three months.

Read the full article [here](#).

## [NIGERIA] Nigeria's poor face education challenges during pandemic

Nigerian educators say that while some Nigerians have been able to switch to online and social media learning, several challenges remain.

Read the full article [here](#).

## [SENEGAL] Senegal postpones school restart after teachers test positive for Coronavirus

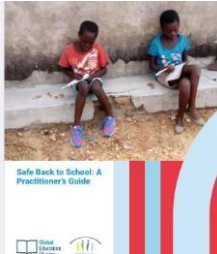


President Macky Sall decided to "*postpone the restart of classes until a later date, in order to avoid any risk of the virus spreading in schools*", after several teachers tested positive in Casamance.

Read the full article [here](#).

## EDUCATION RESOURCES

### [Global Education Cluster] Safe Back to School: A Practitioner's Guide



This document refers to the [INEE Minimum Standards](#), the [Child Protection Minimum Standards](#), the [Sphere Handbook](#), the [Considerations for school-related public health measures in the context of COVID-19](#) (WHO), and the [Guidance for the Prevention and Control of COVID-19 in schools](#) (IFRC, UNICEF, WHO). It also builds on the [UN Framework for Reopening Schools](#), giving concrete actions that can be taken at the community and school level to operationalize these recommendations.

Download the guide [here](#).

Check also the [INEE](#) and [Global Education Cluster](#) websites for additional COVID-19 related resources and tools.

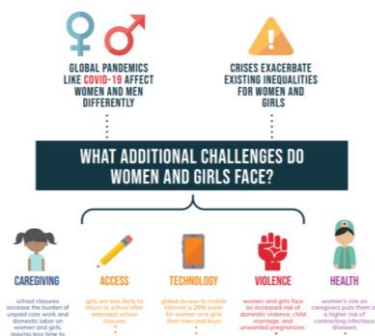
### [ODI] Coordinating education planning and response in crises

The Overseas Development Institute's (ODI) launched a suite of reports on [strengthening coordinated education planning and response among humanitarians and development actors](#). The reports were commissioned by the Global Education Cluster (GEC), the Inter-agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE), and UNHCR, with funding from the Education Cannot Wait global fund for education in emergencies (ECW).



Access the full suite of reports [here](#).

### [INEE] Gender & EiE: Key points to consider



Disease outbreaks affect women and men, girls and boys, differently, and can exacerbate [existing inequalities for women and girls](#). School closures could disproportionately affect girls in conflict-affected settings, where the COVID-19 pandemic represents a 'crisis within a crisis'. INEE's infographic highlights the salient, specific challenges that girls, adolescent girls, and women typically face in response to health crises and suggests ways to develop a [gender-sensitive response](#).

Download the infographic [here](#).

### [AEWG] Accelerated Education Working Group

The Accelerated Education Working Group (AEWG) has recently agreed on [four main areas of focus for 2020-21](#): (a) AEPs included by more governments in national education plans and policies; (b) AE evidence base strengthened; (c) Quality of AEPs improved; (d) AEPs better resourced by all key stakeholders for scale and quality. The AEWG has also just released a [Monitoring and Evaluation Toolkit](#) to support the design and implementation of M&E Frameworks for AEPs.



Learn more about the AEWG by reading the AEWG 2020-21 Brief [here](#).

## EVENTS & CALLS FOR PROPOSALS

### [May 16] International Day of Living Together in Peace

Living together in peace: a celebration of education, citizen engagement and prevention of violent extremism

Faced with the COVID-19 pandemic, our interdependence and ability to unite to solve a collective problem together has never been more apparent. Tomorrow we commemorate the International Day of Living Together in Peace, adopted by the United Nations in 2017 to celebrate a world that "promotes peace, tolerance, inclusion, understanding and solidarity" (UN Resolution 72/130). On this day, we look to West and Central Africa and highlight the work of governments and partners to sustain efforts to live together in peace through education.

May 15, 2020 by The Learning to Live Together (LTLT) Task Team · 4 minutes read · [Facebook](#) [Twitter](#) [LinkedIn](#)



Read the full blog [here](#).

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This blog written by the regional task team [Learning to Live Together](#) highlights the work of governments and partners to sustain efforts to live together in peace through education in West & Central Africa.

### [EdTech Hub] COVID Education Challenge Solutions Call

UNHCR is teaming up with The EdTech Hub to open a specific [Refugee Sub-window](#) to their [EdTech call](#), in order to respond to the [learning emergency](#) caused by COVID19 school closures.

Selected applicants will be invited to a dedicated Pitch Day focused on refugees, allowing teams to compete for the opportunity to join the [Humanitarian Education Accelerator's \(HEA\) Rapid Response COVID-19 Cohort](#).

Access the call [here](#).



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