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New UNESCO Report reveals the strain of refugees on education systems in sub-Saharan Africa

The 2019 Global Education Monitoring Report highlights numerous pioneering initiatives being taken by Chad, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda and Uganda for the education of refugees.

The new 2019 Global Education Monitoring (GEM) Report by UNESCO on migration and displacement documents the progress and challenges in educating refugees around the world. Sub-Saharan Africa houses almost a third of all refugees in the world, along with millions of internally displaced people, both of which the Report shows are putting huge strains on already struggling education systems.

Entitled *Building bridges, not walls*, the GEM Report celebrates the political will for change as outlined in the Horn of Africa's Djibouti Declaration and highlights numerous pioneering initiatives in some countries. Chad, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda and Uganda, together housing over half of the region's refugees and 12% of the world's refugees, are championed in particular for their positive approach to support the education of forcibly displaced children and youth. They join countries like Turkey, Lebanon and Jordan in their ambitions to sit refugees side-by-side by nationals in school.

The Report also points at countries where a greater effort is required to integrate refugee children into national systems of education, as in the U.R of Tanzania. There is a need for lessons to be shared by the EAC (East African Community) countries to ensure refugees are not denied their right to an education. .

Refugees often arrive with low education levels stretching host countries' already limited resources. In Chad, among 6-14 year old refugees from the Central African Republic, Nigeria and Sudan, 30% were illiterate. Refugees from South Sudan in Uganda settle in the poor West Nile sub region, where the secondary net attendance rate was 9% in 2016 – less than half the national rate.

Displacement impacts heavily on the quality of education. In Kenyan refugee camps, schools must comply with Ministry of Education minimum standards and guidelines yet average pupil/teacher ratios in Dadaab reached 120:1 in pre-primary and 56:1 in primary. On average, six students shared a desk and four shared a textbook in English, mathematics, science and social studies.

Many teachers in displacement settings lack formal training. In Dadaab refugee camp in Kenya, only 8% of primary teachers were certified national teachers, and 6 out of 10 refugee teachers were untrained. While Chad offers professional pathways for refugee teachers in its public schools, refugee teachers' qualifications often remain unrecognized, as among the South Sudanese in Uganda. Training is also crucial for helping teachers manage multilingual classrooms. In Uganda, instructional content is translated within the classroom, slowing the teaching process.

Countries need to improve training for refugees on the language of instruction, without which students can end up placed in lower grades, putting pressure on teachers and overcrowding classrooms as seen among Burundian refugees in Rwanda. Linguistic differences also make friendships more difficult and can lead to discrimination, resulting in school-drop out and children joining gangs, as found among adolescent Congolese and Somali refugees in Uganda.

Refugee influxes require additional teachers. In Uganda, an extra 7,000 primary school teachers are needed to educate refugees, with the cost of primary teacher salaries in refugee settlements estimated to be US\$15 million over the next three years.

“Large movements of people have huge implications for education systems” said Manos Antoninis, Director of the GEM Report. *“Many sub-Saharan African countries are leading the way globally for managing this challenge. Yet others are struggling and require international support to cope with the strain. Regional efforts to share positive examples are also needed to help those falling behind to catch up”*.

Globally, only a third of the funding gap for refugee education has been filled. In the region, only 4% of the education humanitarian appeal is currently funded in Burundi, 3% in Chad, 6% in Cameroon, and 10% in both the Central African Republic and Ethiopia. The Report emphasizes that humanitarian aid alone will never fill the gap and points to Uganda as a blueprint for best practice by bringing humanitarian and development partners together to fund its education plan, including refugees.

Humanitarian and refugee response plans are not accurately reflecting some core education priorities. Although one in six displaced people are under the age of five, plans in Burkina Faso, Senegal, Somalia and Ethiopia had no mention of early childhood education.

Recommendations:

- Protect the right to education of migrants and displaced people
- Include migrants and displaced people in the national education system
- Understand and plan for the education needs of migrants and displaced people
- Represent migration and displacement histories in education accurately to challenge prejudices
- Prepare teachers of migrants and refugees to address diversity and hardship
- Harness the potential of migrants and displaced people through skills and qualifications recognition
- Support education needs of migrants and displaced people in humanitarian and development aid.

- ENDS -

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Notes to editors

Visit the [#EducationOnTheMove campaign](#) page to see the stories of people on the move around the world in real time, showing their challenges, and successes in accessing an inclusive education.

Visit the Report's [electronic press kit](#) containing Report and multimedia materials.

The 2019 Global Education Monitoring Report examines the education impact of migration and displacement across all population movements: within and across borders, voluntary and forced, for employment and education. It also reviews progress on education in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

In view of increasing diversity, the report analyses how education can build inclusive societies and help people move beyond tolerance and learn to live together. Education provided equally builds bridges; unequal provision raises walls between migrants and refugees and their host communities.

Two new global compacts on migrants and refugees recognize education's role and set objectives aligned with the global commitment to leave no one behind. This report is a vital toolkit for these compacts. It covers policy issues that address seasonal migrants, rural school consolidation, intercultural curricula, refugee inclusion in national education systems and elimination of segregation, qualifications recognition, targeting of school funding, more effective humanitarian education aid and teacher preparedness for diverse classrooms in emergency, protracted and “new normal” contexts.

The report calls on countries to see education as a tool to manage migration and displacement and an opportunity for those needing one.

COUNTRY EXAMPLES:

Uganda, with the largest number of refugees in the region, is held up as a blueprint for following best practice and bringing together both development and humanitarian aid partners around a table in its one-of-a-kind education plan in 2018. It aims to reach 675,000 refugee and host students a year in 12 districts. While nearly half of 26 active Refugee and Humanitarian Response Plans globally show no mention of early childhood education needs, Uganda is improving the number of certified caregivers and centres.

Chad is praised in the 2019 GEM Report for being the first country to include refugees in a Temporary Education Plan, while it updates its main education plan to include them in the national education system. It carried out an extensive assessment in 12 camps to feed into the plan, which helped it access funding so as to convert 108 schools in 19 camps and refugee sites into regular public schools in 2018. Chad makes sure refugee schools use a Chadian curriculum; and also deploy more Chadian teachers to refugee camps to teach French, civics and geography to help pupils move over into the national system.

The Report highlights Chad's exemplary approach to capturing data on refugees' education, collecting from each camp, and covering pre-primary to tertiary education and non-formal literacy programmes. While most countries around the world do not recruit refugees as teachers, Chad also boasts one of the most promising and rare examples of professional pathways for refugee teachers, upscaling their qualifications so that they now have opportunities to work in Chad's public schools.

In **Kenya**, schools in the two largest refugee camps are registered with the Ministry of Education even if distance from local schools means there are few if any local students.

Ethiopia runs parallel refugee schools, which follow the national curriculum from grade 5 and up, and legally refugees can access national schools and host children to access refugee schools. Three out of five refugee children aged 3–6 are supported in 80 Early Childhood Care and Education centres in refugee camps and 150 private and public kindergartens in Addis Ababa.

Rwanda also pledged in 2016 to include 18,000 refugee children in primary schools and 35,000 adolescents in secondary schools, eliminating the need for parallel camp-based provision; the refugee enrolment rate increased from 54% to 80% in primary and from 34% to 73% in secondary schools over just a year.