

CHAD: CURRICULUM TRANSITION OVERVIEW

KEY FIGURES

1 1 8, 2 8 2

Total number of school-aged children (6-17) in Sudanese refugee camps in eastern Chad

99,495 (84%)

Total number of students affected by the transition (ECD, primary, secondary)

69,041

Refugee students enrolled in primary education in the East of Chad

1,049

Refugee teachers received a 2-week refresher training on the Chadian curriculum

167

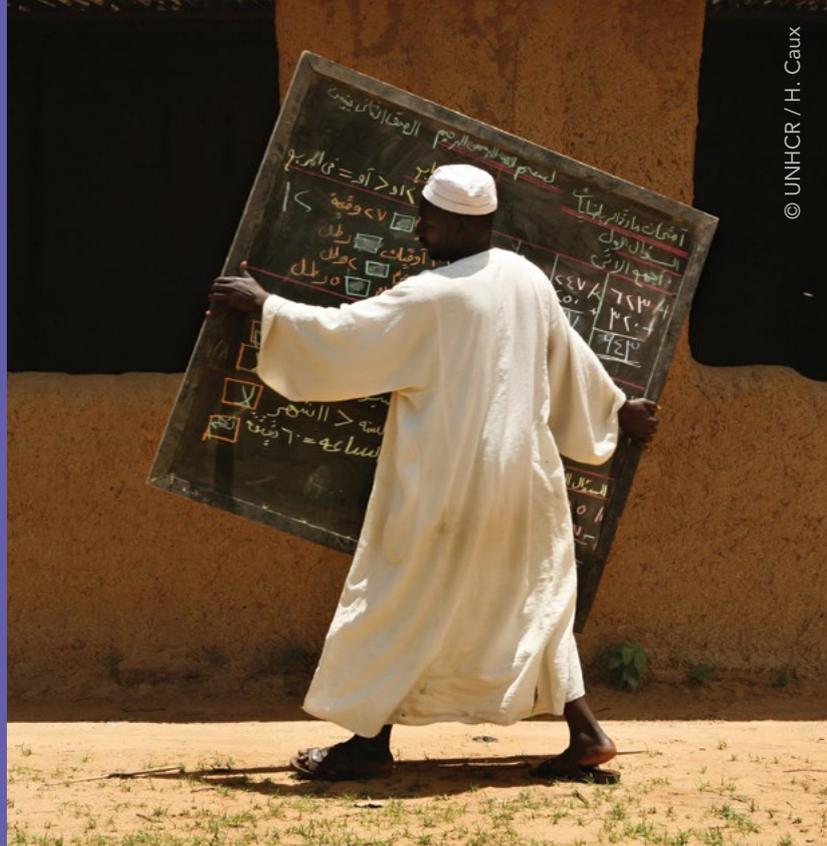
Refugee teachers received a 2-year training at the Chadian Teacher Training College in Abéché

259

National teachers deployed by the Ministry of Education to refugee schools

85

Schools in the 12 refugee camps in Eastern Chad



© UNHCR / H. Caux

WHY A TRANSITION?

- UNHCR's education policy stipulates that refugee students should be mainstreamed, whenever possible, into the educational system offered by the country of asylum.
- In Chad, refugee students from the Central African Republic (CAR) follow the Chadian curriculum, whereas Sudanese refugees followed the Sudanese curriculum since they arrived in 2003.
- Due to the difference in language and educational system (Anglophone in Sudan versus Francophone in Chad), a decision was made in 2003 that Sudanese refugee children would follow the Sudanese curriculum. As in many other refugee contexts globally, it was not anticipated that the arrival of Sudanese refugees from Darfur in 2003 would evolve into a protracted situation where refugees would remain in Chad for more than 10 years. Discussions to facilitate greater linkages between the refugee education system and the national Chadian system, particularly at the secondary school level, began in 2008. With refugees still hoping for peace and an imminent return to Sudan, these discussions were not seriously reignited until 2012.

PROCESS

- Following a decade of assistance, supporting a parallel (Sudanese) education system in the refugee camps was no longer sustainable. Not only were opportunities for voluntary repatriation to Darfur in the near future limited, but the Chad Operation also witnessed a significant decrease in its operational budget in recent years, jeopardizing services for refugees' to access quality education.
- The disconnect between schools in the camps and the Chadian education system was also not conducive to promoting quality education for children, as teachers were not able to obtain qualifications, benefit from professional training; schools were not properly monitored, nor did children have access to recognized examinations which would allow them to continue with their studies beyond the camps and pave the way for durable solutions.
- The parallel system disqualified refugee schools from benefiting from national development programs and support such as the deployment of teachers and distribution of school materials.
- Chad's bi-lingual curriculum (French and Arabic) offered a unique opportunity to adopt the national curriculum without compromising the language of instruction that Sudanese refugees were accustomed to.
- UNHCR Chad's Refugee Education Strategy 2013-2016 provides the framework for the long-term vision of education for refugees in Chad, including their integration into the national system and a closer partnership with the Ministry of Education (MoE), UNICEF, UNESCO and development partners and structures.
- In line with UNHCR Chad's Protection Strategy and overall goal to strengthen linkages between refugee and host communities to promote peaceful coexistence and regional development, the curriculum transition is seen as a means to facilitate greater access of Chadian children to the camp schools, while allowing Sudanese refugee children to access Chadian schools.

In 2012, the Government of Chad announced its new humanitarian strategy to shift from assistance to development.

- From the start in 2012, all **relevant stakeholders were involved** in the discussions and decisions regarding the transition process. This included refugee leaders, partners, Parents and Teacher Associations (PTAs), Mother's Associations (AEM/*refugee mothers who promote education, with a focus on girls*) national and local authorities, the MoE, education partners, UN agencies, particularly UNICEF and UNESCO, and donors, including BPRM.
- In 2012, a participatory assessment was conducted among Sudanese refugees in 12 camps to solicit feedback on a potential transition to the Chadian system as well as educational priorities given the reduction in resources. The results of the assessment pointed to **three major concerns** of the refugee community:
 - Language of instruction (the use of French instead of Arabic);
 - Recognition of diplomas obtained in Chad upon return to Sudan;
 - Loss of nationality, culture, religion and national identity

The results of this assessment helped to inform the planning and sensitization for the eventual transition, and to ensure that key concerns of the refugee community were taken into consideration and addressed.

- To ensure Sudanese teachers received adequate training to continue teaching in the schools in the camps, in December 2012, a two-year **teacher training** programme was initiated for **167 Sudanese teachers** (2 from each school in the camps) at the ENIBA (Abeche Bilingual Teacher Training College) in Abeche. This training aimed to prepare primary school teachers to teach the Chadian curriculum and also to become familiarized with the norms and standards of the Chadian education system. These teachers have served as key resources in schools during the transition. A teacher's certificate issued by the Chadian state was presented to successful candidates upon completion of the course.



- In May 2013, a **curriculum transition workshop** was held on the transition process in N'djamena with the participation of all stakeholders. The workshop's aims were to address refugees' concerns, develop a detailed action plan and timeline for the transition, and to improve overall communication with stakeholders including refugee communities in particular.
- Following a **Joint Agreement between UNHCR-UNICEF and UNESCO** signed in January 2014, a meeting was held in N'Djamena in April to elaborate and address concerns related to the transition. One of the significant results of this meeting was the commitment by all 3 agencies to make every effort to seek the recognition of Chadian education certificate by the Government of Sudan.
- In April 2014, UNHCR supported a multifunctional team composed of MoE officials and education partners to conduct a **sensitization and outreach mission** to all 12 refugee camps in the East. The team met with refugees, shared key information, and discussed refugees' concerns related to the transition.
- In May 2014, the Government of Chad, the MoE, UN agencies, NGOs and donors held a seminar to review the Chadian education system. Chaired by the Prime Minister, one of the conclusions of the seminar was the necessity to **"integrate schools in refugee camps / returnees sites into the Chadian education system"** (premise 55).
- In September 2014, a group of **1,049 Sudanese refugee teachers** received a **training course** on the Chadian curriculum, including key differences with the Sudanese curriculum.
- On 29 September 2014, the MoE issued instructions to **allocate and deploy 259 Chadian teachers** specializing in French, civics, history and geography to refugee camps and returnee sites.
- The transition from the Sudanese to the Chadian education system was **initiated in October 2014** in all primary and secondary schools in the eastern camps.
- Throughout 2014 and 2015, UNHCR and its partners have continued to carry out **sensitization and awareness-raising** in the refugee camps as well as training of teachers. UNHCR also continued its bilateral meetings with the MoE to fine-tune a range of technical areas affected by the transition.

CORDINATION AND PARTNERSHIPS

Education Coordination meetings are held in N'Djamena every three months with the MoE, education partners (JRS, IRC, RET, CORD, UNICEF, UNESCO and the Bureau for Population, Refugees and Migration or BPRM). These meetings provide the main forum for the exchange of information pertaining to the transition. The Chadian MoE continues to play a key role in guiding the transition process. Monthly meetings are also held at the field level with partners.

Technical Working Group meetings are also held in N'Djamena every two weeks to review progress of the transition, including teacher training, equivalencies, resource mobilization and sensitization, and communication. Participants include government counterparts including CNARR and the MoE, UNICEF and education partners.

UNHCR participates actively as a member of the education Local Donor Group (LDG) which is convened by the MoE, UNICEF and UNESCO to review planning and implementation of the **national education sector plan** funded and supported by the Global Partnership for Education (GPE). In 2014, refugees were included as part of the plan. This advocacy will continue, in line with the principles of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) planning process.

CHALLENGES

- Insufficient funding to cover basic needs to enable access to quality education such as textbooks, teacher training and the rehabilitation and construction of classrooms has had a negative impact on the implementation of the transition. It is essential that adequate resources be invested in supporting the transition, particularly during the initial years.
- While substantial sensitization and awareness-raising was carried out in the camps, not all parents have been supportive of the transition, with some parents pulling their children out of camp schools, resulting in a 13% drop in enrolment rate during the 2014-2015 school year. In addition, the community contribution to schools is still not formalized or harmonized in all camps. However, it is expected that the enrolment rate will increase as communities start to see the benefits of the transition over the longer-term. Continuous sensitization and engagement with the refugee community as well as education committees will remain essential over the short and longer-term.
- Despite significant investment in training and support of refugee teachers, turnover remains high. Not only does this impact the quality of education for students as the pupil to teacher ratio increases, but it also leads to difficulties in recruiting new teachers, as the pool of candidates shrinks. The main factor affecting teachers' decision to resign is the low level of remuneration they receive. Although UNHCR welcomes the support provided by the MoE in deploying 259 teachers to camp schools, more support is needed to absorb qualified refugee teachers into the national system as a longer-term solution. In addition, more refresher training for teachers is needed so as to build their confidence in teaching the Chadian curriculum.
- Access to secondary education remains low, with the net enrolment rate at only 12%. The lack of qualified teachers in secondary schools continues to have a negative effect on education quality, leading to drop-out at the primary and secondary levels, in addition to inhibiting students from accessing higher education given their low performance on national exams. More investment in secondary education is needed, beginning with a mapping exercise to review how refugee students can access national schools in the vicinity of camps, where they exist.