

An Overview of the Evidence on the Effects of Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) on Learning and Well-Being of Forcibly Displaced Children¹

Social and emotional learning (SEL) is an integral part of education and human development. SEL is the process through which all young people and adults acquire and apply the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to develop healthy identities, manage emotions and achieve personal and collective goals, feel, and show empathy for others, establish, and maintain supportive relationships, and make responsible and caring decisions.

Source: The Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL)'s SEL Framework 2020

Introduction

Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) is key to enhancing children's development while driving substantial societal and global economic gains. Social and emotional skills are crucial, as they enable children to work effectively with others, adapt to changing environments, and lead healthy, purposeful lives (OECD, 2021a). These skills prepare children to become responsible, resilient citizens who can thrive despite challenges. Evidence shows that supporting children's holistic development through SEL not only boosts their well-being and academic achievement but also delivers broader social and economic benefits (Jacobs Foundation et al, 2023). The World Economic Forum (WEF) estimates that this could boost global productivity by \$8.3 trillion by 2030, with collaborative problem-solving alone adding \$2.54 trillion (WEF, 2024; Business Standard, 2024). In the U.S., every dollar invested in SEL programs provides an average societal return of \$11 (Bowden et al, 2015; Jacobs Foundation et al, 2023). Investing in SEL initiatives within schools and communities can yield significant returns, while the cost of not investing can be substantial. (InterAction, 2024).

The job market today has evolved due to the rising influence of artificial intelligence, requiring new key skills for success. While basic cognitive skills such as reading and math remain important, they are not sufficient on their own. In-demand 21st century skills such as critical thinking, collaboration, and communication are increasingly valued in the private sector (EIU, 2014; LinkedIn, 2019; Anderson & Gantz, 2016; World Bank, 2023). However, the education system has not yet adequately addressed these needs. Countries' efforts to incorporate these skills into national education policies have not produced effective integration into classrooms and curricula (Joynes et al, 2019).

Integrating SEL into education systems is vital for advancing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). SEL supports SDG4, which focuses on ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education, by promoting social cohesion, emotional well-being, and lifelong learning. This approach also aligns with the [UNHCR Education Strategy 2030: A Strategy for Refugee Education](#), which emphasizes a comprehensive approach to SEL as part of its broader educational objectives for refugee children and youth. A holistic education that develops both academic skills and social-emotional competencies is essential for successful school experiences, academic and long-term life outcomes (Jacobs Foundation et al, 2023).

The need for SEL is particularly urgent for refugee and conflict-affected children, who often endure trauma and loss. SEL helps these children manage their emotions, develop coping strategies, and build resilience. By fostering self-awareness, emotional regulation, and empathy, SEL supports their adjustment to new environments and cultural contexts. In educational settings, SEL creates supportive and inclusive atmospheres where refugee children feel valued, facilitating their integration into new communities and improving their prospects for future success.

To address the needs for refugees and crisis-affected children effectively, it is crucial to ensure that the design of SEL programs respond to diverse contexts. This can be achieved by promoting a common understanding on the importance of SEL, conducting evidence-based research to inform effective program design, and increasing resources to support the implementation of SEL initiatives. This is particularly important in humanitarian settings, where information and resources are more limited (USAID, 2019).

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Objectives

The objective of this brief is to:

- a. Present evidence on the effects of SEL on children's learning and well-being, particularly in forced displacement settings, and identify gaps in the existing evidence;
- b. Identify the barriers and challenges to scaling up SEL programs for children in these contexts; and
- c. Provide recommendations for integrating SEL into educational frameworks to better support crisis-affected children.

The brief is organized to reflect the objectives laid out above, with the following structure: It starts by outlining the importance of SEL to children's learning and well-being and the limitations of existing evidence. It then addresses the impact of SEL in the context of forced displacement, and discusses the barriers and challenges for scaling up SEL. The brief concludes with recommendations for effective scale up of the SEL program in this context. This piece does not seek to generate new research but rather to consolidate existing evidence through a comprehensive desk review of available literature.



Children participating recreational activities organized by partner, RET International. ©Ben Dwork

Methodology

The review of the literature was guided by the following criteria:

- a. *Geographical scope*: The review is global in scope, with particular focus on humanitarian contexts.
- b. *Publication type*: The review includes a diverse range of sources, such as academic publications, gray literature, unpublished reports, and other communication products, including existing relevant reviews.

The research was carried out using targeted search terms across search engines, organizational websites, research papers, and identifying relevant citations. The scope was limited to available resources in English, excluding evidence and documentation in other languages. The brief is not a systematic review of evidence.

Findings

A. Importance of SEL on Children's Learning and Well-being and Limitations of Existing Evidence

Evidence from various studies indicates that fostering SEL led to long-term benefits in life in various domains. A review of over 700 studies shows that, on average, SEL leads to an improvement in academic achievement, comparable to an extra four months of progress (EEF, 2019). Education that focuses on a student-centered approach such as playful learning, and which emphasizes 21st-century skills such as collaboration, critical thinking, communication, and problem-solving can help students to *leapfrog* in their learning and develop competencies needed to succeed in their lives and career (Brookings, 2019). Other research also demonstrates that SEL is just as important, if not more so, than academic skills. SEL can connect and enhance a range of skills, including basic literacy and numeracy, as well as digital and job-related skills (UNICEF, 2019).

The first OECD study on this topic suggests that students exposed to holistic pedagogy excel academically compared to those who are not. This is regardless of socioeconomic background, gender, or cognitive abilities. SEL, effective in both formal and non-formal settings, fosters skills that aid learning for all ages. The report indicates that skills such as curiosity and persistence strongly relate to success in reading, math, and the arts (OECD, 2021a). Results from the OECD's 2015 Program for International Assessment (PISA) also found that mindset can be twice as important as socioeconomic background in predicting academic performance, even in low-income contexts (Jacobs Foundation et al, 2023). A meta-analysis of over 200 U.S. SEL interventions concludes that SEL improves socio-emotional skills and academic achievement by 11% (Durlak et al, 2011).

High levels of social and -emotional skills are also strongly associated with greater life satisfaction and overall well-being. The OECD report indicates that skills such as optimism, trust, and stress resistance play a significant role in enhancing psychological well-being (OECD, 2021a; OECD, 2023). Optimistic students, with their positive outlook on life, are less likely to experience depressive disorders and tend to develop resilience and effective coping strategies (Carver et al, 2010). Trust is crucial for collaboration, while stress resistance greatly impacts life satisfaction. Moreover, SEL can help reduce bullying and foster children's sense of belonging in schools. Children who feel a strong sense of belonging are less likely to participate in bullying (Futurity, 2019). A greater sense of belonging also associates with students' higher levels of co-operation with their peers (OECD, 2019).



Children participating recreational activities organized by partner, RET International. ©Ben Dwork

Social and emotional skills can significantly contribute to positive societal impacts (Jacobs Foundation et al, 2023). These skills are crucial for a fulfilling life, including active participation as family, community members, and engaged citizens (Heckmann et al, 2010). Evidence shows that children's socio-emotional development is closely tied to their school commitment, academic and professional success, positive health and social outcomes, reducing violence and criminal behavior (Duckworth et al, 2005; Duckworth et al, 2007; Durlak et al, 2011; Heckman et al, 2013; WEF, 2016; Kankaraš, 2017; Chernyshenko et al, 2018; Jacobs Foundation et al, 2023).

Nevertheless, significant limitations remain in the existing body of evidence. Most of the research has been conducted in high-income countries, with relatively limited data from low- and middle-income countries (LMICs)² (Gallagher, 2018). In addition, most of the literature reviewed does not explicitly mention or include learners in contexts of forced displacement. The limited research on SEL for children in forced displacement contexts and LMICs can be attributed to several key factors. A major challenge is the lack of reliable data systems, resources, and local capacity to track educational outcomes and indicators over time³. Limited resources coupled with a lack of understanding on the importance of SEL, means that implementing SEL programs may receive lower priority compared to other needs and are therefore not being integrated in the educational approach. Without adequate systems, investment, and support, conducting rigorous, evidence-based studies on SEL in LMICs can be particularly challenging, further hampering the incorporation of SEL in education programming and interventions.

B. Impact of SEL in Contexts of Forced Displacement

Refugee students often face significant challenges, including overcoming displacement, socio-economic disadvantages, and language barriers. Analysis of PISA 2018 data reveals persistent disparities between immigrant and students from host communities. While not a precise proxy for protection status, the report indicates that students with immigrant backgrounds are at higher risk of academic underperformance, a weaker sense of belonging at school, and lower life satisfaction, despite many showing high motivation to succeed (OECD, 2021b). In other contexts, an assessment conducted of the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) Better Learning Program (BLP)⁴ in Burkina Faso, Niger, and Mali reveals alarming findings: 53% of refugee children reported feeling unsafe at school, 62% struggled to concentrate on schoolwork, and 64% expressed little hope for the future. Additionally, 72% needed extra school support, 67% required more family support, and 91% exhibited low self-regulation skills (ECW et al, 2022).

SEL is especially impactful in displacement and crisis contexts (OECD, 2021c; Block et al, 2014). Effective SEL programs offer significant benefits for children with academic or behavioral challenges, or those facing toxic stress and trauma (Harvard EASEL Lab & Amal Alliance, 2022; Evans & English, 2022; Noble et al, 2005; Shonkoff et al, 2012; Raver et al, 2013; Bailey et al, 2019; Jones et al, 2011, OECD, 2021c; Block et al, 2014). Neuroscience research shows that emotions greatly impact cognitive processes such as attention and memory, which are critical for learning. This is especially important in environments where students are affected by poverty, marginalization, displacement, or violence, where creating safe and supportive learning spaces is a pre-requisite for learning. Refugee children, often enduring low socio-economic conditions and psychological hardships, urgently need SEL support to enhance their emotional well-being and navigate uncertainties (OECD, 2021c). SEL programs can help these students manage stress, adapt to new cultures, improve their psychosocial well-being, leading to better academic outcomes. A holistic education that includes SEL can play a crucial role in integrating these students into host societies.

Despite this base knowledge, research on the impact of SEL programs in humanitarian settings is limited and fragmented (Deitz et al, 2021; UNESCO, 2019; Kim et al, 2023). While rigorous evaluations of programs targeting refugees and crisis-affected children in LMICs such as International Rescue Committee (IRC)'s Healing Classrooms Tutoring (HCT) and the NRC's *Better Learning Program* (BLP) are recently available and have shown positive effects on wellbeing, academic outcomes and school safety, others are mostly pilot studies or involve small sample sizes, and often rely on qualitative and descriptive methods (Kim et al, 2023). Despite this, there is increasing attention on the important role of SEL in forced displacement and crisis-affected settings, particularly in schools and classrooms with high pupil-to-teacher ratios in LMICs, though evidence remains limited (Brookings, 2018; USAID, 2019; UNESCO-MGEIP, 2020; UNICEF, 2019).

² One notable example from an LMIC context is the Speed School program in Ethiopia, which targets out-of-school children. This program shows that incorporating SEL pedagogy—focusing on skills such as self-efficacy and emotional regulation—leads to improved outcomes in math and language scores for enrolled students compared to those in public schools using traditional teaching methods (Geneva Global, 2021).

³ Some studies in LMICs mentioned difficulties in collecting data in conflict zones due to infrastructural and logistical limitations, for example Arega, N. (2023).

⁴ The BLP program aims to improve mental health and conditions for learning for children through mobilization of support through a network of caregivers, teachers, and counsellors.

Measuring SEL in contexts of forced displacement

In July 2024, UNHCR launched a learning assessment in [Mauritania](#) and [Mexico](#) to tackle the lack of data on learning outcomes for refugee students. This effort is part of a larger holistic learning measurement project that seeks to address the lack of data on learning outcomes of the forcibly displaced and involves the administration of assessments, covering both academic skills—reading and mathematics—and non-academic skills, known as Social and Emotional Skills (SEL).

In addition, as part of forthcoming project partnerships to advance refugee basic education for out-of-school children, SEL will be integrated into activity plans under UNHCR-supported programs to foster a nurturing school environment that impacts learners' ability to thrive and learn effectively. In addition to quantitative assessments, qualitative monitoring surveys will be conducted to further evaluate the impact of SEL on student well-being.

Available evaluations demonstrate that well-designed and targeted SEL programs can effectively improve learning and well-being for crisis-affected children. The BLP⁵ exemplifies this by enhancing the well-being and learning of displaced children through psychosocial support and a holistic approach involving caregivers, teachers, and counselors (NRC, 2017). It provides teachers with tools to address psychosocial issues, improving classroom management and supporting all children in managing stress. An impact evaluation of BLP-2⁶ program in Palestine demonstrates that children who completed the program improved in all domains measured including their wellbeing, ability to self-regulate negative emotions, enhancing their ability to cope with challenges, as well as better school functioning and academic performance (Forsberg & Schultz, 2022; NRC, 2017). Students who participated in the program reported higher grades in Arabic and math, pre- and post-BLP 2 interventions; 61.6% and 65.6% in Arabic, and 59.3% and 63.0% in math, respectively (Forsberg & Schultz, 2022). BLP has expanded and been implemented by NRC in 30 countries across different continents (UiT The Arctic University of Norway, 2024).

A large-scale cluster randomized controlled trial (RCT) of the IRC's *Learning to Read in a Healing Classroom* (LRHC) intervention, a school-based socioemotional learning program, targeting three conflict-affected provinces of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) also demonstrates a significant positive impact on children's geometry scores and improved perceptions of school support and care. These supportive environments led to reduced victimization and better math outcomes, though the program's impact on literacy was not significant. The findings, while modest, illustrate that effective interventions are possible and can yield meaningful benefits, even in challenging contexts (Aber et al, 2016; Wolf et al, 2015).

Another RCT on the IRC's HCT program also suggests positive outcomes on children in fragile contexts. The program combines academic instruction with SEL principles through remedial tutoring to children in schools. Through the evaluation conducted in Lebanon and Niger, findings shows that the HCT program combined with a target SEL activity, especially mindfulness activity, significantly impacts both academic and SEL outcomes for students who received the support compared to those who did not (IRC et al., 2021). The study found promising signs of improvement in several areas, indicating that refugee children's SEL skills can be enhanced with targeted and comprehensive support. More importantly, the program assessment in Lebanon, measuring variation of impact by conflict exposure found that the impact did not vary significantly based on children's exposure to conflict, suggesting that universal SEL programming can be beneficial for all settings (Kim et al, 2023).

⁵ The BLP program focuses on improving students' learning capacity by empowering the school community, integrating coping techniques into daily teaching and learning, and encouraging pupils' natural recovery. The program is school-based and consists of three different interventions:

BLP-1: Universal approach and classroom-based. Supporting students' recovery after emergencies. All the students in the class get training in detecting and regulating stress reactions.

BLP-2: Indicated and group-based: Supporting students' recovery and improving study skills after emergencies. Students with reduced school functioning get psychosocial and educational support.

BLP-3: Indicated, individual and group-based: Fighting traumatic nightmares and sleeping problems. Students with traumatic nightmares get therapy, training, and support.

The BLP program was developed by the UiT- The Arctic University of Norway and the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC).

⁶ The BLP2 program is a school-based and teacher-led psychosocial intervention, targeting academic underachievement among conflict-affected youths. The study was carried out in Gaza, employed a randomized control trial design, and included 300 students between 9 and 16 years of age.

The Colors of Kindness, an innovative education-in-emergencies (EiE) program⁷, is one of the 13 selected SEL innovations identified by HundrED (HundrED, 2021). It was designed to enhance SEL for children in crisis-affected areas using EdTech solution. The program is delivered via weekly audio podcasts and supported by a digital workbook, addresses the disruption of education caused by global crises, natural disasters, and the COVID-19 pandemic. The program has been implemented in Bangladesh, Uganda, and Greece, focusing on improving children's social and emotional skills, overall well-being, and access to inclusive education (LEAP, 2022).

The Color of Kindness was first piloted by Amal Alliance in late 2020 in Bangladesh in response to the UNHCR's HEA COVID-19 Challenge, targeting 137 children in Cox's Bazaar, including a high percentage of girls and Rohingya refugees. The assessment of the program shows a 16.5% increase in SEL competency and a 99% improvement in mood and positive outlook among the children (Amal Alliance et al, 2021). In 2021, the program was piloted in Nakivale Settlement Camp in Uganda, where program assessment reported that children who participated in the program improved their SEL skills by 30%, and improved their self-confidence, goal setting, and better relationships at home (Amal Alliance et al, 2022). These gains have helped bridge learning gaps and increase engagement in distance learning.

In 2022, Amal Alliance and researchers at the Harvard EASEL Lab designed a quasi-experimental study to explore implementation and impacts of the program in Greece, with 400 students participating from both refugee and formal school settings that serve a high number of refugee and displaced students (Harvard EASEL Lab & Amal Alliance, 2022). The study shows significant increases in SEL skills, particularly in fostering friendships and conflict resolution. The assessment results reveals a significant increase in student SEL skills from baseline to endline. On average, teachers reported that students' SEL scores rose from 0.55 to 1.004. Students themselves reported a smaller increase in their SEL skills, from 1.207 to 1.267 (on a scale of 0 to 1.5). This smaller change could be attributed to students initially rating themselves high at baseline, leaving limited room for a noticeable improvement. Teachers also observed that students became more open, inclusive, and emotionally expressive, with breathing exercises proving especially beneficial for self-regulation and transcending language barriers.



UNHCR scales up presence at official border crossings as tens of thousands of Afghans arrive from Pakistan
 ©UNHCR/Oxygen Empire Media Production

⁷ Adapted from HundrED's [Rainbow of Education Initiative](#).

There have also been assessments of SEL programs that integrate music and sports to promote well-being for refugees and crisis-affected children which demonstrated positive results. For example, the *Resilient School Hub Project*⁸ uses music-making and music listening as methodology to help children and youth affected by tsunami 2018 in Indonesia to improve their psychosocial well-being. The project shows significant results in lessening the students' post-traumatic stress symptoms, their fatalism and increasing peer-support. All children participating in the program reported that the activity made them feel calm and happy, while 82% reported that the song would help them cope. Similar programs have also been implemented in OECD countries targeting refugee children and youth such as music education in Canada and Germany, and yoga and sports in Greece, however the program evaluations are not yet available. In addition, a program targeting specific refugee population such as *The Dream Academy* (TDA), piloted in Greece in 2021 and implemented in numerous countries, was designed to help for LGBTQIA+ refugees heal from trauma, understand their rights, and acquire practical business skills for building sustainable futures. The program survey results indicates that 94% of participants increased their confidence, 100% gained leadership skills, 97% felt prepared to take next steps towards decisions to sustain themselves through jobs or further education. Ninety-seven percent gained the ability to trust (OECD, 2021c).

C. Barriers and Challenges for Scaling up SEL

Despite the increasing recognition of SEL's importance over the past decades, scaling up SEL programs for refugee children presents several significant challenges. While numerous SEL curricula are available, most are not specifically tailored for forcibly⁹ displaced students or fit to the context, limiting their effectiveness for this vulnerable population. Additionally, forcibly displaced populations often live in deprived conditions and poverty, with a lack of access to quality education, social services, stable housing, and healthcare, all of which are foundational for building healthy relationships and developing social-emotional skills (HundrED, 2022).

Advocacy and coordination for SEL in forced displacement

In 2023, a dedicated Task Team was established under the [Global Refugee Forum \(GRF\) Education Alliance](#) to emphasize the importance of SEL in situations of forced displacement to enable education outcomes. Led by the LEGO Foundation, Right to Play International, IRC, UNICEF and UNHCR, the MHPSS+SEL Task Team, represented by over 50 members from donors, ministries, foundations and academic institutions, has put forward [advocacy briefs](#), calls to action and created a global pledge '[Promoting MHPSS+SEL to enable education outcomes for refugee displaced and host community children and youth](#)'. The pledge outlines ten key actions aimed to mobilize technical, political, and financial commitments and advance data collection and evidence-based practices.

Key barriers to scaling up SEL programs for refugee children include:

Lack of evidence of the impact of SEL: One of the key challenges is the lack of robust evidence on the effectiveness of SEL programs, especially in LMICs and conflict-affected settings. This gap makes it difficult to understand students' social-emotional skills and evaluate how well existing programs improve learning outcomes and well-being. Without solid data, designing SEL programs that address the unique needs of conflict-affected children—many of whom have experienced violence and trauma—is challenging. The absence of trauma-informed practices in schools compounds the problem, leaving students' mental health needs unmet and limiting the impact of SEL initiatives.

Lack of understanding of the importance of SEL: A common misconception is the perceived divide between academic and social emotional learning. However, increasing evidence shows that cultivating SEL not only enhances academic performance but also helps children overcome adversity and delivers substantial social, societal, and economic benefits (Jacobs Foundation et al, 2023). Despite this growing body of evidence, gaps still exist that hinder a broader understanding of the importance of SEL. Addressing these gaps is crucial to reinforcing the case for SEL, particularly in convincing policymakers of its value and necessity.

⁸ <https://recoverwithmusic.org/#section1>

⁹ Forcibly displaced population' is a standard term used by UNHCR as an umbrella term that includes refugees, and other groups of persons UNHCR serves. Other terms commonly used in the literature include crisis affected populations.

Limited capacity and resources: Resource constraints are a significant barrier to scaling up SEL programs, particularly in refugee-hosting countries, many of which are LMICs settings. These countries often struggle with limited capacity in their education systems, even before considering the inclusion of refugee learners (Anderson, 2020). The scarcity of trained teachers, materials, and infrastructure further limits the reach and effectiveness of SEL programs (Bunn & Betancourt, 2022). In under-resourced settings, teachers frequently face high levels of stress and burnout, especially when working with refugee students who have complex needs. This impairs their ability to implement SEL effectively, particularly in schools where SEL is not yet integrated as part of the curriculum (HundrED, 2022).

Cultural and structural challenges: Cultural and structural barriers hinder the successful implementation of SEL programs for refugee children. Many initiatives struggle with providing culturally appropriate content, navigating stigma and discrimination, and overcoming language barriers, all of which are vital for SEL's success in diverse refugee populations (HundrED, 2022). Common disciplinary practices, such as suspension and expulsion, can be particularly harmful to refugee children who are already vulnerable. Implicit biases among educators, leading to lower academic expectations, also compound these challenges (HundrED, 2022). Creating a positive and nurturing learning environment is therefore essential to support effective implementation of SEL programs.

Addressing these barriers requires a multi-faceted approach. Only by overcoming these challenges can SEL programs be effectively and sustainably scaled up to support the unique needs of refugee children, helping them to thrive emotionally, socially, and academically.

Recommendations

Research Recommendations

Addressing Evidence Gaps: There remain crucial evidence gaps that prevent the scalability and relevance of SEL programs. Addressing these gaps through rigorous research, especially in diverse cultural and crisis-affected settings, is essential. A stronger evidence base can make a compelling case for SEL's integration into education systems. Continuous research and evaluation are necessary to help refine SEL strategies, their relevance and long-term impact. Further evidence is needed in the context of forced displacement.

Include assessment for socio-emotional skills in learning assessment exercises: Many tools currently exist to measure whether and if learners have these skills. Items from these tools should be included systematically in foundational learning assessments to better understand socio-emotional skill acquisition.

Program Recommendations

Teachers' SEL Competencies: Teachers play a key role in the successful implementation of SEL programs. Integrating SEL into pre-service teacher training, ongoing professional development, and coaching is essential to building teachers' social and emotional competencies. The training should emphasize cultural competence and enable teachers to effectively respond to the diverse academic and emotional needs of refugee students. Providing teachers with the necessary support to manage stress is also crucial for preventing burnout and ensuring successful SEL implementation.

Teacher training programs such as *SEL for Teachers* by UNESCO MGIEP¹⁰ provides educators with the tools to better manage classrooms, prevent stress, and enhance their mental and emotional well-being. It emphasizes the role of SEL in preventing teacher burnout and highlights that teachers can foster students' social, emotional, and academic skills through regular teaching practices.

Curriculum Integration: Integrating SEL into education systems will promote consistency, sustainability, and accessibility for all children, including refugee children. SEL should be explicitly included in national and local curricula with a clear implementation framework, with materials available in multiple languages and in culturally appropriate formats (i.e. time on task for SEL related teaching and learning). Countries such as United States, Canada, Finland and Singapore have introduced SEL into their curricula, encouraging schools to integrate SEL into their daily teaching practices to promote a supportive learning environment and enhance SEL for children (CASEL, 2024; The Government of Ontario, 2024; Finland Education Hub, 2023; The Ministry of Education Singapore, 2020).

¹⁰ <https://mgiep.unesco.org/sel-for-teachers>

Conclusion

In a world that often feels stacked against them, forcibly displaced learners need every opportunity to thrive. Evidence clearly shows that socio-emotional skills are just as critical as reading and math competencies, and their development helps students become more prepared for learning. For children who have endured the trauma of forced displacement, socio-emotional skills can serve as a lifeline. Scaling up SEL programs in such contexts is vital for their academic and emotional well-being. To achieve this, significant investments in both funding and policy commitments are necessary. Building effective partnerships among government agencies, donors, international and local organizations, and communities is crucial for successful implementation and for tailoring programs to meet the unique needs of refugee children.

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