



Key Considerations on Education and Transition to Employment for Refugees

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Purpose of the Document

In line with the 2018 Global Compact on Refugees, UNHCR's Refugee Education 2030 strategy, and UNHCR's Refugee Livelihoods and Economic Inclusion Concept Note, UNHCR commits to ensuring all persons of concern and host community youth have access to inclusive quality education as a foundation for successful integration in the economy.

Education and economic inclusion are crucial to meeting the objectives of the Global Compact on Refugees, of which the second is to promote refugee self-reliance. Expanding access to secondary and tertiary education is the first step in closing the gap between learning and earning. Supporting the transition from tertiary education to employment is a crucial next step.

The purpose of this document is to draw on existing knowledge and experience at country, regional and headquarters levels to identify and share five Key Considerations to improving education and economic inclusion approaches and outcomes.

These Key Considerations can bolster the efforts of UNHCR country operations and partners to continuously improve links between education and employment in support of refugee self-reliance.

The Key Considerations are consistent with UNHCR's commitment to prioritize effective partnerships that focus on burden sharing, relieving pressures on host communities, supporting refugee self-reliance, expanding solutions and remaining accountable to affected populations.

1. Country Context

Education and economic inclusion strategies and programmes (to ensure consistency throughout) should be **guided by a contextual assessment** that include the following areas:

- Legal and political analysis, including factors such as national development plans, solutions, legal framework, key actors, political incentives and access to services.
- Economic or market analysis, including factors such as unemployment rate, market demand and employment opportunities in value chains.
- Socio-economic data, including information on population skill profiles, poverty levels and education levels of persons of concern.

Map existing institutions, capacities, curriculum, cost and requirements for refugees' inclusion in the national education system, including in Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) programmes.

Map and **analyze barriers and gaps** to accessing higher education, transitioning to employment or accessing livelihoods in order to formulate specific responses or actions.

Commission, design and **conduct research on refugee participation in labour markets** including professional training, apprenticeships and internships.

Update and **share analysis of education and economic inclusion factors** with sector partners, coordination groups, donors and persons of concern.

2. Advocacy

Engage and build capacity at all levels of government to enhance the inclusion of refugees in national systems and services.

Work with parent and community groups to **build awareness and support for inclusion of refugee youth, especially girls and those with different needs**, in secondary and tertiary education, including TVET and connected education.

Improve access to specific courses and skills-based trainings that are designed to **improve the preparedness** of secondary level students to transition to post-secondary opportunities.

Ensure **equivalent school fee structures** for persons of concern and host community students.

Work with stakeholders to **ensure diverse post-secondary pathways**—including TVET, undergraduate, connected higher education programmes and other education opportunities.

Promote the inclusion of refugees in national TVET systems for relevant skills development that can translate to meaningful employment or self-employment options, in host, home or third countries.

Ensure scholarship opportunities are **relevant to the capabilities of diverse students** and result in equal opportunities for employment.

Identify and resolve issues where **documentation or credentials** present a barrier to accessing higher education or employment.



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UNHCR Country operations and partners can draw on this material to develop coordinated, multi-functional responses to support refugees from education to employment.

3. Partnerships

Advocate for harmonizing laws to allow refugees and persons of concern to **own and register businesses** on the same terms as nationals.

Advocate alongside relevant agencies and ministries to harmonize laws to **allow refugees and persons of concern the right to work and related rights** (i.e. freedom of movement and access to financial services) on the same terms as nationals.

Disseminate information about the right to work for persons of concern with educators, prospective employers, labour organisations, business networks, persons of concern and other relevant stakeholders.

Advocate with public and private sector employers to **include refugees in their labour force and supply chains**, including by establishing apprenticeship and professional insertion programmes that include persons of concern.

Ensure that refugees can contribute to local economies and national response plans by recognising refugee skills and aiding their recruitment in the relevant sectors.

Ensure participation of refugees and other persons of concern in planning and evaluating their higher education, transition to employment and livelihoods programmes.

Identify partnerships that can expand access to higher education and labour market opportunities for persons of concern; **support champions at national and local levels**, including private sector, employment service centers, potential large employers, chambers of commerce, industry groups and academic networks.

Partner with agencies that have a comparative advantage in collection, analysis and management of **education and livelihoods data**.

Work with national institutions, development partners and other UN agencies to **include refugees in national budgets and sector plans**.

Improve linkages between educational institutions and employers in order to **improve transitions and connections** for persons of concern.





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4. Transition to Employment

Support inclusion in **soft skills and career readiness** training to strengthen the ability of persons of concern to be competitive and relevant in the labour market.

Ensure refugee students have access to **academic and career guidance informed by labour market information**.

Analyse and use tertiary education student and alumni data to demonstrate the **impact of higher education in providing sustainable employment** for refugees, doing so in accordance with UNHCR's data protection policy.

Link qualified individuals with jobs and labour mobility pathways that are **matched to their skills and abilities**.

5. Alignment with Labour Markets

Use existing data to profile individuals with skills, professional experience, training and qualifications aligned to labour market opportunities for purposes of placement or advocacy.

Use existing labour market, value chain, education and employment **data to inform planning, partnerships and programming**.

Continue **monitoring and reporting activities** after programme implementation to ensure efficient functioning and to identify joint learning and good practices.