



primary
impact!

PRIMARY IMPACT

Annual Report 2023

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COVER PHOTOGRAPH:

Sarance School is one of the 185 schools participating in 'Respiramos Inclusión' (We breathe Inclusion), a methodology designed and implemented by UNHCR in Ecuador since 2013 to prevent discrimination and xenophobia in the education system from a protection and rights-based approach.

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Executive Summary

Access to safe, quality primary education is critical in forced displacement, providing a foundation for learning, social inclusion, and social and emotional well-being. UNHCR prioritizes including refugee children in national education systems, ensuring equitable access to certified education alongside host community peers. Where inclusion is not feasible, alternative models address immediate needs while advocating for long-term integration. Based on available data, these efforts demonstrate tangible outcomes, including increased student enrollment, improved pass rates (82% in primary exams in reporting countries)¹, and the development of social-emotional skills, which collectively contribute to safeguarding children, fostering resilience, and creating measurable opportunities for academic and personal success.

Key Achievements

The **Primary Impact** initiative, launched in July 2023, operated across 15 countries to transform the lives of refugee children through accessible, inclusive, and holistic education.

- **431,723 children** were enrolled in primary schools, with a nearly equal gender split: **214,405 girls** (49.64%) and **217,318 boys** (50.36%).
- **Accelerated Education: 6,997 overaged learners** were enrolled in programs to help them catch up on missed schooling. For instance, 338 adolescent girls from Accelerated Education transitioned into Grade 6 in formal schools in Pakistan.
- **Teachers:** Compensation was provided to **6,121 teachers**, of whom 60% were refugees. However, only 32% of these teachers were women, underscoring a need to increase female representation.

Enrollment Data Highlights

- **Student Enrollment:** The program's gross enrollment rate exceeded net enrollment in all countries, with the large number of overaged learners suggesting significant gaps in education caused by displacement-related disruptions. Countries like Niger and Tanzania noted marked increases in school attendance due to back-to-school campaigns and the distribution of resources.
- **Gender Disparities:** While girls comprised nearly half of the enrolled students, cultural norms and safety concerns still posed barriers in some regions, particularly in rural areas.
- **Teacher Gaps:** The shortage of trained and qualified educators, combined with legal restrictions on refugee teachers' employment, continues to hinder the quality of education. Refugee teachers often lack equitable pay, recognition, and access to professional development opportunities.

Challenges and Responses

Despite notable progress, barriers persist:

- **Access Gaps:** Enrolment rates still fall below national standards, with economic hardships, security concerns, and insufficient infrastructure contributing to the problem.
- **Teacher Shortages:** High teacher-pupil ratios and limited access to professional development impact learning outcomes. **Sysemic** barriers prevent refugee teachers from fully participating in national education systems.
- **Overaged Learners:** Many enrolled students are overaged due to learning interruptions, requiring targeted interventions such as Accelerated Education programs.

Countries implemented tailored strategies to address these challenges, for example:

- In **Niger**, community radio stations mobilized parents for back-to-school campaigns, significantly increasing enrollment.

- In **Cameroon**, Parent-Teacher Associations supported enrollment drives and collected resources to improve schools.
- In **Ethiopia**, the government provided textbooks and integrated refugee learners into the national education system.

Outcomes and Impact

Primary Impact's interventions are yielding measurable results, for example:

- **Learning Outcomes:** Refugee students demonstrated completion, achieving an 82% pass rate in primary school exams globally.
- **Teacher Development:** Professional development programs trained 152 teachers and education staff in data collection and instructional supervision, supporting improved learning outcomes.
- **School Safety:** Over 3,200 individuals received training in mental health, social-emotional learning, and protection, fostering inclusive environments for students.
- **Gender-Sensitive Interventions:** Girls benefited from targeted initiatives such as hygiene kits, cash assistance for education-related expenses, and safety-focused campaigns, contributing to increased enrollment and retention.

Looking Ahead

Primary Impact aims to expand its reach to 10 additional countries in 2024, with projected funding needs of **\$83 million** through 2027. Strengthened partnerships, evidence-based policies, and resource mobilization will remain critical to achieving the program's goals of inclusion, equity, and quality education for displaced children worldwide.

Primary Impact underscores the transformative potential of education in displacement settings, laying a strong foundation for a more inclusive and equitable future.



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Annual Report 2023
Global Overview

Global Overview

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Global Overview

By the end of 2023, the global number of forcibly displaced people reached 117.3 million, with the school-aged refugee population estimated at 14.8 million¹. Of those school-going age children, approximately 49 percent were out of school². Data from the school year 2022-23 revealed that 65 percent of refugee children are enrolled in primary school³. While the primary enrolment rate is the highest among various education levels, it still highlights a significant gap, leaving many children without schooling.

Access alone does not guarantee improved quality of education. Fragile school systems, further strained by factors such as ongoing conflicts, health outbreaks, population influxes and economic crises, significantly limit educational quality. Simulated estimates from the World Bank suggest that learning poverty – which measures the lack of ability to read and comprehend a simple text by age 10 – has risen to 70 percent on average in low- and middle-income countries⁴, where the majority of the world's refugee population resides. The long-term effects are projected to be substantial, with an anticipated loss in future human capital amounting to \$11 trillion in lifetime productivity and income⁵. This learning crisis and resulting education inequality is expected to disproportionately impact the most vulnerable and displaced children.

In terms of girls' education, data shows that gender parity in access to primary education has not been achieved in any of the countries surveyed by UNHCR⁶. There are also concerns about the rates of primary school completion, the transition to post-primary education and the overall quality of learning. While data on completion and quality of education in displacement situations is limited, national exam results indicate that refugee learners often excel in their studies, exceeding the national average when

¹ [Global Trends report 2023 | UNHCR](#)

² <https://www.unhcr.org/media/unhcr-education-report-2024-refugee-education-five-years-launch-2030-refugee-education>

³ [Ibid.](#)

⁴ [Learning-poverty-report-2022-06-21-final-V7-0-conferenceEdition.pdf \(worldbank.org\)](#)

⁵ [WBG-LearningLosses-flier-10-09-22-e-version.pdf \(worldbank.org\)](#)

⁶ <https://www.unhcr.org/media/unhcr-education-report-2024-refugee-education-five-years-launch-2030-refugee-education>

they are given the opportunity to enrol and stay in school. In the academic year 2022 to 2023, 82 percent of refugee students who sat for primary exams passed⁷.

Over the past decade, there has been a **growing consensus around the refugee inclusion agenda, marked by breakthroughs in access, quality improvements and the establishment of sustainable financial frameworks**⁸. Successes have been identified at the global, regional, and country levels showcasing progress in refugee primary education. However, despite the advancements, the amount of international aid for primary education for refugees remains inadequate, and strong coordination across stakeholders is essential to ensure complementarity of efforts. **To mobilize multi-year resources and coordinate efforts to address the refugee education needs at the primary school level, UNHCR launched 'Primary Impact' in July 2023.**

Primary Impact builds on the extensive efforts made in primary education over the past decade and seeks to expand and scale transformative primary education in displacement situations. **It operates for four years, until June 2027, with the goal of transforming the lives of refugee children and youth through the provision of accessible, inclusive and holistic education.**

Aligned with the [UNHCR Education Strategy 2030](#), Primary Impact works to:

1. Increase equitable access to primary education
2. Improve the quality of education
3. Establish and maintain a safe and supportive learning environment
4. Advocate for and operationalize inclusive education policies at national and local levels

⁷ [Ibid.](#)

⁸ <https://www.unhcr.org/media/barriers-breakthroughs-progress-primary-education-refugees>

SCHOOLS



1,029

STUDENTS



431,723

TEACHERS



6,121

Increase equitable access to primary education

Primary Impact was launched in 15 countries across Africa, Asia, the Americas and the Middle East: Algeria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Djibouti, Ecuador, Ethiopia, Morocco, Niger, Pakistan, Syria, Tanzania, Thailand, Zambia, Zimbabwe. Across the implementing locations, **Primary Impact activities contributed to increasing access to primary education for 431,723 displaced children⁹, 49.64 percent of whom were female, across 1,029 primary schools in both camp and urban settings.** Out of the total number of reached children, 6,997 overaged children enrolled in Accelerated Education programs¹⁰, which are designed to help learners catch up on missed education.



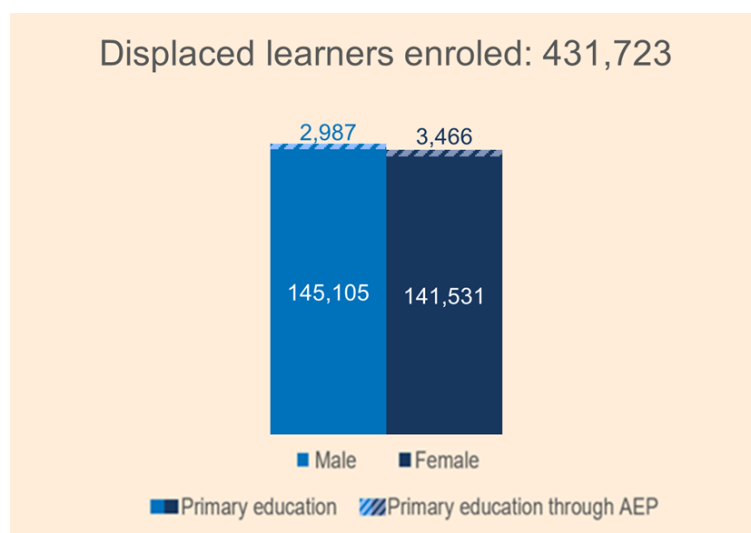
ACCELERATED EDUCATION PROGRAMME STUDENTS

6,997

⁹ Displaced children include refugees, asylum-seekers, internally displaced persons (IDPs), and stateless individuals. Primary Impact is implemented across various education responses and supports different population groups based on UNHCR country plans and strategies.

¹⁰ <https://www.unhcr.org/what-we-do/build-better-futures/education/primary-and-youth-education/accelerated-education>

A wide array of activities across the four dimensions – access, quality, safety and inclusion – contributed to improving and expanding education for displaced and host community children. **Primary Impact countries credited the success of the interventions to the active engagement and ownership demonstrated by school communities, alongside robust coordination mechanisms among education actors.** School governance structures were instrumental in leading back-to-school campaigns, awareness-raising efforts and fostering a safe and nurturing learning environment. Teachers engaged in extensive professional development opportunities, including on data collection and analysis to utilize evidence-based approaches. Education stakeholders collaborated to advance inclusion of refugees in national systems through strategic partnerships.



Progress and positive policy shifts for refugee education inclusion were evident in almost all Primary Impact countries. However, access to primary school for displaced children continues to fall below national standards. In all countries, gross enrolment rates far exceeded net enrolment rates, highlighting a substantial proportion of overaged learners and learning losses resulting from forced displacement, limited schooling opportunities, and overstretched national education systems. Despite differing operational contexts, Primary Impact countries reported similar challenges, including language differences, socio-economic constraints, cultural norms that restricted access, particularly for girls, as well as violence and insecurity. In Burkina Faso, security threats created a major barrier to education, much like the recent surge in criminal violence in Ecuador¹¹ that impeded access to learning. In countries like Ethiopia, which faced a

¹¹ <https://www.unhcr.org/news/stories/violence-and-xenophobia-threaten-access-education-ecuador>

protracted crisis, new refugee emergencies and large influxes further strained an already overstretched education system.

To tackle barriers such as inadequate classroom supplies, Primary Impact countries ramped up their efforts to work with stakeholders, including national education authorities, to distribute evidence-based textbooks and kits to primary school learners. The **distribution of government-endorsed, and age-appropriate, textbooks** in refugee-hosting schools is a key step towards inclusion and an important measure to increase access and retention.



Hassan, 13, is called to the chalkboard to conjugate 'chanter' in his mud-and-thatch classroom in Madaoua, Niger. © UNHCR/Antonia Vadala

For example, in the provinces of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Punjab in Pakistan, textbooks were supplied by education authorities to support the transition to the national curriculum. In Cameroon, the government provided essential textbooks for refugee-hosting schools, benefiting about 14,000 learners under the Education Reform Support Project. In Ethiopia, the Ministry of Education supplied new textbooks to primary school refugee learners, who received original books instead of photocopies for the first time. In Algeria, UNHCR worked with a printing center affiliated with the Sahrawi Department of Education to print and supply teacher manuals and schoolbooks based on a list created and regularly updated by the Sahrawi education authorities. Similarly, UNHCR Zambia worked with the Zambia National Library to procure additional textbooks and lower the

textbook-student ratio. In Tanzania, UNHCR and UNICEF distributed school kits through a joint action plan.

Involving the school community fosters local ownership of education. Primary Impact countries worked closely with school communities through 860 structures, including Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs), School Management Committees, and Student Councils, that championed refugee education, successfully mobilized resources, and engaged in education planning and implementation. With the launch of Primary Impact activities just before the start of the school year in most implementation countries, community-based structures played a key role in back-to-school campaigns and house-to-house visits ahead of school reopening, while also participating in training opportunities. In Niger, community-based radio stations were utilized for back-to-school campaigns. In Cameroon, PTAs helped with student enrollment and collected financial contributions from parents to support school improvements. In response to student dropout and low attendance, members of the community-based structures in Tanzania participated in comprehensive training to define roles and responsibilities in improving refugee education service provision.

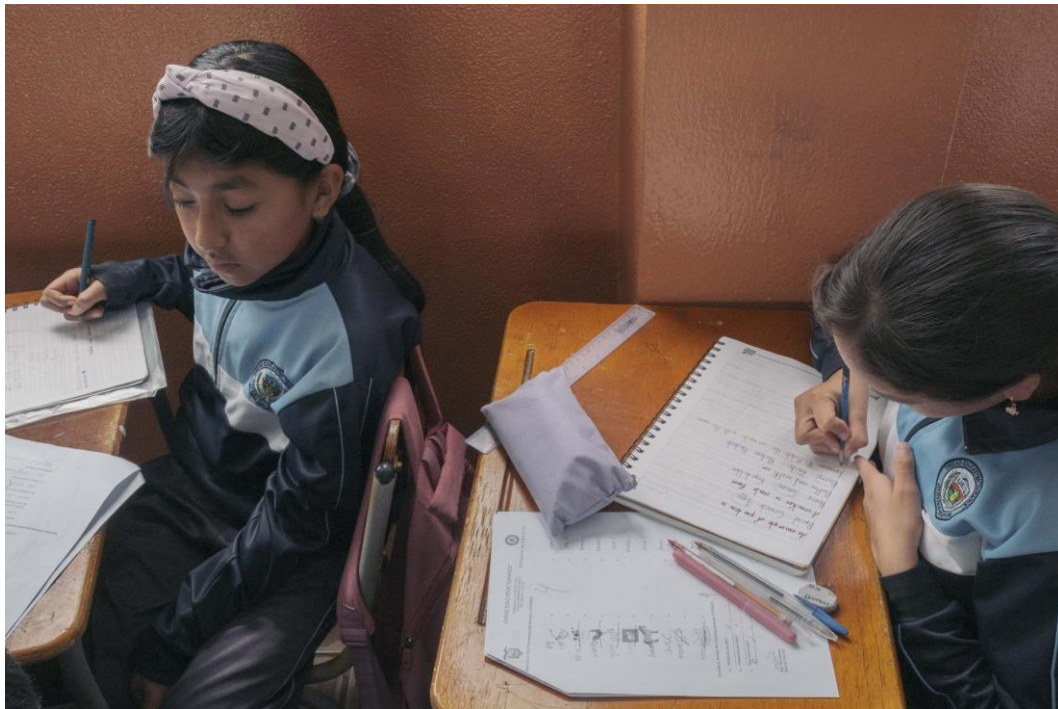


SCHOOL COMMUNITY STRUCTURE

860

The cost of attending school can be a major obstacle to education, especially for refugee families that have lost their livelihoods and face limited opportunities due to frequent restrictions on their right to work in the countries of asylum. **Primary Impact helped decrease barriers to education through cash support and tailored interventions targeting vulnerable groups.** UNHCR Morocco used a monetization approach for school supplies and transportation services, whereby eligible students receive an annual education grant and a monthly allowance to cover expenses and catch-up classes. Similarly, Thailand used cash-based interventions as a modality to help urban refugee families meet the household costs for education (transportation, uniforms, and study allowance). Countries like Ecuador, Cameroon, and Niger have established mechanisms at the registration stage and involved school managers to refer children for multipurpose cash assistance. Post-distribution monitoring in Ecuador revealed that 40 percent of this assistance was allocated for education. In Ethiopia and Tanzania, cash assistance for education is primarily used to cover exam fees. However, due to increased costs in administering the Burundian exams, exams were postponed for Burundian refugee

learners in Tanzania, who follow their country-of-origin curriculum and take the Burundian national exam. In Syria, unconditional cash assistance was used as a measure to promote school enrolment and retention.



Girls focusing on schoolwork in Sarance school, Ecuador. © UNHCR/Jeffrey Guillemard

As part of the efforts to remove barriers for displaced girls to enroll and stay in school, **Primary Impact countries scaled strategies to support girls' education and address cultural and societal norms that create gendered obstacles to education.** These included providing conditional cash transfers to also cover supplies such as hygiene kits and establishing a safe, gender-sensitive school environment. In Pakistan, the Accelerated Education Program for adolescent girls saw 338 out of the 465 enrolled successfully transitioned to grade 6 in formal schools. The provision of school supplies such as uniforms and sanitary kits contributed to addressing hygiene needs and promoting girls' participation in Cameroon, Niger and Zimbabwe.

Primary Impact played a key role in **profiling marginalized and vulnerable beneficiaries, including children with disabilities**, whose needs were identified through healthcare assessments and referrals. In Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Niger and Zambia, tailored and disability-inclusive interventions were implemented. These included access to assistive devices and technology and rehabilitation services, along with accessible learning materials.

Improve the quality of education

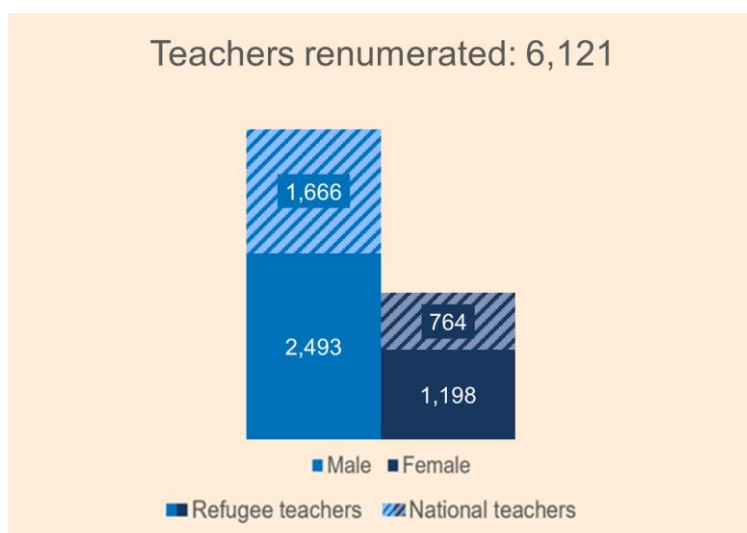
Teachers play a key role in shaping the quality of learning. One of the multiple causes of the learning crisis is the shortage of quality teachers. The latest data released by UNESCO is alarming and highlights a need for 13 million primary teachers and 31 million secondary teachers by 2030¹². Most countries implementing Primary Impact reported that high teacher attrition, limited qualifications among teachers, and high teacher-pupil ratios were primary factors negatively impacting the quality of learning.



TEACHERS

6,121

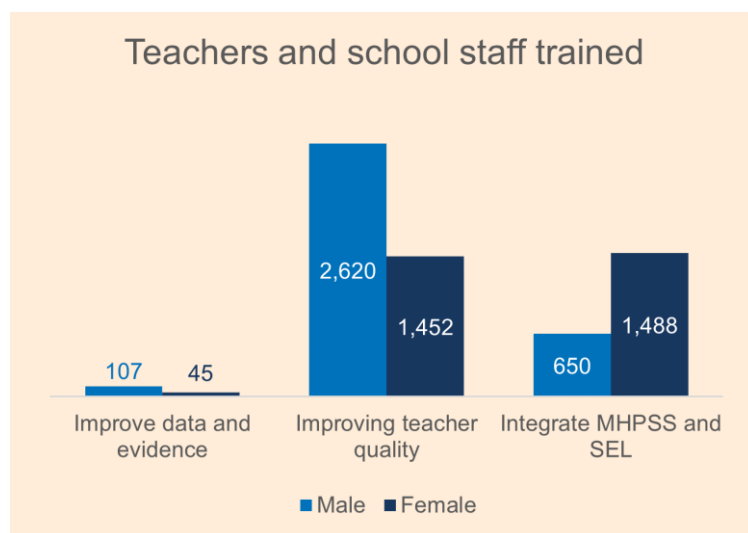
The circumstances for teachers in refugee and displacement contexts varies across Primary Impact countries. However, **refugee teachers face unique and significant challenges**. Targeted and coordinated interventions are essential to address systematic barriers such as lack of recognition of prior education and teaching certifications, limited professional development opportunities, inadequate and unpredictable compensation, minimal supervision, and legal restrictions that impede employment prospects¹³.



¹² [Global report on teachers: addressing teacher shortages and transforming the profession - UNESCO Digital Library](#)

¹³ UNHCR's forthcoming study "Teachers in Refugee and Displacement Settings: Policies, Practices & Pathways for Improving Teacher Quality & Workforce Sustainability"

Through Primary Impact, countries invested in providing timely compensation to 6,121 teachers (60 percent of whom were refugee teachers). While the percentage of refugee teachers may suggest a significant level of employment, disparities, and inequalities in their management compared to national teachers arise from systemic barriers. Refugee teachers often receive insufficient financial incentives, encounter limited access to accredited professional development opportunities, and may find themselves in volunteer or assistant roles due to legal restrictions and no right to work. Teachers are essential to provide stability and the lack of recognition and support has a negative impact on learning and wellbeing.



Primary Impact countries coordinated with authorities to tackle systematic barriers across different levels: financing, recognition, professional development and career progression, and teacher involvement¹⁴. UNHCR and Djibouti's Ministry of Education, for instance, are working on a plan to gradually include refugee teachers in the government payroll while also mobilizing resources from development partners and donors. The Government of Ethiopia, through the MoE's GEQIP-E program funded by a multi-donor trust including the World Bank, trained teachers, including refugees, to increase their knowledge and skills in quality instructional methods. In Niger, social dialogue among national education unions and other education stakeholders led to the coordination of the celebration of International Teachers' Day to raise awareness and recognition of teachers' contributions.

¹⁴ https://globalcompactrefugees.org/sites/default/files/2023-11/teachers_pledging_guidance_-_designed.pdf



Daduha Eida, Sahrawi refugee teacher in Boujdour refugee camp, Tindouf, Algeria. © UNHCR/Nisrine Benyahia

Of all remunerated teachers under Primary Impact, only 1,962 (32 percent) were female teachers. This raises concerns about safety and cultural constraints on female mobility and education, resulting in fewer female teachers who could act as role models and play a key role in encouraging more girls to attend school.

As part of the professional development opportunities for teachers and school-based staff, some training also focused on education data management systems and integration of refugee enrolment information into national Education Management Systems (EMIS) where possible. 152 teachers and education staff improved their data management capabilities. Collecting accurate data is a critical element to adhere to national standards and provide better education services. For example, integrating refugee education data in EMIS would streamline processes such as textbook distribution and timely allocation of resources including capitation grants, thus advancing inclusion in national systems. Countries implemented different approaches to data collection and analysis. In Assosa, Ethiopia, a pilot program was initiated to train teachers and school management in the data collection process for the national Education Statistics Annual Abstract (ESSA) via the EMIS. In Niger, school principals, teachers, and education focal points received training in data collection and analysis to support the two-phase EMIS approach (rapid survey phase and census phase).

In Tanzania, where refugees are not included in the EMIS system, a parallel data gathering and analysis system is being used. Similarly, in Burkina Faso, teachers receive training in standardized methods and data analysis using tablets to improve the accuracy and efficiency of data collection.



Ethiopia. Refugee teacher gives children the chance to continue learning. ©UNHCR/Diana Diaz

By prioritizing sufficient funding for educational outcomes, resources can be directed toward developing data-driven strategies to enhance the quality of learning, advance the refugee inclusion agenda, and support host education systems. This area often lacks clear data on learning outcomes and on the socio-emotional competencies of displaced learners. Some Primary Impact countries like Burkina Faso and Zambia contributed to assessments and studies led by national education authorities and other education stakeholders. In Burkina Faso, assessments by the Ministry of Education for grades 1, 4, and 9 showed that 74.77 per cent of students improved their reading skills and 52.16 per cent enhanced their math abilities, indicating a need for continued support and tailored strategies for refugee children, though no data on social-emotional learning was available¹⁵. In Zambia, The Let's Read Project, supported by USAID and World Vision Zambia, conducts termly assessments for grades 1-4 to monitor student progress and offer remedial lessons. As of August 2023, 56 per cent of

¹⁵ https://tcq.uis.unesco.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/4/2023/12/3.-Apprentissages_Evaluation_BURKINA-FASO_07-decembre.pdf

Grade 2 enrollees scored at least 60 per cent in the Standardized Literacy Assessments, a 9 per cent increase from 2022. Meheba camp surpassed the national primary school certificate pass rate of 68 per cent, with an overall average pass rate of 65 per cent across all settlements¹⁶. However, such data collection efforts are not streamlined in many countries, particularly regarding learning acquisition specific to displaced learners.

To address this gap in evidence of learning poverty and lack of data on learning outcomes in forced displacement contexts, UNHCR plans to mobilize additional resources. A pilot learning assessment at primary school level is set to begin in 2024 in Mauritania¹⁷ and Mexico. The funding and lessons learned gained from this pilot will inform future learning measurement efforts under Primary Impact.

Establish and maintain a safe and supportive learning environment

Research shows that refugee children face higher risk of experiencing bullying and discrimination due to factors such as ethnic or racial differences, language barriers, and past trauma¹⁸. As a result, they often feel less safe in schools compared to their non-refugee peers, with perceived safety levels sometimes as low as 30-50 percent¹⁹.

Evidence from various studies – though limited and fragmented in refugee and displacement contexts – suggests that social and emotional skills, along with mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) are essential to create a supportive and inclusive environment where displaced children feel a sense of belonging²⁰. A UNHCR forthcoming evidence review brief will highlight the benefits of social and emotional learning (SEL) in displaced settings while also calling for increased funding to collect data and generate evidence to better design, target and measure the delivery of future MHPSS and SEL interventions in refugee hosting schools²¹.

¹⁶ <https://usaidzambia-letsread-project.edc.org/>

¹⁷ [Measuring foundational learning in forced displacement: field insights and lessons | UNHCR Blog](#)

¹⁸ [Do First Generation Immigrant Adolescents Face Higher Rates of Bullying, Violence and Suicidal Behaviours Than Do Third Generation and Native Born? | Journal of Immigrant and Minority Health](#)

¹⁹ [A Systematic Review of School-Based Social-Emotional Interventions for Refugee and War-Traumatized Youth - Amanda L. Sullivan, Gregory R. Simonson, 2016](#)

²⁰ OECD, 2019

²¹ <https://globalcompactrefugees.org/media/finalpledgingguidancemhpsseltwopagerpdf>

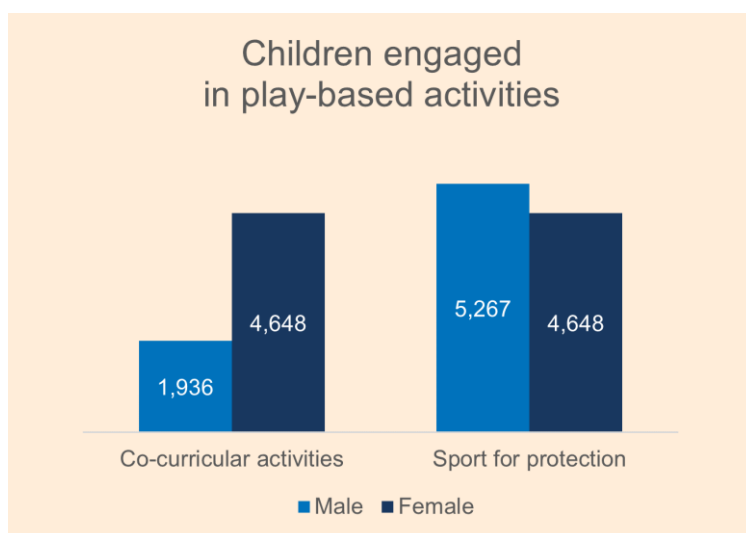
Research and evaluations focused on measuring school safety and SEL are often limited in countries covered by Primary Impact. When conducted, they often lack structure due to limited funding and rely on broad assessments and oral surveys that do not adequately address all aspects of MHPSS and SEL in education. In Burkina Faso, oral surveys indicated that students felt safer at school and experienced less bullying after participating in socialization activities, although ongoing attention to school safety and social cohesion is essential.



Provincia de Cotopaxi School is one of the 185 schools participating in 'Respiramos Inclusión' (We Breathe Inclusion), a methodology designed and implemented by UNHCR in Ecuador since 2013 to prevent discrimination and xenophobia in the education system from a protection and rights-based approach.
 © UNHCR/Jeoffrey Guillemard

To create a safe and supportive learning environment in and around the school community, **Primary Impact countries supported the implementation of several community, teacher, and student-led activities. The range of play-based activities – whether scheduled within the school timetable or offered after school hours – engaged 13,569 learners in indoor and outdoor sports for protection²², art and dance, craft making, and girls' empowerment clubs.** These not only contributed to reducing the risks of bullying and discrimination but also nurtured students' healthy development and critical social and emotional competencies.

²² <https://www.unhcr.org/media/sport-protection-toolkit>



Among the play-based activities, **sport for protection had the highest participation, with 9,527 primary school children engaged, of which girls made up 47 percent of the total.** The implementation modalities of sport for protection activities in school contexts varied across countries. In Tanzania back-to-school tournaments incorporated sport for protection elements to share protection messages and encourage student enrolment. In Ecuador, sport was used as a tool for improving protection, well-being and social development of children with different backgrounds. In countries such as Ethiopia, Zambia and Zimbabwe, physical education is either a mandatory subject of the national curriculum or included as co-curricular activities to support holistic student development and social cohesion between refugee and host community students. In Zambia, Primary Impact facilitated student participation in intra- and inter-school sport competitions, with top students selected by the District Education Board Secretary joining zonal, district and provincial sport teams.



STUDENTS ENGAGED IN SPORTS ACTIVITIES

9,915

To support mental health and psychosocial wellbeing, Primary Impact implemented a variety of interventions and approaches that increased the capacity of teachers and community members to **promote school safety and help learners realize their abilities and potential, cultivate positive and respectful relationships, manage stress and build emotional resilience.**

In Algeria, a comprehensive psychosocial support program for children facing learning challenges included home visits, counseling, and recreational activities, while engaging parents, teachers, and social workers in awareness campaigns and group discussions to promote mental health and resilience across the refugee camps.



TEACHERS TRAINED IN MHPSS, SEL AND PROTECTION

3,279

A training aimed to ensure that all camp-based workers, volunteers, and associates uphold a commitment to safeguarding principles and create a harassment-free workplace was facilitated in Tanzania. In Zambia, Child and Youth Care Workers were recruited to raise awareness on MHPSS and protection risks and foster a positive school environment, that led to increased school enrolment (with 51 percent female attendance in primary school) and school-community collaboration.



SCHOOL IMPLEMENTING CLIMATE ACTION

56

The climate crisis is a driver of displacement as well as a factor that disrupts learning through events such as floods, droughts and cyclones that magnify vulnerabilities and increase insecurity, all contributing to decreased education opportunities. Under Primary Impact, 58 primary schools across the implementation countries responded by building resilient education systems and engaging school communities as change agents.

Climate education was integrated through a number of interventions such as greening projects, environmental clubs, and teacher training in climate action. In Burkina Faso and Niger, targeted schools focused on ecological gardening and vegetable production. 19 primary schools in Ethiopia implemented large scale climate activities focused on tree planting and orchards. Primary Impact facilitated the establishment of school-based environmental clubs in Zimbabwe, that previously did not exist, and contributed to sensitization on climate resilience and justice through both community participation and visibility materials promoting recycling.



School vegetable garden, Burkina Faso. ©UNHCR

While efforts have been made in implementing MHPSS and SEL interventions as well as climate-smart education, funding shortages resulted in the de-prioritization of some of these interventions took place in favour of other pressing needs.

Advocate for and operationalize inclusive education policies at national and local levels

UNHCR works with education systems to secure a supportive policy environment and include refugees in national plans, strategies and policies. At the same time it advocates for responsibility sharing in line with the [Global Compact on Refugees](#) that calls for collective action and unified approach to aid refugee hosting states in **providing inclusive and quality education**. The scale of the challenge demands responsibility to mitigate the barriers to accessing education in practice in the host countries.

Efforts and commitments to advance education in forced displacement were voiced at the quadrennial [Global Refugee Forum](#), which was last held in Geneva, Switzerland, in December 2023.

More than 200 pledges were made by a collation of stakeholders, including government education officials from Primary Impact countries, to advance inclusive refugee education through policy dialogue, increased funding and technical assistance. The Government of Burundi, for example, pledged to include refugees and reintegrate returnees in its education system, addressing challenges like curriculum differences, ensuring availability of qualified teachers and promoting social cohesion²³. The Government of Djibouti committed to training and certifying refugee teachers and gradually including their salaries in the national budget. At the same time, Ethiopia renewed its efforts to include refugees in the national education system by integrating them in central statics services and national gender-based violence programs, along with creating TVET and job opportunities by 2027²⁴.



REFUGEE EDUCATION INCLUSION ADVANCED

POLICIES & STRATEGIES

2

PUBLICATIONS

3

SID & SDP

75

Official policies promoting the inclusion of refugee students often contrast the practical and sociocultural barriers that limit access to educational opportunities for displaced learners²⁵. **Primary Impact facilitated the management of transitions across multiple levels: individual learners, schools through the adoption of national curricula and language of instruction, and at the system level, focusing on workforce management and overall financing**²⁶. Seventy-five improvement and development plans were established in targeted schools to address a range of critical areas including both improvements to school infrastructure and strengthening school governance elements to comply with the minimum standards to be included under the national education system and improve learning for displaced and host community children. Primary Impact in Burkina Faso, Burundi, Ethiopia, Niger, Syria, Zambia, and Zimbabwe, facilitated the construction or rehabilitation of a total of 93 classrooms, 37 water and sanitation facilities, and 1 resource room.

²³ [Global Refugee Forum 2023 Education report: Advancing inclusion, self-reliance and solutions through education for refugees \(unhcr.org\)](https://www.unhcr.org/media/barriers-breakthroughs-progress-primary-education-refugees)

²⁴ [Ibid.](#)

²⁵ [World Bank Document](#)

²⁶ <https://www.unhcr.org/media/barriers-breakthroughs-progress-primary-education-refugees>



CONSTRUCTION AND REHABILITATION

CLASSROOMS

93

WASH FACILITIES

37

Coordination among education stakeholders is key in advancing refugee education inclusion. Primary Impact facilitated collaboration among actors who joined efforts in adding to the evidence base and developing comprehensive policies and strategies to promote inclusion. In Algeria, UNHCR and its education partners conducted a mid-term evaluation of the 'Five-Year Strategy for Education in Sahrawi Camps (2021-2025)', meanwhile in Cameroon, ongoing efforts are focused on incorporating refugees into the Education and Training Sector Strategy 2023-2030 (SSEF). In Ethiopia, refugee data is systematically included in national education statistics publications. In Tanzania, extensive efforts are being made to address the issue of out-of-school children (OOSC), with UNHCR taking the lead under the Education Working Group (EWG) to conduct a comprehensive out-of-school survey.



Outdoors blackboard, Burkina Faso. © UNHCR/Benjamin Loyseau



primary impact!

Annual Report 2023
Country Pages

Country Pages

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Algeria



SCHOOLS

**27**

STUDENTS

**21,041**

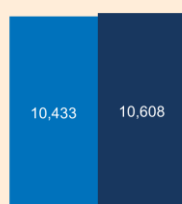
TEACHERS

**426**

Access

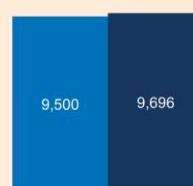
UNHCR's education activities in Algeria take place in urban and camp-based contexts. In urban areas, UNHCR advocates for access of refugee children and youth in government schools through outreach efforts. In the camps, the Sahrawi education system offers a broad array of formal and non-formal educational opportunities tailored to the diverse needs of refugee children and youth, running parallel to the national education system. The system encompasses formal education starting from preschool, followed by primary and secondary education. Upon completion of the first cycle of secondary education in the camps, students have the chance to pursue further secondary and higher education in national institutions. At primary level, the Sahrawi system follows the Algerian curriculum, except for history, geography, civics, and first-grade math, which are based on Sahrawi programs. Enrollment rates for primary and secondary education have remained strong, consistently around 90 percent.

Displaced learners enrolled: 21,041



■ Male ■ Female
Primary education

Learners supported



Resources & materials
■ Male ■ Female

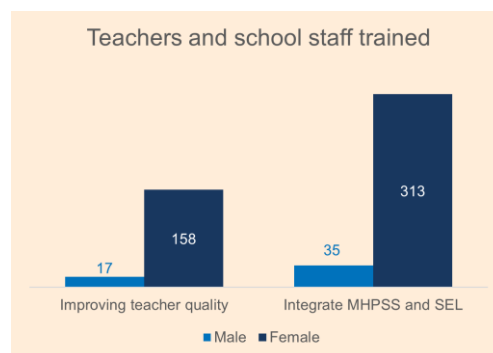
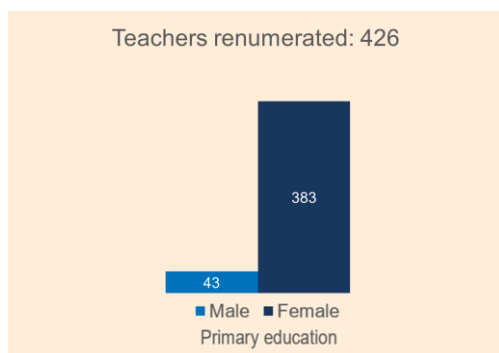
Primary Impact in Algeria is exclusively rolled out for the Sahrawi population in the camps. The provision of textbooks to primary students was a key step in improving educational access, achieving the goal of one book per child. UNHCR collaborated with the 9 June Printing Center, affiliated with the Sahrawi Department of Education, on the supply of Algerian textbooks, as well as the production of manuals and teacher guidelines. Outside the Primary Impact portfolio, UNHCR Algeria provided textbooks to vulnerable children in urban areas, who were identified through psychosocial assessments.



School in Boujdour refugee camp in Tindouf. ©UNHCR/Nisrine Benyahia

Quality

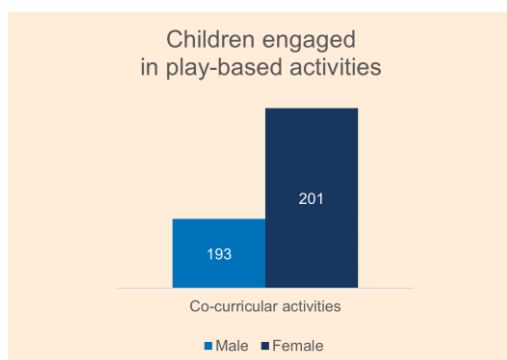
Through its partner Association, Femmes Action Development (AFAD), UNHCR trained 175 primary school teachers across the five Sahrawi camps to improve teaching methods and enhance education for refugee students. This program aimed to strengthen the skills of teachers, inspectors, and managers, creating a more effective and inclusive learning environment. Sessions were designed and facilitated in close coordination with the Sahrawi education department. They focused on psychosocial support, teaching methods and inclusive education and were all accredited.



To help retain teachers and support their development, UNHCR, through its partner AFAD, provided incentives to Sahrawi education staff across the five camps. For the time-being, the incentive amount is modest and often insufficient to cover basic needs like transportation, housing, and living expenses, leading to a high turnover rate among teachers. However, as part of Algeria's five-year education sector strategy 2021-2025, a study funded by ECHO is being carried out to determine more appropriate salary levels. This would allow UNHCR and partners to advocate for better resource allocation to increase teacher compensation, improving motivation and retention.

Safe and supportive learning environment

UNHCR Algeria, in collaboration with education partners, organized outings and extracurricular activities for children, including unaccompanied minors in Algiers. Additionally, the CRA and Sahrawi Youth and Sports leadership launched sports activities across the five camps to address rising protection risks among youth, such as drug trafficking and theft. Although participation data for these activities is currently unavailable, efforts are underway to establish monitoring systems to track involvement and evaluate protection outcomes.



Psychological support and follow-up is offered to children facing pedagogical and learning difficulties in schools. This approach includes home visits, sessions with parents, recreational activities, and individual counseling, engaging not only teachers but also parents and social workers. To foster understanding on mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) within the school community, 10 discussion group sessions have been organized, bringing together parents and teachers to address critical topics such as depression, anxiety, emotional challenges, self-esteem, social phobia, and violence, as well as the importance of communication. In addition, 13 large awareness campaigns focused on children's well-being have been conducted across the five camps, highlighting the need for community support and involvement in promoting mental health and resilience among children.

Inclusion

UNHCR and its education partners conducted a mid-term evaluation of the "Five-Year Strategy for Education in Sahrawi Camps (2021-2025)". This evaluation assessed achievements, identified challenges, and provided recommendations for future actions. The strategy was developed in close consultation with Sahrawi education officials and the Education Coordination Group, with support from UNICEF, to develop a medium-term vision for the education sector to guide education service provision for Sahrawi refugees and advocate for donor support.

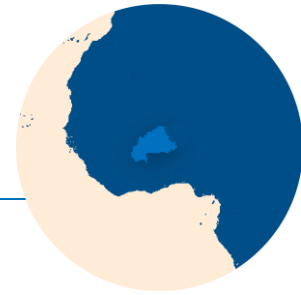


REFUGEE EDUCATION INCLUSION ADVANCED

POLICIES & STRATEGIES

1

Burkina Faso



SCHOOLS

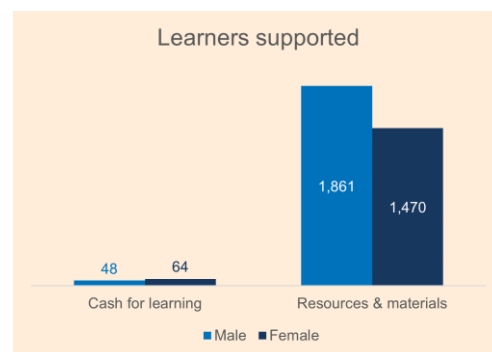
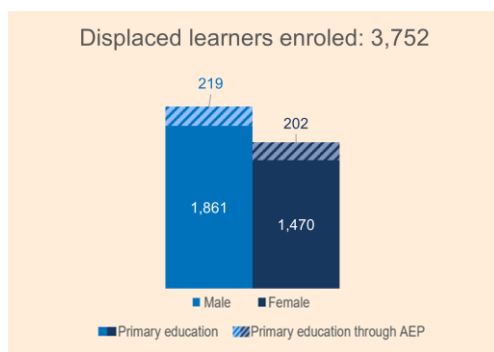


STUDENTS



Access

Burkina Faso has faced escalating violence and attacks by armed groups since 2019, resulting in over 2 million displacements, mainly affecting women and children. The closure of more than 5,300 schools has disrupted education for over 800,000 students and 24,000 teachers. Refugee children have long been included in the national education system. Before the closure of refugee camps due to growing insecurity, camp schools were recognized by the Ministry of Education (MoE), allowing refugee children to follow the curriculum taught by national teachers at both primary and secondary levels. In response to the ongoing insecurity, the MoE has set up a technical secretariat for education in emergencies and an accelerated schooling strategy to support displaced students. However, challenges remain, including a fluctuating Net Enrolment Rate (total number of children of a certain age group enrolled in a particular level of education) of 36 percent and a Gross Enrolment Rate (total number of students enrolled in a particular education level regardless of age) of 44 percent, along with ongoing security threats and resource shortages.



UNHCR Burkina Faso distributed school kits, including essential supplies like bags and notebooks, often sourced locally to support the economy. This assistance has improved learning conditions, and collaboration with the MoE has ensured alignment with national education standards and efficient distribution of materials.

Three key community-based structures - Parents' Associations, Mothers' Associations, and School Management Committees - play a vital role in facilitating access to primary education for displaced children in Burkina Faso. UNHCR, in partnership with educational authorities and other stakeholders, organized training sessions on topics such as school management, child protection, child development and psychosocial support. These sessions contributed to fostering a supportive learning environment through active community involvement.



SCHOOL COMMUNITY STRUCTURE

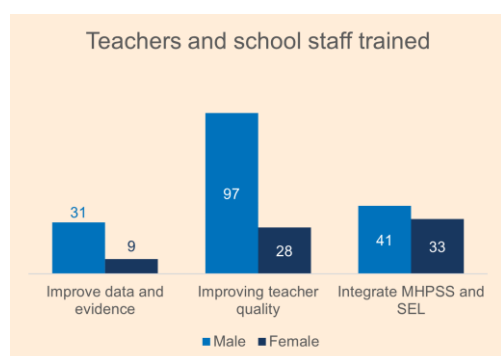
24

Due to a nationwide ban on humanitarian assistance via cash transfers in Burkina Faso, UNHCR provided takeaway dry rations to families in an effort to increase health and education outcomes. To decrease barriers to education and as part of the efforts to promote equitable access, some students with disabilities underwent medical examinations to determine their needs. Through this process, necessary assistive products were prescribed, and the individuals were scheduled for periodic follow-up checks.

Quality

The MoE administered assessments for grades one, four and nine, to guide primary education programming (https://tcg.uis.unesco.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/4/2023/12/3.-Apprentissages_Evaluation_BURKINA-FASO_07-decembre.pdf). Findings reveal that 74.77 percent of students showed significant improvement in reading skills, particularly in comprehension and vocabulary. In mathematics, 52.16 percent of students enhanced their abilities, especially in problem-solving and numerical operations. No data is available on social-emotional learning proficiency. These results underscore the need for continued support and tailored strategies to meet the diverse learning needs of refugee children.

Professional development for teachers includes training in climate change awareness, child protection, mentoring, and psychosocial coaching to foster safe and inclusive classrooms. After training, pedagogical advisors and inspectors conduct classroom visits to assess the implementation of teaching strategies and child protection policies. Refugee teachers can access national professional development opportunities only when the schools they are employed at are invited to participate in the training.



To ensure accurate data collection, teachers and administrators receive training in standardized methods and data analysis using tablets. Displaced children are currently not included in the EMIS, meaning that information about refugee children is not reflected in national statistics. For this reason, UNHCR is actively advocating for the integration of data on displaced children into the redesigned system.

Safe and supportive learning environment

MHPSS services included structured social-emotional learning activities like play, gardening, and environmental awareness, as well as child-friendly spaces, teacher training on psychosocial support, and community engagement initiatives. These contributed to improving emotional resilience, social cohesion, and overall well-being among students, parents, and educators. However, challenges included limited resources, cultural barriers, and the need for ongoing training.

Primary Impact focused on ecological gardening and vegetable production to promote teamwork and facilitate the inclusion of refugees in national schooling. These activities have benefited 524 children, enhancing social cohesion, reducing school violence, and fostering a supportive community.



SCHOOL IMPLEMENTING CLIMATE ACTION

8

Partners conducted oral surveys with teachers to compare student behavior before and after participating in socialization activities. The results indicated that students felt safer at school, with notable reductions in bullying, discrimination, and violence, attributed to the introduction of social cohesion activities. However, while acknowledging this progress, teachers and local community groups stressed the importance of continued focus and improvement in school safety and social cohesion.

Inclusion

The construction of new schools and WASH facilities in the Sahel and North regions has significantly improved educational access for refugee students, encouraging parents to enroll their children in school. These facilities offer safe, user-friendly environments equipped with proper roofing and school gardens, which contribute to a positive learning atmosphere and improve well-being and academic performance. The involvement of school principals, management committees, and regional education authorities, supported by UNHCR, has been critical in fostering an inclusive environment that ensures refugee students are welcomed and adequately supported.



CONSTRUCTION AND REHABILITATION

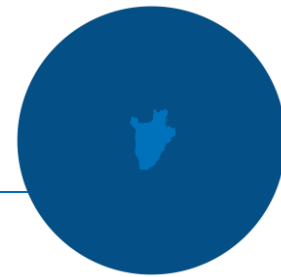
CLASSROOMS

9

WASH FACILITIES

2

Burundi



SCHOOLS



STUDENTS



TEACHERS

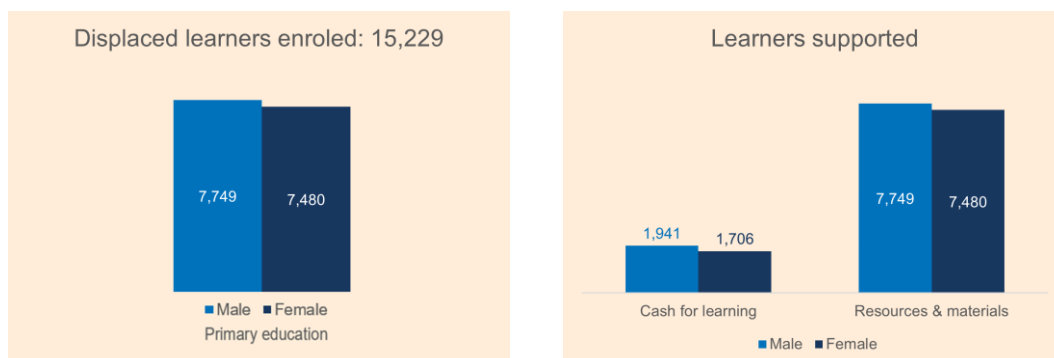


Access

In 2023, Burundi experienced notable improvements in its political and security landscape, including facilitating the voluntary repatriation of Burundian refugees. Refugees residing in camps follow the DRC curriculum, while those in urban settings have the option to enroll in public or private institutions, with the choice of following either the Burundian or DRC curriculum.

Within the refugee camps, UNHCR Burundi oversees the management of primary and secondary schools, working in partnership with education authorities and local partners. As part of efforts to contribute to equitable access to the Burundian education system, interventions such as classroom construction, school meal provision, distribution of school supplies, and catch-up classes are implemented.

In urban areas, UNHCR facilitates school enrolment by providing financial assistance to help families cover costs associated with education. The Gross Enrollment Ratio is currently 78 percent, while the Net Enrollment Ratio stands at 57 percent. Despite the progress and positive policy environment, refugee, asylum-seeker and returnee children still face major challenges in accessing quality education, including overcrowded schools, lack of resources, cultural and language differences and limited enrollment spots.



Of the 213 active community schemes, 196 members participated in sessions on inclusive education, student enrollment, and retention. They were encouraged to oversee the distribution of school kits, help with homework, and promote good behavior at school and home. Additionally, 17 urban community leaders were sensitized on the importance of education for refugee children.



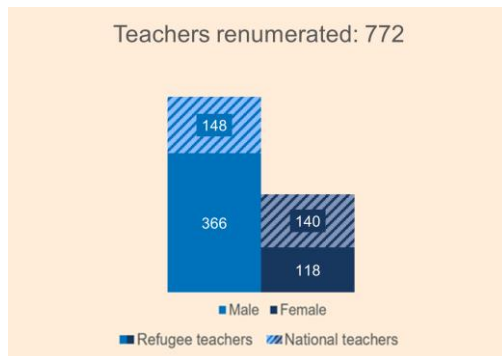
SCHOOL COMMUNITY STRUCTURE

213

Locally procured, grade-appropriate school kits were distributed, including essential supplies like stationery and backpacks. Camp-based students received cash support to sit for DRC national exams. To ensure inclusive access, school fees and supplies were directly covered for 20 children with disabilities and 125 unaccompanied minors. Additionally, 2,610 adolescent girls in primary and basic education received dignity kits.

Quality

Teacher professional development was conducted by the Ecole Normale Supérieure (ENS), a public institution of higher education. Key subject areas focused on school plan development, managing large classrooms and using age-appropriate, differentiated teaching methods tailored to learners' needs and backgrounds, including returnees (Burundian refugees who were previously in Tanzania and returned) and the host community. In addition to the ENS courses, certified modular training courses were organized as part of continuous professional development program. To provide on-the-job assistance, teachers are monitored through regular follow-ups and school visits.



Under Primary Impact, UNHCR Burundi increased the number of teachers receiving monthly salaries as well as adding an increment to their salaries/incentives. This financial support motivated teachers and allowed them to focus on their teaching responsibilities despite the challenging environment.



Photo: Amani, 32, from the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), is a DAFI alumnus currently working as a teacher in Musasa refugee camp school in Burundi. © UNHCR/Antoine Tardy

Safe and supportive learning environment

388 children (girls representing 40.2 percent of participants) took part in football and volleyball competitions organized in refugee camp schools. Structured and regular sports for protection activities are planned for 2025 with the protection objective of promoting social cohesion.



A total of 339 teachers (51 percent women) were trained in psychosocial support, mental health, and referral systems to help them address challenges related to students' behavioral issues and improve their response strategies.

Inclusion

In November 2023, the Government of Burundi initiated the development of a strategy to include refugees and reintegrate returnees into the national education system, supported by UNHCR and UNESCO's International Institute of Education Planning (IIEP) to ensure access to quality, equitable, and inclusive education that fosters social cohesion and integration. The strategy is being developed by IIEP and is expected to be completed by the end of October 2024.



REFUGEE EDUCATION INCLUSION ADVANCED

POLICIES & STRATEGIES

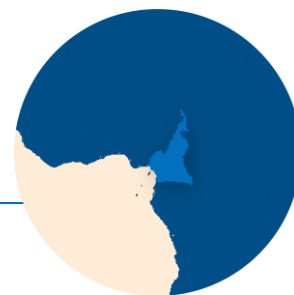
1

SID & SDP

1

Under Primary Impact, UNHCR Burundi and its implementing partners conducted field visits to Kabuyenge Hill in Gisuru Commune to assess urgent educational needs and priorities. The assessments revealed significant challenges, including overcrowded classrooms and insufficient water and sanitation facilities. Through a participatory and consultative process involving administrative and educational authorities, as well as school directors and Parents Teachers Association, schools were prioritized for the construction of additional classrooms, latrines, and water points. The newly constructed facilities meet Burundi's educational standards and align with international benchmarks.

Cameroon



SCHOOLS



STUDENTS



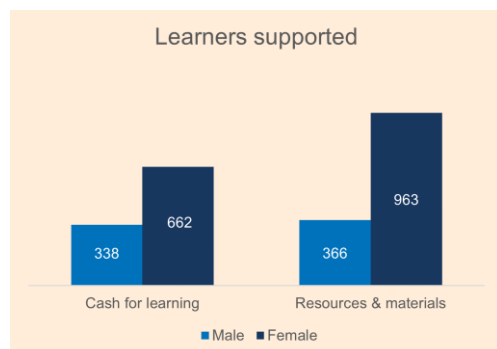
TEACHERS



Access

The Government of Cameroon adopts an inclusive approach to education, ensuring that refugees receive the same educational access as nationals. However, refugees still face challenges in accessing education. Among the major barriers to education are the financial challenges faced by refugee families, which negatively impact their children's education and lead to dropouts. Additionally, the distance to school further contributes to dropout rates.

Primary Impact in Cameroon targets government schools in the East, Adamaoua, and North regions which are enrolling both refugees and local students. UNHCR collaborates with the Ministry of Education to enhance the quality of education, supporting interventions such as the provision of school furniture, learning materials and teacher remuneration to address resource constraints.



The Government, through the Cameroon Education Reform Support Project, distributed a basic set of textbooks and manuals to schools for shared use among students, benefiting around 14,000 learners.



SCHOOL COMMUNITY STRUCTURE

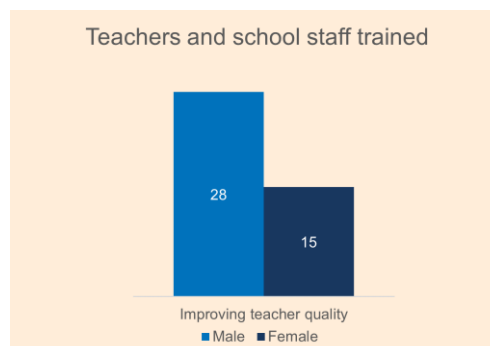
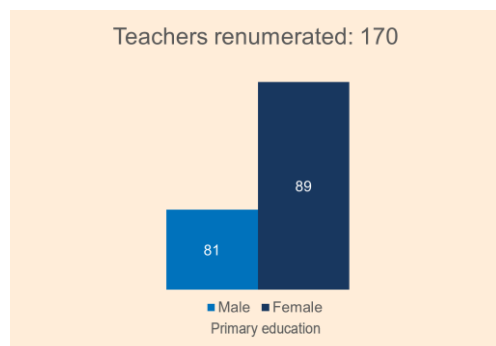
101

A total of 101 Parent Teacher Associations (PTAs) have been reactivated in the project areas. PTAs help with student enrollment and collect financial contributions from parents to support schools. However, funds collected vary by school and are often insufficient, so UNHCR often provides extra financial support. To improve PTAs engagement, sessions were organized across various regions to improve school management and increase awareness on child protection.

UNHCR identified refugee children from vulnerable families for cash-based assistance to support their education. This process uses UNHCR's proGres database with child protection markers during registration. Additionally, teachers and school directors can contact UNHCR directly if they notice a child needing extra assistance. To further address barriers to education, dignity kits were distributed to girls and children with disabilities underwent medical screening to receive assistive devices.

Quality

Education staff members, including teachers and district inspectors from the East region, participated in training on inclusive education, gender mainstreaming, and child protection. Focus areas included adapting teaching methods for refugee children, integrating gender sensitivity into school activities, and addressing child protection issues.



UNHCR employed and compensated community-identified teacher assistants who, despite not holding a formal qualification, help address the shortage of teachers in schools. Refugee teachers with certification from their home countries are also employed in some schools and receive financial support.

Inclusion

Ongoing efforts were made to incorporate refugees into the Education and Training Sector Strategy 2023-2030 (SSEF). Thanks to the dedicated advocacy of UNHCR and its partners, a chapter on refugee education responses was developed. The design and drafting process saw the collaboration with external specialists, including the World Bank.



A primary school class in Bogo camp, in Cameroon's Far North Region. The class is taught by Béréké (not pictured), a parent living in the camp. © UNHCR/Caroline Irby

Djibouti



SCHOOLS



STUDENTS

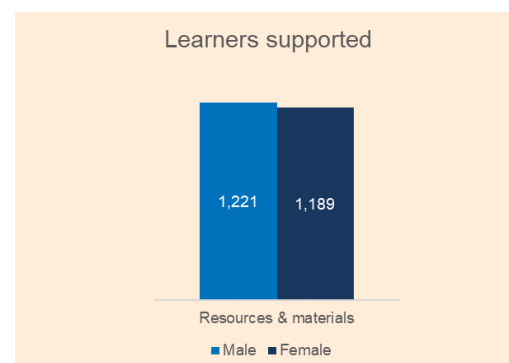
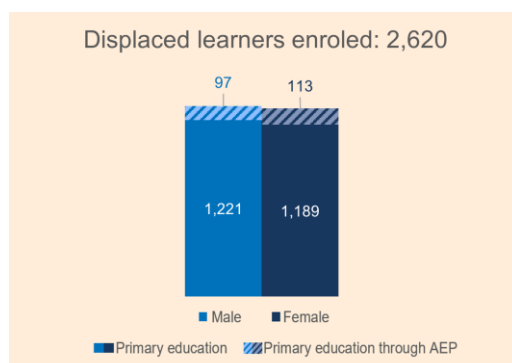


TEACHERS



Access

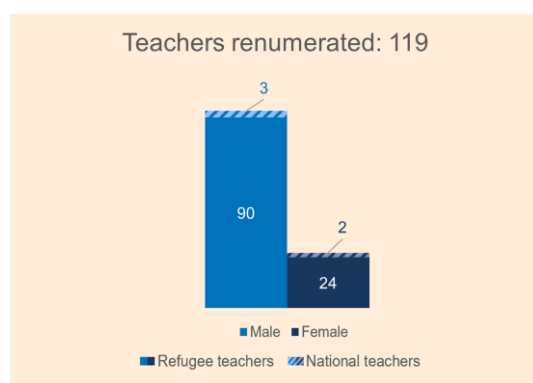
In 2016 the Government of Djibouti adopted the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF) and has since shown strong commitment to integrating refugees into the national education system. UNHCR has signed an MOU with the Ministry of Education and Professional Training (MoE) to support the management of refugee schools in the settlements of Ali Addeh and Holl-Holl. The transition to a national curriculum utilizing English as the language of instruction was implemented in response to specific requests from the refugee community. The signing of the MOU has enabled refugee children to receive certificates of completion, granting them access to universities. This partnership has also led to an increase in school enrollment among refugee children. Additionally, with the influx of new arrivals from Ethiopia, Somalia and Eritrea, the MoE, in collaboration with UNHCR, has introduced accelerated learning programs to help children catch up on their studies.



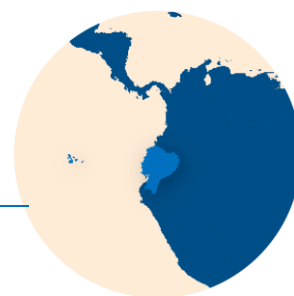
Textbooks and school kits are provided under the UNHCR budget for refugee learners at the beginning of the school year in September. These kits include books, exercise books, pens, and pencils, which significantly help refugee families address education costs and increase access to education.

Quality

Under the MoU with the MoE, UNHCR provides incentives for teachers in refugee settlements, currently covering only primary-level national and refugee teachers. This arrangement uses a significant portion (about 80 percent) of UNHCR's education budget. With increasing enrollment each year and high teacher-pupil ratios, the need to recruit new teachers has become essential. Discussions are underway with the Government for joint resource mobilization involving development actors and donors. Additionally, a proposal for the gradual inclusion of teachers in the Government's payroll is being developed, with UNHCR and the MOE collaborating on the strategy.



Ecuador



SCHOOLS

 210

STUDENTS

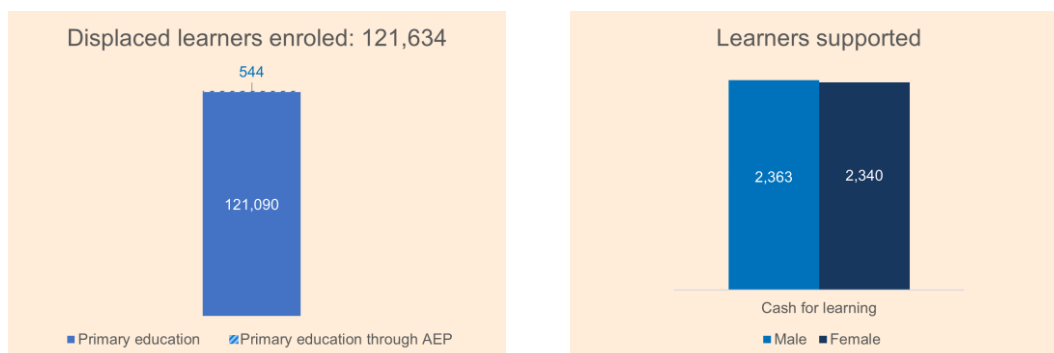
 121,634

Access

UNHCR works closely with Ecuador's Ministry of Education (MoE) to remove barriers that prevent refugee and migrant children from accessing and staying in the education system. During the 2023-2024 school year, 121,090 primary students were enrolled in primary education where funding initiatives and programs were implemented.

Additionally, UNHCR partnered with national education authorities on specific education programs such as Active Search and Todos al Aula. Partners and UNHCR engaged with 210 targeted primary schools through various programs. Together, they identified out-of-school children, registered them, and provided educational kits to ease financial burdens and strengthen public policy on access to education.

Targeted school staff were trained in the Respiramos Inclusión methodology [<https://laeducacioneselcamino.org/respiramos-inclusion>]. Respiramos Inclusión was developed by UNHCR Ecuador, focusing on promoting inclusion and non-discrimination for individuals in human mobility contexts, based on extensive literature, Ecuador's legal educational framework, and actions from 2010 to 2014. It is structured around four pillars - identity, diversity, justice, and social change - and includes components for dismantling discrimination, building institutional inclusion, fostering classroom inclusion, and promoting non-formal educational engagement, with training provided to educators and relevant stakeholders. Additionally, UNHCR and its partners conducted workshops on Agreement 26A, which guarantees educational access and retention for vulnerable children, including refugees and migrants. Training also emphasized the importance of educational inclusion for displaced children.



Registration interviews identified education as a critical need amongst refugee families, with many children at risk of missing school. The actual number of children supported exceeded expectations, highlighting the ongoing needs of newly arrived refugee and migrant families. Many families lack information on accessing education and prioritize immediate needs like food and housing over schooling. Registered families at risk of non-attendance are referred for support based on their specific needs, receiving multipurpose cash assistance, educational kits, or referrals to specialized institutions. Post-distribution cash assistance monitoring revealed that participants primarily used the funds for basic needs, including education, with 40 percent stating the assistance helped keep their children in school.

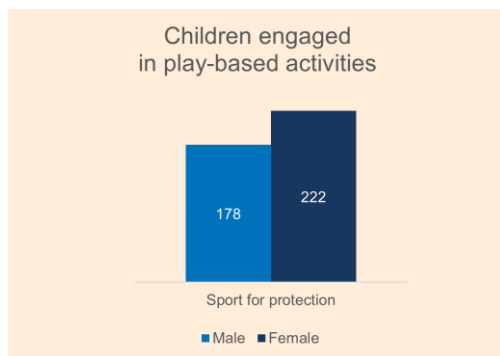


SCHOOL COMMUNITY STRUCTURE

102

Safe and supportive learning environment

UNHCR implements a community protection strategy by collaborating with local organizations and authorities to enhance community safety. This strategy aims to improve humanitarian access, foster leadership, and mitigate violence risks, especially gender-based violence. Sports serve as a tool for protection and social cohesion, helping build trust and unity. During the implementation period, 2,059 children participated in the Sport for Protection program and other community activities, of which 400 were assisted through Primary Impact, which also focuses on community-based mental health and psychosocial support for learners' well-being.



The Respiramos Inclusión methodology also raised awareness about the importance of education for all children, particularly addressing gender-based violence risks for girls. It facilitated discussions on identity, diversity, and social change while employing playful tools to combat biases and foster inclusivity. UNHCR trained teachers, school directors, and counselors to prevent violence and discrimination, exceeding initial participant expectations. 232 children received psychosocial support and engaged in safe community spaces. UNHCR and partners activated protocols to care for those experiencing violence and reduce discrimination in schools, utilizing a methodology validated by the MoE.



Desiree, a Venezuelan refugee in Ecuador, helps two of her children Cristian, 7, and Camila, 6, with their homework. © UNHCR/Santiago Arcos Veintimilla

Ethiopia



SCHOOLS



49

STUDENTS



109,593

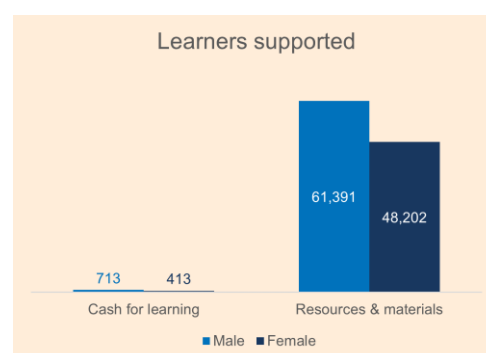
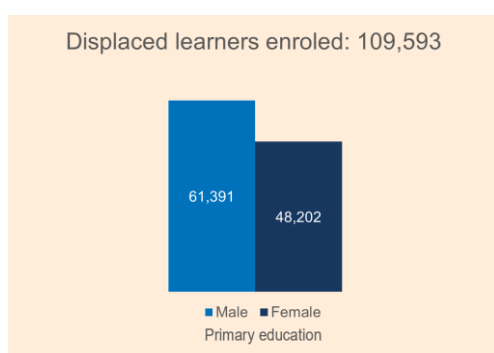
TEACHERS



1,687

Access

Ethiopia faces a protracted refugee crisis hosting one of Africa's largest refugee populations. In late 2023, major refugee emergencies from Somalia and Sudan with large influxes of new refugees further strained an already overstretched education system. Refugees in primary education follow the government curriculum and take national exams.

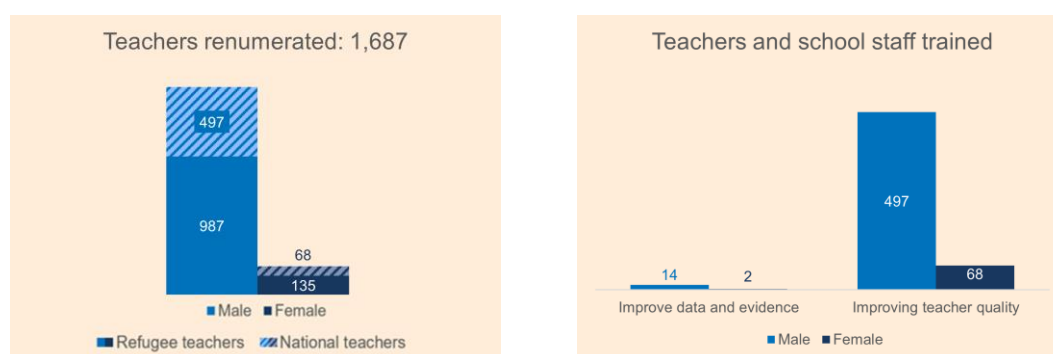


Primary Impact is part of the efforts to increase access to quality and equitable education across the country, and its launch coincided with the first semester of the 2023/2024 academic year. To kick off the school year, back-to-school campaigns were held across various regions. These efforts resulted in 109,593 refugee students enrolled in primary education, including 61,391 boys and 48,202 girls, with girls making up 44 percent of the total.

49 primary schools benefited from the distribution of school kits and textbooks under Primary Impact. As a step toward inclusion, the Ministry of Education (MoE) provided new primary education textbooks to refugee schools, marking an improvement in quality education for refugee students who for the first time received original textbooks instead of just photocopied versions. Financial assistance was provided in only one location in the Assosa region, where learners benefited from cash grants to help cover the examination fees.

The refugee camp leadership includes a Refugee Coordination Committee (RCC) that oversees all activities and works with community groups, such as refugee women and youth organizations. Each school has a Parent-Teachers Association. These school community schemes led back-to-school campaigns and activities such as house-to-house visits, promotional poster placements, loudspeaker announcements, as well as discussions to promote school enrolment, with a focus on closing gender gaps and retention.

Quality



Refugee teachers at primary school level were trained by the MoE as part of the World Bank IDA 19 refugee integration program. The training took place at government teacher training colleges in Jijiga, Gambella, and Melkadida. It focused on important skills such as active learning methods, assessment, lesson planning, and classroom management, all essential for providing quality education. Additionally, the government supplied textbooks for refugee students and teacher guides for the new curriculum, helping teachers enhance their classroom instruction.

Among efforts to improve teacher management and enhance the professional development and qualifications of refugee teachers, various initiatives were implemented. For example, funds have been allocated to include refugee teachers in the MoE's Quality Education Improvement Programme and Equity (GEQIP-E), funded by a multi-donor trust

fund including World Bank support, which is training teachers to increase their knowledge and skills to deliver quality primary education.

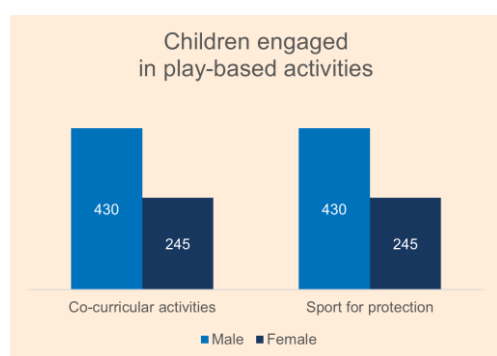


Forced to leave his wife and children behind amid violence when clashes broke out during his morning lesson in Laascaanood, Somalia, Isihak remains committed to teaching. © UNHCR/Diana Diaz

The MoE in Ethiopia publishes an Education Statistics Annual Abstract (ESSA) yearly, including refugee education. Data is collected through the EMIS system, helping the ministry track progress in access, equity, quality, and learning outcomes. This data informs planning and policy decisions for the education sector. Information is gathered at the school level, including in refugee camps, and compiled into the annual report used by the government and other stakeholders. During the reporting period, 16 teachers and school managers in Asossa were trained to participate in the data collection process. Efforts and resources are needed to train teachers in other locations.

Safe and supportive learning environment

Refugee education programming, aligned with MoE standards, emphasizes co-curricular activities to support holistic student development. Each primary school hosts at least seven clubs, and sports are open to all students. Students participate in sports and games as part of the timetable, with activities supervised by designated teachers. Sport is utilized as a powerful tool to foster social cohesion between refugee students and those from host communities.



SCHOOL IMPLEMENTING CLIMATE ACTION

19

While all primary schools integrated climate school elements in their education provision, 19 primary schools in Melkadida stood out for their large-scale climate-related activities, focusing on school greening by planting trees.

Inclusion

No new policies were created with project funding to support refugee inclusion in the national education system during the reporting period. UNHCR, as a member of the Local Education Group (LEG) and co-chair of the Refugee Education Working Group (REWG) with RRS, continues to advocate for refugee inclusion, building on progressive policies developed together with the Ethiopian Government in the past.

While refugees follow the government curriculum and take national exams, primary education is provided by the Refugees and Returnees Service (RRS), operating in parallel to the MoE. Efforts are being made to gradually transfer RRS responsibility to national and regional education bureaus.



REFUGEE EDUCATION INCLUSION ADVANCED

PUBLICATIONS

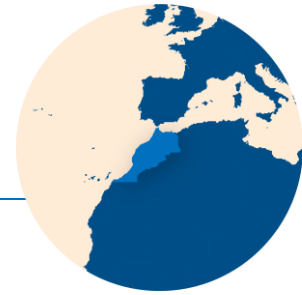
1

SID & SDP

49

Forty-nine primary schools prepared school improvement plans in order to access school grants aimed at harmonizing educational activities between refugee schools and national schools. The school grants are minimal and primarily cover student supplies and contribute to school fencing to create a safer learning environment in line with the national minimum standards. However, lack of funds hampered any implementation activities during this reporting period.

Morocco



SCHOOLS

 356

STUDENTS

 916

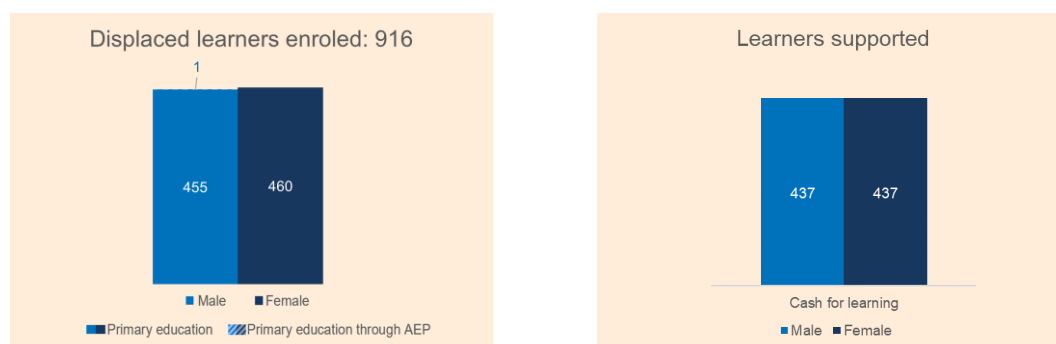
Access

The education system in Morocco promotes the inclusion of children and youth in national education, regardless of nationality or administrative status. In 2021, a Memorandum of Understanding between the Ministry of National Education (MoE) and UNHCR led to the development of a joint action plan to further facilitate refugee enrollment.



Young student waiting for transportation from school in Morocco. © UNHCR/Jawhar Kodadi

Currently, 915 refugees are enrolled in primary education across 356 public schools. In 2023, the Gross Enrollment Rate (GER) for refugees was 78 percent, and the Net Enrollment Rate (NER) was 73 percent. Barriers to enrollment include language, age, recognition and equivalency of prior education, and socio-economic factors. To address these challenges, UNHCR provides language support and remedial programs, along with financial assistance for refugee learners. In response to the difficulties over-aged students face due to age restrictions, UNHCR Morocco is expanding accelerated and non-formal education programs, though availability remains limited due to resource constraints.



Under Primary Impact, UNHCR supported refugee families with cash assistance for additional education costs, including textbooks, school supplies, and transportation. Eligible students that are registered and attend school, receive an annual education grant and a monthly allowance for school expenses, along with reimbursement for private catch-up classes if needed.

Niger



SCHOOLS



32

STUDENTS



32,844

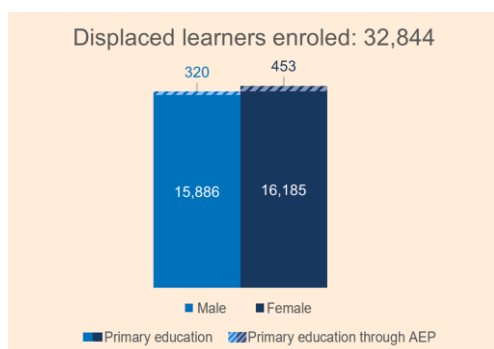
TEACHERS



50

Access

Niger provides a favorable and inclusive environment for refugee children to access the national education system and Primary Impact was launched in nine zones of Niger, targeting 32 government schools. This coincided with the start of the 2023/2024 school year in October, which saw a Gross Enrollment Rate of 40 percent and a Net Rate of 39 percent at the primary school level.



In partnership with education authorities, UNHCR promotes equitable access to quality education and strengthens governance. Efforts include building and repairing schools, distributing education supplies, training teachers, supporting children with disabilities, and participating in sector coordination meetings. To advance the inclusion of displaced learners into the national education system and French-speaking curriculum, accelerated

education classes and remedial courses are provided to learners with different language backgrounds. The curricula for both accelerated education and remedial classes were developed in collaboration with the decentralized structures of the Ministry of National Education, Literacy, Vocational Education, and the Promotion of National Languages (MoE), at the regional, departmental, and municipal levels.

Textbooks and school kits were provided to help reduce indirect education costs and encourage regular school attendance. The kits included backpacks, notebooks, pens, pencils, sharpeners, slate boards, rulers, and erasers, as well as reading and math books. As part of UNHCR Niger's strategy to promote gender equality in education, the distribution targeted mostly girls, especially in regions where cultural and social barriers limit access to education and resources.



SCHOOL COMMUNITY STRUCTURE

80

The 80 community-based structures, including School Management Committees (COGES), Association of Parent Educators (APE), the Association of Mother Educators (AME), school administrations, the central refugee committee, child protection committees, and GBV committees, play a crucial role in promoting education. Prior to the start of the new school year, they organized back-to-school campaigns focused on themes such as education rights, girls' education, inclusive learning, school safety, positive discipline, and female leadership. Additionally, they operated community radio stations covering over 5,000 kilometers that were used to raise awareness and deliver key messaging about education.

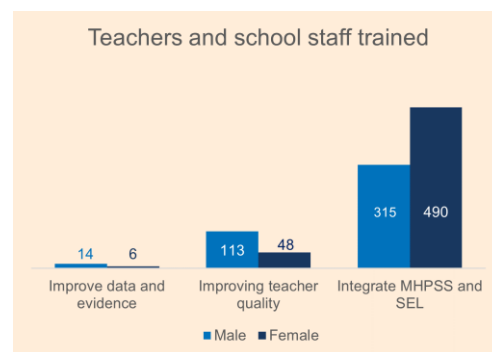
Cash-based aid for education was provided to refugee and asylum-seeker children from poor and vulnerable families based on their size and type of vulnerability, with additional support also extended to vulnerable learners from host communities. Additionally, to promote inclusive education, children with disabilities received materials and assistive devices that enabled them to attend classes alongside their peers.



With help from his tricycle and by attending an accelerated education program for children with specific needs, Lawli is on his way. © UNHCR/Antonia Vadala

Quality

Teachers received training on key topics related to forced displacement, including mental health support, positive discipline, the code of conduct, and updates on the education program. The training also covered how to manage multigrade classes and how to teach language, math, and reading within the Unit for Educational Animation framework. Additionally, it addressed protection topics such as gender-based violence and the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse.



In Niger, teachers receive their salaries from the government, while UNHCR provides supplementary incentives to increase their motivation and engagement. Additionally, UNHCR collaborates with teachers' unions to facilitate the celebration of International Teachers' Day on October 5th, promoting awareness and recognition of educators' contributions. Some teachers hold formal qualifications, while others do not. However, Niger's education system ensures ongoing capacity-building through in-service training facilitated by regional education advisors and inspectors.

Refugees are included in Niger's Education Management Information System (EMIS). The EMIS operates in two phases: a rapid survey in November-December to collect and correct data on the back-to-school situation, and a general census in January/February that assesses the full school year and produces the annual statistical report. School principals, teachers, and education focal points from UNHCR and education partners received training on data collection and analysis, which equipped them to accurately contribute to the national EMIS data collection phases.

Safe and supportive learning environment

As part of the co-curricular activities offered at school, learners participated in the Agadez Air Festival, a championship celebrating song and poetry organized by the regional directorate of the MoE. During school holidays, the Ministry of Education hosts annual sport events with students from across Niger to promote peace and social cohesion through competitions in language, football, wrestling, and more.

Training on psychosocial support and mental health care was offered to teachers, educational advisors, and inspectors.



SCHOOL IMPLEMENTING CLIMATE ACTION

5

Refugee children and youth participated in activities aimed at environmental protection and preservation, including tree planting, market gardening, and reforestation through land recovery efforts.

Inclusion

UNHCR Niger is in the process of developing a national education strategy, incorporating extensive community consultations to ensure an inclusive and participatory process. However, ongoing political instability has significantly delayed progress, with the strategy remaining under development for nearly two years.

In Niger, the GPLE (the Local Group of Education Partners) has established working streams focused on critical themes including education emergency response, girls' education, infrastructure development and vocational training. As part of the infrastructure stream led by the MoE, which includes UNHCR, education partners, and civil society, guidelines for standard school construction were created, and plans were updated to meet community needs and national standards. In the second half of 2023, resources were allocated to enhance classrooms and water and sanitation facilities, creating a safe and supportive learning environment for all students in declared emergency areas, specifically Diffa, Tillaberi, Tahoua, and Maradi.



CONSTRUCTION AND REHABILITATION

CLASSROOMS

6

WASH FACILITIES

6

Pakistan

SCHOOLS

 142

STUDENTS

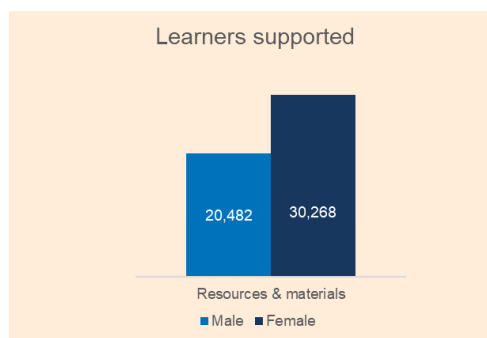
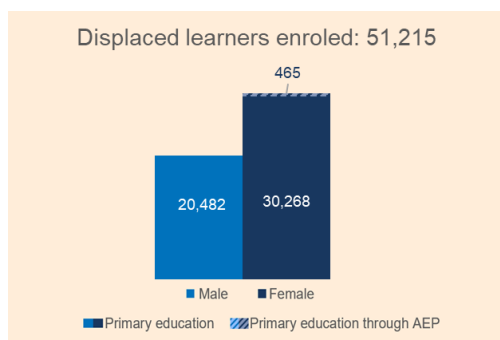
 51,215

TEACHERS

 1,356

Access

Pakistan has an enabling environment for including refugee children in schools. However, the fragility of the national education system, with over 26 million Pakistani children out of school, along with challenges such as distance, socio-economic stagnation, and community perceptions, affects school enrollment for refugees. UNHCR operates 142 refugee village (RV) schools across the country, which have enrolled a total of 50,750 children, 40 percent of whom are female. This marks a significant improvement of approximately 2.8 percent in overall enrollment and a 1 percent increase in female participation compared to 2022. To promote girls' education and provide opportunities for over-aged students, an Accelerated Learning program for the primary curriculum is offered. Among the 465 students enrolled, 338 graduates graduated and some of them enrolled in formal schools in grade 6 at Secondary.



Limited livelihoods opportunities and financial struggles make it difficult for refugee families to afford education costs. To increase school enrolment and retention, UNHCR partnered with the Government of Pakistan to provide curriculum textbooks in the RV schools. In the provinces of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Punjab, the Government provided free textbooks to schools in refugee villages.



SCHOOL COMMUNITY STRUCTURE

192

UNHCR's refugee education efforts rely on key community-based groups like Mother Committees, Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs), and School Management Committees (SMCs), which are present in almost all schools. Training on child protection and gender-based violence were offered to PTAs and Mother Committees in 50 ALP girls' centers and 142 RV schools, benefiting around 2,226 members.

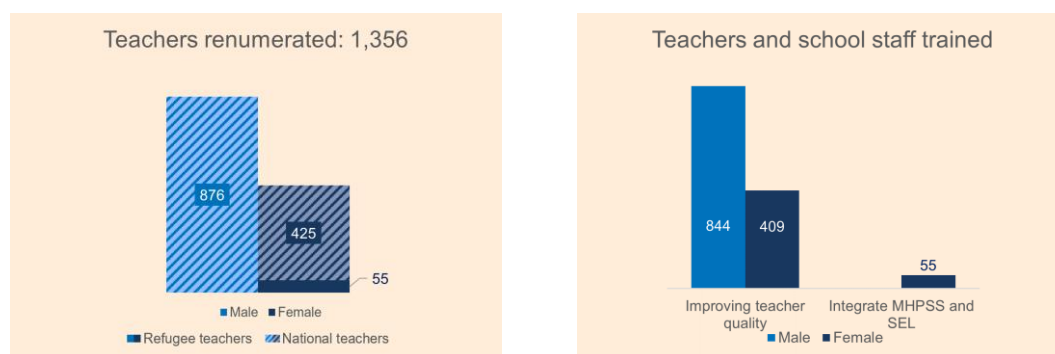
The provision of free school uniforms, bags and other learning materials has significantly increased school participation, especially among girls.



Ali is currently studying in schools damaged by climate-intensified floods with limited access to clean water, in the Sind province of Pakistan. © UNHCR/Zasha Millan

Quality

Primary school teachers participated in the continuous professional development program and were trained on subject content and pedagogy in order to build their capacity to implement the national curriculum. Training topics also included child-centered pedagogies, curriculum objectives, classroom management, use of ICT in classroom and lesson planning, etc.



Teachers and school staff, including watchmen, from refugee village schools and Accelerated Learning Program centers received incentives. Incentive payments for teachers aim to enhance motivation, job satisfaction, and overall commitment, while also ensuring fair compensation.

Inclusion

In 2023, 142 refugee village schools adopted the national curriculum, ensuring access to recognized accreditation. Additionally, 62 RV schools and 31 public schools were upgraded through rehabilitation, construction, and solarization, benefiting over 16,000 students. These improvements increased the capacity for refugee inclusion and enhanced the safety and functionality of learning environments.

Syria



SCHOOLS



STUDENTS



Access

Due to the prolonged crisis, schools and learning spaces continue to be uncondusive to learning due to poor resources, insufficient lighting and heating in classrooms, and inadequate availability and quality of WASH facilities. UNHCR operates two initiatives, catch-up programs and homework cafes, which provide extra study support and promote safe and quality learning for refugee children. These initiatives also help reintegrate out-of-school children and adolescents who have dropped out of formal education and facilitate first-time access to formal schooling when possible. These activities are offered at UNHCR community centers and public schools during after-school hours, primarily serving internally displaced persons (IDPs) and returnees, along with a smaller number of refugees and asylum seekers.

STUDENTS SUPPORTED WITH CASH FOR LEARNING

2,500

UNHCR offered an education cash grant to support refugee and asylum-seeking families with primary school-aged children. This unconditional cash assistance aligns with a rights-based approach and aims to raise awareness in the community about the importance of education, while promoting enrolment and retention.

Inclusion

The rehabilitation of four schools included the repair of 60 damaged classrooms, administrative offices, and WASH facilities. Through this initiative, UNHCR has restored access to formal education for children in specific locations where refugees live. Through the school rehabilitation program, children from refugee, asylum seeker, returnee, displaced, and host communities can attend school together, fostering inclusion and peacebuilding.

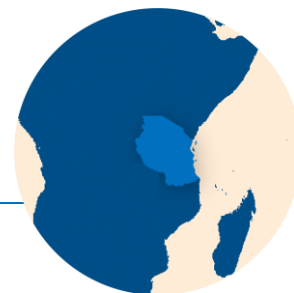


CONSTRUCTION AND REHABILITATION

CLASSROOMS

60

Tanzania



SCHOOLS



STUDENTS



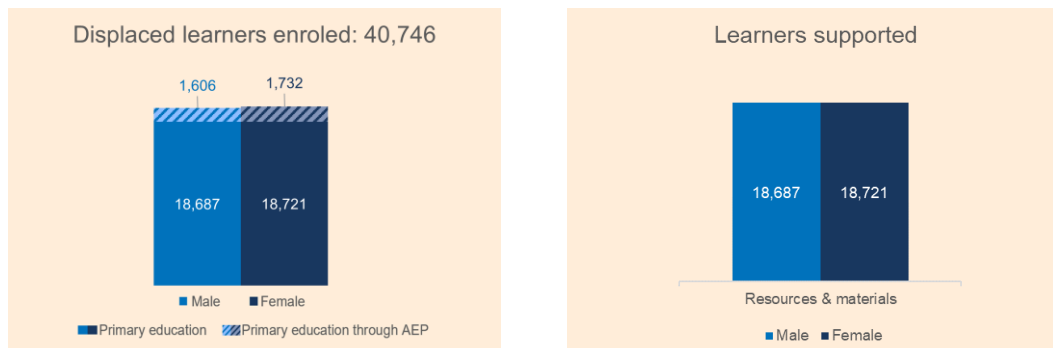
TEACHERS



Access

Due to Government regulations, refugee education in Tanzania runs parallel to the national system and follows the curricula of the countries of origin of the refugee population (Burundi and DRC). While a few refugees attend urban schools, most are restricted to camps due to strict encampment policies. By the end of 2023, 37,408 children were enrolled in the 49 camp-based primary schools. Among the education programs available, there is also an option of Accelerated Education, enabling over aged children to catch up on their studies, which has enrolled 3,338 over-aged children. Primary education has the highest Gross Enrolment Rate (GER) at 138 percent, but concerns remain about low completion rates and difficulty for students to transition to both lower and upper secondary education, with GERs at those levels standing at 49 percent and 33 percent respectively.

Despite significant progress made through Primary Impact, challenges persist, including a shortage of classrooms, WASH facilities, and teaching and learning materials, as well as low teacher remuneration and poor instructional quality. A major concern has been uncertainties around Burundian exam administration due to its high unit cost (USD 115 per student), which led to the postponement of the 2023 examinations for 809 Burundian students to 2024 due to funding constraints.



Under the framework agreement and a collaborative plan of action between UNHCR and UNICEF, school kits were distributed to primary school learners. This joint effort aims to improve access to quality education and provide learners with essential learning materials, including exercise books, as well as ballpoint pens. Additionally, boxes of chalk were provided to teachers, helping ensure they had the necessary materials for effective classroom instruction.



SCHOOL COMMUNITY STRUCTURE

147

In each school there are 3 active community structures that include Parent-Teacher Associations, school management committees and school councils. Other community-based volunteer structures include community outreach workers, youth mentors, and protection facilitators covering a wide range of protection and education cases across all schools.

Under Primary Impact, 53 members of these groups received training to understand their roles and responsibilities in child protection and fostering a safe, harassment-free environment for both school staff and learners. This training is part of a broader effort to tackle challenges like student dropout and low attendance. Community outreach workers play an active role in monitoring at-risk students and raising awareness among students and parents about the importance of education. An example of this was a campaign carried out to support the back-to-school initiative ahead of school reopening in September.

Cash assistance for education mainly supports funding for national examinations. No exams took place between July and December 2023, and the Burundian exams for 809 students were postponed until January 2024 due to the high exam fees. These exams were eventually funded through local resource mobilization efforts by the Swiss Embassy in Tanzania.

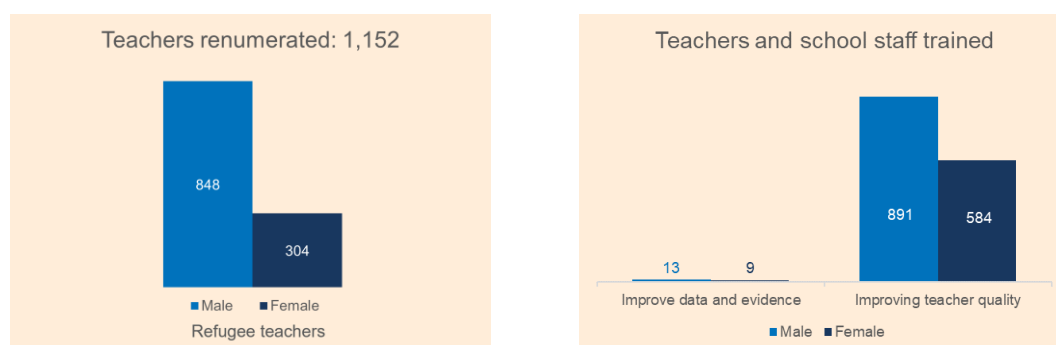
Quality

To improve the quality of learning, UNHCR worked with partners to build instructional capacity utilizing both national colleges and institutions of refugee's countries of origin. Burundian refugee teachers received training facilitated by tutors from the Kasulu Teachers College, a Tanzanian Government-owned institution that offers a variety of diploma and certificate programs in education. This training focused on pedagogy and teaching methodologies, with peer-to-peer learning being a favored methodology. The training for refugee teachers from the DRC focused on curriculum and teaching methods and was supported by the DRC government through institutional arrangements with the Inspection Principale Provinciale Du Sud, Kivu 2.



A learner engaging with digital education resources in Nyaragusu Refugee Camp, Tanzania.
© UNHCR/Maimuna Mtengela

Teachers in refugee hosting schools are solely managed and compensated by UNHCR and partners. This limits professional development opportunities and remuneration, resulting in a shortage of teachers and extremely high teacher-pupil ratios (averaging 1:118) which negatively impact the quality of education provided. UNHCR continues to advocate for inclusion of refugees in the Tanzanian education system which would also create more professional development opportunities for refugee teachers.



UNHCR's REMIS system is used as the main monitoring and evaluation (MEL) tool to capture school enrolment and other education information. The MEL training follows a training of teachers scheme, with representatives from the Education Working Group receiving training on REMIS and then passing on their knowledge to teachers and PTAs in the schools. REMIS training is held regularly to bring together relevant stakeholders, promote knowledge sharing and discuss opportunities and challenges.

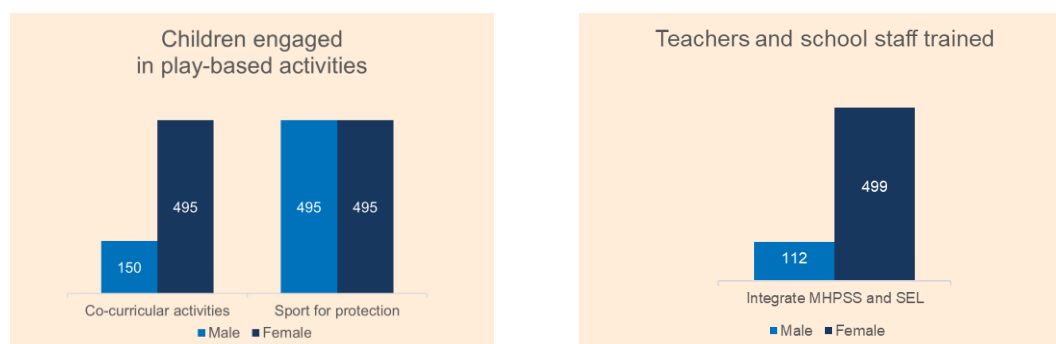
Safe and supportive learning environment

Dedicated education protection staff under partner organizations participate in a robust referral mechanism with day-to-day reporting to address any incidences of violence and run campaigns contributing to school safety. The campaigns incorporate messaging about safety and gender-based violence to promote behavioral change and highlight the importance of a safe learning environment. The 2023 joint assessment mission revealed ongoing gender challenges, including persistent issues with gender-based violence (GBV) and protection from sexual exploitation and abuse and harassment (PSEAH).

Noting that rising school dropouts are linked to a lack of learning materials and dignity kits for girls, extracurricular activities in the camp focused on menstrual hygiene, gender equality and sports and youth empowerment, with six clubs in each school having 30 to 50 members. The members serve as focal points to promote the club objectives and drive

positive change in their schools. For sport and play-based activities, the UNHCR Sports for Protection approach was integrated into back-to-school tournaments to encourage student return and boost enrollment. The tournaments served as a platform to share messages on safe environment and community engagement. DAFI (higher education scholarship) students volunteered during their university holidays to support these initiatives, and sports equipment and uniforms were also provided to facilitate participation. To help the operation of school sport clubs, UNHCR provided equipment to 20 primary schools including first aid kits, whistles, sanitary pads and pants.

UNHCR and its partner conducted PSEAH training, reaching 611 teachers and non-teaching staff to foster a safe learning environment. The training aimed to ensure that all camp-based workers, volunteers, and associates uphold a commitment to safeguarding principles and create a harassment-free workplace. Additionally, refresher training was provided for education staff and mental health staff to strengthen their capacity in psychosocial support and positive discipline.



Climate change activities have not started yet, but there are plans to launch the pilot phase of environmental clubs and global action days once funding is obtained.

Inclusion

All stakeholders within the entire school community are actively engaged, with UNHCR taking the lead under the Education Working Group (EWG) to conduct an out-of-school survey. The survey, prompted by concerns about secondary school dropouts and low primary-to-secondary transition rates, found that only 52 percent of secondary-aged children are enrolled in school, with the remainder out of school. Among 708 out-of-school children (49 percent female), most were at home, with only 3 percent absent due to studies, repatriation, or resettlement. Factors contributing to dropout rates include family responsibilities, financial constraints, child labor, health issues, poor education

quality, and limited future education prospects. UNHCR and education partners have implemented measures to address these issues, but more efforts are needed, such as improving education quality, providing adequate teaching materials, ensuring timely exams, and enhancing teacher capacity and incentives.



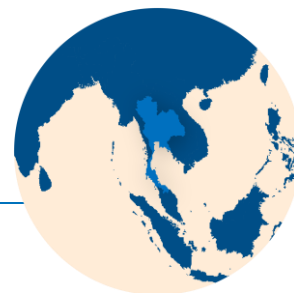
REFUGEE EDUCATION INCLUSION ADVANCED

PUBLICATIONS

1

UNHCR has significantly advanced advocacy efforts, leading to the prioritization of access to refugee education without discrimination by all education development partners.

Thailand



SCHOOLS



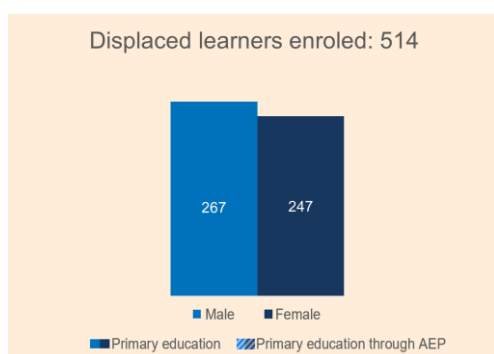
STUDENTS



Access

From July to December 2023, two Education Officers conducted 81 monitoring visits to 77 primary schools, covering 487 students (249 boys and 238 girls), which is 95 percent of the total refugee primary school students assisted during this period. These visits allowed schools to address challenges and enabled UNHCR to monitor students' academic performance and adjustment to the new learning environment.

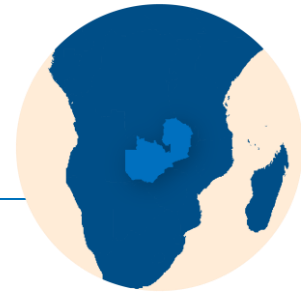
The identified issues include student dropouts due to resettlement without proper notification, new students having a limited understanding of Thai culture and school expectations, and some students struggling to catch up with lessons. To support new students in Thai schools, UNHCR organized support classes for 23 students needing study help, which helped prevent dropouts.



Due to limited job opportunities, many refugee and asylum-seeking parents struggled to send their children to school, facing high additional expenses despite there being no tuition fees. From July to December 2023, UNHCR Thailand MCO provided cash assistance to 514 urban refugee children in primary schools, covering transportation, uniforms, and study allowances.

A donor contribution under Primary Impact enabled the payment of travel allowances for 378 students, improving school attendance and reducing dropouts. Additionally, UNHCR offered travel support to 25 caregivers of young children to join in a support program, resulting in over 85 percent passing end-of-semester evaluations and enrolling in a two-month tutor program before the new academic year in May 2024.

Zambia



SCHOOLS



STUDENTS

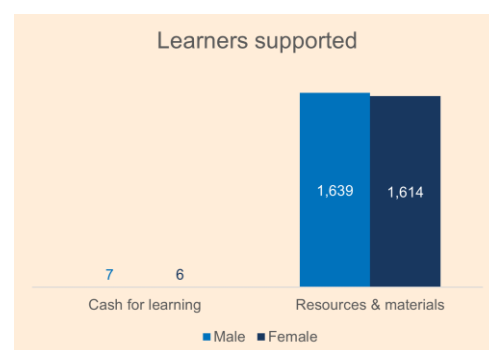
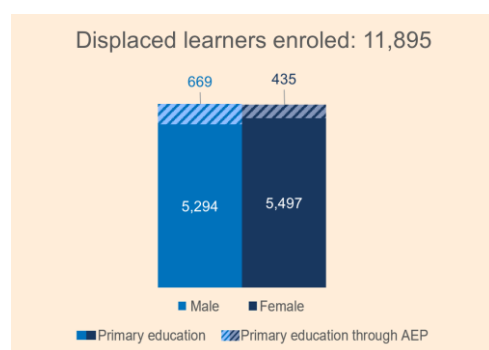


TEACHERS



Access

Through an inclusive education policy that offers free education to both nationals and refugees, the Zambian Government and UNHCR work with various stakeholders to meet educational needs of refugees. Funding from the national treasury is allocated to support school grants. Currently, access to primary education stands at 70 percent, with a gender distribution of 49 percent male and 51 percent female students enrolled. However, despite this, challenges remain in including refugees in schools, as language barriers hinder literacy and outcomes. Additionally, their non-inclusion in the national Education Management Information System (EMIS) limits targeted support and complicates tracking key indicators like the Net Enrollment Ratio (NER).

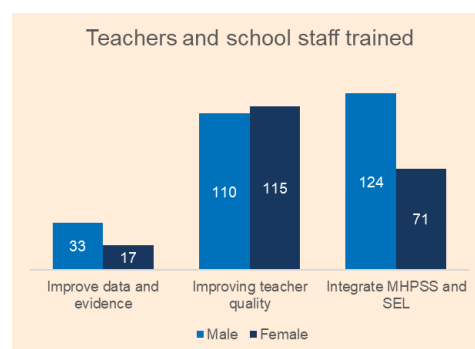
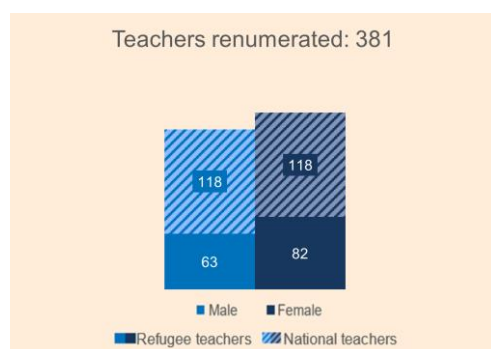


UNHCR is actively collaborating with stakeholders, including the Zambia National Library, to procure additional textbooks. Under Primary Impact, reading materials in the local Bemba language were secured for 3 schools in the Mantapala refugee settlement, marking a slight improvement. However, textbook-to-learner ratio and a shortage of learning materials continue to pose challenges to retention and the overall quality of learning.

Cash-based assistance is planned to support children with special needs and disabilities. This includes covering boarding fees for boys and girls at Kasempa Multi-Disability School and Meheba C, along with providing teaching materials. There is a growing awareness of the need for improved disability inclusion. For this purpose, a special education unit is set to open in Mantapala in 2024, similar to the one in Meheba.

Quality

The Let's Read Project (<https://usaidthambia-letsread-project.edc.org/>) supported by USAID and World Vision Zambia, conducts termly assessments for grades 1-4 to monitor student progress and offers remedial lessons to improve literacy and numeracy for students. As of August 2023, 56 percent of Grade 2 enrollees scored at least 60 percent in literacy, a 9 percent increase from 2022. Data showed that at the national level, Meheba camp outperformed others with an average primary school certificate pass rate exceeding the national average of 68 percent. Overall, the average pass rate across settlements was 65 percent.



To improve classroom standards, the Ministry of Education (MoE) conducted a monitoring visit through local education authorities. In addition to the Continuous Professional Development (CPD) sessions, facilitated by the District Resource Centre Coordinator (DRCCC), schools also held professional development activities from July to December 2023 to strengthen teacher capacity and familiarize with the Zambian

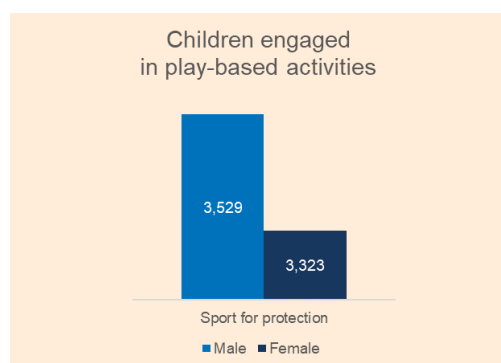
education system, the curriculum and its subjects. All teachers received teaching aids, such as stationery, teacher guides, and literacy books to improve their lesson preparation.

All teachers, including refugee in-service teachers, are qualified, registered with the Teaching Council of Zambia for quality assurance and are affiliated with teacher trade unions that advocate for better working conditions. Female teachers accounted for 40 percent of the primary staff, contributing to gender equality and the safety of girl children, despite a decrease of 8 percent from the previous year. Refugee teachers represented 21 percent of the workforce. The high cost of work permits restricts refugee teachers' access to stable employment.

Community structures in refugee locations share information on re-entry cases, dropouts, and protection issues, as this information is not yet incorporated in national statistics. Annual School Census results for the next three years are pending validation by the Central Statistics Department, and the Ministry is planning to develop a new system.

Safe and supportive learning environment

Co-curricular activities, including girls' empowerment clubs and indoor and outdoor sports like football and netball, are part of the school curriculum. In 2023, the District Education Board Secretary (DEBS) selected top students, including refugees, for zonal, district, and provincial teams. The Peace for Education program in Mayukwayukwa and Meheba engaged students in judo. While enthusiasm is high, limited access to equipment and uniforms hinders refugee student participation in sport events.



MHPSS issues were addressed by the Ministries of Education and Health through counseling and referrals but faced resource shortages and lack of parental support. The education sector partnered with the Ministry of Community Development and Social Services to recruit Child and Youth Care Workers (CYCWs), that along with PTAs and community groups, raised awareness on gender based violence (GBV) and protection from sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA), and sexual and reproductive health (SRHR). These efforts increased school re-enrollment, improved school-community collaboration, and boosted literacy, with 51 percent female attendance in primary schools.



SCHOOL IMPLEMENTING CLIMATE ACTION

23

Climate topics are included in the national curriculum, as well as in clubs and school cleaning activities.

Inclusion

All 23 primary schools in Meheba, Mayukwayukwa, and Mantapala received training to create strategic plans, including Learner Improvement Plans for primary schools. Additionally, the Ministry of Education launched its Strategic Plan for 2022-2026. Addressing the mounting needs to improve school infrastructure, including WASH facilities, is perceived as a collective responsibility that requires collaboration from all stakeholders. In response to this, a refugee-led organization partnering with UNHCR but outside the Primary Impact portfolio, built a primary school with 7 classrooms and administrative space. This project followed the earlier construction of two classrooms by UNDP. The Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development is also constructing a staff house. Schools in Mantapala utilized government funds to refurbish office spaces, conduct training sessions for staff, and offer catch-up lessons for struggling students.

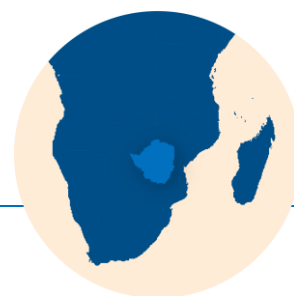


REFUGEE EDUCATION INCLUSION ADVANCED

SID & SDP

24

Zimbabwe



SCHOOLS



STUDENTS

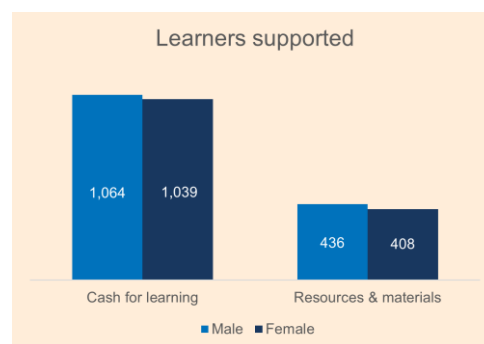
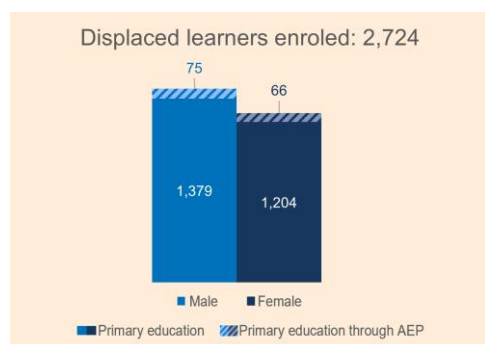


TEACHERS



Access

Primary Impact targeted the primary school in Tongogara Refugee Settlement, a government-registered institution that follows the national curriculum, where teachers are deployed by the Public Service Commission. As of the end of 2023, the school enrolled 2,103 refugees and 173 local children, with a gross enrollment rate of 67 percent and a net rate of 52 percent. High teacher-to-student ratios, inadequate infrastructure and textbooks, and a lack of school uniforms remain significant challenges.



Textbooks and school kits were distributed to the learners from Grade 5 to 7 at Tongogara Primary School. Stationery was locally procured. The primary school provided the list of school requirements which, were used for procurement through local suppliers.

The School Development Committee (SDC) at Tongogara Primary School is elected by parents and receives annual training from the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education (MoE). Comprising six members, four males and two females, it represents both refugee and host community families. The SDC plays a vital role in promoting school development and fostering communication between the school administration and parents. Notably, it initiated the school poultry project, ensuring the smooth operation of the feeding program for early learners, and actively monitors all construction activities at the school.



SCHOOL COMMUNITY STRUCTURE

1

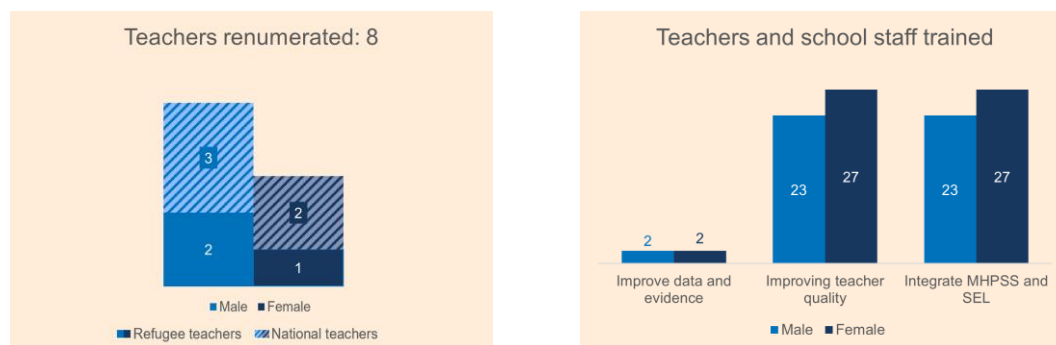
A total of 2,103 learners from Tongogara Primary School received assistance with school fees. This allowed 256 Grade 7 students to take their national exams and obtain certification for their primary education. Additionally, to address barriers to education and increase equitable access, Primary Impact provided schools supplies, including uniforms, sanitary kits for both boys and girls and materials for resource units for children with disabilities. Stationary was also provided to students enrolled in the accelerated education and language support classes. A contract was awarded to a group of six refugee tailors within the camp to produce the school uniforms, creating livelihood opportunities.

Quality

Teachers at Tongogara Primary School were trained to use an educational ICT platform and tools like tablets and laptops, helping to improve their teaching by incorporating technology into lessons. They learned to access resources and create curriculum-based content for teaching. The platform has made work easier for teachers and motivated students to learn more using the tablets. Both national and refugee teachers receive in-service training to meet MoE standards, with ongoing mentorship provided by the school administration. However, while training opportunities are available for refugee teachers, employment restrictions for refugees remain in place.

The teacher pool comprises of qualified national teachers, para-professional refugee teachers who received accredited training by the MoE, and refugee assistant teachers specialized in French and Kiswahili language support. Both national and refugee teaching

staff received in-service training in line with developments in the MoE. Additionally, the primary school administration actively mentored all teachers, refugees and national staff.



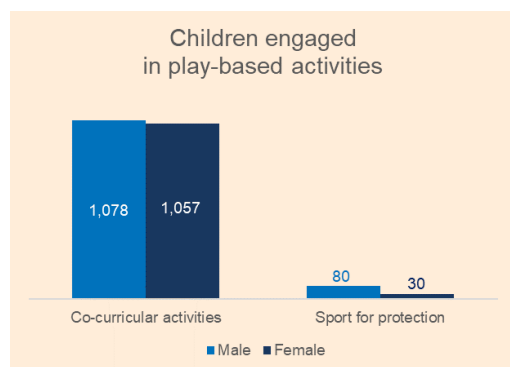
Tongogara Primary School utilizes the National EMIS data collection system to gather information on enrollment, pass rates, staff, school infrastructure, WASH facilities, and emergency preparedness. The school administration, including the head, deputy heads, and Teacher In Charge, collects this data and submits it to the district office for further processing at the provincial and national levels. They receive regular training and support from the district office on data collection and submission. This data is used by the education ministry to allocate resources to the school.

Safe and supportive learning environment

A total of 2,135 children participate in regular sports co-curricular activities, as part of the national curriculum, and represent their sports houses during the school sports days. Protection messages are mainstreamed during the sports events at the school. A total of 110 students represent the refugee primary school in different sporting disciplines within their zone when competing with other schools. Through Primary Impact, Tongogara Primary School received sports kits for activities such as soccer, rugby, basketball, gymnastics and athletics, which enhanced its visibility in competitions with neighboring schools. Primary learners participated in national co-curricular activities, with some advancing from cluster to district levels and showcasing their talents.

The school has guidance and counseling teachers, trained in mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS), that receive ongoing mentorship from UNHCR and partners. Under Primary Impact other training opportunities for education staff covered child safeguarding and potential abuse risks, including from both teachers and peers. Teachers and other school-based staff were encouraged to create a school-based child safeguarding policy to guide responses to any protection cases. Additionally, in

collaboration with TWEENS (Together We Educationally Empower Non-Privileged Students), child protection activities were conducted, including an awareness campaign on child rights and career guidance for students.



SCHOOL IMPLEMENTING CLIMATE ACTION

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To promote environmental awareness and sensitize on climate resilience, the school established environmental clubs, which prior to the launch of Primary Impact did not exist. Sensitization meetings were held with school authorities and students to encourage participation in environmental protection through extracurricular activities. Visibility materials were procured, including t-shirts and posters promoting messages about litter reduction and recycling. The clubs will be organized into three age-appropriate groups to facilitate effective messaging and implement climate change initiatives. In parallel, with support from other projects, fruit trees were planted, and orchards established, to promote sustainability and enhance the school nutrition program.



Two students walk arm-in-arm after a day of learning at Tongogara Primary School, in Tongogara Refugee Camp. © UNHCR/Sonia Gonzalez Suarez

Inclusion

From November 2023 to February 2024, WFP and UNHCR, with support from the Government of Zimbabwe and NGOs, carried out a Joint Assessment Monitoring, focusing on educational opportunities and challenges in Tongogara Refugee Settlement. The monitoring highlighted that, while school attendance is high at 94.9 percent among enrolled children, challenges persist, including low teacher motivation due to inadequate pay, a student-to-teacher ratio of 1:50 in primary schools, and insufficient classrooms and textbooks.

Education Working Group partners meet quarterly to discuss updates and address issues related to the two schools in the settlement. Tongogara Primary School, which is government-owned, has teachers employed and deployed by the government. The school participates in all government capacity-building programs and academic and co-curricular activities. The MoE conducts supervisory visits to monitor standards and ensure policy implementation.



REFUGEE EDUCATION INCLUSION ADVANCED

PUBLICATIONS

1

SID & SDP

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Tongogara Primary School is currently implementing a five-year school development plan that includes various projects, such as building additional classrooms, staff accommodations, an IT laboratory, and security perimeter fencing. To fund these, the school has also started income-generating activities to supplement fees. Additionally, four schools benefited from the construction of additional WASH facilities contributing to improving hygiene and access to clean and safe sanitation services.



CONSTRUCTION AND REHABILITATION

WASH FACILITIES

20



primary impact!

Annual Report 2023
Human Interest Stories
from Algeria and Ecuador

Sahrawi Girls Pursue Education

in Tindouf's Boujdour Refugee Camp



School in Boujdour refugee camp, Tindouf, Algeria. ©UNHCR/Nisrine Benyahia

A group of schoolgirls gather on a basketball court, laughing, chatting, with water bottles and notebooks in hand. Surrounded by the vastness of the Sahara, the uniforms of bright pink and grey stand out against the tones of the desert, jewel tones bright against the sand. The students of Allal Ben Abdellah primary school are taking a break from their studies to shoot some hoops and share stories about their dreams and aspirations.

“My favorite hobbies are drawing, sports, reading, writing, and meeting up with my friends at school,” says Baibaha, a year 5 student, beaming with pride. Her big dreams are not only for herself, as she adds with a smile, “My hope is to see most of my friends succeed!”



Baibaha Cheikh, Sahrawi refugee student. ©UNHCR/Nisrine Benyahia

"As a Sahrawi student, I see education as the key to my future."

— **Baibaha Cheikh**

Born and raised in the camp, these girls are part of the Sahrawi refugee community, a community that has been displaced for over 40 years. Their families fled Western Sahara during the conflict that erupted in the mid-1970s and have been living in the Boujdour refugee camp of Tindouf, Algeria, ever since.

Life in the Boujdour refugee camp is not without its challenges, the harsh desert conditions and limited access to resources and transportation can make getting to and staying in school difficult. Despite the tough environment, where summer temperatures can soar above 50°C, the girls are determined to stay in school.

Here, education is seen as a lifeline. The classrooms are filled with young minds eager to learn, girls and boys sitting side by side. From literacy and mathematics to lessons in civic education, art, and sports, the curriculum prepares them for both practical challenges and future opportunities. For Baibaha and her classmates, education offers them the tools to become architects, teachers, doctors, and leaders who can uplift their community.

Daduha understands the challenges these girls face. Like many of her students, she was born in the camp and attended the same schools. Since graduating from higher education in 2003, she's been deeply committed to her students.

"When I became a teacher, I loved it. I gave this profession all my time and effort," Daduha shares. "The Sahrawi students are very passionate, and education is important as it develops the community as a whole..."



Daduha Eida, Sahrawi refugee teacher in Boujdour refugee camp, Tindouf, Algeria. ©UNHCR/Nisrine Benyahia

*"Educating is, of course, a very complex profession,
but it carries a great significance"*

— Daduha Eida

At the end of their break, the girls of Boujdour refugee camp gather their notebooks and return to their classrooms, excited to attend another lesson. For these girls, and their teacher school is more than just a place to learn—it's a place that offers a sense of purpose and the hope for a better tomorrow, one small step at a time.

Inclusive schools

refugee students find hope in Ecuador

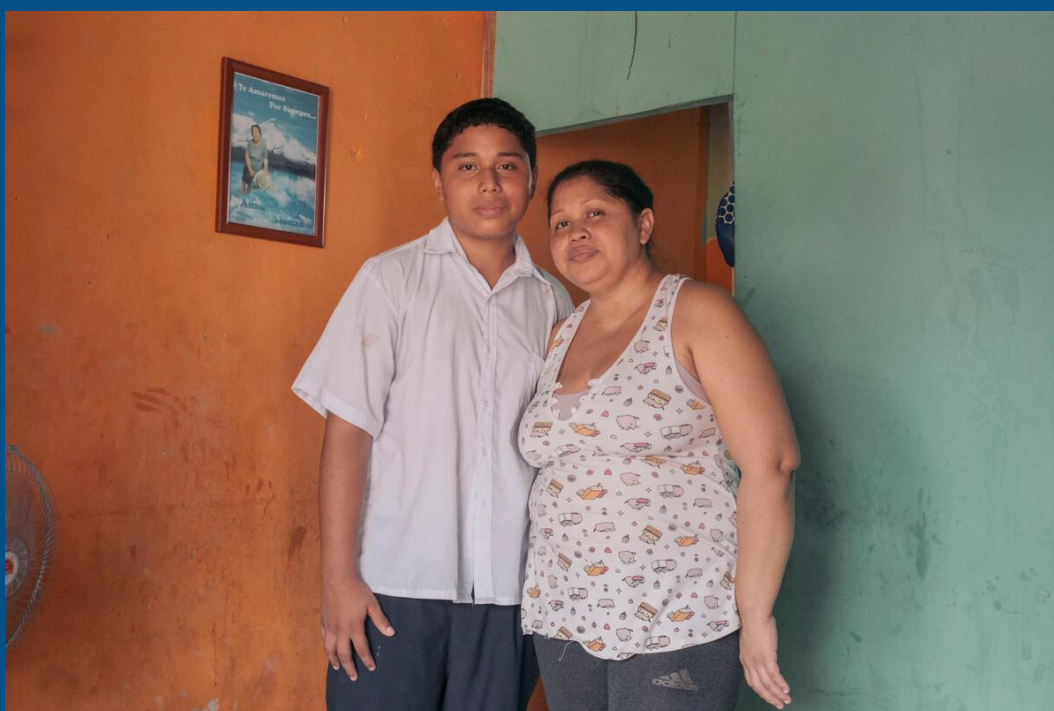


Eleangel in his classroom in Guayaquil, Ecuador. © UNHCR/Jeffrey Guillemard

Born in Venezuela, Eleangel José Roca Trias was just seven years old when his family was forced to move to Ecuador, seeking out safety in a new country. Now 14, Eleangel lives in La Chala, Guayaquil, where violence has become a real worry for boys his age. “It scares me a lot that they grow up and let themselves be carried away by people who make them fall into bad thoughts or actions,” Elexys, his mother, says, “I ask God to take care of them, to protect them.”

From the moment they arrived in Ecuador, Elexys wanted Eleangel in school, but it came with more difficulties than she could have imagined. Since they moved to Ecuador in 2017, Eleangel’s parents have struggled to keep him in school while covering the family’s basic needs. Renting just one room in a house where there are two other families living, Eleangel’s parents spend all the money they can on their children’s wellbeing and future, and education is a top priority. Before she gave birth to her third and youngest son,

Eleonel, Elexys worked in a bakery, but she has been unable to find a new job since then and the family struggle to make ends meet. "It doesn't matter if sometimes we can't buy flour, if he needs a notebook, we buy the notebook first."



Eleonel with his mother, Elexys at their home in Guayaquil. © UNHCR/Jeoffrey Guillemard

Ecuador is home to one of the largest refugee populations in Latin America. Around 40 per cent of this population are children under the age of 18. For many refugee students in Ecuador, education plays a central role in their protection and inclusion. UNHCR has been working with partners to promote safe and discrimination free environments with the help of teachers, psychologists, parents, and the students themselves.

Based on extensive literature and Ecuador's legal educational framework, the Respiramos Inclusión methodology was developed by UNHCR Ecuador to focus on promoting inclusion and non-discrimination, particularly for those in human mobility contexts. The four pillars of identity, diversity, justice, and social change provide the structure for components that dismantle discrimination, build institutional inclusion, foster classroom inclusion and promote non-formal educational engagement. As part of the Respiramos Inclusión methodology, training and workshops are provided on guaranteeing educational access and retention for vulnerable children, including refugees and migrants.

By the end of 2023, Respiramos Inclusión was implemented across 185 schools in Ecuador, helping thousands of refugee students across the country learn and grow. Ecuador continues to have a generous education policy, allowing people of all nationalities access to schools regardless of their status. However, due to lack of resources, the number of schools supported may be curbed by at least a third, risking the future prospects of integration for refugee children across the country.

"My education is important because it will allow me to graduate and become a police officer to help youth who are on the wrong path. I hope one day I can walk on the street with my family without fearing a tragedy."

— Eleangel

Reflecting on his studies, Eleangel initially struggled to adapt to a new environment and do well in school. Now, school is a safe place where he can imagine a different reality and dream about his future. He loves to learn about the universe and nature in his natural science class and also goes to the neighbourhood community centre where he works hard to improve his grades with help from tutors.



Eleangel does his homework while his brothers watch TV. © UNHCR/Jeoffrey Guillemard

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