



**UNHCR**  
The UN Refugee Agency

# RAISING THE BAR

Promising Practices for  
Refugee Education from  
UNHCR and Educate A Child



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with the support from the Qatar Fund for Development

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A programme of education above all



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# Map



Since 2012, UNHCR and Educate A Child, a global programme of the Education Above All Foundation, have been working together to enhance access to quality primary education for displaced children throughout Africa, Asia and the Middle East. As of December 2019, this partnership has resulted in the enrolment of more than 1.2 million out-of-school children. This document captures a selection of promising practices from the field.

BOOSTING GIRLS' SCHOOL ENROLMENT AND RETENTION

# Camp nurseries

It is difficult for girls and women to get an education and go to work in Chad. UNHCR and its partners have successfully set up nurseries in the refugee camps to help more mothers continue their education or careers as teachers after the birth of their child. The initiative gives more girls access to education, and more women the chance to teach, while empowering and allowing them to be more active members of their community. Nurseries also acknowl-

edge cultural realities, respecting the community's own mothering and childcare practices and provide job opportunities for nursery staff.

## Setting up nurseries

To get more girls into school and more women into teaching careers, in 2012, UNHCR and its partners began setting up nurseries in refugee camps to look after children aged 0 to 3 years old. As of 2018, there were 22 of these nurseries across

eight camps in Eastern Chad, employing 40 carers at a ratio of one carer for every three children.

School buildings are scarce in this part of Chad, so the creches are held in either poto-poto structures (semi-permanent and made of mud) or secko shelters (temporary and made of straw), or sometimes even in a private house. In one nursery in Gozbeida, the children are cared for under a tree. Around 60% of nurs-

## CONTEXT

Chad has repeatedly demonstrated its commitment to providing quality, equitable and inclusive education to refugees and Chadians – in line with Article 22 of the Refugee Convention, as well as the New York Declaration, the Global Compact on Refugees, and the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework. In 2014, the Eastern refugee camps were integrated into the Chadian education system. Then, in 2018, more than 100 camp schools became official Chadian schools.

And yet Chad's harsh environment, high poverty rates, and cultural traditions still all conspire to make it difficult for refugee children in Eastern Chad to get an education. It is particularly tough for refugee girls, especially those who marry and bear children early, to go to school. Chad has one of the highest rates of child marriage in the world. Over two-thirds of women are wedded before they reach 18, often preventing them from completing their education. Motherhood can also hamper a woman's teaching career, confronting them with the choice of going to work without childcare or of being a stay-at-home mum.

- 465,343 refugees and asylum seekers are registered in Chad, 56.2% of whom are children
- More than 85,000 refugee children are enrolled in school
- 1,429 refugee children sat the 2018 National Chad Baccalaureate exams

*(UNHCR, April 2019)*

eries currently require repairing or rebuilding, and the availability of equipment is low – there is a lack of mats, diapers, toys, and hygiene supplies.

No formal training is provided for staff in baby care. This is both a weakness and a strength – carers look after children in the same way as they would their own children, respecting the community's cultural standards of childcare.

### Story of success

On average, each nursery cares for about seven children per day, and 3,014 mothers benefited in 2018 alone. Primary school retention rates for girls in the areas of Eastern Chad where the nurseries are located have improved too.

One of the concerns about the nursery programme was that it might

actually encourage early pregnancies, but so far this hasn't materialised. The nurseries should actually have the reverse effect because, as UNESCO has shown, increasing education among girls reduces the rate of teenage pregnancy and child marriage.

### KARIMA'S STORY

"My name is Karima. I come from Sudan and I have been living in Chad since 2004, living in Djabal camp. The education I get is good. One thing that helps me is that my child is kept at the nursery when I am in class. Nurseries look after children when their mums attend school or teach in class. If there were no nurseries, it would be very difficult for me to continue my studies. It is a service that is given to us to continue our education."

## How to replicate this practice

Many countries are home to high numbers of school-aged girls with children. This initiative can be replicated to make sure that they are not denied the chance to go to school, and that female teachers with children are not prevented from teaching.

Other countries can replicate the initiative by taking the following steps:

**STEP 1:** Gather evidence to demonstrate the need for the initiative. For example, collect information about the number of girls who have children and have dropped out of school, and present this data to the community to get their support from the start.

**STEP 2:** Understand the context. For example, in urban areas, finding an available location can be difficult and, in some areas, navigating certain cultural traditions can be a challenge.

**STEP 3:** Focus on advocacy. Use existing groups, such as the association of mother educators in Chad, to help spread the message about the project and organise the recruitment of good-quality carers.

**STEP 4:** Consider how the programme can be sustainably funded and operated, given the context. Will you need a formal training process for staff or official licensing, for example?



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## INCREASING GIRLS' SCHOOL ENROLMENT WHILE PROMOTING SAFETY

# Girls' Clubs

Knowledge and confidence are key to fighting gender inequalities within the refugee community. With support from UNHCR and its partners, Girls' Clubs provide girls with a safe space to discuss topics that might be off limits at home, such as Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV), menstruation and the importance of continuing education. With the ability to target out-of-school girls directly and widely, the clubs are increasing school enrolment and retention rates.

### Girls' Clubs

In eight refugee camps in Eastern Chad, UNHCR and its partners are running Girls' Clubs – with 129 members aged between 12 and 30

years old – to promote girls' education. The clubs are also raising awareness about SGBV and how to prevent it.

These Girls' Clubs identify out-of-school girls and then offer them various kinds of support. They:

- conduct door-to-door campaigning to promote the value of girls' education
- remind girls and their families about school schedules
- offer a girls-only safe space to discuss SGBV issues
- distribute menstrual health and hygiene kits
- participate in school meetings to represent the perspective of girls.

The Girls' Clubs work alongside two adult-run groups that are a feature of every refugee camp in Chad: SGBV committees and Associations of Mothers-Educators (AME). Having close links with the AME and SGBV committees offers the Girls' Club an extra level of support and legitimacy in the community. That said, the community already generally supports education, so the girls are not fighting against entrenched cultural opposition.

Other girls see Girls' Club members as role models because of their knowledge and confidence in talking about education and SGBV.



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And yet Chad's harsh environment, high poverty rates and cultural traditions still all conspire to make it difficult for refugee children in Eastern Chad to get an education. It is particularly tough for refugee girls, especially those who marry and bear children early, to go to school. Chad has one of the highest rates of child marriage in the world. Over two-thirds of women are wedded before they reach 18, often preventing them from completing their education. And if parents cannot afford to keep all their children in school, they will typically opt to educate their boys.

- 465,343 refugees and asylum seekers are registered in Chad, 56% of whom are children
- More than 85,000 refugee children are enrolled in school
- 1,429 refugee children sat the 2018 National Chad Baccalaureate exams

(UNHCR, April 2019)

## How to replicate this practice

There's no reason Girls' Clubs could not be introduced just as effectively in other countries to promote education. Depending on the most pressing local issues, the other focus areas could include child marriage, child labour, or female genital mutilation, for example, rather than or as well as SGBV.

**STEP 1:** It might be necessary to conduct an assessment to identify the major barriers preventing girls from attending school or forcing them to drop out, as well as the main forms of SGBV in the community. The results of this assessment should be shared and discussed with the community, including children and young people. People should be given the chance to raise concerns and make suggestions.

**STEP 2:** Find any pre-existing activities or structures that can complement and support the Girls' Clubs. But even without the kind of SGBV and AME committees that exist in Chad, the clubs could still support girls' enrolment in school and other issues important to young people, while seeking acceptance and support from the community.

**STEP 3:** Participating in public events and celebrations is a good way for Girls' Clubs to gain acceptance and support from the wider community. Events like World Refugee Day can help clubs increase awareness of their activities. It can also be useful to introduce sensitive topics at public events through drama and dance.

**STEP 4:** Girls' Clubs do not need much financial investment, but they can benefit from training and support from suitable partners.



## INCLUDING REFUGEES IN NATIONAL EDUCATION STATISTICS

# Inclusion of refugee school children in national data

Inclusion between refugees and host communities is essential to create an environment where refugees thrive and not just survive. The successful collaboration between UNHCR, its partners, and the Government of Ethiopia has created a system to gather valuable education data on refugees, helping better include them in the national education system.

### Refugee EMIS: one step closer to inclusion

To help Ethiopia measure progress towards its education targets, the Administration for Refugee & Returnee Affairs (ARRA), UNHCR, and UNICEF have been working since 2016 with the Ministry of Education (MoE) to develop a Refugee Education Management Information System (EMIS). The

Refugee EMIS is a customised version of the government's existing EMIS – a key tool for planning and monitoring education progress.

With the launch of the Refugee EMIS, the same MoE data collection tool is being used for both refugees and non-refugees. This might seem like a mere technical change, but it represents an important step to-

wards the inclusion of refugees in national statistics and the planning of the national education system. It takes the country closer to the full inclusion of refugees in national education.

### Scaling up the integration of the Refugee EMIS

The Refugee EMIS is currently the responsibility of the MoE, but the MoE plans to delegate its implementation to Ethiopia's five refugee-hosting regions. First, though, the relevant staff in those regions will receive the training and support that they need on EMIS from the MoE, UNHCR, and UNICEF.

The federal MoE helps regional EMIS directorates collaborate on refugee education data collection, verification, analysis, and reporting. It also supports the publication of refugee education data at regional level. Regional Education Bureaus (REBs) are responsible for running education from pre-school to secondary school, so their involvement in refugee data collection is an essential aspect of scaling-up the Refugee EMIS. The REBs are already collecting standard national EMIS data, so gathering refugee EMIS data as well will not be a huge added burden.

An inter-agency EMIS "taskforce" – including the MoE, UNICEF, UNHCR, and ARRA – has been created to support the effective implementation of the Refugee EMIS.



## How to replicate this practice

Including refugees in national education statistics can be replicated in other countries, helping the world move towards reaching the Sustainable Development Goal of providing access to education for every child. Here are the four steps towards replicating Ethiopia's Refugee EMIS in other countries:

**STEP 1:** Advocate for government support. In Ethiopia, ARRA championed the cause and drove the process, which was then jointly supported by UNHCR and UNICEF.

**STEP 2:** Use tools that already exist. The MoE already owned the original EMIS tool in Ethiopia and simply adapted it to include refugees.

**STEP 3:** Replicate the Refugee EMIS feature that allows UNHCR to track progress every academic year, showing the proportion of children left with no access to education.

**STEP 4:** If there is accurate data, then key information can be linked to planning for other related activities, such as livelihoods.

It is important for any country looking to replicate the Ethiopian Refugee EMIS to bear in mind that it suits a context where refugees are still living in camps or specific districts, where it is easier to track which schools refugees attend. It does not suit a context in which refugees are spread out in many schools and where it is more difficult to know in which schools refugees are enrolled.

### CONTEXT

Ethiopia hosts over 905,000 refugees and asylum seekers as of 2018 – the second highest number of any country in Africa. More than 99% of them originate from four countries: South Sudan, Somalia, Eritrea, and Sudan. Close to half of the refugee population in Ethiopia are school-age children, who have access to the primary education system alongside Ethiopian children – and refugee enrolment is growing. But the Government wants to further expand access, having committed to increase enrolment in primary, secondary and tertiary education at the Leaders' Summit on Refugees in New York in 2016.

- Ethiopia hosts more than 905,000 refugees and asylum seekers
- The number of refugee children in the country's primary schools has increased from 118,275 in the 2016/17 academic year to 132,563 in 2017/2018
- The gross primary school enrolment rate in 2017/2018 was 72%. The government's pledged target is 75%.

(UNHCR, December 2018)

## INCREASING ENROLMENT AND RETENTION

# Working with Government for an inclusive education policy

UNHCR and its partners are working in close collaboration with the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran to promote the Solutions Strategy for Afghan Refugees (SSAR) and to support the Government's efforts to implement inclusive policies to ensure all refugee and undocumented children are enrolled in national schools. This successful working relationship has led to the continuation of the educational space, allowing more school-aged children to enrol and stay in school and, thus, helping them avoid having to resort to negative coping mechanisms. This has also contributed to building resilience for refugees and the

undocumented, which in turn also benefits the host community.

### How is it being done? The role of tripartite agreements and co-funding mechanisms

Through building strong working relationships with the main Government counterpart, the Bureau for Aliens and Foreign Immigrants Affairs (BAFIA), which is affiliated to the Ministry of Interior, as well as with the Ministry of Education (MoE) and the Literacy Movement Organisation (LMO), UNHCR has been able to create a strong culture of collaboration in the field of education, which has enhanced refugees' enjoyment of

inclusive government policies and their access to safe learning environments on par with students from the host community.

Activities and interventions for refugee education are now jointly designed by UNHCR and the Government of Iran, and implemented through tripartite agreements between the MoE, LMO, BAFIA, and UNHCR – depending on the type of the intervention needed. Interventions such as school construction and literacy programmes benefit from co-funding between the Government and UNHCR. This implementation modality has facilitated higher impact within available

resources and greater dialogue, collaboration and sustainability which are crucial for the long-term provision of education activities for refugees.

Together, UNHCR and the Government closely review progress, conduct regular onsite visits to identify challenges, and mutually agree on remedial action.

### Retaining vulnerable children in schools through the expansion of school infrastructure

For decades, the Government of Iran has been applying inclusive educational policies to bring refugee and undocumented children into the national education system. However, a shortage of suitable educational spaces is one of the key challenges in implementing these policies, given the high number of Afghan children. In areas with large refugee populations, existing educational facilities are overstretched and insufficient to accommodate more refugee and undocumented children. To support the efforts of the Government of Iran and facilitate access to primary schooling, UNHCR has helped increase school enrolment since 2014 by constructing and equipping around 50 standard 12-classroom schools.

These activities are co-funded by UNHCR and the Government of Iran, with the Government matching or surpassing UNHCR's investment.

### Bringing over-aged out-of-school children back to school

UNHCR and its partners also provide targeted support for over-aged and out-of-school children to re-join formal education through Accelerated Education Programmes (AEPs) and other alternative learning programmes (literacy and numeracy classes).

These informal education programmes are implemented by the LMO, affiliated to the MoE and BAFIA, with the support of UNHCR, and give older out-of-school children a second chance to enter the national education system. Again, these programmes are co-funded by UNHCR and the Government of Iran, with the contribution from LMO and MoE constantly exceeding UNHCR's contribution to these joint projects.

## How to replicate this practice

**STEP 1:** Build close partnerships with the MoE and other relevant government agencies. A high level of engagement by the government is vital for the sustainability of inclusive education.

**STEP 2:** Develop mutual working structures with key government actors to facilitate effective programming and enhance the reach of UNHCR in a national or provincial context.

**STEP 3:** Include the host community in educational planning, ensuring that UNHCR activities clearly benefit nationals and provide a compelling case for increased cooperation.

**STEP 4:** Agree on a co-funding model where the government and UNHCR can share responsibility.

## CONTEXT

Iran is host to one of the largest and most protracted refugee populations in the world. According to the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran (GIRI), in 2015, over 951,000 Afghan and 28,000 Iraqi registered refugees lived in Iran. In 2015, Iran's Supreme Leader issued a decree to allow all children of school age, regardless of their documentation status, to attend primary and secondary school within the public national system. In 2016, the Government removed refugee-specific tuition fees (\$ 70-90 per child) for all refugees and undocumented children of school age. This was a major development, because beyond the registered refugee population, there are an estimated 1.5 to 2 million undocumented Afghans in Iran.

UNHCR's operational goals in Iran are firmly anchored to the SSAR, developed with the Islamic Republics of Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iran, which aims to find durable solutions for Afghan refugees and to assist refugees and host communities in host countries, particularly by supporting national and local public service delivery systems.

- 441,000 Afghan children were enrolled in school in 2018/19 – including 103,000 undocumented students
- Over 308,000 of these are in primary school (52.5% boys and 47.5% girls)

*(UNHCR, April 2019)*

PROVIDING A SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENT TO ENHANCE THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION

# Inclusive education for refugee learners

Children with disabilities still face many challenges when it comes to accessing a mainstream education. With support from its partners, UNHCR has created a positive and inclusive learning environment through specialised teacher training, individual learning assessments, and encouragement from teachers, families, and the broader community. This gives more children with disabilities the chance to access mainstream formalised schooling.

## Inclusive education programmes

For education to be truly inclusive, educational policies, practices and facilities should meet the diverse needs of all learners, including those with physical, sensory, mental and intellectual disabilities. Children with disabilities should be able to study alongside their peers in the same classroom without discrimination.

As of May 2019, there were 1,155 children with disabilities enrolled in 22 primary schools in Dadaab. Inclusive programmes increase the enrolment and retention of learners with disabilities by:

- making the physical environment more accessible to learners with disabilities through

pavements, ramps, etc.

- encouraging children with disabilities to participate in education through awareness raising activities
- placing children with disabilities in schools catering for their disability – for example, giving visually impaired students access to schools with a teacher trained in Braille
- providing specialised in-service training for teachers at the Kenya Institute of Special Education (KISE), focusing on basic assessments and interventions.

Each school has a different support infrastructure responding to specific needs identified in the community. In the case of visually impaired students, for example, in order for them to be able to read and write, they need to learn Braille. Once they learn this skill, they can join a mainstream classroom. This requires that the teacher is trained in Braille and, in many cases, the schools will employ a Braille transcriber, allowing the learner to follow lessons more easily.

Mainstreaming can only succeed with coordination and collaboration between teachers, parents,

and the Special Needs Education (SNE) Committee, Educational Assessment and Resource Centres (EARC) Technical staff, and hospital and rehabilitation centres.

A good example comes from Bidii primary school, where 16 learners (including 9 females) have successfully transitioned from separate classes to learn alongside their peers. Students Mohamed and Maryam were identified by Educational Assessment & Resource Centres (EARC) community mobilisers in one of their home visits and brought for an assessment. After the assessment, they were referred to the International Rescue Committee (IRC) hospital for verification of the specific support they required. Based on the assessment, a report was prepared which informed on their school placement.

## What has been achieved

Inclusive education programmes have resulted in more children with disabilities enrolling in and completing a primary education. So far, UNHCR and its partners have helped 1,010 students with disabilities access mainstream education in Dadaab. The number of children with disabilities from Dadaab who completed the Kenya Certificate of

Primary Education has more than doubled – from eight children in 2015, to 17 children in 2018.

A key factor in the rise in enrolment has been teacher training. In 2018, 30 teachers received specialist training on special needs education, increasing the number of trained teachers from six to 36. UNHCR has also provided assistive devices such as hearing aids to 80 children with disabilities per year, making it easier for them to attend school, and made sure 120 students with disabilities have been able to take a taxi to and from school in Dadaab.

It has been noticed that there is a growing understanding and acceptance among the community that all students can learn together, regardless of different abilities.

#### MARYAM: “THIS IS A MIRACLE”

Maryam, aged 16, was born in Somalia and is paraplegic. After performing well in an accelerated education programme, and receiving guidance from an educational psychosocial counsellor, she was able to move into a mainstream class. Her teacher accompanied her at first, helping make sure her new teachers and students accepted her and supported her in class.

Maryam’s mother is very happy that her daughter is now in school and doing well. At times she accompanies Maryam to school using the transport offered to children with disabilities. “This is a miracle,” she says. “I can’t believe that my daughter can now read and write and even dress herself. I am so happy.”

## How to replicate this practice

There is a need to make education more inclusive for children with disabilities across the world. With the necessary resources, each of the following steps can be replicated in other countries:

**STEP 1:** Set up or use existing specialist assessment centres to evaluate the needs of students with disabilities, so the right support structures can be put in place for individuals and schools.

**STEP 2:** Make sure schools have staff trained in special needs. Not all teachers need to be trained, but the more trained staff there are, the greater the chances of creating a supportive environment.

**STEP 3:** Schools themselves need to provide a learning environment that is suitable for all learners, including those with disabilities. This might involve altering the physical environment – for example, building ramps and paved pathways for wheelchair users. It will also involve building a supportive social environment, where learners with disabilities are accepted, rather than stigmatised or discriminated against.

#### MOHAMED: JOINING A MAINSTREAM SCHOOL CLASS

Mohamed’s speech was slurred, and he lacked mobility and fine-motor coordination. He was diagnosed with cerebral palsy. Mohamed needed speech therapy, support to be able to interact with his peers and teachers, and occupational therapy to develop his muscles.

UNHCR and partners’ inclusive education programme allowed Mohamed to join a mainstream school class. His teacher received training in how to respond to his educational needs, and a range of activities has been put in place to help Mohamed thrive in the classroom.

#### CONTEXT

Kenya hosts one of the world’s largest populations of refugees. Its vast Dadaab refugee camp was established in 1991 by the Kenyan government and UNHCR for people uprooted by Somalia’s civil war. Many of the camp’s inhabitants have been living there for over 25 years.

UNHCR and its partners in Dadaab have been working to improve education opportunities for refugee children and young people with disabilities who often face overcrowded classrooms and poor facilities, as well as stigma and discrimination.

- Kenya hosts 476,695 refugees and asylum seekers, 70% of whom come from Somalia and South Sudan
- Dadaab accommodates 211,086 (44%) of Kenya’s refugees
- Only 67% of the school-age children in Dadaab, about 62,610 children, are enrolled in school

(UNHCR, May 2019)



## ENGAGING AND EMPOWERING COMMUNITIES

# A role for refugee parents

Education strengthens community resilience and helps empower refugees. UNHCR and its partners have facilitated the set up and support of “Boards of Management” to give parents the opportunity to play a more active role in their children’s schools. By breaking down cultural differences, they help maintain harmony in the classroom and community and encourage all families to enrol their children in school.

### Getting parents involved: Boards of Management

In an effort to improve the quality of education across Kenya, the Kenyan Parliament passed a Bill offering parents a more proactive

role in the running of their children’s schools. They were asked to join Boards of Management (BoMs), alongside teachers and other community members, which aim to make schools more accountable and focused on children’s learning.

There are BoMs at Dadaab refugee camp’s 22 primary schools, with a total of 308 board members. These BoMs allow parents to be part of making decisions about issues involving their children.

BoMs play a major role in maintaining harmony within the schools. After arriving from war-torn Somalia, refugees were settled according to

their clans to reduce tension. But in an effort to foster greater integration, children from different clans are increasingly attending the same schools. By coming together as part of the same BoM, parents from various clans can promote a sense of unity and help create a tolerant environment where children from different backgrounds can mix safely. Whenever a cultural conflict does occur, BoM members meet to resolve the issue.

This move towards greater tolerance and diversity in schools – promoted by the BoMs – has helped to improve social cohesion. BoMs also work directly with individual fami-

lies to help foster a more positive attitude towards education among the community. They play a very visible role in enrolment campaigns at the start of every term, encouraging both higher enrolment rates and greater integration.

Dadaab's BoMs have also been involved in:

- erecting fences around schools, fitting gates, and paying for extra teachers to supplement UNHCR's programmes
- providing guidance for students on discipline, career choice and academic performance
- meeting donors to advocate for resources to help students, especially those with special needs
- ensuring that all children can access education, including through school enrolment campaigns.

UNHCR and its partners, including the Kenyan government's Refugee Affairs Secretariat, organise BoM elections every two years. The Ministry of Education also facilitates training for BoM members on their roles and responsibilities.

## CONTEXT

Kenya hosts one of the world's largest populations of refugees (476,695 refugees and asylum-seekers, as of May 2019). Its vast Dadaab refugee camp was established in 1991 by the Kenyan government and UNHCR for people uprooted by Somalia's civil war. Many of the camp's inhabitants have been living there for over 25 years.

With a third of Dadaab's child refugees out of school, there is also an urgent need to increase enrolment and improve the quality of education refugees receive. To avoid conflict in the camp, children from Somalia's different warring clans were initially kept apart and separated into different schools. But now efforts are being made to break down those divides and bring children from different backgrounds together.

- The school-age population is 105,551, out of which 41% are out-of-school
- Dadaab camp accommodates 211,086 (44%) of Kenya's refugees
- Only 67% of the school age children in Dadaab, about 62,610 children, are enrolled in school

(UNHCR, May 2019)

## How to replicate this practice

As the BoMs show, the more parents are involved in education, the more children tend to benefit. Here are four steps to increase parental participation elsewhere:

**STEP 1:** Where necessary, advocate for institutional changes to the management structure of schools. Dadaab benefited from the Kenyan government's commitment to national change and its support for BoMs at camp schools. Where national commitment is lacking, local governance systems can be put in place instead.

**STEP 2:** Consult with parents and the community to outline the BoM election process and provide an outline of the boards' responsibilities.

**STEP 3:** Encourage communities to nominate a broadly representative range of people to join the BoMs, with a mix of men and women. UNHCR can help with the practical aspects of board elections. The elected board then votes to elect a Chair, a Vice-Chair, and a Treasurer. The head teacher serves as the Secretary of the Board.

**STEP 4:** The Ministry of Education can provide training on the board's responsibilities. Additional training and support are facilitated by UNHCR, including for governance and financial administration.



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INCREASING ENROLMENT AND RETENTION, AND ENHANCING THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION

# Camp schools registered in the national education system

Access to equitable education is an essential pathway towards refugee inclusion and aligns with the pledge to “leave no one behind” outlined in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. UNHCR and its partners have increased their advocacy on the importance of inclusion and registration of refugee schools in the national education system. This registration has improved the quality of education and broken down barriers that exist between refugee and host community schools.

## Including camp-based schools

To operate legally, schools in Kenya must be registered by the Ministry of Education. They should then automatically benefit from government-deployed teachers, the provision of learning and teaching materials, and inclusion in other national education programmes.

Following UNHCR advocacy, 26 camp-based primary schools in Kakuma were registered as public

learning institutions by January 2019. This covers over 58,000 students.

## The impact of school registration

Their registration has meant camp-based schools have:

- been included in government early-grade literacy and numeracy programmes, benefitting from the provision of textbooks, the training of teachers, and the monitoring of progress

- the opportunity to participate in co-curricular activities and to compete at national and regional levels in sports, drama and music
- access to support in quality assurance and school assessments
- been included in the national education management information system process as public schools – enabling them to be captured in national planning and budgeting.

Preliminary evidence from the early-grade literacy and numeracy programmes indicate an improvement in learning results. Additionally, participation in co-curricular activities and competing with other schools in sports, drama and music has allowed refugee children to express their creativity and showcase their talents, resulting in increased motivation to enrol in and complete primary school. The schools have excelled in competitions, winning various categories at the National Schools Music and Drama Festival.

Over the past three years, the number of refugee children who have sat the Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE) has increased by 300%, with many achieving exam results above the national average.

## How to replicate this practice

Registering camp schools is a key step towards the inclusion of refugees in national education systems, and it can be replicated in other countries by following these steps:

**STEP 1:** Where needed, host governments must be supported to facilitate the registration and integration of camp schools, so they are able to deploy additional trained teachers, provide per capita student funding, and other resources as required.

**STEP 2:** Government, private sector and development partners must work together to help mainstream refugee schools. They should all play a part in developing, planning, budgeting and mobilising resources for inclusion.

## CONTEXT

Turkana County is the poorest part of Kenya – drought, water shortages, poor infrastructure and low literacy levels are just some of the factors that make it a very tough place to live. Refugees and asylum seekers make up about 15% of Turkana County’s population. They live in Kakuma Refugee Camp and Kalobeyei Settlement, host to approximately 186,000 refugees and asylum seekers, mainly from South Sudan and Somalia.

Many refugee children in Turkana County are missing out on an education – and the chance of a better future. At the end of the 2017 school year, more than a third of them were not in school – with 63% of children under 18 enrolled. There is a growing consensus that refugees should be included in the national education system. Running parallel systems can deny refugees access to examinations and certification, leaving children unable to further their education. That is why Kenya is advancing the inclusion of refugees in the national education system.

- Kakuma Refugee Camp and Kalobeyei Settlement host over 186,000 refugees and asylum seekers, accounting for approximately 15% of the total population of the Turkana County
- More than 50% of the refugee population is under the age of 18 years

(UNHCR, May 2019)



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## IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION

# Support for teachers

In Malaysia, one of the biggest challenges is providing a well-trained and professionally competent workforce of teachers for refugee schools. The skill level of both refugee and host-community teachers is often lower than required. To support and keep teachers at refugee schools in Malaysia, UNHCR and its partners have successfully implemented several supportive practices such as non-salary financial support, mentoring and skills training from more experienced retired teachers and academic institutions. These practices help teachers continue to grow and develop as professionals, positively impacting the retention rates and progress results of refugee students.

### The shortage of good-quality teachers

A lack of qualified teachers remains one of the main challenges for refugees in Malaysia. Some refugees come to the country with tertiary qualifications and can comfortably take up positions at learning centres, but others are appointed with little education or teacher training because of the shortage of qualified applicants. And most community teachers are only able to teach basic literacy and numeracy due to low literacy rates and language barriers. Many of the learning centres also rely on volunteer teachers recruited via UNHCR because of the difficulty in hiring local experienced and skilled teachers.

Finding committed and dedicated teachers is never easy, especially ones willing to work in as challenging an environment as the learning centres. Teachers at the centres often have children of varying ages and backgrounds in the same class, or children who hadn't seen the inside of a classroom until their early teens, or children traumatised by conflict and displacement.

The low rates of pay also mean that learning centres often lose teachers to other higher paying jobs.

### Retired teachers can contribute

To help address the lack of qualified teaching staff, centres have brought

in retired local teachers. They've many years of experience to share and are often keen to remain active and contribute. So they've been recruited not only to teach, but also to provide teacher training and mentoring. One UNHCR partner recruits retired head-teachers as volunteers to assess the performance of teachers at the centres and design in-house training.

Retired teachers share best practices gleaned from their own careers and help motivate teachers at the refugee learning centres to feel good about their work and themselves.

### Taking care of teachers: beyond the salary

Teachers on low pay have received other forms of support to make them feel valued and motivated. For example, every one of the learning centres' 444 refugee community teachers have been provided with low-premium health insurance, covering hospitalisation and in-patient treatment, and offering compensation of up to RM 20,000 (USD 5,000) for permanent disability or death.

One retired head-teacher, Mr Lim, said that volunteering at the learning centre gave him a sense of purpose again after his retirement. He said he was proud to share his knowledge with a group of teachers who made him feel appreciated.

### Working with academic institutions: teacher training

UNHCR has partnered with universities, such as the University of Nottingham, HELP University, and University Tuanku Abdul Rahman, to create and conduct free teacher training programmes. The programmes cover English language competencies, teaching methods, and classroom and behaviour management.

## CONTEXT

Refugee children have no access to the formal education system in Malaysia. Instead, there is a parallel informal system of 133 community-based learning centres, supported by UNHCR. More than 122 of them are run by the communities themselves with support from NGOs, faith-based organisations and others. There are continuing efforts to include refugees in the national education system, with the Ministry of Education (MoE) agreeing to register and provide licences to learning centres.

In Malaysia, the Rohingya refugee population's attitude towards education has become much more positive over the last seven years of UNHCR support. In 2008, there were only two Rohingya learning centres, but many years of community outreach work has resulted in 32 Rohingya learning centres opening between 2012 and 2018, most with seed funding from UNHCR.

- 30,829 are children of school age (3 to 17 years old), 45% of whom are primary school age (6 to 13 years old)
- About 60% of these primary school-aged children are enrolled at community learning centres
- School access is via 133 community learning centres

*(UNHCR, December 2018)*

## How to replicate this practice

The methods used to raise teaching standards for refugees in Malaysia can be replicated almost anywhere, using the following steps:

**STEP 1:** Most countries will have an association of retired teachers who can become partners in improving the teaching quality of less experienced teachers. Volunteer retired teachers can teach in the classroom, provide mentoring and teacher training, and help with quality assurance programmes.

**STEP 2:** A variety of strategies beyond offering incentive payments can help to make teachers feel valued, keep them engaged in the classroom and push them to improve their skills. In Malaysia, this has included providing low-cost health insurance for refugee teachers. Providing adequate housing could also be an effective incentive, particularly in remote locations.

**STEP 3:** Working with both local and international academic training institutions can provide opportunities for teachers to take free or low-cost skills-improvement programmes, which provide certification and encourage teachers to keep developing their skills and stay working in their field.



## INCREASING GIRLS' ENROLMENT AND RETENTION, AND PROMOTING COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

# Home-Based Girls' Schools

Refugee girls often have fewer opportunities than refugee boys to access education. To encourage more parents to send their daughters to school, UNHCR and its partners have established Home-Based Girls' Schools (HBGSs) as a safe and accessible learning environment. HBGSs help to increase self-reliance for girls, strengthen the whole refugee community and offer young people the chance of a brighter future.

### Home-Based Girls' Schools

To address the challenges facing girls in Pakistan, UNHCR and its partners have established Home-Based Girls' Schools (HBGSs). This initiative represents an interim solution to the challenges of enrolling and supporting girls in school, while working towards their full inclusion in national education systems and

expanded opportunities for girls' involvement in social and economic activities.

HBGSs were first established in Malgagai refugee camp in Balochistan province in 2004. Religious and cultural factors meant community members and parents were not in favour of sending their girls to school. Parents were reluctant to allow girls to study in co-ed schools, and girls' schools were too far away. UNHCR began to make community members and parents more aware of the importance of girls' education, and involved them in a series of consultations, which led to the establishment of a formal learning programme.

HBGSs provide accessible opportunities for Afghan refugee girls who would otherwise be unable to get

an education. The HBGSs follow the Pakistan national curriculum, teaching girls to read and write, and use technology such as smart phones.

### Empowering female teachers

Teachers are paid by the programme and UNHCR and partners provide them with continuous professional development. UNHCR and its partners deliver two- to three-day teacher training courses several times a year on, for example, class assessment, class management and teaching strategies.

As well as educating their students, teachers at the HBGSs also reach out to the community about education issues, advocating strongly for girls' inclusion. Some of the girls who completed their education in HBGSs have become teachers

themselves and are now running the HBGSs in their communities. The fact female teachers can contribute to their families' income has helped change communities' attitudes towards the benefits of girls' education too.

There are 20 HBGSs attended by 459 girls in four refugee villages in Balochistan. In urban areas of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, new HBGSs will provide accelerated education programmes for older girls so that they can move quickly into government schools nearby.

Where girls have access to other schooling opportunities, they are not encouraged to attend HBGSs – the emphasis remains on promoting equal access to inclusive education in the national system.



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## CONTEXT

Pakistan hosts one of the largest refugee populations in the world and welcomes refugees into its education system. But there are many problems with public education in Pakistan. Facilities are poor: there are limited numbers of classrooms, basic equipment and furniture are frequently lacking, and textbooks are often out of date. In addition to this, there is a lack of well-trained and well-supported teachers. All this results in high student dropout rates and poor learning outcomes.

Significant social and cultural traditions undervalue education, particularly for girls who are less likely to be in school than their male peers, and women are less likely to teach than men. Girls are often burdened with household duties, forced into child marriage, or at risk when travelling long distances to schools that lack security.

- 1.4 million Afghan refugees are registered in Pakistan
- 32% of refugees live in rural villages across three regions: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), Balochistan and Punjab
- 500,000 are school-aged (5-18 years old) refugee children, 20% of whom are in national schools

*(UNHCR, December 2019)*

## How to replicate this practice

In areas where formal schooling is suitable and accessible, public schools remain the ideal option for girls' education. But wherever barriers limit girls' access to education, Home-Based Girls' Schools could have a role to play. They can be replicated by following these steps:

**STEP 1:** Conduct an educational needs assessment to ensure that there is a sufficient number of out-of-school girls to justify setting up HBGSs. Then consult the community to make sure they will support an HBGS approach.

**STEP 2:** Select a suitable female teacher. In Pakistan, this usually means a person with a minimum of a grade-12 qualification or a high-school certificate. However, in Balochistan, such teachers are more difficult to find, so teachers with grade 8 qualifications are recruited.

**STEP 3:** Next, find a suitable teaching space. This usually involves the teacher offering to use a room in her house as a classroom. The provision of fresh water, sanitation facilities, and a separate entrance are also required.

**STEP 4:** Provide teachers with training of up to one week, so they can begin teaching as quickly as possible. They can then be given on-the-job training, such as feedback based on classroom observation and one-on-one support to help them improve their skills.

**STEP 5:** Create a plan for maintaining facilities and establish school management committees to help get the most out of the schools.



## INCREASING SCHOOL ENROLMENT AND RETENTION

# Orientation programmes

Starting at a new school can be daunting for any child. For a refugee child, it can be even harder. The six-month orientation programme run by UNHCR and its partners has been a successful initiative to help refugee students enter Rwanda's national education system and dissolve any barriers that may come between refugees and their access to education. Preparing the way for smooth inclusion reduces potential conflicts between refugees and hosts, and contributes to dissolve barriers such as language, and cultural differences and attitudes that can hinder the inclusion process. The orientation programme also helps encourage refugee self-reliance and ease pressure on the host country.

### The orientation programme

There are significant differences between the curriculum, culture,

and languages of Rwanda's education system and those of refugees' home countries. To help refugee students and teachers better integrate into national schools, UNHCR and its partners designed an innovative pre-enrolment orientation programme aimed at bridging the gaps between students and teachers' previous educational experiences in their home countries and the education system in Rwanda. The programme was launched with the 2012 influx of DRC refugees in Kigeme and Mugombwa camps, and was then extended to Mahama camp in 2015 to support Burundian refugees.

This six-month programme in English has had a major impact since its inception. It has enabled refugee students and teachers to adapt very quickly to the new curriculum, language of instruction,

and teaching methodology, and to perform at a level equal to host community students and teachers.

Between 2012 and 2018, 8,711 girls and 9,137 boys benefitted from the orientation programme in Rwanda. The programme also employed 182 refugee teachers – 79 women and 103 men.

### How the orientation programme works

**Step 1: Needs assessment.** A rapid needs assessment is conducted and discussions with existing schools, partners and focus groups help determine the orientation programme's feasibility. The assessment looks at the resources required, possible sites for the programme, and the number of potential students and teachers. For each location, initial meetings with those involved in the

education and inclusion of refugees are held – including the Ministry of Education (MoE), the Ministry of Emergency Management, the Rwanda Education Board, UNHCR, partners, and school authorities, teachers, and community leaders.

**Step 2: Enrolment and baseline assessment.** Enrolment sites are set up to help establish the number of potential students in the local community and identify which schools have the capacity to enrol refugees. Potential teachers – among either refugees or the host community – are also identified. Teachers are recruited according to their educational background and level of experience, and receive training on the Rwandan education system and curriculum. As refugee students often flee without authenticated documents certifying their education level, a baseline assessment test is used to measure their ability and place them at an appropriate class level.

**Step 3: Development of curriculum and teaching materials.** In collaboration with the Rwanda Education Board and district and school authorities, an appropriate curriculum is developed and teaching materials are designed. The orientation

curriculum for students consists largely of language courses to ensure refugees are prepared for a national curriculum delivered in English and Kinyarwanda. Science subjects and civic education are also emphasised.

**Step 4: Programme delivery, monitoring and evaluation.** Students are grouped into class levels according to the results of the baseline assessment. The teachers are assigned according to their expertise, experience, and ability to teach particular subjects. Meetings are held with the community, teachers, and partners to evaluate progress and address issues including absenteeism and out-of-school children. Parents are regularly involved in the orientation programme and are encouraged to visit teachers and discuss student progress.

At the end of the orientation period, learners take a final test that helps determine the level at which the student will be enrolled in school. In their first months at their new school, checks are made to ensure that students have been placed at the appropriate class levels.

## How to replicate this practice

Here is a quick reminder of the key steps to be considered when replicating the programme in other countries where there is support for increased inclusion of refugees in national education systems:

**STEP 1:** Conduct a needs assessment.

**STEP 2:** Enrolment in the programme is followed by a baseline assessment test.

**STEP 3:** Develop a curriculum and teaching materials with host community education authorities.

**STEP 4:** Monitor and evaluate student placement effectively. A final test should be conducted to determine the appropriate level at which students will be placed and followed by validation of those placements after several months.

### CONTEXT

Rwanda offers a supportive environment for refugees. The government allows them to settle in urban areas as well as in camps, and makes its national services, such as health and insurance, inclusive. It supports the full inclusion of refugee children in the national education system, ensuring that refugee students' needs and rights are met.

In Rwanda's six refugee camps, UNHCR works together closely with the Ministry of Education and its partners to build classrooms, provide essential education materials, and distribute school meals. Teachers are supported through training programmes that help them qualify to teach in the national system, and refugee children with disabilities are assisted and provided with scholarships.

- Rwanda hosts over 155,000 refugees and asylum-seekers
- 29,115 refugee children are enrolled in primary schools, 85% of whom are in national schools
- 3,000 primary school-age refugee children in urban areas are not enrolled in school

*(UNHCR, December 2018)*

CONNECTING WITH HOST COMMUNITIES TO IMPROVE SCHOOL RETENTION

# Adopt a Tree

From small things, big things grow. With support from UNHCR and its partners, the “Adopt a Tree” initiative helps promote a shared vision and understanding about the importance of education and the environment, fostering relationships between host communities and refugees. The environmentally friendly solution increases school retention rates and promotes peaceful coexistence between the two communities.

## Adopt A Tree: an educational and environment-friendly solution

In theory, all of South Sudan’s refugee children have access to schools in refugee camps where they are taught the national curriculum – but in reality, almost a quarter of school-age refugee children don’t attend. In the remote area of Maban, where there are no government schools, children from host communities go to the same camp schools as refugees. This is often their only chance of an education.

At the same time, Maban’s forest cover has been nearly completely

depleted because of the overdependence on wood as a source of fuel and building material. This all creates the need to get more of Maban’s children into school and to teach them about sustainable development as well as the opportunity to bring refugee and host communities together to make it happen.

To address this gap in educational opportunities and the progression of resource depletion, UNHCR and its partners launched the “Adopt A

Tree” initiative in 2016. This is an inventive way to engage the community in education and conservation, helping boost school attendance in the process. Annual events are organised and timed to coincide with World Environment Day bringing together schoolchildren and the community to plant trees in schools.

“Adopt A Tree” is implemented through school-based clubs – the Girls’ Education Movement Club and the Environmental Club – and aims to make school, learning and



© UNHCR/Andrew McConnell

environmental conservation more exciting. Refugee and host-community leaders, government and UNHCR representatives, partner agency staff and other invitees come together to plant a tree near a school with a group of students – five per tree – who then have the job of making sure the tree grows to maturity. Community members follow up with these groups of students to make sure the tree has been regularly watered and cared for, and that the students are attending school regularly. Trophies are awarded on a rolling basis for the school that has the highest tree-survival rates.

A departure from the traditional speech-filled community engagement campaigns, tree planting is a fun and cost-effective way of promoting education. It has a symbolic

resonance too: just as the trees are planted and nurtured until maturity, students are encouraged to enrol and stay in school until they complete their education.

### A growing impact

So far, “Adopt a Tree” has benefited about 1,600 students directly, ensuring that they can stay in school and complete their education. It has also helped more than 500 teachers learn more about conservation.

An estimated 20,000 students take part in these annual events that bring together participants from all walks of life to learn about the importance of planting trees.

Since the launch of “Adopt a Tree”, 2,500 seedlings have been planted, with a survival rate of 70%, and most schools now have tree cover.

## How to replicate this practice

“Adopt a Tree” was first launched in three South Sudanese camps: Batil, Kaya and Gendressa. It has now become an annual event and there is great potential for replicating it in other areas:

**STEP 1:** Promote tree-planting as a way of engaging the community and building on existing environmental and development initiatives.

**STEP 2:** Pass on knowledge about tree-growing to students free of charge. Encourage them to sell spare seedlings to community members, and use the money to buy more seeds, making the project sustainable and cost effective.

**STEP 3:** Make students’ access to the tree-planting programme contingent on their school attendance. Use the initiative to involve host community members in promoting school attendance and reducing absenteeism. This can help bring the host community and refugee students together and accelerate progress towards national education goals.

**STEP 4:** Use the initiative, and the involvement of students and the wider community, as an effective way of attracting other development actors, including the World Bank and UN Environment Programme.

### CONTEXT

The enactment of the South Sudan Refugee Act in 2012 gave refugees the right to seek employment, access basic health services, and enrol in primary education. In 2017, the education curriculum in refugee camps was aligned with the national education curriculum.

But poor school infrastructure, a shortage of qualified teachers, and a lack of facilities for children with disabilities still hamper refugee children’s access to education in South Sudan. The average pupil-to-teacher ratio is 99:1. There is a high number of older refugee children who have missed out on years of schooling – though some are now benefitting from accelerated education programmes (AEPs).

- South Sudan hosted 294,776 refugees as of July 2018, with Sudanese refugees making up 93% of the total
- There were 40,871 primary-age refugee children enrolled in school, 8,173 of whom are enrolled in accelerated education programmes
- 22% of school-age children are out of school

(UNHCR, July 2018)

IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF TEACHING

# Mentor teacher programmes

All around the world, mentoring programmes are used to help foster professional development. UNHCR and its partners are supporting a teacher mentoring programme to improve the skills of teachers in remote areas. The initiative provides teachers with hands-on training to improve their teaching skills and increase the quality of education available to both refugee and local students in remote areas.

## Mentor teachers

In South Sudan, low salaries and delayed payments have seen many qualified teachers leave the profession. And in refugee camps in Maban, for example, the lack of qualified teachers is affecting the quality of teaching – approximately 80% of the primary and accelerated education programme teachers receiving UNHCR incentives had barely completed upper primary levels of school learning. The fact that Sudanese teachers who are used to teaching in Arabic have to teach in English in South Sudan further compromises the quality of teaching.

There are only four teacher training centres in South Sudan, and the cost of transport and accommodation means only a few trainees from the refugee camps can enrol each year. Plus, the trainees who do enrol will be out of the classroom for the duration of the one-year training programme.

To tackle this, UNHCR and its partners launched several initiatives to promote teacher development, including:

- English language courses
- certified pre- and in-service teacher training
- mentor teacher programmes.

In each of Maban's primary schools, UNHCR has recruited at least two qualified mentor teachers from other parts of South Sudan. They observe lessons conducted by the schools' teachers, identify areas that need improvement, and offer support in those areas. By bringing the training to the teachers, it becomes much more cost effective, trains more teachers and keeps them in the classroom while they learn.

## How the mentor programme works

UNHCR works with the Ministry of Education (MoE) to recruit qualified mentor teachers. To attract qualified mentors, UNHCR pays their salary and offers additional benefits such as free accommodation, health insurance and transport costs for flights to the region.

The structure of the teacher training programme in South Sudan provides unique opportunities for mentors to support trainees during their teaching sessions and to guide them on areas that need improvement. Every teacher is observed using a tool that monitors seven different areas of teaching practice. This then forms the basis of a post-observation feedback session.

Mentors help trainees develop their skills in other ways too. For example, they teach demonstration lessons to help the trainee teachers learn specific skills. They coach trainees daily on a range of subjects, such as child-centred pedagogy, school record keeping, and time management. This helps teacher trainees



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become more professional, improving their lesson preparation and classroom management.

### Addressing the lack of female teachers

Of the 484 refugee teachers for primary and accelerated education programmes across the four camps in Maban, only 18% are female, and there are only six female mentor teachers. UNHCR has introduced an intensive English course for female-only applicants, which has enrolled 359 participants so far. This is expected to significantly increase the pool of prospective female teacher trainees, who would then be mentored in schools.

### The impact of mentor teacher training

An evaluation found that after adopting the mentor teacher programme, the Maban schools using it recorded consistently higher student pass rates (over 80%) in the end-of-primary-school examinations.

By contrast, in another camp, where more teachers were recruited but the mentor teacher programme was not put in place, students' exam results showed no improvement on average when compared with previous years, despite the additional teaching capacity.

## How to replicate this practice

The mentor teacher training programme can be replicated easily in other countries.

**STEP 1:** Mentor teachers may need to be given incentives to relocate, especially to a location with harsh living conditions. These incentives might include accommodation, health insurance, transport costs, and other essentials to supplement salary payments.

**STEP 2:** Involving the Ministry of Education in the recruitment of mentor teachers ensures that the whole programme is aligned with the national teacher training and primary education systems. Because the mentor teacher programme has been included as an integral part of the in-service teacher training programme in Maban, it is coordinated with other initiatives such as school inspections and teacher certification.

**STEP 3:** Additional measures may sometimes need to be put in place to make sure the mentor programme reaches everyone – like the English classes for female teachers in Maban.

### CONTEXT

The enactment of the South Sudan Refugee Act in 2012 gave refugees the right to seek employment, access basic health services and enrol in primary education. In 2017, the education curriculum in refugee camps was aligned with the national education curriculum.

But poor school infrastructure, a shortage of qualified teachers and a lack of facilities for children with disabilities still hamper refugee children's access to education in South Sudan. The average pupil-to-teacher ratio is 99:1. There is a high number of older refugee children who have missed out on years of schooling – though some are now benefitting from accelerated education programmes (AEPs).

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(UNHCR, July 2018)



## ENGAGING AND EMPOWERING COMMUNITIES

# Parent Teacher Associations

Engaging and empowering the refugee community can help schools address some of the critical challenges facing them. With a relatively small initial investment and training, UNHCR and its partners are helping Parent Teacher Associations (PTAs) set up businesses and generate an income to support the camp schools. By addressing some of the critical challenges facing the schools, they are giving more children the chance to learn at better schools and building community self-reliance and involvement in their children's education.

### Kick-starting PTA businesses

To address the shocking numbers of children out of school, UNHCR and its partners are providing Parent Teacher Associations (PTAs) in Kassala state's refugee camps

with seed funding to kick-start their own businesses. These businesses make school communities more self-reliant, generating much-needed funds to support schools and improve the learning environment.

PTAs and other community members at Um Gargour and Wad Sherifey refugee camps in Kassala are also provided with business training. They learn and discuss how best to make an income given their own skillset, the market opportunities, and the community's needs.

The community at Um Gargour camp regularly needs space for social events, especially after harvest season, but hiring large tents from outside the community is expensive. The PTA drew up plans to purchase and rent out large cele-

bration tents, and then applied to UNHCR for seed funding to buy three of them. The PTA's tent-hiring business has been very successful, bringing in much-needed funds. This money has been used to hire additional substitute teachers, pay for education equipment and buy lamps so students can keep studying at night.

New teachers have been attracted to the community by these improvements, in turn increasing the school's pupil enrolment and retention rates. In 2019, the PTA is planning to expand its business by purchasing chairs and tables to rent out for social events.

At Wad Sherifey camp, the PTA identified a high demand for transportation from the camp to the

nearby city of Kassala. They applied to UNHCR for seed funding to buy a motorcycle taxi – providing the community with transport to Kassala and producing a steady income stream for the PTA. They've used the money to invest in maintaining school buildings, buying volleyball equipment for the students, paying exam fees, and providing additional tuition for pupils taking the end of primary education examinations. In the past,

families had to pay these costs, which many couldn't afford, or they had to be requested from UNHCR or the Commissioner for Refugees (COR).

As in Um Gargour, the improvements at the school are helping to retain students and inspiring more children to enrol. The school PTA also plans to use the profits from the motorcycle taxi to invest in another income-generating project.



## How to replicate this practice

The success of the income-generating initiative in Sudan shows what is possible and should inspire other refugee communities to replicate this approach using these four steps:

**STEP 1:** Use business training to help refugees identify market opportunities, the PTA's skillset, and the community's needs. The training should also cover fund management, accounting and business skills to make sure the new business is properly managed.

**STEP 2:** Business proposals need to be carefully assessed, evaluating their chances of success. Decisions should also take into account the needs of vulnerable groups, such as girls and people with disabilities.

**STEP 3:** Once the business is up and running, a treasurer should be appointed to record income against expenses, and surplus funds. The PTA should decide how to invest these funds, with the active participation of all members of the school community (including the students).

**STEP 4:** The business should be run by the community, so that it meets the community's needs.

### CONTEXT

Sudan has a long-standing tradition of hosting refugees. For decades, it has kept its doors open to people fleeing war, hunger, and hardship in countries such as Eritrea, Syria, Yemen, Chad, and more recently from South Sudan.

But Sudan's deepening economic crisis has made it increasingly difficult for refugee children to access an education. Approximately 65% of refugee children are now out of school, largely because of poor school infrastructure and the need for children to work to provide an income for their families. Not only is enrolment low, but there is an extremely low rate of children moving from primary to secondary school, and an even lower proportion going from secondary school to tertiary institutions.

- There are an estimated 920,115 refugees and asylum seekers in Sudan
- 54% of the registered refugee population is younger than 18 years of age
- There are an estimated 81,509 school-age refugee children out of school

(UNHCR, April 2018)

PROVIDING SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENTS TO INCREASE ENROLMENT AND RETENTION

# Community-centered services

Access to education gives children and their families a better chance for a brighter future. With support from UNHCR and its partners, community centres in Syria can offer education and protection services to support an overloaded national education system. They create a supportive environment so that more refugee children can successfully re-enter and stay in school and build resilience within communities.

## Community-centred service delivery

The humanitarian crisis in Syria is so severe and damaging to children's schooling that UNHCR and its partners have introduced a system that delivers education to displaced and host community children in a wide variety of areas. UNHCR and its partners are offering community-centred education services, including education programmes, mobile outreach services, and an educational hotline. This helps children in Syria to keep learning, and prepare to re-enter formal schooling as soon as possible.

## Community centres

UNHCR is funding 97 community centres and 26 satellite centres in Syria, which promote access to formal education for students aged 6-18 years. The community centres are not intended to replace formal schools. They aim to help students re-enter the formal education system. They also help children who are already enrolled in formal schools to catch up on missed studies and reduce the risk of them dropping out.

The education activities at community centres are delivered by qualified teachers and include:

- **Remedial classes** that teach students the Syrian curriculum and prepare them for mid-year and final exams. The students are offered 20 sessions a week over a period of four months. Priority for these classes is given to children who have dropped out of school.



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- **Accelerated learning programmes** that target out-of-school children, older children, and displaced children who find it difficult to cope with the Syrian curriculum. The 20-session programme is implemented as a fundamental activity in all community and satellite centres, and enables children to re-enter the formal education system.
- **Homework café activities** that take place after school, five days a week. They provide a suitable educational environment for students to do their homework and review their lessons with the help of teachers or trained volunteers.
- **Summer camps** that aim to give students the chance to learn and also provide entertainment, cultural activities and a talent development programme. Summer camps run 20 hours per week for a period of two months.

### Community volunteers, mobile units and the education hotline

Over 2,654 community volunteers support the community centres, informing families of the services available, identifying needs, and referring cases for additional support. Volunteers are provided with code of conduct training and an induction on protection programmes. Training is also offered to teachers and counselors who are in direct contact with children, especially on identifying children facing protection risks.

To reach the most vulnerable people in the most remote areas, who do not have easy access to the community centres, UNHCR and its partners have created mobile units to provide a range of protection and education services.

There is a dedicated education hotline for refugees that provides information on a range of school-related issues, such as school registration procedures in public schools and enrolment for children who have dropped out of education.

## How to replicate this practice

Providing education through community-centred programmes has increased access to education and helped address the needs of children. It is an approach that could be adopted in other countries in emergency situations until formal education services are restored. Interested countries can use the following steps:

**STEP 1:** There is a need to coordinate activities closely with the Ministry of Education, as well as other education stakeholders, so UNHCR can ensure that education priorities are being identified and met.

**STEP 2:** It is important to build up the capacity of partners, especially national NGOs who run the community centres and the mobile outreach activities, which can be quite an organisational challenge.

**STEP 3:** An assessment of needs in an identified location is jointly undertaken by the NGO partners, UNHCR and the local government authorities.

**STEP 4:** After the partnership is underway, UNHCR follows up through regular meetings, by conducting monitoring visits to project sites and by providing financial oversight.

### CONTEXT

The Syrian conflict is now in its ninth year. It remains the largest humanitarian and refugee crisis in the world. In 2018, around 11.7 million people in Syria were in need of humanitarian assistance and 6.2 million people were internally displaced. During the same year, 750,000 formerly displaced people inside Syria went back to their own regions and over 50,000 former refugees returned to the country, but return comes with significant obstacles and risks.

The Syrian Ministry of Education has authorised all children living in Syria to enrol in school, and individual schools have shown flexibility in accepting late registrations. However, with so many schools damaged during the conflict and schools in safe areas badly overcrowded, children are struggling to access education.

- 6.2 million people are internally displaced in Syria and 6.9 million people had to flee the country
- Over 1.2 million internal displacements are recorded in 2018 alone
- Of the 7 million school-age children in Syria, an estimated 2.1 million are out of school, and 1.35 million are at risk of dropping out

*(UNHCR, December 2018)*



## ENGAGING AND EMPOWERING COMMUNITIES

# Village Education Committees

For refugee children, access to education is often limited. UNHCR and its partners have facilitated the establishment of Village Education Committees (VECs) to help create a positive environment where all children can enrol and stay in school. VECs have successfully helped make parents more aware of their responsibility to send their children to school, held meetings to encourage students who have dropped out to return to school and reinforced the links between the refugee community and schools in their catchment area.

### Village Education Committees

The costs of education, cultural norms such as child marriage, and the need for children to earn money for the family prevent many children from going to school. Even so, there is a great desire among refugee communities for their children to attend school and excel when

they get there. Village Education Committees (VECs) were developed to build on this positive collective attitude.

VECs help support an inclusive education agenda in every location where UNHCR works in Uganda. They connect to their own communities, linking people with schools, education authorities, and other refugee representative bodies such as Refugee Welfare Committees and they raise awareness about the importance of education in building better lives and societies. They also oversee school administration and follow up on individual issues, such as children who are frequently absent, drop out of school or need extra educational support.

While formal schooling is the primary focus of the VECs, they can also help address other education-related issues within their communi-

ty. Some campaign for youth and adult-education services, such as life-skills training and adult literacy classes.

### How Village Education Committees work

VECs are elected by refugees in a process overseen by the Ugandan government with support from UNHCR. VECs have a formal structure, which includes a chairperson, a vice-chairperson, a secretary and two committee members. UNHCR provides administrative support for the VECs in the form of transport, stationery and funds for running “Go Back to School” and other education-related campaigns.

All members of the VEC receive training on a quarterly basis to ensure they have the knowledge and skills that they need to do their jobs. Meetings are held to share best practices and address specific challenges.

In their day-to-day activities and engagement with fellow community members, VEC members come to know about individual issues being raised in the schools and by the community. They also learn about children who are not enrolled in school, those who are frequently absent, and those who are otherwise struggling with education. These issues are raised during monthly coordination meetings with education partners to collectively seek solutions.

Since they were set up, the VECs have:

- helped make parents more aware of their responsibility to send all their children to school – these awareness raising sessions contributed to an increase in pupil enrolments from 25,000 in 2017 to 35,000 in 2018
- organised 25 “Go Back to School” campaigns, which carried positive messages on the importance of sending children to school
- conducted follow-ups with students who dropped out of school to encourage them to return
- provided regular reports on access, retention and completion barriers to education in their villages.



## How to replicate this practice

VECs can play an important role in helping refugee children get an education, which in turn benefits the whole community, and it is possible to replicate them in other locations.

**STEP 1:** Communities should be involved in the formation of VECs, the election of committee members and regular feedback sessions on the VEC’s impact.

**STEP 2:** A wide-ranging set of aims should be agreed on for the VEC. Funding or in-kind support might be needed to ensure it can effectively carry out its aims.

**STEP 3:** The VEC’s volunteer members will typically need training to better understand their roles and responsibilities, and the need for equity and inclusiveness.

### CONTEXT

Uganda has one of the most progressive refugee protection policies in the world. It was the first country to officially roll out the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF), part of the Global Compact on Refugees. The government grants refugees freedom of movement, and the right to work, establish businesses, and access public services. In line with Uganda’s settlement approach, refugee families receive plots of land on which they can live and farm.

But the 12 districts hosting refugees are among the least developed in the country, and new influxes are putting a severe strain on already limited resources. Refugees have the right to access education, including free primary schooling. During 2019, 245,509 refugee and 62,036 host community students enrolled in primary school in the first term. Yet, the majority of 6 to 17 year olds still do not attend school.

- Uganda hosts more than 1.37 million refugees and asylum seekers
- At least 61% of the refugee population are under the age of 18
- 50% of children between the ages of 6 and 17 years are out of school

*(UNHCR, December 2018)*



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## COMMUNITY-BASED SOLUTIONS TO IMPROVE QUALITY EDUCATION AND ENROLMENT

# Accelerated education

Education is essential to empowering refugees and giving them a chance for a better future. The refugee community group Al Ghaith is embracing its local knowledge and community understanding to improve access to education for refugees. With support from UNHCR and its partners, Al Ghaith is successfully running high quality and low cost Accelerated Education Programmes (AEPs) to help more refugee children and adolescents join the formal school system.

## Accelerated education

The Accelerated Education Programme (AEP) helps out-of-school children aged 9-17 complete their primary education. It is run in Kharaz refugee camp by a refugee committee called Al Ghaith. The Ministry of Education (MoE) provides technical support, textbooks, exams and certification. Al Ghaith selects students, provides and sup-

ports the teachers, and runs the Accelerated Education (AE) classes. AE learners complete the equivalent of six years of schooling in just three years, then move into formal primary schools at Grade 7. Apart from formal classes, AE students participate in computer classes, language classes, and sports – including football tournaments – all run by Al Ghaith.

## How the accelerated learning programme works

The AEPs are implemented by a refugee committee, so they are more likely to have a sustainable impact on refugee education. Al Ghaith committee members include teachers, headmasters and medical staff. Having lived in Kharaz refugee camp for up to 27 years, they are best placed to select the



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right students and teachers for the programme.

In October 2014, the committee went door-to-door to determine which children were out of school, identifying 79 girls and 71 boys. Al Ghaith then recruited six qualified teachers and one supervisor, and the children were divided into four classes.

The AE students receive a conditional monthly financial incentive of \$27 based on their attendance during the first year. Students often do not enroll or drop out of school because they need to earn money to support their family, so the monthly payments help them stay in the programme.

## Challenges

The project needed to overcome various challenges, including:

- **Venues:** Al Ghaith initially resorted to using a shaded outdoor area for classes, but, in 2016, UNHCR provided a training centre at the camp.
- **Curriculum:** There was no specific curriculum for the AEP so Al Ghaith had to use the literacy department programme, which was written for adults. In 2019, education staff developed a child-specific MoE-endorsed curriculum for the programme, covering literacy and numeracy. Teachers will be trained in this curriculum by the same staff who developed it.
- **Security:** Insecurity sometimes prevented UNHCR from visiting the camp, but working with the camp-based Al Ghaith committee was a way to overcome this problem.

## Results

Between 2014 and 2018 a total of 333 refugee children (165 boys and 168 girls) attended the AE classes, with 88 of those students moving into the formal education system.

## How to replicate this practice

Accelerated Education Programmes (AEPs) could be replicated anywhere that there is a significant over-aged population of children who are out of school.

**STEP 1:** The need for accelerated education in the community should be assessed. Who are the target students, and is the objective to provide them with non-formal education, or to integrate them into the formal system?

**STEP 2:** Resources need to be found, such as venues, teachers and a curriculum. Decide who is best placed to deliver these services, and what level of financial support is required to do so. Standard operating procedures need to be developed, covering areas such as the registration process, student tracking, a system for referring children on to formal schools, and a mechanism for coordinating with these schools.

**STEP 3:** To have a refugee group deliver AE, it is necessary to explore the level of interest and capacity within the refugee community. This may involve showing them examples of other refugee groups working in other locations to see if they think they'd be able to replicate it, and then providing them with any necessary extra training and support.

**STEP 4:** Sharing reports of refugee associations' work and arranging field visits to help others understand what is possible.

## CONTEXT

After five years of war in Yemen, more than 2.3 million people have fled their homes. Despite the dire humanitarian situation, the country continues to host around 280,000 refugees from the Horn of Africa, the majority of whom are Somalis. Most refugees live in the main cities of Aden and Sana'a.

Yemen's national education system has been devastated by the conflict: 66% of schools are reported damaged and 27% have closed down, putting the education of 4.5 million children at risk. Refugee families struggle to provide school materials for their children and keep them in school. In 2015, UNHCR began working with a local refugee association to deliver an Accelerated Education Programme which aims to increase the number of refugee children in school and improve their performance when they get there.

- Yemen is hosting 273,000 refugees in 2018
- 1.2 million primary school aged children (30%) are out of school
- 3,500 out of 8,080 registered refugee children of school age in Aden were enrolled in school in 2018

*(UNHCR, December 2018)*



## CREATING ENVIRONMENTS TO SUPPORT INCLUSION

# Resource rooms for students with disabilities

Thousands of children with disabilities struggle to access quality education. In response, UNHCR and its partners have set up resource rooms to improve the children's self-confidence and ability to learn and to ensure a smooth integration into mainstream schools. Refugee and host community children have benefited from resource rooms with better school facilities and support to reduce school drop-out rates.

### Resource rooms

Until 2015, very few children with disabilities were enrolled in the 10 public schools supported by UNHCR because the schools lacked the extra resources that these children required. To enable

children with disabilities to enroll and remain in primary school, UNHCR worked closely with Yemen's Ministry of Education and partners to establish fully equipped resource rooms.

These rooms, now installed in each of the 10 UNCHR-supported schools, are staffed by teachers trained in how to work with children with disabilities. The teachers adapt the curriculum to the capacities of each child and, when they are ready, re-integrate the children into regular classes with their peers. The teachers then continue to provide the children with disabilities additional assistance as needed.

The students benefitting from the resource rooms have a range of physical and intellectual disabilities, including vision impairment, hearing impairment, motor disabilities, cerebral palsy and various types of learning disability. On average, students spend one or two lessons per day in the resource rooms, working on specific subjects they have difficulties with.

The resource room can receive 20 students at once. It is divided into four sections, with each one serving children with a different type of disability or learning difficulty. Rooms are equipped with numerous educational materials, tools, and devices that are suitable for different needs.

## Results

In the 10 schools taking part in the programme, the resource rooms have provided extra support to 501 refugee and host community children. Children's self-esteem has increased thanks to their mastery of tasks in a supported environment and they have become much more capable of studying in regular classes. Resource room teachers continue to work closely with regular classroom teachers after the students' reinclusion. This has all resulted in an improvement in children's grades and educational levels.



## CONTEXT

After four years of war in Yemen, more than 2.3 million people have fled their homes. Despite the dire humanitarian situation, the country continues to host around 280,000 refugees from the Horn of Africa, the majority of whom are Somalis. Most refugees live in the main cities of Aden and Sana'a.

Yemen's national education system has been devastated by the conflict: 66% of schools are reported damaged and 27% have closed down, putting the education of 4.5 million children at risk. Parents of refugee children with disabilities or learning difficulties face extra hurdles in enrolling and then keeping their children in school. Many drop out of school, while others are unable to enrol at all. This can mean siblings also drop out to stay home to provide daily care for their brother or sister with special needs.

- 2.1 million people have been displaced by the conflict
- 2,773 out of 9,968 registered children of primary school age in Sana'a were enrolled in school in 2018
- 48% of the 2,773 newly enrolled children were girls

*(UNHCR, December 2018)*

## How to replicate this practice

With the required level of support and resources, this practice is replicable in other countries:

**STEP 1:** To make sure resource rooms fit the cultural context and increase self-reliance among refugee communities, it is recommended to engage skilled refugees with expertise in running similar activities and developing programmes.

**STEP 2:** Children with disabilities should be carefully assessed and targeted recommendations for support made.

**STEP 3:** Training for resource room teachers – including a refresher session after three months – is key. It means staff know how to best assist children with disabilities, how to evaluate children's progress, and how to set targets. It is also important to include parents and the community in training sessions, to help them support the children.

**STEP 4:** Having a joint monitoring team that consists of the Ministry of Education, education partners, and UNHCR is highly recommended. It means resource rooms can be properly evaluated to ensure they are meeting desired standards, and that all the relevant stakeholders are working together to enhance inclusive education.

**STEP 5:** Where possible, using up-to-date technological tools and equipment in the resource rooms is recommended to further enhance the support provided to students.

The first part of the document discusses the importance of maintaining accurate records in a business setting. It highlights how proper record-keeping can help in decision-making, legal compliance, and financial management. The text emphasizes that records should be organized, up-to-date, and easily accessible.

Next, the document addresses the challenges of data management in the digital age. It notes that while digital storage offers convenience, it also introduces risks such as data loss, security breaches, and information overload. Solutions like cloud storage, encryption, and regular backups are suggested to mitigate these risks.

The third section focuses on the role of technology in streamlining business processes. It describes how automation and software tools can reduce manual errors, save time, and improve overall efficiency. Examples include using accounting software for invoicing and project management tools for task delegation.

Finally, the document concludes by stressing the need for continuous learning and adaptation. As technology and market conditions evolve, businesses must stay informed and be willing to adopt new practices to remain competitive and successful.