

REGIONAL BUREAU FOR **WEST & CENTRAL AFRICA**

EDUCATION NEWSLETTER



Partnerships in Action: Together towards new Opportunities

More than one year after the adoption of the [Global Compact on Refugees](#), its full operationalization needs a continuous work and reflection on the way to engage with a broad range of [partners](#) in responding to the forcibly displaced education needs across the region, in line with the [whole-of-society approach](#).

With the aim of ensuring [equitable and continuous access to quality education](#) for all [refugee and displaced children and youth](#) in the region, despite the many humanitarian and displacement crises, close coordination and collaboration with [humanitarian, development and private actors](#) is needed if we are to effectively operationalize the [humanitarian/development nexus](#).

The [security situation](#) across the West and Central Africa region has been evolving in an alarming manner since the beginning of the year with an [increasing number of forcibly displaced persons](#) in several countries of the [Central Sahel](#), the [Lake Chad Basin](#), and also in [Central African Republic](#), where the resurgence of violence that started last December has caused new internal displacement and new refugee influxes in neighbouring countries, and has also led to extensive school closures.

In light of this context, [collective and renewed efforts](#) are needed to ensure [quality education continuity](#) in contexts of forced displacement and to propose [effective alternatives](#) that will enable all young people to find decent work and achieve autonomy.

UNHCR'S EDUCATION INTERVENTIONS

Strengthened Partnerships to Improve Education for Refugees

In 2021, UNHCR in West and Central Africa will strengthen its existing partnerships and develop new ones to enhance refugee and forcibly displaced children access to quality education, by further supporting their inclusion in national education systems and encouraging holistic interventions for all.

[Agence Universitaire de la Francophonie] Expand Access to Education and Solutions for Refugees



On February 24, the [Agence Universitaire de la Francophonie \(AUF\)](#) and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) signed a partnership agreement, during a virtual conference led by a number of high-level speakers.

Raouf Mazou, UNHCR Assistant High Commissioner for Operations, and Slim Khalbous, rector of AUF, have signed the first MoU between the two Organisations.

Through this collaboration, the two signatories intend to expand and improve the access of refugee students to [higher education](#) and [vocational training](#) across the African continent.

This collaboration will be based on 5 main components: advocacy with political decision-makers, the search for financial and material partners, awareness-raising, guaranteed access to documentation, and the promotion of employability and entrepreneurship for refugee students.

In [Chad](#) and [Cameroon](#), projects to strengthen French language skills for refugee students have already been initiated, thanks to collaboration between UNHCR and the AUF.

Read more about the importance of access to higher education for refugees: [‘Why investing in access to higher education for refugee populations is a win-win situation?’](#)

[Education Cannot Wait] Support Education in Crisis in Central Sahel

Education Cannot Wait approved [US\\$33.3 million](#) for the Central Sahel to develop new [Multi-Year Resilience Programmes \(MYRP\)](#) in [Burkina Faso](#), [Mali](#) and [Niger](#). In response to escalating crises in the region, these new programmes will reach [300,000 children and youth](#) impacted by displacement, conflict and COVID-19.

In addition, [UNHCR](#), [UNICEF](#), and [NRC](#) have developed a [regional component](#), kicked off this month with a webinar which saw the participation of nearly 60 participants from the three countries. The objective of this regional component is to support and complement national MYRPs through: (i) Increasing the visibility of needs to support [resource mobilization](#); (ii) Improving the quality and availability of [data](#) on education in emergencies; (iii) Exchanging [good practices](#) and lessons learned.



[Bioforce] Access to Certified and Quality Vocational Training



Since mid-January 2021, four young refugee women have joined the Bioforce Center in Dakar (Senegal) thanks to [scholarships](#) offered by the **Bioforce Africa Training Center**. They have followed several [training modules](#) on the [management of humanitarian projects](#). In the interview below, **Yann Yves Dutertre**, Head of Bioforce Africa Training Center, presents this new initiative, perfectly in line with the spirit of the Global Compact on Refugees.

What is Bioforce and what is its field of action in the region?

Bioforce was created in France more than 35 years ago. About 10 years ago, a Center was established in Burkina Faso, and in 2017, the Africa Center was opened in Dakar, Senegal. Bioforce is an association of general interest and the Africa Center in Dakar benefits from a number of subsidies for training, which allows us to have lower training costs for the public who come here. The demand for training in Senegal is mainly linked to the many crises the region is experiencing. The existence of the Center in Dakar is entirely in line with the localization agenda issued from the Istanbul Conference, and that is why the Center in Dakar works mainly with African audiences. Currently we have about 10 nationalities among more than 100 students, with an average age of 33 years. We offer courses for beginner profiles and courses for experienced profiles and all our professional training courses lead to diplomas. Following the beginner profile and experienced profile courses, there is a period of application of skills through internships, in international NGOs or UN agencies for example, to facilitate the transition to employment.

What is the origin of the initiative to open Bioforce's doors to refugees in Senegal?

The initiative to include refugees into our training courses is a new reflection that we have carried out with our headquarters and with UNHCR Regional Bureau. It is a pilot project which was made possible thanks to the financial support of the Monegasque Cooperation. This support allows us to grant scholarships for women. This year Bioforce is reflecting on its 2021-2023 strategic plan and it seemed very important to us to reflect on the target group of refugees. [Refugees can be very good humanitarian actors!](#) For example, they are already involved in the humanitarian response with UNHCR in camps, as UNHCR works more and more by involving its beneficiaries. We can also target urban refugees. Include refugees in our courses can also facilitate their integration within the host community and support their transition to employment.



Yann Yves Dutertre, Head of Bioforce's Africa Training Center, has more than 20 years of experience in INGOs in West and Central Africa. @UNHCR/Courtay

What is the result of this first pilot project?

In this pilot project, we have been able to identify four refugee candidates and include them in several modular courses but not yet in the entire course, because of the mandatory pre-requisites to access to whole cycle. Nevertheless, they were able to test their skills on the modular courses in order to potentially go further afterwards.

What is the future of this new initiative?

This first pilot project opens up many avenues for reflection to improve the inclusion of refugees, particularly in terms of adapting our training curricula to meet the needs of different profiles. We would like to gradually increase our scholarship system to give the possibility to refugees, but also to other vulnerable persons, to access our training. This type of scholarship will of course depend on the funding that Bioforce hopes to find in the coming years.

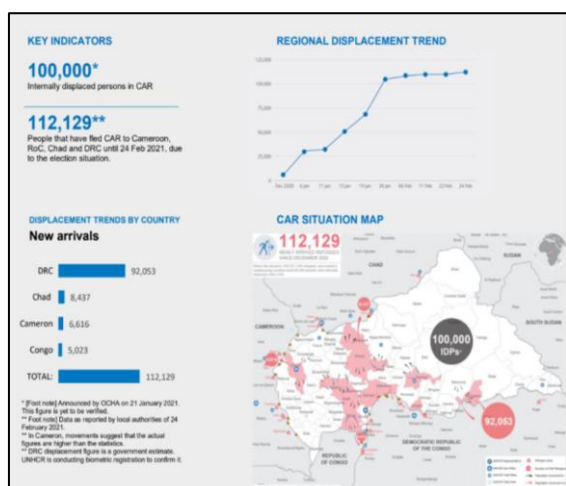
Interview by Gosia Courtay, UNHCR Senegal Multi-Country Office

EDUCATION IN EMERGENCIES



[New Displacement] Central African Republic Regional Emergency

Since the electoral crisis in the Central African Republic, neighbouring countries have reported the arrival of at least 112,000 people who fled the armed conflict. As humanitarian and protection needs grow, UNHCR is appealing for \$164.7 million, of which almost 10% to cover education needs of displaced children in CAR and neighbouring countries.



In CAR, half of the country's children are out of school because of the resurgence of violence that started in December. Nearly [1,000 schools](#) have been forcibly closed, occupied or damaged and at least 26 schools are still occupied by armed groups in 11 of the 16 prefectures. According to UN data, almost [3,000 child soldiers](#) have been recruited so far this year.

In [Chad](#) and [Cameroon](#), UNHCR's priority is to increase capacity to provide education for children both in camps and villages early in the response, with initial assessments indicating that only 50% of the children were in school in CAR.

Read UNHCR's latest [Emergency Update](#) and [Emergency Appeal](#).

[Attacks on Education] School Destructions, Students and Teachers Abductions and Forced Recruitment on the Rise

While a new wave of student kidnappings is hitting Nigeria, the education crisis affecting the English-speaking regions of Cameroon persists and forced recruitment continues to increase throughout the subregion.

Across the region, and especially in the [Central Sahel](#) and the [Lake Chad Basin](#), schools are increasingly targeted. Repeated attacks, massacres, and kidnappings threaten the [safety of children](#) and jeopardize the continuity of their education even when schools remain open. The increased risk of forced recruitment, due to the multiplicity of conflict situations in countries where dizzying out of school and drop-out rates make idle youth an easy prey, is also a major protection issue (see above on child recruitment in CAR).

Faced with this problem, there is an urgent need for closer, effective and more systematic collaboration between [education and protection actors](#). Strong advocacy for the immediate implementation of the [Safe Schools Declaration](#) and an education response centered on the protection and well-being of children are essential in all the affected country response plans, so that children can continue learning in safe and protective spaces.



Sources: [Education in Danger](#), [ACAPS](#), [OCHA](#).

RESOURCES



[UNHCR-WBG] The Global Cost of Inclusive Refugee Education



UNHCR and the World Bank jointly released a report providing a standardized methodology to estimate refugee education costs across all host countries, hoping to catalyze the development of country-level costed refugee-inclusive education plans.

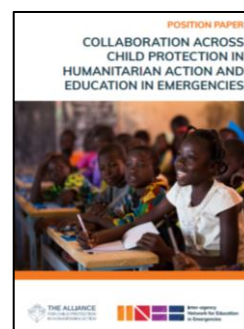
The report highlights that, in most developing countries, hosting 85% of the world's refugees, only a marginal increase in public education expenditure would allow for education for all refugee students. It also stresses that the principle of inclusive education, in this case, opening education up to all refugee children and their inclusion into national education systems can also lead to better services for local communities in host countries.

Read the report [here](#).

[INEE] Collaboration Across Child Protection in Humanitarian Action and Education in Emergencies

The Alliance for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action and the INEE released a new position paper that sets out the evidence supporting collaboration and integration between the sectors, providing a rationale for cross-sector work grounded in child wellbeing and holistic development. The paper includes a summary of challenges and opportunities and draws out clear recommendations for systematic and planned collaboration.

Access the document [here](#).



[UNESCO-GEC] Distance Education in French-speaking Africa



The French-speaking African regional platform [imaginecole.africa](#) is the key component of a Global Partnership for Education (GPE) project to improve the quality of distance education in Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea Conakry, Mali, Niger, Senegal, Chad and Togo.

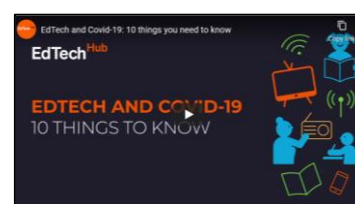
Imaginecole offers over 600 educational resources, ranging from high-quality educational videos and interactive lessons to downloadable printouts. It covers a comprehensive emergency response for learning both in connected and disconnected locations.

Access the platform [here](#).

[EdTech Hub] EdTech and COVID-19

In education, mass school closures have accelerated the global use of education technologies. Yet the benefits do not reach everyone. EdTech Hub and its partners have been researching and applying evidence on what works in technology for education in different contexts. They present 10 important lessons from that work.

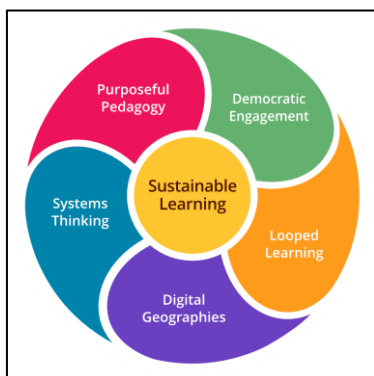
Access the publication [here](#).



CAPACITY BUILDING



[Center for Learning in Practice] Pilot on Quality Holistic Teaching and Learning



The [Center for Learning in Practice](#) (CLiP) at the Carey Institute for Global Good is currently forming communities of practice for teachers of refugee, displaced, and marginalized primary and secondary students. Countries of focus include [Chad](#), [Niger](#), and East and Central Africa regions more broadly. Project team members, including teachers and other key local education stakeholders, will utilize CLiP's [Sustainable Learning Framework](#) to develop competency-based teacher professional development including online teaching/learning, social and emotional learning, asset-based pedagogy, and other proficiencies critical to quality holistic learning. Participants will contribute to the design of short

courses, toolkits, assessment resources, and other professional learning resources which will be made openly accessible (as OERs) in English, Arabic, and French.

Learn more about the project [here](#).

Contact [Julie Kasper](#), Refugee Educator Academy Program Manager, at jkasper@careyinstitute.org or [Oula Abu-Amsha](#), Senior Project Consultant, at qhl.support@careyinstitute.org for more information and to get involved.



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