

## Reference Paper for the 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the 1951 Refugee Convention

### **Educating the Forcibly Displaced: Key Challenges and Opportunities**

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#### Abstract:

Today, the forcibly displaced people account for 1 percent of the world's population. Not only is the magnitude of forced displacement unprecedented, but so is the complexity. An estimated 40 percent of forcibly displaced people are under the age of 18 years, so that provision of quality education is of paramount importance to an adequate crisis response. This paper provides a review of the changing education policy landscape in response to the increasing number and complexity of protracted forced displacement crises. It discusses some of the challenges and interventions to support effective and sustainable delivery of quality education to forcibly displaced children and youth. The paper also summarizes key lessons and opportunities for improved and durable solutions to the long-term education challenges faced by this vulnerable population and their host communities.

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## Abbreviations

3RP	Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan
CRRF	Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework
DRC	Democratic Republic of the Congo
ECHO	European Commission Humanitarian Aid Office
ECW	Education Cannot Wait
EGMA	Early Grade Mathematics Assessment
EGRA	Early Grade Reading Assessment
EMIS	Education Management Information Systems
EOF	Education Outcomes Fund
ERP	Education Response Plan
EU	European Union
FCS	Fragile, conflict and violence-affected situations
FCV	Fragility, Conflict and Violence
GCM	Global Compact on Migrants
GCPEA	Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack
GCR	Global Compact on Refugees
GEC	Global Education Cluster
GEMS	Geo-enabling for Monitoring and Supervision
GER	Gross Enrollment Rate
GPE	Global Partnership for Education
IBM	Iterative Beneficiary Monitoring
IDA	International Development Association
IDMC	Internal Displacement and Migration Center
IDP	Internally displaced people
IFFEd	International Finance Facility for Education
IGAD	Intergovernmental Authority on Development
INEE	Inter-agency Network for Education in Emergencies
NGO	Non-governmental organization
NRC	Norwegian Refugee Council
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
PISA	Programme for International Student Assessment
PTA	Parent Teacher Association
RMR	Risk Mitigation Regime
RSW	Sub-Window for Refugees and Host Communities
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

UNICEF United Nations Children's Fund  
UNRWA United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees  
WFP World Food Programme

## Executive Summary

More people than ever before find themselves in situations of forced displacement - today, forcibly displaced people account for 1 percent of the world's population. Not only is the magnitude of forced displacement unprecedented, but so is the complexity. The challenges associated with displacement are exacerbated by protracted conflict and political instability with regional spillovers, global and regional pandemics, global economic recessions, climate change, rising food insecurity and gender-based violence. Worse, these challenges are situated in resource and capacity-constrained environments as a large share of forcibly displaced populations are hosted in developing countries.

Given that an estimated 40 percent of forcibly displaced people are under the age of 18 years, provision of quality education is of paramount importance to an adequate crisis response. It is essential for human capital formation, economic growth and self-sufficiency, and peacebuilding and reconstruction. Providing equal access to quality education today is critical to reducing inequality in opportunity in the future.

This paper provides a review of the changing education policy landscape in response to the increasing number and complexity of protracted forced displacement crises. It discusses some of the challenges and interventions to support effective and sustainable delivery of quality education to forcibly displaced children and youth. From this review emerge key lessons and opportunities for improved and durable solutions to the long-term education challenges that this vulnerable population and their host communities face.

### *Summary findings*

***Shift towards national inclusive education systems.*** Given the protracted nature of forced displacement, focusing on humanitarian assistance and the use of parallel systems to provide education is not a sustainable and efficient approach. Host countries that **integrate forcibly displaced children and youth into national education systems** can have efficiency gains from long-term planning and resource allocation. Inclusive systems allow for **refugee and host community students to benefit equally** from increased funding, easing supply constraints and improvements in the quality of teaching, learning environments and other inputs. This shift in service delivery practices should be supported by **costed national inclusive education policies** and **strengthened national capacity** in their operationalization.

***Strengthen systems, tracking and reporting of education data.*** Despite the prevalence of forced displacement, quality and timely data on the forcibly displaced population remains sorely lacking. The education needs of forcibly displaced populations differ based on refugee or IDP status and by gender, age group and disability, necessitating **decisive action towards improved data collection with adequate levels of data disaggregation**. Better education data are required for **improved design of policies that are responsive to the specific needs of displaced populations**, and once interventions have been implemented, in order to **assess the effectiveness of interventions to inform future policy making**. Better data needs are not limited to the forcibly displaced themselves but include **better data on host communities**, which are often historically disadvantaged. National-level education system support should include **support to strengthening data systems and capacity building** in the analysis and use of data on forcibly displaced populations for education sector decision-making. Finally, **improving dissemination of information** on the impact of forced displacement on education outcomes can strengthen political buy-in and social cohesion.

***Strengthen response to and lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic.*** The COVID-19 pandemic has brought to the fore challenges of inequitable access to continuity of learning, inadequate teacher capacity and lack of essential inputs that need to be urgently addressed to **safeguard against deepening existing divides**. The pandemic has led to the adoption of remote education service delivery in many countries, and the resulting reliance on internet connectivity and availability of hardware has exacerbated learning inequalities, particularly for the forcibly displaced and their host communities. At the same time, the dramatic shift to remote education presents an **opportunity to assess what works to improve learning and how to effectively reach the most remote and vulnerable children**, including the forcibly displaced.

***Improve coordination and strengthen partnerships.*** Partnerships across all humanitarian, development, and other actors are important in order to **maximize complementarities** and results on the ground for the forcibly displaced. These partnerships are most effective when they are **mission-driven and host country-led**. Given the need for urgent action in many instances, it is best to establish partnership agreements in advance and make use of them when the need arises. There are multiple actors supporting the education of the forcibly displaced and multiple entities aiming to coordinate these different actors. There is an **urgent need for strong leadership** to streamline the role of each of these actors for effective coordination.

***Mobilize financing that is multi-year, flexible, predictable and sustainable.*** Humanitarian appeals for education have historically been underfunded and developmental financing is limited and poorly targeted. There is an urgent need for **increased and innovative investments** in education for the forcibly displaced. Financing should be **integrated into national planning** complemented by clear financing targets embedded in national education response plans to improve the sustainability of interventions. As such, funding would also be better coordinated by host country governments, allowing both government and development partners to aim for better efficiency of spending and to ensure adequate protection of existing investments through **effective sequencing of humanitarian and development financing** in crisis contexts.

## Introduction

1. The escalation in forced displacement since the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees was adopted presents one of the greatest contemporary challenges that confronts the world. In the last decade alone, at least 100 million people<sup>1</sup> were forcibly displaced as a result of persecution, violence or conflict. At the end of 2019, 79.5 million people remain forcibly displaced worldwide. Among them are 45.7 million internally displaced people (IDPs), 26 million refugees<sup>2</sup>, 4.2 million asylum seekers and 3.6 million Venezuelans<sup>3</sup> displaced abroad.<sup>4</sup> Today, forcibly displaced people account for nearly one in every 100 people. This is a marked increase from one in every 159 people in 2010 and one in every 174 people in 2005.<sup>5</sup> This paper provides a review of the changing education policy landscape and the evolution of interventions concerning the protection and assistance afforded to this vulnerable population over time. It further outlines opportunities for improved and durable solutions to the long-term education development challenge.

2. Developing countries are most affected by mass displacement. At the end of 2019, approximately 85 percent of forcibly displaced persons – almost 67.5 million people – were hosted in developing countries.<sup>6</sup> The majority of forcibly displaced persons are either internally displaced or refugees hosted just over the border in neighboring countries. Five countries, Afghanistan, Colombia, Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Syria and Yemen, hold more than half of all IDPs fleeing conflict and violence.<sup>7</sup> Turkey hosts the largest number of refugees worldwide, almost exclusively from neighboring Syria, with approximately 3.6 million refugees or one in every 23 people in the country.<sup>8</sup> Other countries in the region like Lebanon and Jordan are similarly affected with one in seven and one in 15 people in the country being refugees, respectively. With the onset of the Venezuelan crisis, small island countries like Aruba and Curaçao have received a large number of refugees, making them among the top five refugee hosting countries relative to their local population.<sup>9</sup> These host countries and communities are already stretched to deliver public services. The shocks caused by large internal displacement or influx of refugees can exacerbate vulnerabilities in host communities, and require a collective, concentrated response effort.

3. Furthermore, forced displacement is becoming increasingly protracted as situations of conflict and instability persist and prevent safe return. Between 1990 and 2010, numbers of forcibly displaced remained relatively stable between 37 million and 42 million<sup>10</sup> as new displacements replaced those that were repatriated or resettled. However, since 2010 not only did the numbers of forcibly displaced increase dramatically but fewer were able to return to their home countries. As a result, approximately 77 percent of the world's 20.4 million refugees under the mandate of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) find themselves in situations of protracted displacement.<sup>11</sup> This necessitates a shift in response from humanitarian assistance to long-term developmental support.

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<sup>1</sup> UNHCR. 2020. *Global Trends– Forced Displacement in 2019*.

<sup>2</sup> This includes 20.4 million refugees under UNHCR's mandate and 5.6 million UNRWA refugees.

<sup>3</sup> While the exodus of Venezuelans to neighboring countries marks one of the largest displacement crises in the world, they do not currently receive refugee status in all host countries and are therefore included as a separate category.

<sup>4</sup> UNHCR. 2020. *Global Trends– Forced Displacement in 2019*.

<sup>5</sup> UNHCR. 2020. *Global Trends – Forced Displacement in 2019*.

<sup>6</sup> UNHCR. 2020. *Global Trends – Forced Displacement in 2019*.

<sup>7</sup> IDMC. 2020. *Global Report on Internal Displacement*.

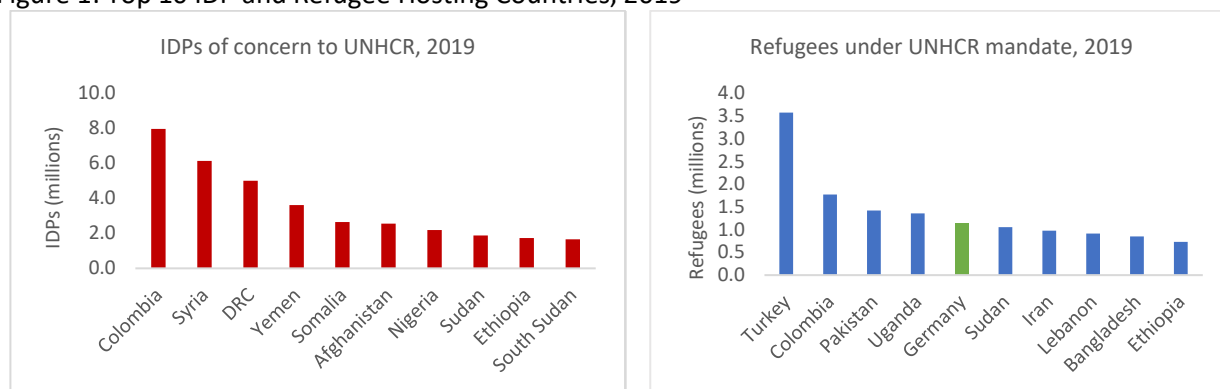
<sup>8</sup> UNHCR. 2020. *Global Trends – Forced Displacement in 2019*.

<sup>9</sup> UNHCR. 2020. *Global Trends – Forced Displacement in 2019*.

<sup>10</sup> UNHCR. 2020. *Global Trends – Forced Displacement in 2019*.

<sup>11</sup> UNHCR. 2020. *Global Trends – Forced Displacement in 2019*.

Figure 1: Top 10 IDP and Refugee Hosting Countries, 2019



Source: Based on data from UNHCR. 2020. *Global Trends– Forced Displacement in 2019*.

### Education outcomes and challenges for refugees and forcibly displaced children

4. Forced displacement has large implications for human capital formation. The demographic composition of forcibly displaced people is skewed towards a younger population. An estimated 40 percent or 30 – 34 million forcibly displaced people are under the age of 18.<sup>12</sup> Often displaced children do not have access to education; coupled with situations of protracted crises, this means that millions of children may spend a large proportion or the entirety of their schooling years out of school. The [Global Compact on Refugees](#) (GCR) calls for minimizing the amount of time refugee children spend out of school to a maximum of three months after arrival in the country of asylum.<sup>13</sup> This goal is far from being achieved. UNHCR estimates that refugee children and youth miss out on an average of 3 to 4 years of schooling due to forced displacement.<sup>14</sup> Time spent out of school results in learning losses that accumulate over time, leading to high levels of learning poverty and increased learning inequality. This translates into inequality in economic opportunities and human capital loss.

5. Education is of paramount importance for forcibly displaced children. The right to education for refugees is asserted in the [1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees](#) and is reaffirmed for both primary and secondary schooling in the [2016 New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants](#). Quality education is a central goal of the [Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework](#) (CRRF), wherein the United Nations General Assembly asserted the commitment of member states to provide quality primary and secondary education in safe learning environments for all refugee children. The GCR reaffirms international cooperation and solidarity toward this commitment to quality education for all refugees and their hosting communities. Quality education is a central goal of education development broadly, as articulated in [Sustainable Development Goal 4](#) (SDG4) and the 2030 [Incheon Declaration and Framework for Action](#). Access to quality education enables progress toward productive employment for individuals and sustainable economic growth for communities, as articulated in Sustainable Development Goal 8 (SDG8); toward full participation in society, as articulated in the International Convention on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights; and toward peaceful and inclusive societies, as articulated in Sustainable Development Goal 16 (SDG16).

<sup>12</sup> UNHCR. 2020. *Global Trends – Forced Displacement in 2019*.

<sup>13</sup> United Nations. 2018. *Global Compact on Refugees*.

<sup>14</sup> UNHCR. 2016. *Missing Out: Refugee Education in Crisis*.



6. Beyond a rights-based argument, access to quality education is critical to the future livelihoods of refugees and IDPs. Many refugee children and youth arrive to host countries having little, no or irregular participation in formal education. Internally displaced children may have their education disrupted for prolonged periods. Addressing these gaps in education provision is important for economic self-reliance and growth, peacebuilding and sustainable reconstruction, and improved individual livelihoods and socio-economic outcomes. It can provide sense of normalcy and stability so children can cope with and overcome the trauma of forced displacement, violence and personal loss. Protecting and building human capital is arguably one of the most important sources of resilience.<sup>15</sup> The 2011 UNHCR Refugee Education Global Review argues that access to quality education is not only a durable solution for the future but also the present – unlike other durable solutions of resettlement, repatriation or local integration, provision of quality education is not dependent on the resolution of conflict or political and legal barriers but is immediately realizable for forcibly displaced populations in the protracted crises settings in which they find themselves.<sup>16</sup> It also contributes to opportunities in other durable solutions, especially local integration (through inclusion in national schools and systems) and resettlement (through complimentary pathways).

7. Education outcomes for forcibly displaced populations remain alarmingly poor. The UNHCR Refugee Education 2030 Strategy sets out the goal of achieving parity in access to education between refugees and non-refugees at the pre-primary, primary and secondary levels and of increasing access to tertiary education for refugees to 15 percent.<sup>17</sup> In 2019, at the primary level, gross enrollment rate (GER) for refugee children was 77 percent,<sup>18</sup> compared to a global figure of over 100 percent.<sup>19</sup> This gap is even starker at post-primary levels of education: secondary GER for refugee adolescents was 31 percent<sup>20</sup> compared to 76 percent globally, and tertiary GER for refugees was 3 percent compared to 38 percent globally.<sup>21</sup> There is a sharp decline in the GER of refugee children between primary and secondary levels, and significant gender disparities in access to secondary education. In 2019, 36 percent of refugee boys were enrolled in secondary education compared to only 27 percent of refugee girls.<sup>22</sup> Further, the minor gains made in access to education are at risk of being eroded as a result of the twin shocks of school closure and economic recession resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic.

8. Educating forcibly displaced children presents complex and diverse challenges. Supply-side constraints include the availability of schools, classrooms and teachers in areas where forcibly displaced populations are hosted. This is compounded in countries where there are legal constraints on the movement of refugees and there are no schools close by, or in areas of conflict where schools have been destroyed or are occupied by armed groups. One of the key demand side constraints is the direct and indirect cost of schooling. Even where schooling is free, the cost of learning materials, uniforms and transport can be prohibitive. Further, the opportunity cost of education for forcibly displaced children is very high in terms of foregone income or domestic chores. Demand for education is also affected by the perceived benefit of education, especially as children get older. As of 2018, around 50 percent of refugee-

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<sup>15</sup> World Bank. 2020. World Bank Group Strategy for Fragility, Conflict and Violence 2020 – 2025.

<sup>16</sup> UNHCR. 2011. *Refugee Education – A Global Review*.

<sup>17</sup> UNHCR. 2019. *Refugee Education 2030 – A Strategy for Refugee Inclusion*.

<sup>18</sup> UNHCR. 2020. *Coming Together for Refugee Education*. Gross enrollment figures are based on data from 12 countries that host more than half of the 20.4 million refugees under UNHCR's mandate.

<sup>19</sup> World Development Indicators (WDI). 2018. Available at: [link](#). [Accessed on 18 September 2020].

<sup>20</sup> UNHCR. 2020. *Coming Together for Refugee Education*.

<sup>21</sup> World Development Indicators (WDI). 2018. Available at: <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SE.SEC.ENRR>. Accessed: 18 September 2020.

<sup>22</sup> UNHCR. 2020. *Coming Together for Refugee Education*.

hosting countries did not allow refugees to work;<sup>23</sup> limited access to formal labor markets reduces the incentive to enroll and complete post-primary education. Another key barrier to education access is a lack of documentation and recognition of existing schooling or certification. People fleeing conflict or violence often do not have the time to gather essential identification documents, least of all educational records. Even when they have these records, they may not be recognized by schools in host countries, forcing students to enroll in non-formal or informal schooling or to drop out of school entirely.

9. Further, forcibly displaced children have additional educational needs to ensure smooth integration into formal schooling. They are likely to have been out of school for extended periods and might require intensive language learning when the local or academic delivery languages are new, remedial support in foundational mathematics and literacy, support to adapt to new elements in a curriculum such as history or geography, or accelerated education programs to enroll in age-appropriate formal schooling. Additionally, they require psychosocial support to cope with and overcome the trauma of any conflict or violence they may have experienced. Finally, in addition to preparing forcibly displaced children for formal schooling, it is critical to train host community and refugee teachers in delivering quality education to refugees, in inclusive pedagogy, and in facilitating a child-friendly, safe learning environment free from discrimination, prejudice and bullying.

10. While internally displaced children do not face the same legal and political barriers to accessing host community schools, continuity of education is hindered by several other factors. Since they remain in countries with conflict and violence, they risk facing persistent insecurity and may be forced into repeated displacement. Schools are frequently used as temporary shelters for IDPs resulting in disrupted schooling for host communities too. Often schools are targeted during conflicts – in the past five years, more than 14,000 attacks on education were reported in 34 countries according to the Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack (GCPEA).<sup>24</sup> Despite these challenges and the number of internally displaced children being far larger than refugee children, they receive a fraction of the global attention that refugees do. The GCR and the Global Compact on Migrants (GCM) recognize the role of education and set objectives aligned with SDG4, but neither explicitly mention IDPs, let alone their educational needs.<sup>25</sup> Yet IDPs also suffer similar psychosocial trauma and challenges to continuing their education. These challenges are further exacerbated by national and regional politics, safety and security considerations for the delivery of education services, and limited government capacity to collect reliable data and adjust national education budgets to respond to internal displacement. There is also the perception that national authorities bear the primary responsibility for protecting and assisting IDPs resulting in inadequate international solidarity around these vulnerable populations. Yet, as with refugee education, the only durable solution is to strengthen national inclusive systems so they can respond rapidly to crises, redirect funding and support schools in host areas to absorb more children.

11. Given that the majority of forcibly displaced people are in developing countries, these challenges are situated within limited national education systems that are already underfunded and stretched to deliver quality education. Only 0.5 percent of the global spending on education was in low income countries compared to 65 percent in high income countries even though the two groups have roughly the same number of school-age children.<sup>26</sup> In 2019, almost 85 percent of the world's displaced people were

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<sup>23</sup> UNHCR. 2019. *Stepping Up – Refugee Education in Crisis*.

<sup>24</sup> IDMC. 2019. Equitable access to quality education for internally displaced children.

<sup>25</sup> IDMC. 2019. Equitable access to quality education for internally displaced children.

<sup>26</sup> Global Education Monitoring Report. 2019. *Migration, displacement and education: building bridges, not walls*. Paris: UNESCO.

hosted in low- and middle-income countries.<sup>27</sup> Further, approximately half of the world's poor today live in fragile and conflict-settings and this figure is expected to rise to two-thirds by 2030.<sup>28</sup> Of the approximately seven million primary and secondary school-aged refugee children in developing countries, over 40 percent are hosted by only five countries – Turkey, Uganda, Pakistan, Sudan and Lebanon.<sup>29</sup> Without adequate support, these countries remain ill-equipped to respond to learning poverty for local and forcibly displaced populations alike, as well as to respond to a large influx of refugee children or their specific educational needs described above. They are burdened by systemic limitations including inadequate education financing, poor resource allocation and public financial management, lack of trained and motivated teachers, large class sizes, limited teaching and learning materials and facilities, poor school leadership and a lack of school-level accountability and parental engagement. Further, given the prevalent regional dimension of displacement, refugees may be concentrated in remote, poor and vulnerable host communities that are themselves marginalized and have poorer educational outcomes than national averages. A focus on the education inadequacies or inequities in regions where refugees settle, and targeted investment, could consequently result in significant improvements in education provision for all learners affected by displacement.

### Changing education policy landscape for forcibly displaced populations

12. Earlier approaches to education for forcibly displaced populations were shaped by short-term humanitarian assistance. These approaches acted as one component of a rapid response to crises, were deployed quickly and were an effective temporary solution. They were often administered in parallel to national systems and were not supervised or certified, used curriculums from the country of origin or developed by the United Nations (UN) or international non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and were highly reliant on short term international aid. While these solutions were adequate when crises were expected to be resolved quickly and affected populations returned to their homes, they come woefully short in responding to the increasingly protracted crises that are unfolding today. In 2019, 15.7 million refugees were in situations of protracted displacement lasting more than five years.<sup>30</sup> Parallel systems do not provide a reliable, sustainable or durable solution. They often do not provide pathways to formal accreditation, are affected by the limited capacity and unreliable financing of NGOs and philanthropic organizations, and do not always involve collaboration with host governments or local capacity and institutional development.

13. However, in the last decade, there has been an increasing shift towards using a developmental approach and supporting inclusive policies. Following the 2011 UNHCR Refugee Education Global Review, the evolution of international policy on refugees demonstrates a marked shift towards inclusion in national systems. This includes the UNHCR Policy on Alternatives to Camps (2014), the New York Declaration and Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (2016) and the GCR (2018), all of which call for a shift from parallel hosting and service delivery systems to inclusive practices as a durable solution. The GCR calls for delivery of assistance through local and national service providers rather than through parallel systems for refugees from which host communities do not benefit over time.<sup>31</sup> UNHCR

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<sup>27</sup> UNHCR. 2020. *Global Trends: Forced Displacement in 2019*.

<sup>28</sup> World Bank. 2020. *World Bank Group Strategy for Fragility, Conflict and Violence 2020 – 2025*.

<sup>29</sup> UNHCR and World Bank. 2020. *Global Cost of Inclusive Refugee Education*.

<sup>30</sup> UNHCR. 2020. *Global Trends – Forced Displacement in 2019*.

<sup>31</sup> United Nations. 2018. *Global Compact on Refugees*.

goes further by strongly discouraging investments in informal education that substitute for formal or non-formal education<sup>32</sup> and do not provide pathways to accredited learning.<sup>33</sup>

14. These policy shifts need to be supported by systematic capacity and institutional development of host country governments. The 2020 World Bank Fragility, Conflict and Violence (FCV) White Paper finds that building government capabilities and establishing policies to support continuity of education for the forcibly displaced is usually an afterthought in education planning in times of crisis.<sup>34</sup> It was not among the mandate or priority areas of all the key bilateral agencies, multilateral agencies or international NGOs working in the space. These capacity constraints affect host governments' ability to respond to internal crises and shocks from large refugee influxes. Gradually, organizations like UNHCR, the World Bank, Education Cannot Wait (ECW)<sup>35</sup> and Global Partnership for Education (GPE)<sup>36</sup> have begun supporting local capacity development, recognizing its potential to bolster durable solutions. Given its experience in post-conflict resolution and long-term relationships with country governments, the World Bank could leverage its political capital and play an important role in the future in facilitating this shift from a humanitarian approach to a longer-term developmental approach. The World Bank FCV Strategy 2020-2025 outlines a clear roadmap for increased support to prevent and mitigate risks of conflict and violence, to preserve institutional capacity and human capital during a crisis, and to support governments on the path of post-conflict reconstruction and recovery.<sup>37</sup>

15. Policy shifts toward inclusive systems are also evident at the regional and national level. For instance, the Djibouti Declaration published in 2017 shows a commitment towards national inclusive education systems among the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) country members – Djibouti, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Kenya, Somalia, Sudan, South Sudan and Uganda.<sup>38</sup> Several developing host countries including Turkey, Jordan, Lebanon, Iran, Ecuador and Uganda have introduced policies guaranteeing the right to education for all children irrespective of their legal status.

16. The international community is also supporting the development of policies that facilitate the integration of refugee children into national systems. Supported by the 2017 Djibouti Declaration, UNHCR and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in collaboration with member state ministries of education have committed to mapping equivalencies across education cycles from primary through tertiary in each IGAD country.<sup>39</sup> This will improve continuity of learning in host countries during a crisis and ease recognition of learning once refugees return to their home countries. In 2019, the UNESCO-led Global Convention on Certificate Recognition was concluded, which facilitates international academic mobility and promotes the rights of individuals to have their higher education

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<sup>32</sup> Formal education refers to education programs that are recognized and certified by a Ministry of Education. Non-formal education programs take place both within and outside educational institutions and may, but do not always lead to certification. They include vocational and technical programs as well as skills training for the labor market. Informal education refers to education activities that include literacy, numeracy, life skills and recreational activities, but are not certifiable by a Ministry of Education and are not bound to an age or target group.

<sup>33</sup> UNHCR. 2019. *Refugee Education 2030 – A Strategy for Refugee Inclusion*.

<sup>34</sup> World Bank. 2020. *FCV Education White Paper (forthcoming)*.

<sup>35</sup> ECW is a global fund dedicated to education in emergencies and protracted crises. It was established during the World Humanitarian Summit in 2016.

<sup>36</sup> GPE is a multi-stakeholder partnership and a global fund established in 2002 dedicated to transforming education in lower-income countries.

<sup>37</sup> World Bank. 2020. *World Bank Group Strategy for Fragility, Conflict and Violence 2020 – 2025*.

<sup>38</sup> UNHCR. 2019. *Refugee Education 2030 – A Strategy for Refugee Inclusion*.

<sup>39</sup> UNHCR. 2019. *Refugee Education 2030 – A Strategy for Refugee Inclusion*.

qualifications recognized.<sup>40</sup> This is an important step towards eliminating barriers to entering or continuing higher education for refugees. It also provides an avenue for the recognition of teaching qualifications so that qualified teachers within refugee communities can be recruited in line with national policies and can support refugee education.

17. There has been increasing support for education service delivery beyond primary education. A global debate is ongoing around investing in secondary education where universal primary education has not been achieved. Yet, these investments are important to provide a gateway to higher education including technical and vocational training, as well as meaningful work opportunities. They also provide an incentive to enroll in and complete primary education. They offer equal opportunities to refugee and host populations and promote human capital development of the refugee population. Post-primary enrollment rates for refugees are very low compared to non-refugee children. Further, at the secondary level, there are only seven refugee girls enrolled for every 10 refugee boys.<sup>41</sup> Yet, individual economic returns to secondary education are large and larger still for girls and other marginalized groups. The private rate of return<sup>42</sup> for each additional year of formal education is about nine percent on average, and for secondary education in low-income countries it is double that. Beyond individual returns, social returns<sup>43</sup> to secondary education are also high at over 10 percent.<sup>44</sup>

18. Provision of post-primary education, given subject specialty areas that require more qualified teachers and specialized inputs, is simply more expensive. Furthermore, demand for secondary education greatly exceeds supply. According to UNHCR, as of December 2019, approximately 24,588 refugee children in Kenya were enrolled at the secondary level with a GER of 51 percent. Girls are less likely to proceed to secondary school than boys as a result of cultural and socio-economic barriers and represent only 27 percent of enrolled refugee learners at the secondary level. The refugee camps in Kenya have 48 primary schools but only 16 secondary schools with an actual capacity of little under 17,000 students. While both the number of refugee and asylum-seekers completing primary school and secondary school in Kenya increased in absolute terms from 2014, 94 percent of eligible secondary school-aged refugee children are out of school.

19. Further, secondary and tertiary education for forcibly displaced children can be prohibitively expensive both in terms of direct fees and opportunity costs in foregone earnings or contribution to household responsibilities, especially for girls. In 2017, UNHCR set up an initiative to improve enrollment, retention and completion of secondary school called Youth Education Program, which has been piloted in Kenya, Rwanda, Uganda and Pakistan.<sup>45</sup> In 2019, UNHCR expanded this concept into the Secondary Youth Education Initiative providing support to ten operations to prioritize access to secondary education.<sup>46</sup> Connected higher education programs are also gaining momentum. These programs allow refugee students to digitally connect to learning programs supplemented by peer mentoring, thereby increasing

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<sup>40</sup> UNESCO. 2020. Global convention on the recognition of qualifications concerning higher education. Available at: [link](#). [Accessed on 5 August 2020].

<sup>41</sup> UNHCR. 2019. *Stepping Up – Refugee Education in Crisis*.

<sup>42</sup> The private rate of return to schooling equates the value of lifetime earnings of the individual to the net present value of costs of education. It provides an estimate of the increase in earnings from an additional year of education for an individual.

<sup>43</sup> The social rate of return includes society's spending on education – direct costs by government and foregone earnings of students as they invest in education. Social benefits should include non-monetary benefits of education, but given the scant empirical evidence on social benefits, estimates are based on observable monetary costs and benefits.

<sup>44</sup> Psacharopoulos, G. and Patrinos, H. 2018. *Returns to investment in education – a decennial review of the global literature*. Policy Research Working Paper No.8402.

<sup>45</sup> UNHCR. 2019. *Stepping Up – Refugee Education in Crisis*.

<sup>46</sup> UNHCR. 2020. Oral update on the global programmes. Seventy-seventh meeting of the Standing Committee. Available at: [link](#). [Accessed on 1 March 2021].

high education access for those for cannot attend a university. This shift towards supporting post-primary education should be accompanied by policies that improve refugee access to the labor market.

**Key policy insight:** Given the protracted nature of forced displacement, focusing on humanitarian assistance and the use of parallel systems to provide either formal or non-formal education to the forcibly displaced is not a sustainable and efficient approach. Instead, the forcibly displaced should be integrated into host country national education systems and be able to benefit from access to all levels of education, including the post-primary level. This shift should be supported by an enabling policy environment at the global, regional and national levels and international community support to strengthen national systems.

## Shift towards national inclusive education systems

20. Inclusion in national education systems is increasingly being recognized as the only sustainable solution to the refugee education crisis. It ensures the education needs of refugee children will be visible in national data systems and allows for efficient allocation of resources through long-term planning, reflecting the current proliferation in protracted refugee crises. It creates opportunities for equitable access to quality education for both refugee and host community children in line with the principles of the GCR. This implies that refugee and host students benefit equally from increased funding, easing supply constraints and improvements in the quality of teaching, learning environments and other inputs. It also ensures that the financial constraints faced by host countries apply to both groups and governments are not expected to commit more resources to refugees than to host students beyond the initial integration phase.<sup>47</sup> Inclusion into national systems further ensures that refugee education is recognized and accredited so that refugee students can transition into post-primary education, higher education and the labor market whether they are assimilated into the host country, return to the country of origin or are resettled. Finally, financial or technical support directed to host governments can help strengthen institutional capacity in the delivery of quality education which benefits both refugees and local students and creates resilience against future shocks.

21. As a result of the changing policy landscape and greater international advocacy, an increasing number of countries are adopting refugee-inclusive education policies. Rwanda's Strategic Plan for Refugee Inclusion (2019-2024) lists the integration of refugees into the national education system as one of four priority policy action.<sup>48</sup> The Country Refugee Response Plan 2019-2020 outlines a clear target to have 89 percent of all refugee children accessing the national education system by 2020.<sup>49</sup> Other signatories to the CRRF including Kenya, Ethiopia and Uganda have also committed to providing refugee children access to their national education systems with impressive outcomes already visible. In Ethiopia, the primary GER for refugee children grew by five percentage points from 62 percent to 67 percent in just one year from 2016/17 to 2017/18.<sup>50</sup>

22. In 2018, Uganda launched the Education Response Plan (ERP) for Refugees and Host Communities<sup>51</sup> which provides a global benchmark in bringing together government support, development aid, humanitarian assistance and private investment to respond to the education needs of

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<sup>47</sup> UNHCR and World Bank. 2020. *Global Cost of Inclusive Refugee Education*.

<sup>48</sup> ODI. 2019. *The Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework: Progress in Rwanda*.

<sup>49</sup> MIDIMAR. 2019. *Rwanda Country Refugee Response Plan 2019-2020*. Available at: [link](#). [Accessed on 18 September 2020].

<sup>50</sup> World Bank. 2019. *Education for Resilience – Exploring the experience of refugee students in three communities in Ethiopia*.

<sup>51</sup> While Uganda's ERP promotes refugee inclusion, it remains a satellite policy not integrated in the national sector plan. Situating the ERP within the Ministry of Education rather than the President's Office would improve long-term sustainability.

a large refugee influx and host communities. The ERP presents a multi-year strategy with priority intervention areas and a costed implementation plan, targeting sub-counties where the refugee school-age population is 25 percent larger than the local school-age population.<sup>52</sup> This allows various stakeholders to contribute to the national plan based on their comparative advantages and for the government to identify gaps in support. As a result, primary enrollment rate for refugee children in Uganda increased from 53 percent to 75 percent in the last two years.<sup>53</sup> Inclusive education programs benefit host communities too. In Pakistan, education investments made over ten years through the Refugee Affected and Hosting Areas initiative, benefitted 800,000 students of which 16 percent were Afghan refugees and the rest were local Pakistani students.<sup>54</sup>

23. In 2014, the Turkish government established a regulatory framework to transition temporary education centers that enrolled over 80 percent of Syrian refugee children under the coordination of the Ministry of National Education. Between 2014 and 2018, the share of Syrian refugee children enrolled in Turkish public schools increased from 20 percent to 63 percent.<sup>55</sup> This transition was supported with large scale implementation of Turkish language classes, remedial learning, provision of school materials and subsidized transport, teacher training and standardization of learning in temporary education centers. The Turkish government has committed to ensuring that all Syrian children are integrated into the national system as part of a sustainable education response. At the end of 2018, there were around 320,000 Syrian children of primary school age in Turkey and about 96 percent of them were enrolled in public schools, exceeding pre-war primary school enrollment rate in Syria.<sup>56</sup>

24. The Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan (3RP) presents a strategic and coordinated effort between humanitarian and development partners for planning, advocacy and fundraising to develop durable solutions to the Syrian crisis. It brings together plans developed by five major host countries – Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Turkey and Iraq. The education strategies are embedded in nationally mainstreamed refugee response plans, policy frameworks and data collection instruments and focus on transition to formal, accredited education, enhanced community engagement, and social protection and child support mechanisms.<sup>57</sup> Over a million children have been enrolled in formal education since the launch of the 3RP in 2015.<sup>58</sup>

25. Where there are legal or policy restrictions to integrated national systems, refugee education outcomes suffer. In Bangladesh, national policies prevent refugee children from accessing accredited education. According to UNHCR, the country is host to about 855,000 million stateless Rohingya refugees, 54 percent of whom are children. By June 2019, the education sector had provided non-formal education to 280,000 children aged 4 to 14 years, but 97 percent of children aged 15-17 years are not enrolled in any form of formal education or training,<sup>59</sup> due to specific restriction on permitted activities for this age group. NGOs are providing stop-gap non-formal education interventions, but a large majority of youth have no choice but to enroll in informal education. While the government recently approved two out of

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<sup>52</sup> UNHCR. 2019. *Uganda Country Refugee Response Plan 2019 – 2020*. Nairobi: UNHCR.

<sup>53</sup> ECW. 2020. *Stronger Together in Crisis – 2019 Annual Results Report*.

<sup>54</sup> UNHCR. 2019. *Stepping Up – Refugee Education in Crisis*.

<sup>55</sup> UNHCR. 2019. *Refugee Education 2030 – A Strategy for Refugee Inclusion*.

<sup>56</sup> Tumen, S. 2019. *Refugees and 'native flight' from public to private schools*. *Economic Letters*, 181: 154-159.

<sup>57</sup> UNESCO. 2020. *Enforcing the right to education of refugees: a policy perspective*.

<sup>58</sup> 3RP. 2020. *Annual Report 2019*.

<sup>59</sup> UNICEF. 2019. *Beyond survival: Rohingya refugee children in Bangladesh want to learn*.

four levels of an informal learning framework for Rohingya children<sup>60</sup>, this does not provide certification for transition across school years nor a pathway to higher education or the labor market.

**Key policy insight:** Where the forcibly displaced have been integrated into host country national education systems, or into host community schools in the case of IDPs, their access to education has improved. There is therefore the need to support host countries and communities in providing inclusive education.

## Improving education data systems and evidence-based decision making

### *Data gaps and key challenges*

26. There are significant gaps in the availability of data on forcibly displaced populations. Not all vulnerable people that cross a border register with UNHCR. Of those that do, demographic data is available for 80 percent of refugees, but only 33 percent of asylum-seekers and one percent of Venezuelans displaced abroad.<sup>61</sup> Data on IDPs, who constitute 57.5 percent of forcibly displaced people, is even more lacking. The Internal Displacement Monitoring Center (IDMC) released the first ever estimates on the number of children displaced as a result of conflict and violence in 2019,<sup>62</sup> and the first ever estimates on the number of people internally displaced by disasters or climate change only in 2020.<sup>63</sup>

27. Quality and timely data is critical to assess the impact of mass displacement on host communities, to support effective response policies for displaced populations, to track their progress towards the SDGs, to improve the targeting of limited resources, and to advocate for additional resources and strengthened responsibility sharing. This necessitates not just knowing how many people are forcibly displaced but having granular data beyond aggregate numbers. At a minimum, this includes the demographic composition (age and gender) of affected populations; where possible, efforts should be bolstered to collect data on educational access, attainment and quality of learning, skills and livelihoods, health and disability status, poverty incidence, location of settlement, and international protection status. Further, this data is required not only for those displaced but also for host communities.

28. The challenges associated with collecting and disaggregating data on forced displacement are extensive. A vast majority of IDPs and refugees are in fragile countries that tend to be the most data-poor. The drivers of inadequate quality data in these contexts include limited inputs in terms of resources and capacity, and outdated statistical infrastructure and processes for data collection. Further, there are implementation challenges linked with insecurity from conflict and violence, natural disasters like floods, or pandemics like Ebola or COVID-19 that make it difficult to send enumerators into affected areas. Given the high volatility associated with forced displacement, data can become outdated quickly or respondents become hard to track as populations move between locations.<sup>64</sup> In situations where it is challenging to collect data on simple population statistics, data collection for program effectiveness and impact evaluations is all the more confounding.

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<sup>60</sup> Post, L., Landry, R. and Huang, C. 2019. Centre for Global Development. *The Rohingya Response: Shifting to a whole of society approach that benefits all.*

<sup>61</sup> UNHCR. 2020. *Global Trends – Forced Displacement in 2019.*

<sup>62</sup> Cazabat, C. 2019. IDMC Thematic Series – Hidden in Plain Sight. *Twice invisible: Accounting for internally displaced children’s needs.*

<sup>63</sup> IDMC. 2020. *Global Report on Internal Displacement.*

<sup>64</sup> Hoogeveen, J. and Pape, U. 2020. *Data collection in fragile states – innovations from Africa and beyond.* World Bank: Washington, D.C.



29. Refugees are largely left out of national reporting systems. Out of the 42 countries that submitted 2019 Voluntary National Reviews for SDG reporting, only 13 mentioned refugees and none included data on refugees to measure their progress towards the SDGs.<sup>65</sup> The shift towards inclusive education systems should be accompanied by the inclusion of refugees in national data collection, with appropriate levels of data protection for each context. This will ensure that the needs of refugee children do not remain invisible, that they are not left out of education planning and resource allocation towards their education outcomes becomes more efficient and sustainable. For instance, the Jordan Education Simulation Model<sup>66</sup> which is used for long term planning and to identify resource requirements, includes age-disaggregated data on Syrian children and identifies the distribution of children across education subsectors, refugee-specific education interventions, budgetary gaps and sources of financing. Beyond education planning, it is important to track outcomes including access rates, learning outcomes and completion rates for refugee children to ensure that they are not left behind in the progress towards the SDGs. Efforts to improve inclusiveness should be reinforced with support to strengthen national education data systems. This includes improvement in timeliness of data collection, capacity building for data analysis and reporting and increased transparency in safe data sharing and dissemination. Importantly, to safeguard refugee children, national education systems should not collect data disaggregated by legal status where data privacy and child protection protocols are not in place. Schools, enumerators and Ministries of Education need to be trained and sensitized on how this data should be collected and used.

**Key policy insight:** Despite the prevalence of forced displacement, quality and timely data on the forcibly displaced population remains sorely lacking. The education needs of forcibly displaced populations differ based on refugee or IDP status and by gender, age-group and disability, necessitating decisive action towards improved data collection with adequate levels of data disaggregation.

#### *Data to improve programmatic efficiency and policy response*

30. Forced displacement affects different groups differently. Without disaggregated data, any blanket policy response risks leaving the most marginalized behind. With about 40 percent of forcibly displaced persons below the age of 18 years,<sup>67</sup> any effective response should cater to the needs of children and invest in education and human capital development. But programmatic inputs vary widely across education subsectors from early childhood education to primary, secondary, tertiary and technical and vocational training. Age-disaggregated data would allow for a more efficient allocation of resources across subsectors. Gender and disability disaggregation of data are critical to planning inclusive interventions.

31. Further, forcibly displaced populations are more likely to have women-headed households<sup>68</sup> with high dependency ratios characterized by lower education attainment, lower labor market participation and higher poverty headcount. These conditions create significant demand-side barriers to education and require a different policy response than increased inputs like school infrastructure and teachers. The lack of reliable data on the socioeconomic conditions of refugees and IDPs limits the effectiveness of program design and implementation. An education module has been developed to be included in Socio-Economic

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<sup>65</sup> Grossman, A. and Post, L. 2019. *Missing persons: Refugees left out and left behind in the Sustainable Development Goals*.

<sup>66</sup> Jordan Ministry of Education. 2018. Jordan Education Simulation Model.

<sup>67</sup> UNHCR. 2020. *Global Trends – Forced Displacement in 2019*.

<sup>68</sup> Hoogeveen, J. and Pape, U. 2020. Data collection in fragile states – innovations from Africa and beyond. World Bank: Washington, D.C.

Assessments conducted or commissioned by UNHCR, representing a crucial step in improving program design and policy response.

32. Beyond inputs, it is important to start collecting data on education quality including learning outcomes through formative school-based assessments and summative sample-based assessments like the Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA) and the Early Grade Mathematics Assessment (EGMA).<sup>69</sup> A recent analysis of EGRA scores in Kenya finds that learning outcomes of refugee children in Kakuma camp were exceedingly low, much worse than their counterparts in the rest of Kenya and far lower than those of disadvantaged children in the host community of Turkana county.<sup>70</sup> An understanding of the learning gaps for refugee or forcibly displaced children can allow policymakers to design programs that not only bring children to school but allow them to thrive and build their human capital.

33. Refugee teachers are rarely included or transitioned into national systems; as a result, they receive only incentive payments through donor organizations or non-governmental organizations, with poor sustainability and no safeguards through Ministry-level investments when crises like COVID-19 hit. Refugees who are qualified teachers rarely have their qualifications recognized in host countries, which presents significant challenges. Improved data on refugee teachers and recognition of their qualifications would allow host systems to absorb additional refugee students more rapidly than having to train, recruit or redeploy national teachers to host communities. It would also provide refugee teachers with a source of income where economic opportunities in camps or host communities are limited.

34. Several program-types, including accelerated learning programs, local language instruction (where the language of instruction differs between the origin and host country), mental health and psychosocial support and school feeding are relatively common in locations where there have been large influxes and humanitarian investment. They are often implemented by NGOs or international agencies that might collect data for project monitoring and reporting. Given their priority is to deliver humanitarian services, sometimes in very challenging environments, data collection has generally been treated as a byproduct of the intervention rather than a more deliberate activity to inform evidence-based policymaking.<sup>71</sup> Further, given that these environments are highly resource-constrained, funds are directed towards the intervention rather than impact evaluations. Impact evaluations, or baseline and endline surveys are rarely encouraged, requested or included in humanitarian education proposals. Thus, while the evidence on each of these interventions in non-conflict settings is extensive (see 2018 World Development Report<sup>72</sup> on what works to improve learning), there is very little rigorous evidence on the impact of these programs in settings of forced displacement. As countries move towards more inclusive national education systems, there is an urgent need to increase the resources (both financial and technical) dedicated to understanding the impact of refugee education programs and how they can be integrated into national systems for long-term, durable solutions to displacement.

**Key policy insight:** Better education data are required in order to allow better design of responsive policies to refugees' specific needs, and once interventions have been implemented, in order to assess these interventions' effectiveness to inform future policy making.

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<sup>69</sup> UNHCR. 2011. *Refugee Education – A Global Review*.

<sup>70</sup> Piper, Benjamin, Dryden-Peterson, Sarah, Chopra, Vidur, Reddick, Celia, and Oyanga, Arbogast (2020) Are refugee children learning? Early grade literacy in a refugee camp in Kenya, *Journal on Education in Emergencies* 5(2): 71-107.

<sup>71</sup> Data collection is generally reflected through reporting to Education or Protection Clusters, or from individual organizations to donors. This data tends to be program-specific and not entirely adequate to respond to data requirement for policy design.

<sup>72</sup> World Bank. 2018. *World Development Report 2018 – Learning to realize education's promise*.

## Data on host countries and communities

35. The GCR calls for reliable, comparable and timely data which is essential to assess the impact of mass displacement on host communities.<sup>73</sup> Data on forcibly displaced populations should be supplemented by data on host communities. This is important to strengthen policy design, improve the efficiency of resource allocation and reduce social tension. For instance, in Uganda, the GER for refugees in primary school in 2018 was 58 percent compared to 120 percent for host community children; but secondary school GER was extremely low for both groups (11 percent and 18 percent respectively).<sup>74</sup> This data might lead to different policy responses for each subsector – with an oversubscribed primary education sector, the Ministry of Education would have to invest in additional classrooms or introduce double shift for refugee children to prevent overcrowding of classrooms; to address the low GER in secondary, government interventions would have to target supply and demand-side constraints that were keeping both refugee and host community children out of school.

36. Data from IDPs in South Sudan and South Sudanese refugees in Ethiopia show that refugees tend to be far poorer than host communities, whereas IDPs and rural hosts are nearly equally poor.<sup>75</sup> This kind of data can improve targeting of programs – for instance, cash transfers to students in communities with a high proportion of refugees may be conditional on refugee status or household poverty; whereas in rural communities with high numbers of IDPs, transfers may be conditional on attendance rather than IDP status.

37. Further, forced displacement has a significant regional dimension. Refugees are largely concentrated in border communities that may themselves have inadequate access to public services. This can create social tensions if host communities believe that IDPs and refugees would reduce classroom spaces and lower education quality. To ensure improved integration and diffuse social tension, host communities need to perceive that they are not being sidelined but are benefitting from humanitarian, developmental and government support, and this should be backed by data collection and dissemination.<sup>76</sup> In Mozambique, the construction of a secondary school near a refugee camp benefitted both refugees and the host community for whom the nearest secondary school was 35 kilometers away.<sup>77</sup> Pakistan's Refugee Affected and Hosting Areas initiative directed funds to underserved host communities and of the 800,000 beneficiaries, 16 percent were Afghan refugee children while the rest were local Pakistanis.<sup>78</sup> In Rwanda, school attendance of local children was higher among those who resided within a 10-kilometer radius of a Congolese refugee camp compared to children residing farther away. These children were also significantly more likely to be part of a school-based feeding program.<sup>79</sup> Based on evidence from the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), the mathematics, science and reading scores of Turkish native adolescents significantly increased following the influx of Syrian refugees.<sup>80</sup> A study estimating the impact of Syrian refugees on education outcomes (school entry,

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<sup>73</sup> UNHCR. 2018. Global Compact on Refugees.

<sup>74</sup> UNHCR. 2019. *Uganda Country Refugee Response Plan 2019 – 2020*. Nairobi: UNHCR.

<sup>75</sup> Hoogeveen, J. and Pape, U. 2020. Data collection in fragile states – innovations from Africa and beyond. World Bank: Washington, D.C.

<sup>76</sup> Hoogeveen, J. and Pape, U. 2020. Data collection in fragile states – innovations from Africa and beyond. World Bank: Washington, D.C.

<sup>77</sup> Ghelli, T. 2017. UNHCR – Support education for all in Mozambique. Available at: [link](#). [Accessed 15 July 2020].

<sup>78</sup> UNHCR. 2019. *Stepping Up: Refugee Education in Crisis*.

<sup>79</sup> Bilgili, O., Loschmann, C., Fransen, S., and Siegel, M. 2019. Is the education of local children influenced by living near a refugee camp? Evidence from host communities in Rwanda, *Internal Migration*.

<sup>80</sup> Tumen, S. 2019. *The effect of refugees on native adolescents' test scores: Quasi-experimental evidence from PISA*.

enrollment and grade-wise progression) of Jordanian children found no evidence of adverse effects.<sup>81</sup> Disseminating this evidence more widely could lead to improved integration and social cohesion.

**Key policy insight:** Better data needs are not limited to the forcibly displaced themselves but include data on host communities, which are often historically disadvantaged. An improved understanding of the constraints facing host community education services is necessary both for better policy design as well as inclusivity of these policies.

### *Global collaboration and innovations to improve data availability and strengthen data systems*

38. Recent collaborations between humanitarian, development and academic actors mark a shift in improved data collection, analysis and evidence-sharing on forced displacement. The World Bank and UNHCR launched the Joint Data Center on Forced Displacement in October 2019 with the objectives of strengthening data systems and building local capacity for timely and evidence-based decision making, improving collection and analysis of microdata, and supporting public dissemination of data.<sup>82</sup> The [Inclusive Data Charter](#) which was launched in 2018 with champions amongst governments, international organizations and non-governmental organizations, aims to mobilize political commitments and meaningful actions to deepen disaggregation.<sup>83</sup> In March 2020, a new indicator was added to the SDG Agenda to track the proportion of refugees by country of origin, making it the first SDG indicator to specifically mention refugees.<sup>84</sup> The GCR indicator framework includes 15 indicators, of which one tracks the proportion of refugee children enrolled in national education systems at the primary and secondary levels.<sup>85</sup>

39. Supported by this rich policy environment, several innovations in data collection and analysis have emerged in fragile and conflict-affected settings. The GPE supports transitional and long-term education planning for crisis-affected countries,<sup>86</sup> and this funding could be leveraged to strengthen inclusive data systems. UNESCO has extensive experience working with ministries on education management information systems (EMIS) and is currently undertaking a partnership with ECW and Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) to strengthening EMIS in the education in emergencies data landscape.<sup>87</sup> National data systems often lack the ability to adapt to the rapidly changing and complex nature of crisis situations, necessitating decisive action to strengthen and support them. This includes investments in capacity building and technology for data collection, analysis and reporting. Support to governments should include harmonization of humanitarian data and data from national EMIS, and the utilization of this data in education sector planning and decision making. Improvements in national data systems impact the sector's ability for crisis preparedness, response and recovery. Further, since data systems tend to be weak in most crisis-affected development countries, these investments can bolster equitable resource allocation and education sector planning for host countries.

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<sup>81</sup> Assaad, R., Ginn, T. and Saleh, M. 2019. Impact of Syrian refugees in Jordan on education outcomes for Jordanian youth.

<sup>82</sup> Gilsätter, B. 2019. World Bank and UNHCR: Using open data to drive evidence-based responses to support refugees and their hosts.

<sup>83</sup> Global Partnership for Sustainable Development Data. 2020. Inclusive Data Charter. Available at: [link](#). [Accessed 14 July 2020].

<sup>84</sup> UNHCR. 2020. *Global Trends – Forced Displacement in 2019*.

<sup>85</sup> UNHCR. 2019. Global Compact on Refugees – Indicator Framework.

<sup>86</sup> GPE. 2019. Supporting countries affected by fragility and conflict.

<sup>87</sup> UNESCO. 2020. Strengthening EMIS and data for increased resilience to crises. Available at: [link](#). [Accessed 24 September 2020].

40. The World Bank FCV Strategy 2030 encourages the systematic use of digital solutions in FCV settings.<sup>88</sup> For instance, Geo-enabling for Monitoring and Supervision (GEMS) was used in the DRC to collect detailed data and map all secondary schools within a few months, providing real time insights for the Ministry of Education without risking the safety of enumerators.<sup>89</sup> Digitized data collection can reduce the amount of time spent in the field where security risks are high, can improve the quality of data collected, and allow for more rapid analysis and feedback loops. Free and open source tools, like [Kobo Toolbox](#) developed by the Harvard Humanitarian Initiative or [Survey Solutions](#) developed by the World Bank, are being widely used in crisis settings.

41. Adequate data collection coupled with big data analytics, can help develop early warning systems so that countries and regional humanitarian and development partners can develop effective emergency preparedness and response plans as signs of internal crises begin to emerge. For instance, both the Venezuelan and the Syrian crises were internal displacement crises for four years before they escalated to large-scale refugee crises,<sup>90</sup> which is considerable lead time to develop and mobilize response efforts. The [INFORM Risk Index](#) uses 50 indicators to measure the severity and risk of crises<sup>91</sup> and covers 191 countries. The index is used by the World Food Programme (WFP) to trigger timely and adequate preparedness and response and to support the inter-agency Early Warning, Early Action and Readiness Analysis process. It is used by other UN agencies including European Commission Humanitarian Aid Office (ECHO) and Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) to support the development of annual strategies and funding decisions.<sup>92</sup> The IDMC has also developed a Global Displacement Risk Model for over 200 countries and territories which helps model and predict the impact of climate and weather disasters on mass displacement.<sup>93</sup> Further, analysis of satellite imagery can also help estimate large movements of people. These kinds of innovations in data collection and analysis can provide insights to guide prevention, preparedness, response and recovery.

42. In areas where on-site monitoring or data collection becomes challenging, rapid phone-based data collection and feedback can provide useful information. For instance, phone surveys are being widely used to collect data on the reach and efficacy of home-based learning programs in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic.<sup>94</sup> In Mali, iterative beneficiary monitoring (IBM) was used to improve a school feeding program. IBM involves rapid, frequent and focused data collection with multiple low-cost surveys conducted to create dynamic feedback loops. In Mali, the questionnaires focused on key areas of concern, data collection rounds were within six months of each other, and reports were generated very quickly. As a result of these rapid feedback loops, the average time of cash transfers for the school feeding program was reduced from four months to 15 days and the number of schools that offered less than five days a week fell from 25 percent to 13 percent.<sup>95</sup> This kind of monitoring is in contrast to a rigorous impact evaluation but can help improve the effectiveness of an intervention and course-correct for better outcomes.

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<sup>88</sup> World Bank. 2020. World Bank Group Strategy for Fragility, Conflict and Violence 2020 – 2025.

<sup>89</sup> World Bank. 2020. World Bank Group Strategy for Fragility, Conflict and Violence 2020 – 2025.

<sup>90</sup> Bahar, D. and Dooley, M. 2019. Brookings. *Venezuela refugee crisis to become the largest and most underfunded in modern history*. Available at: [link](#). [Accessed 15 July 2020].

<sup>91</sup> Crises include human hazards from current and projected conflict and natural hazards including earthquakes, tsunamis, droughts, floods, cyclones and epidemics.

<sup>92</sup> Inter-Agency Standing Committee and the European Commission. 2020. INFORM Report 2020: Shared evidence for managing crisis and disaster.

<sup>93</sup> IDMC. 2020. Global Report on Internal Displacement.

<sup>94</sup> IPA. 2020. Research for Effective COVID-19 Responses (RECOVER). Available at: [link](#). [Accessed 16 July 2020].

<sup>95</sup> Hoogeveen, J. and Pape, U. 2020. Data collection in fragile states – innovations from Africa and beyond. World Bank: Washington, D.C.

43. While these innovations are encouraging, much remains to be done. Quality, disaggregated data is essential to strengthen preparedness and response, and can be collected in a timely and cost-effective manner. Ministries of Education should be encouraged to include refugees and IDPs in national data systems and track and report their progress against the SDGs. They should also be supported with systematic capacity building. There is a paucity of evidence on the effectiveness of refugee and IDP education programs which requires additional investments. Digital solutions provide strong alternatives to field monitoring in certain contexts and should be leveraged. Ultimately without reliable and timely data, forcibly displaced people remain invisible and risk further marginalization than they already suffer. Where financing is already limited, quality data is critical to planning, policy design and effective targeting.

**Key policy insight:** National-level education system support should include support to strengthening data systems and capacity building in the analysis and use of data on forcibly displaced populations for education sector decision making. Several recent technological and methodological innovations, developed through partnerships between humanitarian, development and private actors, have improved data availability to anticipate, track and respond to large-scale displacement and to assess their impact on home and host countries. Further exploration of the potential for these innovations is needed to expand data availability sufficiently. National and regional response plans for home and host countries can be strengthened through the use of such data.

### Challenges and opportunities arising from the COVID-19 pandemic

44. The COVID-19 pandemic has had a profound impact on the education sector globally. In April 2020, more than 180 countries experienced school closures, affecting 1.6 billion children and youth.<sup>96</sup> Without effective mitigation and remedial action, this disruption in schooling coupled with a widespread economic recession could result in increased dropouts, reduced years of schooling, exacerbated learning losses and permanent erosion of human capital. It is estimated that as a result of the pandemic, an additional 6.8 million children will drop out of school and average quality-adjusted years of schooling will fall from 7.9 years to between 7.0 and 7.6 years.<sup>97</sup> For countries where refugee girls' GER at secondary education is less than 10 percent, like Ethiopia and Pakistan, it is estimated that all girls are at risk of dropping out of school for good.<sup>98</sup>

45. Even before the onset of the pandemic, the education sector was grappling with high levels of learning poverty with less than half the world's children being able to read for meaning by age 10.<sup>99</sup> The pandemic will not only increase learning poverty but also learning inequality as the impact will be worse for marginalized groups like adolescent girls, children from low-income households, children with disabilities and forcibly displaced children. Remote and distance learning models are not homogeneously effective since there is a large digital divide in connectivity and access to hardware, teacher capacity to facilitate remote learning differs and parental capacity and engagement to support home-based learning varies. Further, the opportunity cost of education increases during an economic recession, disproportionately for poorer communities, as children may be expected to work to supplement household incomes. This risks deepening existing inequalities.

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<sup>96</sup> UNHCR. 2020. *Supporting continued access to education during COVID-19 – emerging promising practices*.

<sup>97</sup> Azevedo, J.P., Hasan A., Goldemberg, D., Iqbal, S.A. and Geven, K. 2020. *Simulating the potential impacts of COVID-19 school closures on school and learning outcomes – a set of global estimates*. World Bank: Washington D.C.

<sup>98</sup> GPE. 2020. Displacement, Girls' Education and COVID-19. Available at: [link](#). [Accessed 24 September 2020].

<sup>99</sup> World Bank. 2019. *Ending Learning Poverty: What will it take?*

46. The pandemic also exacerbates the pre-existing challenges faced by forcibly displaced children, putting them at greater risk of falling behind. Millions of these children rely on school feeding programs, psychosocial support and child protection services all of which are disrupted during school closures, impacting their health, nutrition and wellbeing, and their ability to continue learning. Local language instruction may also be discontinued further widening the gap in the effectiveness of home-based learning materials if they are not in the appropriate language. Refugee communities might not be connected to the electricity grid or have physical or financial access to connectivity that their host peers do for online learning. Even when schools reopen, social distancing may not be feasible with overcrowded classrooms. Further, access to schooling for refugee children may be affected by a larger demand for public schooling from local communities. As household education expenditure falls and the supply of low-cost private schooling contracts without sufficient revenues, public education systems will become overburdened. For instance, this could be particularly challenging in Lebanon, where 70 percent of children are enrolled in private schools and the number of refugee children is nearly double the number of Lebanese children enrolled in public school.<sup>100</sup>

47. Other supply side constraints resulting from shrinking government fiscal space, reduced international aid budgets, and redirection of limited resources to combat impacts on health systems and livelihoods, are likely to reduce investments in education. Yet, now more than ever, it is important to protect and even increase education investments, given the long-term impacts of learning poverty and learning inequality on economic productivity, lifetime earnings and human capital formation.

48. Many education systems are rising to the challenge of the COVID-19 pandemic and turning the crisis into an opportunity. The pandemic has compelled governments to rapidly roll-out remote and home-based learning programs, and plan for more resilient, equitable and sustainable education delivery. Effective programs use a blend of high and low technology solutions including online programs, television and radio broadcast, interactive SMS lessons and supplementary printed materials. In Egypt, digitized materials on the Education Knowledge Bank are used by over 25 million local and refugee children. In Jordan, Kenya and Uganda, educational content on online learning platforms is zero-rated removing high connectivity cost barriers. With support from ECW, UNHCR are providing refugee children and teachers in Uganda with pre-loaded tablets to help prepare for national examinations. Radio programs are being broadcasted in refugee camps in Kenya and South Sudan. In Indonesia, learning centers established by UNHCR now use instant messaging and video conferencing through WhatsApp, Zoom and YouTube to increase teacher and student interactions. Printed materials and self-study packs are being distributed in refugee camps in Niger, Ghana and South Sudan. Finally, in refugee camps in eastern Chad, community members are engaged through Parent Teacher Associations (PTAs) to provide and assess weekly homework for students.<sup>101</sup>

49. Important lessons and opportunities are emerging from the response to the COVID-19 pandemic that will allow education systems to cope and recover and ensure more inclusiveness and resilience as they build back better.

- a. *Continuity of learning.* Students must continue to learn through intermittent school closures to prevent the erosion of learning gains and ameliorate learning poverty. Beyond a rights-based argument, there is a strong economic case for countries to ensure continued access to

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<sup>100</sup> World Bank. 2017. *Lebanon Education Public Expenditure Review*.

<sup>101</sup> UNHCR. 2020. *Supporting continued access to education during COVID-19 – emerging promising practices*.

learning even as health and livelihoods crises compete for limited resources. It is estimated that without adequate mitigation measures, learning losses from the pandemic could translate into US\$10 trillion of lost earnings over time or an equivalent of 16 percent of government investments in basic education for this cohort of students.<sup>102</sup>

b. *Multi-platform and blended approaches to learning.* Effective remote learning programs necessitate a combination of online programs, television and radio broadcasting, and printed materials. In response to the pandemic, hundreds of education technology solutions have emerged. Governments and education partners should begin to rigorously evaluate their effectiveness to improve the use of technology in learning. Further, approaches to improve remote teacher-student interaction is critical as there is increasing evidence that education technology should complement rather than substitute the role of the teacher.<sup>103</sup>

c. *Closing the digital divide.* The COVID-19 pandemic has exposed the large inequality in access to hardware and connectivity. As governments increasingly use education technology it is important to bridge this divide. Partnerships with NGOs and the private sector could accelerate this process. For instance, War Child developed a low-cost tablet through their project Can't Wait to Learn that uses adaptive, gaming technology to improve learning in conflict-affected areas. This evidence-based program is now operational in Sudan, Uganda, Lebanon, Jordan, Chad and Bangladesh,<sup>104</sup> and program evaluations show that it can be scaled cost-effectively.<sup>105</sup> In 2019, UNICEF launched [GIGA](#), a global initiative to connect every school to the internet and every young person to information. Starlink is a SpaceX project that is developing a satellite-based broadband system that will deliver low-cost connectivity with near-global coverage by 2021.<sup>106</sup>

d. *Equitable access to learning.* Governments must ensure that remote learning opportunities are inclusive. For refugee and IDP children, this may include remote local language instruction or translation of learning materials in multiple languages. Learning materials should also be adapted for children with disabilities. Where possible education content should be zero-rated (implying access without cost to user) through partnerships with telecommunication partners. Once schools reopen, mitigation measures including enrollment campaigns and conditional cash transfers should be targeted at vulnerable children at-risk of dropping out of school.

e. *Learning recovery.* As schools reopen, teachers should be encouraged to assess learning losses and provide remedial instruction, rather than being pushed to complete curriculums that may be very ambitious. Accelerated education programs can help recover losses in instructional time. Evidence of the positive impacts of teaching at the right level is emerging from India, Ghana and Kenya.<sup>107</sup> As rapid assessment and targeted instruction materials and practices are

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<sup>102</sup> Azevedo, J.P., Hasan A., Goldemberg, D., Iqbal, S.A. and Geven, K. 2020. *Simulating the potential impacts of COVID-19 school closures on school and learning outcomes – a set of global estimates*. World Bank: Washington D.C.

<sup>103</sup> Education Endowment Foundation. 2019. *Digital technology – moderate impact for moderate cost, based on extensive evidence*.

<sup>104</sup> War Child Holland. Can't Wait to Learn. Available at: [link](#). [Accessed 7 July 2020].

<sup>105</sup> Stubbé, H., Badri, A., Telford, R., van der Hulst, A. and van Joolingen, W. 2016. *E-Learning Sudan, Formal Learning for Out-of-School Children*. The Electronic Journal of e-Learning, 14:2.

<sup>106</sup> Starlink. Available at: [link](#). [Accessed 7 July 2020].

<sup>107</sup> Banerjee, A., Banerji, R., Berry, J., Duflo, E., Kannan, H., Mukherji, S., Shotland, M. and Walton, M. 2016. "Mainstreaming an Effective Intervention: Evidence from Randomized Evaluations of 'Teaching at the Right Level' in India." NBER: Cambridge, MA.



strengthened across the world, there will be positive spillovers for forcibly displaced children who often have their schooling disrupted for prolonged periods. Education technology, big data analytics and adaptive learning will allow for the development of flexible, individualized learning programs for children and this provides a great opportunity to meet the specific needs of forcibly displaced children.

f. *Strengthened role of teachers.* Across the world, support to teachers is woefully inadequate as they transition into facilitating remote learning. Pre- and in-service teacher training programs should include modules on methods during emergencies, digital literacy, targeted instruction, WASH and mental health and psychosocial wellbeing. Further, teacher salaries should be safeguarded not only to ensure that teachers can return to work once schools reopen but also to protect livelihoods where other economic opportunities do not exist. Refugee teachers and teachers in forcibly displaced situations can be leveraged to provide additional teaching support where appropriate. For instance, in Kenya, refugee teachers living in the Dadaab camp are preparing and broadcasting radio programs.<sup>108</sup>

g. *Improved parental and community engagement.* Home-based learning has compelled parents to play a more active role in their children's education. There is considerable evidence that parental engagement can improve learning. In Ghana, a program that trained mothers in play-based pedagogy resulted in improved student cognition, school readiness and pre-numeracy and literacy skills.<sup>109</sup> Therefore, efforts to support learning must also be directed towards parents. For instance, in Ecuador, a text message program relays information and encouragement to parents on supporting education through the pandemic.<sup>110</sup> Efforts should be made to ensure that increased parental involvement persists beyond the pandemic. Within refugee camp settings and beyond, communities and civil society organizations can play an important role in providing continuity of services like local language instruction, feeding programs and psychosocial support, adhering to social distance norms while schools remain closed.

50. Governments and the international community will have to devote the necessary financing to help education systems cope, recover and adapt to the "new normal". The pandemic has exposed the large digital divide and underlying inequalities in accessing quality education but has also accelerated education technology like never before. Great opportunities are emerging from this crisis that are relevant and important for the response to the forced displacement crisis. Countries should leverage this momentum to reach all students and enhance learning.

**Key policy insight:** The COVID-19 pandemic has brought to the fore challenges of inequitable access to continuity of learning, inadequate teacher capacity and lack of essential inputs, which need to be urgently addressed to safeguard against further deepening existing divides. The pandemic has led to the adoption of remote education service delivery in many countries, and the resulting reliance on internet connectivity and availability of hardware has exacerbated learning inequalities, particularly for the forcibly displaced and their host communities. At the same time, the dramatic shift to remote education should not be rolled back completely post-pandemic. Instead, countries can tap into the possibilities of individualized learning and other

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<sup>108</sup> UNHCR. 2020. *Supporting continued access to education during COVID-19 – emerging promising practices.*

<sup>109</sup> Attanasio, O. and Krutikova, S. 2019. *The effects of a play-based preschool learning program in rural Ghana.*

<sup>110</sup> Devercelli, A. 2020. *Supporting youngest learners and their families in the COVID-19 (coronavirus) response.*

benefits that remote education offers, thereby building back better with respect to improving the learning of the marginalized, including the forcibly displaced.

## Partnerships for greater impact

51. The provision of education for forcibly displaced children is considered a global public good that extends beyond the responsibility of the host country and the country of origin. There are positive spillovers regionally and globally in terms of increased human capital and self-sufficiency. Furthermore, quality education can foster strengthened citizen engagement and social and political stability that are critical to ending the cycle of fragility and conflict and can contribute to sustainable reconstruction and peace-building. Yet, one of the key characteristics of a global public good is the incentive to “free-ride”. Since the benefits of education accrue to the global community in addition to the forcibly displaced population, each country should contribute to this public good but in reality, individual host countries bear the lion’s share of the cost. This market failure creates the need for collective action through effective partnerships.

52. A dizzying array of multilateral, bilateral, private sector, civil society, and philanthropic actors seek to support refugee, IDP, and host community children in obtaining a quality education. On its website, UNESCO lists<sup>111</sup> Inter-agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE), ECW, NRC, UNHCR, United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), Global Education Cluster (GEC), UNOCHA, GCPEA, and the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children in Armed Conflict as the humanitarian and UN partner agencies that it works in close partnership with to strengthen its impact on education in emergencies. INEE, in turn, indicates on its website that it partners with “more than 130 leading organizations in the field of education in emergencies and post-crisis recovery.”<sup>112</sup> The GEC, for its part, provides a Partners Forum that is a platform for national and international NGOs, UN agencies, and other organization supporting education in emergencies in order to share information, priorities, and enhance coordination. In other words, there are not only multiple actors aiming to support the education of the forcibly displaced, but also multiple entities aiming to coordinate these different actors. This not only leads to competing agendas but also inadequate attention to critical areas of response including prevention of crises, government capacity building for resilience, cross-sectoral coordination, and knowledge production on the drivers of fragility and what works to improve learning in these environments.<sup>113</sup>

53. Traditionally, partners have fallen into two broad categories, humanitarian or development, the rationale being that humanitarian partners respond quickly to the immediate emergency needs, while development partners focus more on the medium- to long-term solutions. Mirroring this grouping, coordination mechanisms across partners are primarily separate for the humanitarian and development sector. Country-level clusters coordinate humanitarian actors and investment for IDP populations and many mixed IDP-refugee situations; whilst UNHCR coordinates refugee situations, and local groups including development partners coordinate development planning and investment (although the exact terminology can vary across countries). Ideally, there is cross-fertilization across the two groups, and each group has representation and presence in the other though this is rarely the case. In recognition of this, UNHCR’s *Refugee Education 2030: A Strategy for Refugee Inclusion* felt it necessary to describe a role for UNHCR in leading and facilitating collective partnership action that aims to leverage both the

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<sup>111</sup> UNESCO. 2020. Partners in Education and Emergencies. Available at: [link](#). [Accessed 3 September 2020].

<sup>112</sup> INEE. 2020. Partners. Available at: [link](#). [Accessed on 4 September 2020].

<sup>113</sup> World Bank. 2020. *FCV Education White Paper (forthcoming)*.

humanitarian and development partners for effective sequencing of education planning and financing in a global context of refugee protraction.

54. Partnerships are universally acknowledged as critical in order to improve learning outcomes for the forcibly displaced. Yet given the large number of actors involved, and the fact that multiple coordination mechanisms already exist, it is clear that coordinating across all actors is not possible nor perhaps desirable. Instead, the World Bank *Strategy for Fragility, Conflict, and Violence 2020-2025* makes the case for partnerships being mission-driven and based on the comparative advantages of each partner. Experience indicates that partnerships take time and effort to establish and nurture, and that they involve transaction costs in terms of both time and financial resources. Therefore, they need not be established with all actors and simply for the sake of partnering. Instead, partnerships should respond to concrete needs identified in-country, from the ground up, in an effort to generate results greater than the sum of each partner.

55. The importance of country-led coordination across partners is generally acknowledged, but the speed with which this can be achieved is a major issue. At the same time, speed is often of the essence. The delay can often come from different partners' inability to work jointly, whether for practical or legal and institutional issues. In this regard, there are examples of established partnership agreements that are in place and can be triggered when the need arises without spending time defining the nature of the partnership, the roles of each actor, and so on. One such partnership is between the European Union (EU), UN, and the World Bank regarding conducting joint Recovery and Peace-Building Assessments, which define the post-crisis needs of a country, including financial resources. Another partnership is the UN-World Bank Partnership Framework for Crisis-Affected Situations, which commits to coordinating support to situations of protracted crisis by aligning strategies, objectives, and collective outcomes based on joint analyses and assessments, as well as scaling up impact by leveraging existing financing and comparative advantages. The UNHCR, INEE and ECW launched the [Global Partners' Project](#) to strengthen the evidence base on joint coordination, planning and response, and to provide support to country coordination teams and partners working on education in emergencies. Yet another partnership in the making is between ECW, GPE, and the World Bank, which committed during the 2019 Global Refugee Forum to coordinate on identifying and closing funding gaps for education of the forcibly displaced.

56. There is a long-standing consensus that partnerships between humanitarian and development actors should be strengthened to respond to immediate, short-term and longer-term education needs at the earliest stages of a crisis; yet, there are real structural barriers that have to be addressed to ensure that these partnerships are effective. These include different funding sources and cycles, project timelines, programmatic policies, institutional policies and mandates, earmarking of funding for humanitarian and developmental interventions, and so on. For instance, given the World Bank's long-term relationships with governments, it has a comparative advantage in convening humanitarian and development actors with government and ministerial leadership; however, where there is insufficient political will or evident political bias, humanitarian agencies may be better equipped to respond to crises with neutrality and impartiality. Some partners may work better at the national policy level, others have a stronger presence on the ground, and yet others are able to deploy limited but urgently needed resources quickly. Yet most organizations have multiple-mandates and as a result, compete and scramble for limited resources. Strong leadership is required to coordinate effective partnerships, and a willingness within development and humanitarian organizations to push changes that streamline their roles and their ability to work in consortium with other organizations.

57. One clear example is the lack of coordination at the global level in financing for education in fragile, conflict and violence-affected situations (FCS). As the largest financier of education, the World Bank has a comparative advantage in fundraising for development financing. The GPE provides essential grant funding that can complement the World Bank's lending. The ECW has demonstrated the ability to quickly deploy funds to UN implementing agencies and national and international NGOs that the World Bank and GPE do not traditionally reach. This is important to bridge the gap in financing where lending to client governments may be in breach of impartiality and neutrality, or otherwise delayed. The International Finance Facility for Education (IFFEd) can provide critical funding to middle-income countries that require subsidized financing but are not eligible for grants; and the Education Outcomes Fund (EOF) can help mobilize funding from private sector and philanthropic actors. However, several organizations including ECW, the World Bank and GPE, are involved in fund-raising of development financing and determination of country allocations of funding. This could result in a zero-sum game where funds raised by one organization are not available to the other, creating room for competition and poor coordination. It is critical that these overlapping and competing mandates are streamlined through mission-driven partnerships and supported by improved coordination and leadership. UNESCO has global convening power and has the potential to play a central role in the coordination of these actors given its mandate as the Secretariat of the SDG 2030 Education Steering Committee; this would, however, require a deliberate push to strengthen its role as the central coordinating agency in the humanitarian-development nexus for education in FCS.

**Key policy insight:** Partnerships across all humanitarian, development, and other actors are important in order to maximize complementarities and results on the ground for the forcibly displaced. These partnerships are most effective when they are mission-driven and host country-led. Given the need for urgent action in many instances, it is best to establish partnership agreements in advance and make use of them when the need arises. There are multiple actors supporting the education of the forcibly displaced and multiple entities aiming to coordinate these different actors. There is an urgent need for strong leadership to streamline the role of each of these actors for effective partnerships.

## Financing education for forcibly displaced populations

58. International funding for education of forcibly displaced populations is seriously inadequate. A joint World Bank-UNHCR paper, in consultation with host governments convened through the GCR technical workshops, estimated the annual average cost of providing K-12 years of education to all refugee children under UNHCR's mandate in their host countries through national systems at US\$4.85 billion.<sup>114</sup> While this might seem an ambitious level of funding, the paper argues that it is not beyond the reach of the collective effort of the international community and host governments. For comparison, the world spends approximately the same amount on the military every day.<sup>115</sup> Yet, there is a large gap in existing funding – in 2016, combined humanitarian and developmental support to refugee education amounted to US\$800 million<sup>116</sup> which implies that achieving an annual level of financing of US\$4.85 billion would require a six-fold increase in resource mobilization. The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA) spends an additional US\$420 million on education annually for Palestinian refugee children. A global estimate on the funding required to reach all internally displaced children with

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<sup>114</sup> UNHCR and World Bank. 2020. *Global Cost of Inclusive Refugee Education*.

<sup>115</sup> Save the Children. 2018. *Time to act: a costed plan to deliver quality education to every last refugee child*.

<sup>116</sup> Global Education Monitoring Report. 2019. *Migration, displacement and education: building bridges, not walls*. Paris: UNESCO.

quality education does not yet exist, although the IDMC has begun working on the cost of education service delivery for IDPs in select countries.<sup>117</sup>

59. Financing for refugee education has largely mirrored the financing patterns of humanitarian aid, which by design has generally been short-term and earmarked for specific interventions directed to parallel rather than national systems. It is also dependent on the resources mobilized for emergency response, which are largely voluntary and can be unpredictable and inadequate to respond to a long-term development challenge like education. In 2019, humanitarian appeals for education were significantly underfunded at only 43 percent. There is limited data available on how much of humanitarian education funding is invested in system strengthening and how much is parallel. As crises evolve into protracted situations, humanitarian agencies face challenges to raising additional financing as a result of dwindling media coverage or donor fatigue.

60. The shift from parallel service delivery to national service delivery policies requires a shift in education financing from short-term humanitarian aid to multi-year development financing that can benefit both forcibly displaced populations and their host communities. The GCR calls for financing to be predictable, flexible, multi-year and unearmarked.<sup>118</sup> Predictable and multi-year funding is critical for effective planning and public financial management. Flexibility in financing is important to respond to the complex and rapidly-changing nature of crises, especially when displacement crises interact with other crises like the COVID-19 pandemic. Increases in financing should be complemented by clear financing targets embedded in national refugee and host community education response plans. This will improve the sustainability of interventions, and where appropriate, will allow financing to be linked to improved efficiency in public expenditure. Long-term planning using national systems will further enable the identification of bottlenecks to access, retention and completion, including the need to invest in post-primary education, benefitting both refugee and national populations.

61. Achieving universal primary and secondary education requires not only an increase in the volume of financing but also improved targeting of resources. The share for education in total humanitarian aid increased from 2.1 percent in 2017 to 5.1 percent in 2019, exceeding the 4 percent target. While overall aid to education reached a record high in 2016 amounting to US\$13.4 billion, the share of basic education aid to low income countries fell from 36 percent in 2002 to 22 percent in 2016.<sup>119</sup> National governments too should improve the targeting of public expenditure on education by considering the principle of 'progressive universalism'. This means increasing overall spending for education, but targeting the increase towards the most marginalized learners, using gender-responsive budgeting. Humanitarian agencies, NGOs and philanthropic organizations can redirect funds to improve the targeting of refugee and IDP-specific education interventions where national interventions do not reach the most marginalized.

62. Long term planning for education financing is hindered by limited data. Except for a few countries, refugees are largely invisible in host government education data sets and there are limited mechanisms to uniquely identify IDPs among national populations. Still fewer countries include refugee numbers in the estimation of school grants. Further, despite education programs delivered through humanitarian agencies and NGOs for refugees, there is limited information on the cost of these programs at the global or national level. Beyond public and donor expenditure, households incur education-related costs even

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<sup>117</sup> IDMC. 2019. The ripple effect: economic impacts of internal displacement.

<sup>118</sup> United Nations. 2018. *Global Compact on Refugees*.

<sup>119</sup> Global Education Monitoring Report. 2019. *Migration, displacement and education: building bridges, not walls*. Paris: UNESCO.

where primary and secondary education are provided free of cost. While data is limited, where available it shows that household expenditure can account for a significant share of total education expenditure – for instance in El Salvador (50 percent), Indonesia (49 percent) and Peru (45 percent).<sup>120</sup> Not only is costing data limited, but so is financing data. Despite increasing commitments, not all agencies or organizations report towards a centralized database on the share of education funds within humanitarian budgets; where they do, large proportions of aid are categorized as multisector. This prevents the tracking and analysis of education financing for forcibly displaced populations over time.

63. There is increasing recognition of the need to prioritize and improve education financing in fragile and conflict settings. In 2016, the ECW fund was launched signifying the first steps towards bridging humanitarian and development assistance. ECW disbursed US\$131 million across 29 countries in 2019, exceeding its 2017 and 2018 disbursements combined. This included over 100 First Emergency Response Grants and ten Multi-Year Resilience Programs. ECW has also been successful in increasing private sector contributions to education in emergencies and protracted crises which increased from 2 percent in 2018 to 7 percent in 2019.<sup>121</sup> The GPE introduced its Funding and Financing Framework in 2018 that improves the targeting of funding towards countries affected by conflict and violence in its funding allocation formula. UNHCR in partnership with Educate a Child has also increased the share of its budget allocated to education.

64. The World Bank Group has significantly scaled up the volume and type of financial support provided to FCS in the last few years. The 18<sup>th</sup> replenishment of the International Development Association (IDA18) included a US\$14 billion allocation for FCS representing nearly double the allocation of IDA17. The Risk Mitigation Regime (RMR) was introduced to pilot approaches to prevention and risk mitigation, and the Sub-Window for Refugees and Host Communities (RSW) was introduced to support host countries to respond to forced displacement.<sup>122</sup> Over US\$330 million was allocated to education projects in FCS under the RSW.<sup>123</sup> The IDA19 replenishment for 2021-2023 will scale up these efforts, including incentive structures to prevent conflict and reduce FCV risks.<sup>124</sup>

65. While these are certainly important developments, a lot remains to be done. The education sector in general has been slow to take up innovative financing, and instead is highly dependent on government-driven official development assistance and aid. This is especially true in the case of education in protracted crises. There is an urgent need to expand mechanisms for resource mobilization through foundations, private investors and citizen contributors as is common in the global health and energy and environment sectors. In addition to resource mobilization, innovative financing can lead to improved efficiency of expenditure through the use of results-based financing, public private partnerships and social impact or education bonds. The GCR also identifies a role for private partners in de-risking arrangements, private sector investment, infrastructure strengthening, development of innovative technology and reducing the digital divide, and greater access to information.<sup>125</sup> As aid is better targeted to low income countries, innovative financing mechanisms are required to increase resources available for middle income countries. For instance, loan buy-downs wherein a third party buys down all or part of the interest of a

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<sup>120</sup> Global Education Monitoring Report. 2019. *Migration, displacement and education: building bridges, not walls*. Paris: UNESCO.

<sup>121</sup> ECW. 2020. *Stronger Together in Crisis – 2019 Annual Results Report*.

<sup>122</sup> World Bank. 2019. *IDA19 Second Replenishment Meeting: Special Theme - Fragility, Conflict and Violence (English)*. IDA19 Washington, D.C.: World Bank Group. Available at: [link](#).

<sup>123</sup> As of February 2021, the World Bank has allocated over US\$990 million to education projects in FCS, including both IDA and RSW funding.

<sup>124</sup> World Bank. 2020. *World Bank Group Strategy for Fragility, Conflict and Violence 2020 – 2025*.

<sup>125</sup> United Nations. 2018. *Global Compact on Refugees*.

loan, can be useful for countries transitioning from low to middle income that may not have as much access to concessional aid.<sup>126</sup> In 2017, the Education Commission proposed the IFFEd which would use guarantees and grants from contributors to generate increased education financing by multilateral development banks and to reduce lending terms for borrowing countries.<sup>127</sup> Additional resource mobilization and improved efficiency of expenditure is critical to meeting the increasing demands of the education sector.

**Key policy insight:** Funding needs for the forcibly displaced are greater and longer lasting than the expectation has been to date. Financing needs for the education of the forcibly displaced cannot be treated as short-term humanitarian assistance but should instead be integrated into the overall planning and development aid provided to host countries by development partners. As such, funding would also be better coordinated by host country governments, allowing both government and development partners to aim for better efficiency of spending and to ensure adequate protection of existing investments through effective sequencing of humanitarian and development financing in crisis contexts. The sector should explore innovative financing mechanism for increased resource mobilization and improved efficiency of expenditure.

## Conclusion and Recommendations

66. In the last decade, over 100 million people have been displaced. Today, forcibly displaced people account for 1 percent of the world's population. These figures represent increasingly complex population movements. Forcibly displaced people include refugees, asylum seekers, stateless and internally displaced people, around 40 percent of whom are below the age of 18 years. Some flee conflict, violence, persecution or human rights violations; others are displaced by climate-related disasters and food insecurity. While some cross borders into neighboring countries or risk perilous journeys across international seas, a large majority are internally displaced. Over 85 percent of refugees are hosted in developing countries with varying economic security, institutional capacity, and political and legal environments that impact the treatment of refugees. There is no uniform formula to respond to this multifaceted challenge, but the principles of equitable treatment of forcibly displaced and host populations and increased international solidarity and responsibility sharing are key to establishing durable solutions.

67. Education solutions for the forcibly displaced are intrinsically linked to the achievement of SDG4 to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and lifelong learning opportunities for all. Without extending access to quality education to all forcibly displaced children, this goal will not be achieved. Reaching all children with quality education poses substantial challenges and will require varied education partners to come together to provide comprehensive, durable solutions. It requires that the international community stand in solidarity with host governments and communities, and in line with the GCR, ensure that responsibility sharing is more equitable, predictable and sustainable. Ensuring a better future for everyone means that no one is left behind.

68. The table below provides concrete recommendations to address the education challenges faced by forcibly displaced persons and their host countries and communities, and to strengthen partnerships between the varied education stakeholders for improved response.

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<sup>126</sup> Education Commission. 2016. The Learning Generation: Innovative Financing Recommendations.

<sup>127</sup> Education Commission. 2020. 2020 Update: The International Finance Facility for Education (IFFEd). Available at: [link](#). [Accessed 27 September 2020].

Key recommendations	
<i>Protracted displacement situations necessitate a shift from humanitarian response to developmental approaches to education provision</i>	Temporary responses to education needs that run in parallel to national systems offer only a stop gap solution. Given that a large proportion of refugees and IDPs spend extended periods in displacement, sometimes encompassing their entire schooling cycle, a long term perspective is needed to ensure that they have access to quality education, that their educational efforts are recognized and accredited and that interventions provide pathways to formal education, labor market opportunities and self-sufficiency. Protracted crises affect not only those that are forcibly displaced but also the communities that host them. Host communities should not be burdened and further marginalized by the influx of displaced populations over protracted periods but benefit from additional investments in education.
<i>Inclusive national education systems present a durable solution to the refugee and IDP education crisis</i>	Inclusive systems ensure the education needs of refugee children are visible in national data systems and allows for the efficient, predictable and sustainable allocation of resources through long-term planning. It creates opportunities for equitable access to quality education for both refugee and host community children and ensures that refugee education is accredited. Inclusive education systems are even more critical at the post-primary level where refugee access rates are very low, and economies of scale can lower unit costs of education delivery in host communities. It can also help strengthen institutional capacity in the delivery of quality education which benefits both displaced and local students and creates resilience against future shocks.
<i>Diverse solutions are required to meet the distinct educational needs of forcibly displaced children and allow them to transition into formal schooling</i>	Forcibly displaced children are likely to have been out of school for extended periods and would require remedial support in foundational mathematics and literacy, support to adapt to a new curriculum, or accelerated learning programs. They may also require psychosocial and language support. This support is critical to the smooth transition into formal school and should be delivered sustainably, through national systems with support from NGOs and humanitarian agencies as required.
<i>Education interventions should be supported by an enabling policy environment</i>	The global policy landscape on refugee education promotes inclusive national systems, equitable access to quality education for refugees and non-refugees, improved measurement of refugee education outcomes and increased responsibility sharing between host governments and the international community. National and regional policies can provide a platform for streamlined collaboration between government, NGOs, development partners and the private sector, and can help improve fundraising and advocacy around refugee and host community education. Global policies do not provide sufficient focus on the education needs of internally displaced children. This is an urgent gap that must be bridged given that IDPs represent a large share of those forcibly displaced.



Key recommendations	
<i>Strengthening data systems and building a robust evidence base are critical to improving investments in education for the forcibly displaced</i>	Quality and timely data is essential to assess the impact of mass displacement on host communities, to support effective response policies for displaced populations, to track their progress towards the SDGs, to improve the targeting of limited resources, and to advocate for additional resources and strengthened responsibility sharing. The education needs of forcibly displaced populations differ based on refugee or IDP status and by gender, age-group and disability, necessitating decisive action towards improved data collection with adequate levels of data disaggregation. As countries move towards more inclusive national education systems, there is an urgent need to increase the resources (both financial and technical) dedicated to understanding the impact of refugee education programs and how they can be integrated into national systems for long-term, durable solutions to displacement. Efforts to improve inclusiveness should be reinforced with support to strengthen national education data systems. This support should include capacity building in the analysis and use of data on forcibly displaced populations for education sector decision making.
<i>Technology can be leveraged as an enabling tool to reach marginalized students and improve education outcomes</i>	While there is limited evidence on the impact of using technology to improve learning in forced displacement settings, the COVID-19 pandemic has compelled governments to roll-out remote learning mechanisms, many of them technology-enabled. This presents an opportunity to assess what works to improve learning and how the most remote and vulnerable children can be effectively reached. Technology should not be considered a silver bullet, but as a tool to support good teaching and quality learning. It can be effective when aligned with national curriculums and used alongside teacher interactions.
<i>Collaboration between governments, humanitarian agencies, development actors, private sector and affected communities is critical to a comprehensive response</i>	Partnerships across all humanitarian, development, and other actors are important in order to maximize complementarities and results on the ground for the forcibly displaced. These partnerships are most effective when they are mission-driven and host country-led. Given the need for urgent action in many instances, it is best to establish partnership agreements in advance and make use of them when the need arises. There are multiple actors supporting the education of the forcibly displaced and multiple entities aiming to coordinate these different actors. There is an urgent need for strong leadership to streamline the role of each of these actors for effective partnerships.
<i>More and better financing is required to achieve education for all</i>	Humanitarian appeals for education have historically been underfunded and developmental financing is limited and poorly targeted. There is an urgent need for increased and innovative investments in education for the forcibly displaced and to ensure adequate protection of existing investments through effective sequencing of humanitarian and development financing in crisis contexts. Increases in funding should be complemented by clear financing targets embedded in national education response plans to improve the sustainability of interventions. Predictable,

Key recommendations

multiyear, flexible and unearmarked financing is critical to improving the efficiency of already limited resources.