



# HOPE AWAY FROM HOME

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## LEARNING BRIEF

### Education in Emergencies Learning Community: 2023's World Refugee Day Celebrations

This Learning Brief was compiled by the Global Campaign for Education (GCE) following the webinar held on the 20<sup>th</sup> of June 2023 in commemoration of the World Refugee Day. The content presented in this Learning Brief is a compilation of discussions and recommendations generated from the panel presentations and input from participants. The learning brief provides insights and on-the-ground experiences on issues relating to Internally Displaced People (IDPs) and refugees in various regions and how the challenges they face deprive them of their right to education.

July  
2023

## About the webinar

The 2023's World Refugee Day celebration webinar brought together GCE's national and regional members, partners and other stakeholders to discuss whether and how displacement shapes education opportunities. More specifically, the webinar explored whether and how conflict, violence, human rights abuses, environment and environmental change-related emergencies impact people's rights to education.

The webinar provided a platform on which various speakers and experts from four different countries and regions reflected on the impact of the refugee crisis on the right to education in their countries and the regions. The panellists included Patricia Gainza from the Red Espacio Sin Fronteras and a member of Campaña Latinoamericana por el Derecho a la Educación (CLADE), Giulia McPherson from the Jesuit Refugee Service-USA, Ahmed Badawy from the Egyptian Foundation for Refugee Rights, and a member of ACEA, Adeleke Damian-Mary from the Civil Society Action Coalition on Education for All (CSACEFA), Macarena Romero Álvaro from GCE-Spain. The event was moderated by Luis Eduardo Pérez Murcia, GCE's Policy and Research Advisor.

### Key Take-Aways

1. The learning event successfully engaged GCE members and reflected on the challenges faced by IDPs and refugee populations to enjoy the right to education, advancing the objective of the Education in Emergencies Learning Community.
2. Experiences and common practices about how national and local governments address the challenges of securing the right to education for IDPs and refugee populations were shared.
3. Good practices of how Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) and national coalitions can advocate for IDPs and refugees' right to education were also shared.

## Contextual analysis

Globally, conflict, violence, human rights abuses, environment and environmental changes have forced millions of people to leave their communities and homes in search of safety. Latest figures for internally displaced people reveal that by the end of 2022 there were 71.1 million internally displaced people across the world, 62.5 million as a result of conflict and violence, and 8.7 million as a result of disasters. Sub-Saharan Africa, the Middle-East and North Africa and South Asia being the most affected regions. The ongoing conflict in Ukraine, has forced 5.9 million people to move and the country has become the fastest growing conflict displacement situation in the world<sup>1</sup>. In terms of refugees, the figure was estimated at 32.5 by mid-2022 and the number of asylum seekers reached 4.9 million. Seventy two percent of the refugees come from only five countries: Syrian Arab Republic, Venezuela, Ukraine, Afghanistan and South Sudan<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (2023). Global Report on Internal Displacement. Geneva.

<sup>2</sup> UNHCR (2022). Figures at a Glance. Mid-year trends report.

Displacement, whether within or across national borders, disrupts people's right to education. Internally displaced people, refugees, asylum seekers and stateless persons struggle to access education and continue their studies. To illustrate this, by 2021, only 3% of refugees had access to higher education, a figure far below the global average higher education enrolment for non-refugee populations, which stands at 39%<sup>3</sup>. Hence, the Global Campaign for Education's *Education in Emergencies Learning Community* brought together its members and partners to commemorate **2023's World Refugee Day**. This was an opportunity for the GCE to acknowledge the multiple impacts of displacement on people's lives and, more specifically, to understand better how forced migration affects internally displaced persons and refugees' right to education. Advocacy and campaigning for displaced people's right to education and more broadly for people living in emergency situations is one of GCE's priorities as stated in its 2023-2027 strategic plan.

## **What does the World Refugee Day mean and its importance to various stakeholders?**

Conflict, human rights violations and disasters causes people to flee their homes, many of these being women and children. In trying to understand what the celebrations/commemorations under the auspices of the World Refugee Day mean for GCE members and partners who attended the webinar, it was highlighted that this day:

- ✚ Is a landmark event which provides an opportunity for the GCE membership and stakeholders to discuss the problems and challenges facing IDPs and refugees across the world and prescribe solutions for the crises.
- ✚ Gives various stakeholders an opportunity to celebrate the resilience of IDPS and refugees in the face of conflict, violence, human rights abuses, environment and environmental change-related emergencies and how these, combined, have affected their right to education.
- ✚ Dedicates time for us to think about people who have been involuntarily displaced and moved away from their homes, schools and separated from their loved ones, appreciate the richness of various cultures when IDPs and refugees are integrated into new communities, acknowledge education as a right and not a privilege that should be made accessible to everyone including IDPs and refugees so that no one is left behind.
- ✚ Draws attention to the world the needs and expectations of IDPs and refugees so that more resources are allocated to assist them to continue their education at all levels.
- ✚ Is used as a window to highlight the humanitarian crisis around us and how it takes away the right to education from IDPs and refugees.

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<sup>3</sup> UNHCR (2022). Refugee Week 2022.

# Contextual Experiences and Practices

## Refugee Education in Latin America: Campaña Latinoamericana por el Derecho a la Educación (CLADE)

As a network of civil society organizations, present in 18 countries of Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC), CLADE promotes social mobilization and advocacy actions in defence of the human right to transformative, public, secular and free education for all. LAC is faced by the presence of 20 million displaced people in the region, compounded by a serious growth in the number of refugees in Colombia, Peru and Ecuador, whilst applicants for international aid has grown remarkably. Venezuela has the highest number, recording 5.7 million refugees and migrants spread across the region. Headlines often focus on people moving to the USA, whilst most of the 20 million settle in other LAC countries such as Mexico and Brazil.

These contextual realities make increase the demand for CLADE and its members to deal with this ever-growing humanitarian crisis and advocacy for access to education in the region. Some of the challenges that perpetuate the impact include:

- ◆ Lack of international aid to mitigate the refugee crisis and ensure access to education for IDPs and refugees;
- ◆ Lack of access to IDPs and refugees who are often trapped in totally inhospitable areas such as in the middle of the jungle;
- ◆ Lack of documentation and identification as most IDPs and refugees will have left their homes with nothing because their homes and belongings will have been destroyed;
- ◆ Accounts of violence, extortion, recruitment and rape by gangs of refugees and IDPs;
- ◆ Language difficulties and cultural barriers;
- ◆ System weaknesses or shortcoming for the recognition, validation and accreditation for learning;
- ◆ Xenophobia and discrimination which is rife in the receiving areas as most communities feel that they are being deprived of their resources when they are allocated to IDPs and refugees;
- ◆ Limited education infrastructure to accommodate the IDPs and refugees; and
- ◆ Poverty and malnutrition.

To reduce some of the challenges and problems IDPs and refugees encounter in accessing education, Red Espacio Sin Fronteras, in collaboration with CLADE, take various steps where lessons can be drawn from which include:

- i. Citizenship Stores which promote social and cultural integration of children and migrant and refugee adolescents, valuing cultural diversity through inculcation of a culture of peace in the school, community and family in the regions of Brás and Guaianases, in São Paulo (SP).
- ii. Vocational and artisanal training for IDPs and refugees have the tools necessary to enter the labour market in the countries in which they will have obtained asylum.
- iii. Teaching Portuguese for free to immigrants and refugees in Brazil so that their integration, learning and communication in the host country is made easier.

## Refugee Education in the United States of America (USA): Jesuit Refugee Service

The USA is one of the world's top refugee destinations. From taking in hundreds of thousands of Europeans displaced by World War II to welcoming those escaping from socio-economic instability in Latin America and the Caribbean, Africa, and the Middle East, among others, the United States has helped define protections for refugees under international humanitarian law. Beginning in 1980, the U.S. government moved from an ad hoc approach to the permanent, standardized system for identifying, vetting, and resettling prospective refugees that is still in use today. To date, the USA has admitted and resettled 3.1 million refugees since 1980. However, 2 million IDPs and refugees remain vulnerable and in need.

In its drive to integrate and resettle refugees, the USA has continuously rolled-out school registration, provides free public education and funds post-secondary education for this group of people as to ensure their right to education and lifelong learning. Notwithstanding the challenges and shortfalls in the USA's education system, education is universally presented to migrant and refugee youth and their families as a solution to assist them in their transition into their new communities. This way, education is viewed as a mechanism to socially integrate youth into their new communities, as well as a transform them into productive citizens.

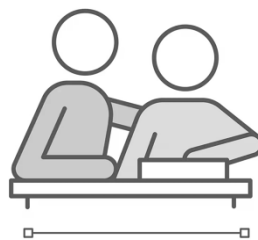
However, in spite of the significant gains that have been made in the past, it has been apparent that education systems and educators are often not prepared for the unique needs and challenges of refugee and forced migrant students, particularly following the COVID-19 pandemic, which led to school closures and learning disruptions across the USA. This exposed challenges in the country's education system such as:

### •Tutoring and mentorship



•Refugees were deprived of private academic support, usually provided by an expert teacher; someone with deep knowledge or defined expertise in a particular subject or set of subjects. Private learning, particularly during the pandemic, was mainly accessible for the rich due to technology and systemic inequalities. Most refugees found it difficult to access EdTech gadgets such as laptops, tablets, internet connectivity, among others so that they could conduct learning virtually.

### •Diverse peers



•Refugees are frequently deprived of support and involvement in positive peer relationships in schools with local learners due to cultural and religious differences. This prevents them from obtaining core social skills such as developing and maintaining friendships, improving conversational skills, entering and exiting group discussions to promote their integration in the USA's educational system.

### •College and career planning



•As people who will be coming from outside the country, refugees often encounter challenges with choosing a college, applying to college, studying, learning about work and then planning their career choices based on what they have learned. In the end, approximately 6% of refugees end up in Higher and Tertiary institutions, with a significant decline mostly at Secondary level.

## **Civil Society Action Coalition on Education for All (CSACEFA), Nigeria**

The spate of insurgences and conflicts in the country and around the sub-region has led to the increased presence of refugees and Internally Displaced People (IDPs) in Nigeria. This has resultant challenges on the basic needs of refugees and IDPs at different levels. One of the highest priorities of refugees and IDPs communities is education. In Nigeria, approximately 20 million refugees under the care of the UNCHR, half are children below 18 years; only 50% of the children are enrolled in primary education; 25% in secondary education and 1% have access to tertiary education.

Historically, Nigeria has been struggling to provide basic education for her citizens. Hence, the emergence of refugees and IDPs and their need for education has put a double burden on the nation's education system. There is a generally acknowledged deficit in Nigeria's education infrastructure and its inability to provide the most basic requirements for the education sector, worse still for IDPS and refugees. This was made worse by the COVID-19 pandemic, an ever growing population and socio-economic challenges which Nigeria is facing. Therefore, this untenable situation requires concerted efforts of governmental and non-governmental bodies towards policy and legal reforms, capacitation of teachers and communities on how to accommodate IDPs and refugees, development of an inclusive curriculum, among other things,

## **Education in Emergencies and the need for the triple nexus to guarantee the right to education of refugees: GCE-Spain**

**In its work to promote the right to education, GCE-Spain noted that:**

- ◆ Currently, there are 27 open conflicts (Council on Foreign Relations, 2022) and in 2022 alone, 323 natural disasters occurred (OurWorldinData). This context drags a devastating panorama that has direct effects on people's lives. Due to these crises, there are already 339 million who need humanitarian aid in 2023.
- ◆ This group is made up of boys, girls and adolescents (while they represent 30% of the world population). Specifically, 36.5 million children under the age of 18 were outside their homes in 2021; 13.7 of them are refugees and asylum seekers and 22.8 are internally displaced, figures never recorded since World War II (UNICEF, 2022).
- ◆ From a total of 69 million students, 24 million in primary school and 45 million in secondary school (INEE, 2021) are out of school.
- ◆ The effects of having millions of children and adolescents outside the educational system will have enormous consequences for the achievement of the 2030 Agenda in its entirety, since education is an enabling right of many others included in this agenda (such as decent employment or a more peaceful world). In addition, there is a path of regression in the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4 and that many of the goals will not be achieved by 2030 (United Nations, 2021).

# What needs to be done to reverse the effects of armed conflicts and climate related emergencies on education?

## Adopting and adapting the triple nexus to guarantee the right to education of refugees

The answers can no longer be limited to traditional structures, but must be given simultaneously. This means that humanitarian assistance, development programs and peacebuilding must be conceived in a comprehensive and coherent way giving a sustainable response to people before, during and after a crisis.

The triple nexus speaks to the need to reinforce (and not replace) existing local and national capacities in the affected country. This is reflected in the so-called Grand Bargain where the international community establishes that 25% of the funds go to local organizations. When we focus the intervention on the education sector, the nexus approach becomes even more relevant to achieve the following objectives (INEE, 2021 and European Commission, 2018).

*When we focus the intervention on the education sector, the nexus approach becomes even more relevant to achieve the following objectives:*

- ◆ **Guarantee access:** responding to immediate educational needs, while planning the continuity of their education.
- ◆ **Promote development:** education is one of the pillars of a more egalitarian society and an effective tool to promote sustainable development, but for this it is necessary to educate and train with quality throughout all stages.
- ◆ **Create resilient educational systems:** taking into account the average duration of the crises, it is necessary to create educational systems that are capable of overcoming the various onslaughts to which they will be subjected during those years. This means establishing well-planned, coordinated education systems with the necessary investment.
- ◆ **Be more efficient:** it is widely recognized that the field of humanitarian action and that of development respond to different logics and that sometimes they can even be contrary. Thus, if from the beginning it is planned strategically thinking about the various stages and the objectives that must be achieved, it will be possible to reduce costs and be more efficient. (INEE, 2021a).

In an emergency, the right to accessible and quality education remains inalienable and indivisible and therefore cannot be suspended and must be guaranteed at all levels (from the initial to the higher, formal and informal stages). In addition, it is important to underline that it is independent of the legal status, location or condition of the people. Thus, it is a right that travels with each one and allows its full development.

However, in emergency situations, States often have difficulties in guaranteeing and protecting human rights. This may be due to the loss of power and chaos that a situation of this nature entails, the destruction of infrastructures or the redirection of resources. In either case, emergencies increase the likelihood that the right to education will be violated. The interruption of this right not only means fewer learning opportunities in the present for children, but it can also jeopardize their future.

## Recommendations from the discussions

Webinar panellists and participants proffered the following recommendations to mitigate the negative effects of the refugee crisis on the right to education:

- ◆ Reforming the legal framework and adoption of inclusive policies should be done as it is important for vulnerable and receiving countries to have progressive laws and policies which are accommodative, protect and promote the rights of IDPs and refugees. Draconian laws only serve to marginalise, abuse and enable discrimination against this group of people in the same fashion as Egypt is mistreating refugees fleeing from the conflict in Sudan.
- ◆ Refugee education requires professionals in all aspects of education relevant to develop the vital learning domains which include basic knowledge, technical or job related skills, positive attitudes, inter-personal relationship and productive consciousness, for personal and communal efficiency.
- ◆ Educators involved with refugees should devise means of providing temporary classrooms and improvise to meet peculiar needs of refugees. They may be able to support the refugees psychologically and create a feeling of hope for the future after the current emergency.
- ◆ Action plans for refugee education is akin to preparation for natural disasters such as cyclones, floods, hurricanes and mudslides because they may occur without warnings and their impacts inform human and social crises.
- ◆ Given that resources and supplies are often limited, provisions of vocational and entrepreneurial training for employment of IDPs and refugees is strategic to meet their personal and family sustenance requirements. This also removes the dependency syndrome as IDPs and refugees can also find ways to individually finance their studies without over-relying on State resources.
- ◆ In countries such as Nigeria with a lot of ethnic groups, language learning programs should be rolled out. Often, classes are filled with learners who are of varying educational backgrounds/levels, language skills and ages. Therefore, there should be deliberate linguistic support for IDPs and refugees who will have found refuge in new regions where a different language might be in use.
- ◆ Sensitization and training of teachers is critical. Teachers should be supported and trained to meet the challenges of teaching in refugee communities.
- ◆ International organizations, foundations and developed countries should offer assistance and support the countries with high reception and admission of IDPs and refugees to improve on their educational requirements. International and regional cooperation is crucial in such contexts.
- ◆ Adult education programs can also be integrated in catering for the needs of IDPs and refugees. These can be done through organizing educational or recreational activities and support informal educational groups organized by refugees and displaced persons themselves.