Including Refugee Learners in National Education Systems

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Abbreviations and acronyms

COVID-19	Coronavirus disease 2019
CRRF	Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework
CRS	Creditor Reporting System
ECE	Early Childhood Education
ECW	Education Cannot Wait
EMIS	Education Management Information System
FER	First Emergency Response
GoR	Government of Rwanda
GPE	Global Programme for Education
GTRM	Working Group for Refugees and Migrants
ICT	Information and communication technology
IDA	International Development Association
IGAD	Intergovernmental Authority on Development
IOM	International Organization for Migration
LOEI	Organic Law on Intercultural Education
MINEDUC	Ministry of Education
MINEMA	Ministry of Emergency Management
MYRP	Multi-Year Resilience Programme
ODA	Official development assistance
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
R4V	Interagency Regional Platform for Refugees and Migrants from Venezuela
RMRP	Regional Migrant and Refugee Response Plan
RRRP	Regional Refugee Response Plan
RSW	Regional Sub-window
TEC	Temporary Education Centre
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

Contents

1. Introduction

In recent years, the number of refugee children has risen dramatically to an estimated 10 million – an estimated rise of 116 per cent from 2010 to 2020.[1] An estimated 48 per cent of refugee children globally are out of school. Enrolment rates are particularly low in secondary education; only 34 per cent of girls and 38 per cent of boys are in secondary education. Low-income countries hosting refugees also have high levels of children out of school (*see Box 1*).[2] The provision of education for refugee learners is likely to involve a mix of access to the national systems of the host country, parallel formal provision (e.g., accredited schools following the curriculum of refugees' country of origin), varied types of non-formal provision (e.g., community schools taught by refugee teachers) and remote learning (driven by the coronavirus disease 2019 [COVID-19] pandemic).

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) Education Strategy 2012–2016 marked a clear shift in thinking about the most effective way to secure education for refugee learners. An approach based largely on parallel systems was replaced by a move towards encouraging inclusion in national education systems.[3] This means studying in the same classroom with native learners, ideally after a short period of accelerated classes to support the development of language skills (for those who do not speak the primary language of the host country) and to address cultural barriers. This shift reflects several factors, including:

> **Box 1: Statistics on refugee learners' access to education**
>
> Data from 40 countries from 2020–2021 show that, among refugee children of the relevant age groups:
>
> - Only 42 per cent were enrolled in pre-primary education
>
> - Only 68 per cent were enrolled in primary education (67 per cent of girls and 68 per cent of boys)
>
> - Just 37 per cent were enrolled in secondary education (34 per cent of girls and 38 per cent of boys).
>
> In 2019, enrolment rates among refugees in low-income countries were lower still: 50 per cent were in primary, and 11 per cent were in secondary education.

- A growing number of refugees globally, creating an impetus to implement more systemic approaches

- A declining proportion of refugees living in camps who are relatively isolated from the host population[4]

- An increasing average length of displacement,[5] meaning that many children are living in a host country for the entire duration of their schooling, with little prospect of returning to their home countries

- Recognition in some countries (in which refugees are permitted to work in the formal economy) that participation in national education systems prepares young people for work, and thus to contribute to the host country's economy.

Reflecting this, the Global Compact on Refugees commits United Nations Member States to: "contribute resources and expertise to expand and enhance the quality and inclusiveness of national education systems to facilitate access by refugee and host-community children (both boys and girls), adolescents and youth to primary, secondary and tertiary education. More direct financial support and special efforts will be mobilized to minimize the time refugee boys and girls spend out of education, ideally a maximum of three months after arrival."[6]

Inclusion in national education systems seems a simple idea on the surface; however, there are many aspects to consider. These relate to factors such as: the level and type of school that refugee learners can attend; the national curriculum; the language of instruction; certification and access to financial support; and others.[7] Beyond such policy-related factors, and the financing and implementation capacity issues that underpin them, the extent of refugee learners' inclusion is also affected by broader factors that affect educational inclusion. These include: the overall strength, level of resourcing and accessibility of the education system; the level of physical and material security, or lack thereof, affecting both children and teachers; and identity-related issues, such as gender, age, ethnicity and disability. This report discusses how the inclusion of refugees in national education systems is understood, and how it can be achieved.

Report aims and objectives
This aim of this report is to answer the following key research questions:

- What evidence is there of effective policies and practices for the inclusion of refugees in national education systems?

- What factors have underpinned these effective policies and practices?

- What factors have challenged the inclusion of refugees in national education systems?

- What evidence is there of efforts to address intersecting inequalities to boost the inclusion of particularly marginalized groups of refugee learners?

The report seeks to synthesize existing evidence of good practices to promote the inclusion of refugee learners in the various areas of national education systems and to share examples of good practice. Political and legal frameworks and implementation arrangements are examined, as are the budgetary and/or public financial decisions that support effective ways of working. Inclusion does not, however, solely depend on a supportive political and budgetary environment. For refugee learners, it also fundamentally depends on the approach and ethos of the individual school, preschool, college and community. This report therefore covers both macro-level policies, as well as 'micro-level' practices.

The report gathers evidence to **inform a simple continuum of approaches** to the inclusion of refugee learners in national education systems (*see Figure 2*). This provides the basis for a **decision support tool**, to help policymakers increase the inclusion of refugees in diverse education systems, in situations that vary greatly in scale and length of displacement (*see Annex 1*). This report highlights that 87 per cent of the world's refugees live in low- and middle-income countries, of which 27 per cent are in the world's least-developed countries.[8] In light of this, the report draws evidence primarily from these settings, and also incorporates relevant contributions from high-income contexts.

The main focus of the report is on primary and secondary education, to reflect the existing literature, with brief reference to pre-primary and post-secondary education (for children under 18), where relevant literature exists.

Case study overviews

The report presents two in-depth case studies from **Ecuador** and **Rwanda**, which are relatively under-researched refugee-hosting countries. The case studies focus on how approaches to including refugees in national education systems have evolved, with the aim of identifying lessons that may be applied in other refugee-hosting contexts. Factors underpinning refugees' inclusion in both countries' education systems are highlighted, as are ongoing challenges.

Key definitions for terms that are used throughout this report are given (*see Box 2*). Chapter 2 sets out the conceptual framing and methodology for our further research, while chapter 3 goes on to explore various approaches to the educational inclusion of refugee learners. Chapter 4 looks at the critical question of financing refugees' inclusion. Chapters 5 and 6 present case studies of refugee learners' inclusion in the national education systems of Rwanda and Ecuador, respectively, taking a detailed look at how concepts and approaches manifest in specific contexts. Chapter 7 summarizes the content of the report and provides a conclusion. Annexes 1–4 include a decision-making rubric based on our conceptual framework, as well as further details in terms of pledges, disbursements and response plans for the inclusion of refugee learners.

Box 2: Key definitions

Asylum seeker: A person seeking international protection. In some countries, it is used as a legal term for a person who has applied for refugee status (or a complementary international protection status) and has not yet received a final decision on their claim. It can also refer to a person who has not yet submitted an application but may intend to do so or may be in need of international protection.[9]

Inclusion of refugee learners in national education systems: Throughout the report, this refers to refugee students' participation in publicly funded education institutions on the same basis as students from the host population. This definition has been developed by the authors, in the absence of an internationally agreed definition. However, this term is used in studies such as that by Brugha et al.[10]

Refugee: Article 1A (2) of the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees (as modified by the 1967 Protocol) defines a refugee as a person who "owing to well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinions is outside of the country of his nationality and is unable or owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country." The UNHCR glossary of terms summarizes the definition as follows: "Under international law and UNHCR's mandate, refugees are persons outside their countries of origin who are in need of international protection because of feared persecution, or a serious threat to their life, physical integrity or freedom in their country of origin as a result of persecution, armed conflict, violence or serious public disorder."[11]

National education systems: Although no internationally agreed definitions were found, the term 'education systems' generally refers to public schooling, from a person's early years in preschool through to higher education. EdGlossary refers to "everything that goes into educating public-school students at the federal, state, or community levels", including: laws; policies and regulations (for example, related to access, curriculum, assessment and certification); public financing and procedures for determining allocations; governance and administration at different levels; staff; teaching resources and learning materials; and many other elements.[12]

2. Conceptual framework and methodology

This chapter provides a conceptual framework to structure the exploration of the inclusion of refugee learners in national education systems. Existing literature is considered, and key dimensions and issues are set out. A continuum of approaches, based on those developed by UNHCR, is presented.[13] An outline of the methodology is given, as well as the scope of research undertaken for the study, both as a whole and for its constituent parts.

2.1. Conceptual framework

Literature, discourse and policy frameworks related to refugees, on one the hand, and to education, on the other, tend to define the terms 'integration' and 'inclusion' differently. Further differences appear when comparing low/middle-income with high-income country contexts. Typically, refugee policy aspires to achieve social integration, requiring adjustments from both refugees and host societies. This is particularly the case in higher-income countries, where resettlement of refugees tends to be on a long-term basis.[14] Inclusion can be understood as involving more limited and specific policies and practices and may be more palatable politically in contexts where there is substantial pushback against hosting large numbers of refugees.[15]

Many of the frameworks for inclusive education have emerged from approaches to educating learners with disabilities.[16] This has evolved into an emphasis on reducing barriers for any group of students. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) defines educational inclusion as 'a process that helps to overcome barriers limiting the presence, participation, and achievement of learners'.[17] In high-income contexts, which typically host relatively few refugees, students from these groups are often considered disadvantaged, facing specific barriers to access learning.[18]

International policy and analysis focused on low- or middle-income contexts, in contrast, tend to use the terms 'integration' and 'inclusion' somewhat interchangeably.[19] They may refer to 'inclusion of refugee learners',[20] 'social and cultural inclusion' or 'local integration'.[21] These strategies and frameworks suggest a more limited and specific approach, rather than full integration of refugees into all areas of society. Surprisingly, none of the academic or policy literature reviewed explicitly articulates

a definition of inclusion of refugee learners. This report follows the emerging international policy and discourse, referring to inclusion of refugee learners in national education systems. This is defined as participation in government-funded education institutions on the same basis as nationals.

Various frameworks have been developed, which help shed light on the processes, approaches and ingredients of effective inclusion of refugees. For example, Cerna et al. identify five areas of policy and practice that contribute to overall educational inclusion.[22] These are:

1. Governing diversity in education (including goals, regulatory framework, provision and division of responsibilities)

2. Resourcing diversity in education (including both overall resourcing of education for all learners and resources targeted to specific groups)

3. Developing capacity to manage diversity in education (including preparation of school staff and orientation of students)

4. Promoting school-level interventions to support diversity in education (including learning strategies to respond to diversity, matching resources to the needs of individual students, non-instructional support and services, and engagement with parents and communities)

5. Evaluating and monitoring diversity in education (including monitoring provisions at school and system levels).

These areas are supported by overarching legal frameworks, as well as public policy in other sectors. As well as distinguishing approaches to inclusive education, this framework identifies different types of outcomes. These can be used as metrics of success and are reflected in the rubric for inclusion of refugee learners (*see Annex 1*). These outcomes are measured at: an individual level (e.g., academic success, socioemotional well-being and labour market outcomes); a system level (e.g., increased inclusiveness in education systems); and in terms of overall social cohesion (e.g., level of engagement between refugees and hosts, and low levels of conflict/tensions and discrimination).

A review by Dryden-Peterson et al. of policies for inclusion of refugee learners distinguishes between structural and relational inclusion.[23] Structural inclusion refers to the accessibility of institutions and services, such as education. Relational inclusion is a sociocultural process, connected to identity development and transformation; it includes both an individual-level sense of belonging, or connectedness, as well as social cohesion on a group level.

Most efforts to promote the inclusion of refugee learners have focused on structural inclusion. This includes, for example: enabling refugee learners to access the same schools as students in the host population; using the host country's national curriculum and languages; and enabling access to the host country's national exams and certification systems. This report focuses primarily on structural aspects (for which there is the most evidence). This is supplemented with evidence on how relational aspects of inclusion can be best supported in a resource-constrained context. These include elements such as targeted mental health and psychosocial support activities and extra/co-curricular activities that aim to strengthen bonds between refugee and host-country learners.

Key insights from these frameworks have been integrated to emphasize issues that emerged during the literature review on inclusion of refugee learners in national education systems in low- and middle-income countries (Figure 1). The five areas of policy and practice identified by Cerna et al. as contributing to overall educational inclusion are presented, as are a further set of 10 related dimensions that play a significant role in determining the level of inclusion experienced by refugee learners.[24]

Figure 1: **Conceptual framework: Key dimensions affecting inclusion of refugee learners in national education systems**

Source: Authors

Building on this conceptual framing, its constituent parts can be further broken down into a continuum, which distinguishes different practices, in terms of level of inclusivity. The refugee educational inclusion continuum devised by UNHCR has been simplified (*see Figure 2*).[25] This shows the different levels of inclusion for each dimension. It is important to recognize that the most feasible and appropriate approach will vary by context, including by children's prior educational experience, and that any education system may involve arrangements at various points on this continuum.

Figure 2: Continuum of inclusion of refugees in national education systems

Dimension	Mostly parallel provision	Partial inclusion	Part of national system
Legal frameworks	Exclusionary or no law/policies	Some law and policies but little adherence	Law and policies with equal access as nationals
Type of school	Non-formal education for refugee learners	Separate camp schools or shift system	Public schools with same rights as host-country learners
System financing	External sources (usually humanitarian)	Blend of domestic and external	Inclusion financed domestically
Social protection	Targeted cash and in-kind support from external agencies	Eligibility for some aspects of national cash, supplies, meals	Same forms of social protection as host learners
School infrastructure	Temporary classrooms in separate spaces	Crowding of classrooms, poor facilities, no ICT	Enough classrooms, adequate facilities, new ICT
Teachers	No recognition of qualifications or hiring of refugee teachers	Training refugee teachers and/or recognition of qualifications	Training and hiring refugees and additional host teachers
Curriculum	No formal curriculum	Home-country curriculum	Host-country curriculum, sometimes accelerated
Language of instruction	Home-country language	Home-country language with bridging to host language	Host-country (or international) language
Assessment and certification	No exams or certification available	Exams and certification administered by home country	Host-country national exams and certification
Education data systems	No records of refugee learners	Separate data collection for refugees	Inclusion in national EMIS, disaggregated by protection status

Source: Authors

Note: EMIS, Education Management Information System; ICT, information and communication technologies.

2.3. Methodology

This report is based on a rapid review of the literature, undertaken between July and October 2022, and interviews with global stakeholders. Additionally, in-depth country case studies in Ecuador and Rwanda are presented, which have been developed through a review of documents and in-country stakeholder interviews. A total of 17 interviews were conducted with representatives of United Nations agencies, civil society and, in Ecuador, government representatives (*see Table 1*).

Table 1. **Distribution of interviews**

TYPE OF INTERVIEWEE	GLOBAL	ECUADOR	RWANDA
Government	-	1	-
United Nations agency	1	5	5
Other donor	2	-	-
Civil society	-	2	1

The literature review involved synthesis of academic and grey literature. The initial step was to review the works already known to the research team through prior research on education in emergencies, refugee inclusion and financing of refugee education. Next, literature identified through targeted Google searches on the two case study countries and on specific thematic issues was evaluated.[26] Most of the literature reviewed is from the period 2012–2022; however, earlier studies are referred to occasionally where they contribute essential conceptual or empirical evidence.

The study was limited by the amount of time available and the qualitative nature of the vast majority of available literature on effective practices. Therefore, it was not possible to conduct a systematic review. As well as filtering the literature in terms of its relevance, the team also drew on studies with robust methodologies (including those that used mixed qualitative and quantitative methods, and those that drew on insights from various stakeholders).[27] Insights were extracted, analysed and incorporated based on their relevance to the key themes of interest in this study.

The case studies were selected in consultation with UNICEF and UNHCR. This was based on an initial mapping of: the numbers of refugees in various countries, approaches to inclusion of refugee learners on various different dimensions, participation in the joint UNICEF–UNHCR Blueprint for Joint Action, geographical representation, and the extent of evidence available. The aim of the case studies is to provide insights into the contrasting experiences of two countries that are not well documented in the international literature. The case studies contrast experiences in two countries situated in different global regions, one of which is a low-income country (Rwanda) and the other an upper-middle-income country (Ecuador), and where refugees make up approximately 0.9 per cent and 2.8 per cent of the population, respectively.

Financing information on specific disbursements to refugees from global international data sets such as the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Creditor Reporting System (CRS) and the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs Financial Tracking System were not available. Therefore, the financing information presented in chapter 4 and Annexes

2–3 has been estimated from the evidence from published reports and websites. Data on the financial requirements for providing education to refugees draw on estimates by UNHCR and the World Bank.[28] Chapter 4 draws on the following sources:

- **Bilateral aid:** A survey conducted by the OECD in 2018–2019, which collected information on donors' disbursements to refugees.[29] This report estimates disbursements to the education sector based on this information.

- **Refugee Regional Response Plans (RRRPs):** Financing information has been extracted from all RRRPs launched in 2022.

- **Education Cannot Wait (ECW):** Information on how many and which refugees have been reached by ECW, together with the funding available and categorized by stream, has been extracted from the ECW website. According to the website, the information was last updated in September 2022.

The aim of the global interviews was to understand interviewees' perspectives on positive practices at different levels, and what underpins them. Interviews with key stakeholders in Ecuador and Rwanda[30] probed the evolution of inclusive policies and other factors shaping positive refugee inclusion, perceptions of their effectiveness and key challenges in design or implementation (e.g., costs that learners face, discrimination and xenophobia, coordination, limited spaces in schools, and other factors). The researchers for the Ecuador and Rwanda case studies also collaborated with UNESCO researchers to investigate policies and practices related to inclusion of refugee learners in national education data and information systems.[31] The report integrates insights from all these sources.

Limitations

There are some important limitations to highlight. The report is based on a rapid desk review. The country case studies were based on a small number of primary interviews conducted remotely. Clearly, this represents a limitation of this study, when compared with one based on in-depth primary research. In the case of both countries, there were some recent data that were not publicly available (e.g., on the progression of refugee learners to higher educational levels by sex and grade, domestic financing directly targeted to refugee learners, monitoring and evaluation data, etc.).

Other limitations include the fact that much of the grey literature presents 'good practices', with little evaluation-based evidence of the impact of these practices, or detail on how any positive changes have been achieved; there is also no critical discussion of their effectiveness. This makes it difficult to identify transferable lessons.

Further, most literature includes the perspectives of parents and caregivers, with very few studies drawing on research with refugee children themselves. The direct experiences of other key actors involved in refugee educational inclusion is also limited in the literature, including the perspectives of school staff or local staff from government agencies and civil society organizations. Fewer global interviews than planned were conducted. Further, in Rwanda, the lack of availability of key informants meant that fewer primary interviews than planned were undertaken. Only one government interview was conducted (in Ecuador).

There is very limited availability of evidence on the inclusion of refugee learners in national technical and vocational education systems; therefore, the report does not cover this issue. While a few studies highlight some positive examples of inclusion in national systems, in many of the sources examined, the extent to which provision is integrated with national systems is unclear.[32] This would be a valuable focus for a dedicated study.

Overall, this report offers insights based on the review of literature and experiences in two contrasting country settings. It would be valuable to test how far the conclusions apply to a wider set of contexts.

3. Inclusion of refugee learners in national education systems: Insights from the literature

This chapter focuses largely on approaches that are considered to support inclusion, and therefore help refugee host countries to move towards the right-hand side of the continuum (*see Figure 2*). Some elements of the context, including broader refugee policy, are also highlighted. Most of the discussion focuses on structural aspects of inclusion; however, section 3.4 touches on relational aspects. Evaluations showing the effectiveness of practices are sparse. However, empirical studies documenting the implementation of inclusion policies and programmes in various contexts of forced displacement shed light on how these have translated into educational provision in practice. Where possible, the report draws on such studies, as well as policy reports that provide an overview of documented or emerging good practices.

A common thread in many of these empirical studies is the gulf between policies intended to promote full inclusion of refugees and access to good-quality education, and their sometimes paradoxical unintended effects. This is a result of policies being interpreted 'on the ground' by individual schools, particularly in contexts where education governance is decentralized.[33] Evidence from empirical studies about the challenges of implementing inclusion policies is therefore highlighted. As these empirical studies also show, arrangements – and the degree of inclusion – also can vary by refugees' country of origin, area of residence and year of arrival.[34] A key point made in a number of studies[35] and recent calls for action is the critical importance of involving refugees in decision-making about the most appropriate forms of educational provision in different contexts.[36] It is vital to remember that different groups of refugees in any given context may have different aspirations, and that 'one-size' policies, even if consistently implemented, are not always appropriate for every learner.

3.1 The role and limits of global agreements and policies

Historically, there have been numerous global treaties, policies and plans put in place for refugee education. While these strategies play an important role in outlining global priorities and obligations related to refugee inclusion, a small but growing body of evidence suggests that global efforts are not enough to achieve meaningful inclusion in education for refugee learners. These challenges stem

from issues of enforceability, relevance and reach of global strategies. For example, the three global treaties that address refugees' right to education – the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights – are some of the least enforceable treaties in international human rights law.[37] This can exacerbate gaps between policies and practices for inclusion. For example, in a survey of 190 professionals involved in refugee education across 16 countries, Mendenhall et al. found a consistent gap between policy and practice, stemming from a myriad of factors, including differing priorities between actors, variable capacity of education professionals, lack of resources and discrimination.[38] Political factors, such as the perceived acceptability of different types of refugee response to the national population, help explain the common gap between policy and practice.[39]

Legal, humanitarian and development strategies globally attempt to bridge the policy and practice gap by outlining specific goals, implementation plans and financial needs; and by incentivizing signatories to act. These strategies are often helpful in establishing a common set of initial priorities for international and national actors, serving as a critical building block for further collaboration.[40] However, these strategies are inconsistent in their level of influence across actors. For example, Russell et al. find that United Nations organizations are more likely than other actors to reference and frame policies and programmes for refugee education in connection with global legal, humanitarian and development documents.[41] Also, actors outside the United Nations system or with weaker financial ties to United Nations organizations are less likely to reference global humanitarian and development documents in refugee education activities. While referencing global agreements is not necessary to support the spirit of the goals or activities outlined in those strategies and documents, this does point to a potential mismatch between United Nations commitments to global strategies and the policies and practices adopted by non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and international NGOs, and other government and local partners. For example, in an analysis of refugee integration in schools in Kenya, Bellino and Dryden-Peterson found that global plans and policies can support physical integration in schools, but it is local strategies and practices that shape possibilities for social inclusion.[42]

Variations in national policies may stem in part from differences in ideas about refugees' futures. In a 14-country study of how the purposes of refugee education are conceptualized by actors working at local, national and global levels, Dryden-Peterson et al. found that disparity in ideas about this stems from practical considerations related to the efficiency of service delivery and from differing views about the status of refugees in terms of their length of stay in a host country.[43] Where refugees are viewed as temporary visitors, the purpose of education is regarded as being to prepare them for futures living elsewhere. Where refugees are viewed as potential long-term members of a host society, however, education can become more closely aligned with the purposes articulated for national citizens.[44]

Ideas about refugees' futures are inevitably connected to employment opportunities. A recent report found that 55 per cent of refugees live in a host country that substantially limits their right to work, and 19 per cent live a country that severely or completely restricts their right to work.[45] In the absence of the right to work, refugees' futures, and thus the purpose of enabling their access to education, are uncertain. This situation is characterized by Dryden-Peterson as "education for an 'unknowable' future".[46]

3.2 Levels of inclusion for refugee learners

Refugee-hosting countries vary greatly in their approaches to refugee education, and in the levels and types of inclusion offered. In Colombia, for example, as in much of Latin America, refugees have full access to national education systems. However, in Bangladesh and Burundi, for example, this is limited or non-existent. In an analysis of refugee rights to education in 48 low- and middle-income countries hosting more than 10,000 refugees, Dupuy et al. found that: 54 per cent of the host countries have no official restrictions on refugee education; 35 per cent have some restrictions (including policies such as second-shift schools, differences in primary and secondary education, or documentation-related barriers); and 10 per cent have complete restrictions, in that refugees have no official access to schools.[47] When refugees' access to formal education is prohibited, as is largely the case in Bangladesh, refugees must rely on informal learning opportunities in temporary education centres.[48] However, even these informal options can be threatened during periods of particularly hostile policy and practice.[49] Even where refugee learners are granted full access to national education systems, however, factors such as documentation requirements, language barriers and costs contribute to a low percentage of refugee students being enrolled in education (*see Box 1*).

There is a range of approaches to refugee learners, from full inclusion to complete exclusion from national systems (*see Table 2*). The examples presented below are illustrative and were selected based on information found in the review of literature and the two case studies.

Table 1. **Illustrative examples: Overall spectrum of approaches to refugee learners**

APPROACH	EXAMPLES
No restriction, plus additional measures to support inclusion	**Djibouti:** Full inclusion, plus the government has been translating the national curriculum into English and Arabic to support refugee transitions into national systems, and making efforts to recognize prior learning and certificates.[50] **Costa Rica:** Full inclusion, plus efforts to simplify school registration processes.[51]
No restrictions related to refugee education	**Cameroon, Rwanda, Uganda, Zambia,**[52] **Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru**[53]
Partial restrictions: temporal restrictions (second-shift schools)	**Lebanon; Jordan:** The majority of refugee students typically attend school in the afternoon, while nationals attend in the morning.[54]
Partial restrictions: inclusion of some refugee groups, exclusion of others	**Egypt:** Inclusion of Syrians, exclusion of other groups.[55]
Partial restrictions: inclusion in some levels of education and segregation in others	**Ethiopia:** Most refugees attend primary schools inside refugee camps and can attend national secondary and tertiary institutions.[56]
Partial restrictions: access dependent on documentation	**Trinidad and Tobago:** Access only for students with regular status. **Aruba and Curacao:** Evidence of compulsory health insurance is required.[57]
Full restrictions or prohibition of education for refugees	**Bangladesh, Burundi, China, Malaysia, Nepal.**[58]

Within countries, the continuum presented (*see Figure 2*) can be further complicated by differences related to levels of education and refugees' nationality, and between different parts of the country. For example, in Ethiopia, refugee students attend separate schools at the primary level but may attend national secondary schools. In Egypt, Syrian refugee students are included in national schools, while others are excluded.[59]

In Jordan, refugee students may attend national schools, but this is largely through second-shift schooling arrangements. While this is a practical solution to increase the number of children with access to education, it means that refugee students often remain physically isolated from national students, despite sharing the same school buildings and teachers, and studying the national curriculum. In Greece and Türkiye, refugee students may attend national schools but are typically offered only limited supplemental language support to productively engage in learning.[60]

"Head teachers and school administrators sometimes need more support and understanding of what the policy is and how to operationalize it. That often times has a financial amount associated with it, which can prevent the implementation of those policies... I've been in several places where there was a national policy that said double shifting is OK because there's a crisis. But when you get to an actual community or teachers don't know how to do that. They don't know that the policy exists so it's not happening. Instead you just have lots of children that are being excluded from education."

Key informant interview 2
GLOBAL, DONOR

Countries such as Costa Rica,[61] Djibouti,[62] Rwanda (*see Chapter 5*) and Ecuador (*see Chapter 6*) have developed innovative models of inclusion to allow refugee students to be included in national education systems and provide additional support to help facilitate this. Measures involve giving language support, making efforts to recognize prior learning, and eliminating documentation-related barriers to school registration (*see Box 3; Sections 3.3–3.5*).

Box 3: Addressing documentation-related barriers to educational inclusion

Even in countries where refugee children are allowed access to all levels of the public education system, administrative requirements can form prohibitive barriers. These can include: documentation being required for school registration (sometimes this involves evidence of legal residence or humanitarian status in a country, or evidence of legal identity, such as a birth certificate) and certification of prior learning. For example, until recently, refugees living outside camps were required to register with Jordan's Ministry of Interior and obtain 'service cards' to access schools. A birth certificate was required to obtain a service card. Refugees who arrived without their birth certificates, or children who had not had their births registered by their parents during the upheaval of displacement were ineligible for public school registration.[63] In a move towards greater flexibility in late 2016, Jordan's Ministry of Education began allowing public schools to enrol children without identification cards.[64] Restrictions of this kind are not uncommon across refugee-hosting contexts, examples include Trinidad and Tobago, Aruba, Curaçao and other Caribbean countries.[65]

Following growing recognition of this documentation challenge, many countries have taken steps to reduce administrative barriers to school registration. Armenia, Bulgaria, Chile and Ecuador have developed measures to allow students who do not have or have lost their documentation to enrol in school.[66] For example, in Ecuador, proof of any previous registration with public services (not only education services) in another country can be used to enrol in school (*see Chapter 6*). Rwanda, Cameroon, Ethiopia and Indonesia have pledged to improve access to birth registration for refugee children to address this barrier to education.[67] Chile and Colombia issue unique school identification numbers to students who do not have identification documents.[68] Costa Rica waived documentation requirements entirely for refugee and migrant students.[69] In Peru, parents can sign a sworn declaration to enrol their children in school without identity documents.[70]

Recognition of prior qualifications and learning is also vital to ensure that refugee children are placed in the correct level of schooling in their new host country. To address this, the Economic Community of West African States has formalized a regional system of education attainment equivalency, in which a student's prior education level is recognized upon arrival in a host country without the need for further documentation. This has facilitated refugees' inclusion in the national education systems in Burkina Faso, Ghana and the Niger.[71] In a similar effort, East African members of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) signed an agreement to recognize and validate prior qualifications from IGAD member countries.[72] In much of Latin America, signatories to the Andrés Bello Convention have agreed to recognize students' prior qualifications and school certificates. This process has recently been boosted by efforts to share the tables of equivalences developed under the Convention, and to integrate their use in national education systems in refugee-hosting contexts in the region.[73]

While there has been progress in these areas, continued effort on the part of ministries of education is required to ensure that administrative barriers do not limit refugees' inclusion in education, whether formally or informally.

Impacts of different approaches to inclusion

While the literature identifies many promising practices, there is still limited – and mixed – evidence on the impacts of various approaches to learning, both among refugee students and in host communities. Further, studies are rarely able to examine how well the impacts are sustained over time. Measuring what works in refugee education and comparing models of inclusion requires data on refugees' access to school, participation and learning outcomes. However, refugees are often 'invisible' in data sources, including government statistics and household surveys, and this is a challenge that extends across sectors.[74] Sometimes, this reflects concerns about refugees' safety and thus an explicit decision not to disaggregate data by protection status.[75] Where refugees are fully integrated into national certification and assessment systems, as in Chad for example, data on their learning outcomes are available from national-level data on school-leaving examination performance.[76]

There is, however, a growing body of evidence based on both single- and cross-country studies of effective inclusion models. In Kenya, evidence suggests that a lack of inclusion can be harmful for refugee learning outcomes.[77] In a study of learning levels for refugees attending separate schools inside Kakuma refugee camp, Piper et al. found that refugees have some of the lowest scores in

literacy and numeracy in Kenya, and perform worse than disadvantaged students in nearby host communities.[78]

In a five-country study comparing the effectiveness of different models of refugee education, Crul et al. found that including children as early and fully as possible in national education systems and mainstream classes provides them with their best chance to learn.[79] In contrast, keeping refugee children in separate parallel systems is more likely to result in students dropping out, or not attending school at all.[80] Where there were new students enrolled in schools, there was no impact on educational outcomes for national students, evidence from the United States of America showed.[81] Further, in Rwanda, the existence of a refugee camp and associated school provision (which local children can also attend) improved learning outcomes for both host and refugee students.[82] Evidence from Türkiye indicates that educational outcomes for lower-performing national students improved following the inclusion of refugees in schools.[83]

There is, therefore, promising evidence supporting broad inclusion policies, as well as compelling normative reasons to pursue this option in protracted crises. However, investigation into how inclusion policies may interact with existing inequalities within host countries, and the specific vulnerabilities that refugee learners face is needed. In a 2022 World Bank report, Holland et al. argued that refugee inclusion also requires additional efforts, such as programmes to support transitions to host-community schools (this is discussed in more detail in sections 3.3–3.5).[84] Kelcey and Chatila found that refugee inclusion in national schools in Lebanon has been pursued in ways that exacerbate existing inequalities.[85] This has resulted in a de facto form of social exclusion for refugee learners. National policies for refugee inclusion were the product of negotiations between international and national actors. However, teachers and school leaders – as 'street-level bureaucrats' – often act and distribute scarce resources within schools in ways that reinforce academic and socioeconomic vulnerabilities. This results in social exclusion both within and outside schools.[86] In some cases, students have been expelled when it was felt that refugee enrolment was too high. In others, only the highest-performing Syrian students were allowed to enrol in the morning shift at school, along with Lebanese students.[87]

Inclusion in education data systems

It is important to identify and include refugees in national education data systems, both for individual refugees, and for education systems. For refugees, having an educational 'identity number' facilitates recognition of educational achievements and transfer between educational institutions, if necessary, in different countries. For schools, it is essential to track learners' progress, and for education systems, it is essential to measure outcomes and identify the vulnerabilities of different groups of children. Though establishing accurate data on inclusion of refugee learners necessarily involves multiple data sources (such as population censuses and household surveys), in this report we focus on inclusion in national Education Management Information Systems (EMIS). These wider dimensions are discussed in a forthcoming UNESCO study on inclusion of refugees in national education data systems.

Using data from 41 countries, Zeus analysed the extent of refugee learners' inclusion in national EMIS.[88] With levels of inclusion coded on a scale of 1–4, the average across these countries was 2.41, lower than for all other dimensions of inclusion, except funding sources.[89] This indicates that inclusion in national education data systems lags behind overall policy change, use of host-country curricula or access to certification. A report by UNHCR and the UNESCO Institute for Statistics similarly found that refugee children are severely under-represented in education data.[90]

The report identified several challenges, including:

- An absence of disaggregation by refugee status (and/or unreliability of these data in contexts where schools are not necessarily aware of students' international protection status)

- Absence of data on learners in non-state institutions outside the humanitarian system (this is important in contexts where a substantial proportion of refugee learners are attending private schools)

- An overly narrow focus on access to education (and much less data on outcomes)

- Fragmented or weak data coordination between actors, including between governments and partners focused on refugee education

- Poor integration of refugees into national statistical frameworks. A UNESCO-led study of seven countries, forthcoming in 2023, will provide much-needed recent empirical evidence on shifts towards education data systems that are more inclusive of refugees, and discuss what has enabled the necessary shifts.

Despite the challenges, good examples of refugee inclusion in national education data systems around the world are increasing (*see Table 2*).

Table 2. **Illustrative examples: Approaches to refugee inclusion in national education data systems**

APPROACH	EXAMPLES
Adding questions on students' refugee status or country of origin in school censuses or in national EMIS to facilitate measurement of learning outcomes for different groups	Colombia, Ecuador, Peru,[91] South Sudan, Zambia[92]
Collecting data on refugee enrolment in annual statistical yearbooks	Ethiopia, Rwanda
Merging of UNHCR data with national EMIS data to identify most vulnerable schools and target resources accordingly; transitioning parallel EMIS into national system	South Sudan[93] Türkiye[94]

Source: EMIS, Education Management Information Systems; UNHCR, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

There is still a long way to go to improve refugee inclusion in national education data systems. Ongoing activities through groups such as the Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies Data Reference Group on Education in Emergencies, joint efforts between United Nations agencies, and collaborative activities to strengthen capacity and representation in national statistical systems are important steps towards the goal of full inclusion. The literature reviewed does not discuss in any depth the challenges involved in making these shifts, or the time needed to do so. However, positive examples of transition between parallel and national systems are highlighted, such as in Türkiye. Among the issues raised are the importance of confidentiality in refugees' data and sensitivity to peoples' fears of the possible consequences of identifying themselves as refugees.[95]

3.3 School-level provision issues: Curriculum, language of instruction and assessment

As noted in sections 3.1 and 3.2, decisions about which curriculum refugee learners should be following reflect perceptions of how long they are likely to be in a country, and thus where they are likely to be living when they enter the labour market and participate in adult life. Where refugee learners are included in national education systems, this often implies using new languages of instruction, and needing support for this transition. This section outlines different approaches. It should be noted, however, that very limited evidence was found comparing their relative effectiveness.

Curriculum

Over the past decade, there has been a rapid shift to the use of national curricula and languages of instruction to educate refugees. In 2010, only 5 of the 14 countries hosting the most refugees globally used their national curriculum and languages of instruction to educate refugees. By 2014, the number had risen to 11.[96] Zeus's comparative study of 41 countries found that curriculum (and certification) were the dimensions with the highest levels of educational inclusion (averaging 3.39/4 each).[97] Where children have full access to school places within the public education system, they will almost always be studying the same curriculum as children in the host country. There are also examples of children studying the host country's curriculum in parallel facilities. This would enable transition to the public system in the event of policy change, and supports older adolescents' access to the labour market. Where displacement is expected to be shorter, students and parents often prefer to continue studying their home country's curriculum than that of the host country, or they may study both.[98] Due to the unpredictable nature of conflict and displacement, however, this may mean that, at the minimum, it is important to learn the lingua franca of the host country (*see Section 3.3.2*).

Illustrative examples of the main approaches to use of different curricula identified in this study are outlined in Table 3.

Table 3. Illustrative examples: Approaches to the use of home- and host-country curricula

APPROACH	EXAMPLES
Full use of host country's curriculum	Venezuelan refugees in Latin American countries (e.g., Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru);[99] Sudanese refugees in Chad;[100] Syrian refugees in Türkiye,[101] Lebanon;[102] Kenya since 1997[103]
Mixed use of host and home country's curricula	Ukrainian refugees in Poland (via distance learning or extra classes)[104]
Use of host country's curriculum in informal education centres or online	Malaysian primary curriculum in informal education centres[105] Equal Place education programme (English-language), Trinidad and Tobago[106]
Parallel provision, with refugees following the home country's curriculum, often online.	Equal Place education programme (Spanish-language) for Venezuelan and Colombian students in Trinidad and Tobago[107]
Parallel provision with non-accredited curricula (e.g., in madrassas)	Malaysia[108]

Since many countries are in the process of shifting to educate refugee learners using host-country curricula, a strand of the literature focuses on analysing how these shifts have been accomplished. Some of the key areas highlighted are:

- Training of host-country teachers to support children for whom the language of instruction is a second language. Examples include Türkiye (*see Box 4*) and English as a second language training for teachers in schools hosting Venezuelan refugees in Guyana.[109]

- Language training for host-country teachers (e.g., Spanish-language training for teachers in Brazil, in schools accommodating Venezuelan refugees).[110]

- Orientation for host-country teachers to explain to them the kinds of experiences children may have had during flight and living as refugees, and their psychosocial and social integration needs

- Training refugee teachers to teach host-country curricula, both to expand provision and to support the social integration of refugee teachers. In Chad, for example, since refugee education provision was absorbed into the national education system in 2013, as of 2019, over 500 Sudanese teachers had been trained in Chadian teacher training institutes.[111] Following an influx of refugees from Cameroon in February 2022, Cameroonian refugee teachers were trained to teach the Chadian primary school curriculum.[112]

- Development of bilingual curriculum resources (*see Section 3.3.3*)

- Using accelerated learning programmes to enable children to catch up on missed learning and enter formal education at an age-appropriate level (*see Section 3.4*).

Language of instruction

The literature on language of instruction in refugee situations focuses largely on the challenges children face when learning in languages they do not understand well.[113] Some qualitative literature also explores the range of aspirations refugee children and young adults have, involving the use of different languages, including maintaining their home language so they can continue to communicate with their families and maintain connections to their communities and countries of origin.[114]

It is considered good practice to implement language learning programmes to support refugee children to adapt to new languages of instruction. However, the literature on how best to do this, particularly in low-resource contexts, is sparse. It is important to note that, in many refugee-hosting contexts, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa, local children also often have to transition from learning in their home languages to an alternative language of instruction (often an ex-colonial language) during their middle- to late-primary school years. At best, teachers will already have some experience in supporting children – both local and refugees – to transition to new languages of instruction. At worst, teachers may struggle to teach in a language they do not speak well. The literature reviewed also highlights that, even where refugee learners ostensibly speak the host country's language of instruction, differences in accent, vocabulary, etc. can prove challenging.[115] Enabling young children to develop skills in the host country language during pre-primary education can facilitate their subsequent progress through national education systems.

There are several different models for supporting refugee children to learn new languages of instruction (*see Table 4*). The literature on refugee inclusion contains little evaluation of these approaches, particularly in low- and middle-income country contexts. There is emerging academic literature, particularly from high-income contexts such as Germany,[116] but key insights have not yet filtered into policy, nor has there been sustained consideration of the transferability of these insights to lower-income settings. Drawing more deeply from the wider educational literature on effective transitions between languages of instruction could further inform effective approaches to the inclusion of refugee learners.

Table 4. Illustrative examples: Approaches to supporting refugee children to learn languages of instruction

APPROACH	EXAMPLES
Pre-entry language (and cultural orientation) courses of varying length	Netherlands[117] Türkiye: Temporary Education Centres, up to 2020. Sweden: Two years of preparatory classes Germany[118] Rwanda: Six-month language and cultural orientation programme (*see Chapter 5*)
Immersion programmes: children attend mainstream classes with some teaching assistance support, in the classroom or in small groups, outside core lessons	United Kingdom.[119] Serbia: After-school classes[120] Mixed evidence on effectiveness; there are some concerns that children are 'submerged' in classrooms where they understand very little; counterbalanced by appreciation that they miss other learning if segregated in language-focused courses for too long[121]

APPROACH	EXAMPLES
Refugee and host-country teachers co-teaching, to ensure all children understand	Mentioned by UNESCO without any specific country example.[122]
Bilingual education resources	Portugal: Textbooks and other learning materials, and distance-learning programmes (TV and radio) in Portuguese and Ukrainian[123] Brazil: Bilingual learning resources for early childhood education in São Paulo[124] Uganda: Learning and assessment materials in four local languages and two languages spoken by refugees in the West Nile region[125]
Differentiated learning and assessment options, depending on language competence	Portugal: Learners with advanced Portuguese follow the Portuguese curriculum (with additional language support as needed); those with beginner and intermediate language skills follow a curriculum designed for learners with Portuguese as a second language[126]
Offering language instruction to parents to support their integration and engagement with parents' learning	Türkiye[127] United Kingdom[128] Germany[129]

Where children do not speak the language of instruction and/or parents are uncertain of the value of learning it (for example, if they expect to return home within a few years), this can lead to parents opting instead for private schools, with teaching being in their preferred language of instruction. For example, in Mauritania, refugees from francophone West African countries sent their children to private schools that teach in French, rather than public schools teaching in Arabic.[130] Private education, however, is often beyond most refugee families' economic means.[131] These examples highlight a need for refugee learners to maintain and develop skills in their home languages and home education systems, as well as those of the host country.

Türkiye is often cited as a positive example of a transition from parallel provision to inclusion of refugees in a national education system, with language learning playing an important role (*see Box* 4).

Box 4: Türkiye case study: The role of language of instruction in refugee inclusion

The first Syrian refugees crossed into Türkiye in April 2011. Between 2013 and 2018, the percentage of Syrians living outside camps increased from 64 per cent to 93 per cent.[132] As the refugee population increased and spread beyond the camps, various informal schools were established. These were generally staffed by volunteer teachers, who used a modified Syrian curriculum, and taught in Arabic. The schools were largely unregulated, operated outside the national system and had very limited quality assurance or standardized certification at the end of grades 9 and 12.[133]

In 2014, Türkiye's Ministry of National Education established a regulatory framework for these Temporary Education Centres (TECs). Education provision, data management and regulation of organizations supporting TECs were further standardized during the following two years, and TECs not meeting regulations were closed.[134] In August 2016, the government announced that

all Syrian children (who, at that time, numbered around 1 million) would be integrated into the national education system,[135] and children enrolling at the key transition points of the education system (i.e., grades 1, 5 and 9) were directed to public schools rather than TECs.[136] Since 2017, an estimated 700,000 Syrian children have joined Türkiye's public education system.[137] To facilitate this transition, the ministry mandated that all TECs should offer 15 hours of Turkish-language instruction per week in order to prepare students for the transition to Turkish schools. The shift was supported by the €300 million Promoting Integration of Syrian Kids to the Turkish Education System project.[138] Two fifths of the money was used to finance school construction; the rest was allocated to Turkish and Arabic language courses, catch-up education and remedial classes, free school transport, education materials, an examination system, guidance and counselling, training of 15,000 teachers and hiring of administrative personnel.[139]

A qualitative study of schools in one province (Bursa) in 2017 found, however, that teachers mostly considered the training they had received to be insufficient to help them support newly arrived children.[140] While some schools received dedicated language support via 'contract teachers', not all did, and the Turkish language materials and textbooks they received were not always appropriate for children of a range of ages. Teachers in Mostafa's study also noted particular challenges when students joined part-way through a school year or had missed the early grades of the Turkish school system and therefore lacked the language skills to fully participate and learn. Despite feeling unsupported, the teachers interviewed developed a range of strategies to aid the inclusion of Syrian students (*see Section 3.3.3*).

Assessment and certification

Issues of assessment and certification are highlighted in the continuum (*see Table 2*). This reflects their importance as gateways to the labour market and to higher education in the host country, the refugees' home country or a third country (*see Table 5*).

Table 5. Illustrative examples: Assessment and certification arrangements

ASSESSMENT AND CERTIFICATION ARRANGEMENTS	EXAMPLES
Use of qualification frameworks to assess equivalence of certification and allow access to higher levels of education and the labour market	European Qualifications Passport for Refugees;[141] Andrés Bello Convention
Full access to host country's assessment systems and certification	Uganda,[142] Rwanda (*see Section 5*), Türkiye,[143] Chad[144]
Access to host country's assessment systems; certification only with correct documentation	Curaçao, Dominican Republic,[145] Ecuador (*see Chapter 6*)
Access to host country's assessment systems; no certification	Rohingya: Refugees in Bangladeshi primary schools (mid-2010s)[146]

ASSESSMENT AND CERTIFICATION ARRANGEMENTS	EXAMPLES
Home-country curriculum, certified by authorities of home country	Congolese refugees in Burundi (mid-2010s);[147] Ukrainian students learning online in Poland, Moldova and other European host countries;[148] refugees in Tanzania[149]
Alternative curriculum certified by international/ external provider	UNICEF-supported initiative for Venezuelan secondary school students following remote learning course in Trinidad and Tobago, with certification from a US-based university[150]
Informal provision aligned with national system and with certification to allow smooth transition	UNHCR has worked with informal education centres to administer end-of-primary-school achievement tests using the Malaysian Primary School Evaluation Test[151]
No certification or certification that is not aligned with broader qualifications frameworks	Some informal programmes[152]

Where refugees are studying in a host country's public schools and are using the same curriculum as host-country learners, they should be allowed to participate in end-of-cycle assessments and receive certification in the same way as their native peers. A study of 41 countries, mostly in Africa and the Middle East, indeed found that full or close to full inclusion in assessment and certification was common (countries scored an average of 3.39/4 on a four-part index of inclusion).[153] The countries that did not offer certification via national systems were generally those that only allowed refugees to learn through parallel systems, such as Bangladesh and Malaysia.

The study did not examine any countries in the Latin America and Caribbean region, however. This may explain the under-representation of countries that make receiving certification contingent on refugees providing documentation proving their right to reside and/or evidence of prior study.[154] In much of the region (e.g., Colombia, Ecuador, Dominican Republic, Aruba and Curaçao), students cannot receive certification of their studies without this documentation (*see Ecuador case study, Chapter 6*).[155] Although some of the countries hosting the largest numbers of Venezuelans have instituted mechanisms to regularize their status (e.g., Colombia and, to a lesser extent, Ecuador), in the short-term many older adolescents who are currently studying are unlikely to receive certification.

Other models may be relevant in different circumstances. Where refugees hope or expect to return to their home country in the relatively near future, obtaining certification from there may be important, particularly for older students nearing the end of the school cycle. Historically, this approach was more common (*see Table 5*). Given the unpredictability of displacement, however, in recent years more emphasis has been placed on regional qualifications equivalency frameworks, which can avoid the need to obtain certification from a refugee's home country. Where neither home- nor host-country certification is available, third-country certification may be another option (such as the online high school courses offered to Venezuelan students in Trinidad and Tobago).

3.4 Specific support for inclusion of refugee learners

Inclusive school and pedagogical practices

School and pedagogical practices supporting the inclusion of refugee learners are not easily classified on a continuum from least to most inclusive. Rather, they are better conceived as a range of approaches to support refugee students' learning and 'relational inclusion'. The following discusses some of the most common approaches.

Learning assessments enable children to be placed in a class that is appropriate to their prior learning.[156] In some high-income countries (e.g., Finland), schools develop individualized learning plans to tailor educational support to students' specific needs.[157] In many Latin American countries (including Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and Mexico), placement tests assess children's learning levels without requiring documentation of their previous studies, and determine grade levels.[158] Evidence suggests that schools have some flexibility in both their use and content and, in the case of Peru, whether to charge families for these tests.[159] The tests are most effective when focusing on core skills and knowledge, rather than material that is specific to individual countries' curricula. Without learning assessments, there is a risk of learners being placed in grades below their actual achievement level, particularly where host country teachers have negative perceptions of the quality of education in refugees' home countries, as documented, for example, among Nicaraguan refugees and migrants in Costa Rica.[160]

Remedial classes seek to help displaced students catch up with lost learning. Where learners are 'overage' in relation to their learning level, remedial classes or accelerated learning programmes are more likely to promote effective social and educational inclusion than placement in a class that is commensurate with their learning level. These classes are typically offered by specialist teachers and take place in small groups, concentrating on key knowledge and skills, and sometimes including language learning support. The literature on effective approaches with refugee learners is much slimmer than that for accelerated learning programmes. As is the case for a number of aspects of additional support for refugee inclusion discussed in this section, it would be valuable to draw from the broader literature on remedial education in formal school settings, particularly those in low-resource contexts.

Accelerated education programmes. Data from low- and middle-income countries suggest that children lose an average of three to four years of education through forced displacement.[161] As noted above, accelerated learning programmes can enable re-entry into a more age-appropriate level of the education system, or allow adolescents to receive certification and move to training or into the labour market. For example, in Dadaab (Kenya) an accelerated learning programme implemented by the Norwegian Refugee Council condenses eight years of the Kenyan curriculum into four, with multiple entry and exit points. At the end of each cycle, students can re-enter the formal system at a grade-appropriate level, using an assessment framework endorsed by the Kenyan Ministry of Education.[162]

Intercultural education. Numerous studies have highlighted the importance of intercultural education to enrich the learning of both refugee and host-country learners and to promote social inclusion.[163] However, such insights are not discussed systematically in the literature on inclusion of refugee learners. Teacher preparation to support refugee students typically involves some orientation in intercultural education. However, the quality and depth of this is variable.[164] Qualitative studies show individual teachers' efforts to draw in students through discussion of aspects of their home culture,

by using greetings in their native language, and schools organizing cross-cultural family festivals.[165] Mostafa's study highlights the importance of such initiatives being supported and integrated across 'whole schools' by school leadership, a finding that is consistent with broader studies.[166]

Extracurricular/social integration activities aim to promote social integration by engaging refugee and host-country students in social and educational activities outside the core curriculum. These typically involve sports and arts-based activities. While some are framed explicitly as social integration activities such as *Seamos Amigos* in Ecuador (**see Chapter 6**), others attempt social integration 'by stealth'; that is, by targeting recreational or extracurricular learning opportunities to both refugee and host-country learners. Although few such initiatives are rigorously evaluated, there is evidence of positive impacts on social integration. For example, the Jordan Ministry of Education's Nashatati programme, which enables vulnerable children aged 12–15 years to develop life skills through sport and art. An evaluation found that participants demonstrated a 33 per cent increase in self-confidence, a 34 per cent increase in the ability to deal calmly with confrontation and not resort to violence, and a 35 per cent increase in willingness to play and work with other students of different ages and nationalities.[167] In Türkiye, an initiative with primary school children promoting empathy led to lower peer violence and victimization in schools.[168]

Access to social protection

Numerous studies have identified both the direct and opportunity costs of schooling as a critical barrier for refugee learners. While these are also major barriers for children from host communities, poverty levels are often higher among refugee households, particularly where parents are unable to work.[169] Research by UNHCR in four countries (Egypt, Ethiopia, Malaysia and Uganda) found that hidden costs, such as additional fees demanded by schools, uniforms, food at school, transport costs and school supplies, were critical reasons for refugee children not progressing beyond primary school.[170] In Egypt, respondents also mentioned the costs of examination fees and private tutoring. As noted in chapters 5 and 6, refugee adolescents (both boys and girls) often prioritize working over studying, to alleviate poverty. There are four main approaches to providing cash and in-kind assistance to help refugee children and adolescents continue to attend school (**see Table 6**).

Table 6. Illustrative examples: Different levels of inclusion in social protection systems to support school attendance

ASSESSMENT AND CERTIFICATION ARRANGEMENTS	EXAMPLES
Financial or in-kind support targeted at refugees (usually through parallel systems)	Lebanon: Min Ila cash transfer programme[171] Türkiye: Emergency Social Safety Net[172] Egypt: textbooks and tablets for refugee children[173]
Refugees have access to in-kind support, but not cash transfers, via national systems	Ecuador: school feeding and textbook programmes (*see Chapter 6*)
Refugees may access national cash transfer programmes (if they meet documentary requirements)	Colombia, Chile[174] Türkiye: Conditional Cash Transfer for Education[175]
Refugees meeting eligibility criteria have access to all forms of social assistance, including cash transfers	Brazil[176]

Evaluations of cash transfer initiatives suggest that, if well designed, they can play an important role in meeting the hidden costs of schooling and thus support refugee learners' inclusion in national education systems (*see Table 6*). This is the case whether the transfer is provided exclusively to refugees, as with Min Ila in Lebanon and the Emergency Social Safety Net in Türkiye, or whether it is part of the national social protection as with the CCTE, also in Türkiye, or Brazil's Bolsa Familia.

Key factors that underpin effectiveness include the size of transfer, receiving it regularly over an extended period, and relatively simple application procedures. For example, the evaluation of Min Ila in Lebanon found that the cash transfer increased children's school attendance, families' spending on educational expenses, and the proportion of children using the school bus. It also led refugee children to feel equal to others at school, since their households could afford school materials, school uniforms and transport, and motivated them to study. Similarly, Syrian households benefiting from the Emergency Social Safety Net cash transfers in Türkiye were more likely to send their children to school, reducing child labour statistics, because the transfer was high enough to address the opportunity and direct costs of schooling.

While sufficient cash transfers – whether they are delivered through national social protection systems or non-governmental agencies – can help support refugee children's inclusion in national education systems, the choice of modality and eligibility criteria have substantial implications for overall social inclusion. For example, evidence from Ecuador suggests that social protection initiatives available to refugees as well as the local population can help build social cohesion.

There were no evaluations found of initiatives providing in-kind educational transfers to refugee students (e.g., learning materials, school supplies, uniforms or food). Further, although common in Education in Emergencies programming, their impact on enabling attendance in national systems or influencing learning outcomes is unclear. A systematic review of education support initiatives in low- and middle-income countries without a specific focus on displaced students found that providing learning materials to students has little effect if the broader constraints to learning, such as teachers' skill levels, are not addressed.

3.5 Cross-cutting and broader issues

The previous sections have outlined a number of areas of education policy and practice (*see Figures 1 and 2*). This section briefly outlines a few broader areas of policy and practice that underpin effective inclusion, which have emerged in the literature and interviews as particularly significant.

Expansion and upgrading of infrastructure
As noted above, around 85 per cent of refugees are hosted in low- or middle-income countries, where education systems are already overstretched. In many refugee-hosting contexts, newcomers are concentrated in low-income communities. These are typically in border regions, or in the poorer districts of major cities.

"Refugees arrive in a very concentrated manner in a short period of time in one place. In the main they're not going to go to the wealthy areas of the city ... they're going to be crowding education systems in the poor areas ... so we get out of this learning crisis we need to invest in education facilities for all."

Key informant interview 1
GLOBAL, DONOR

Expansion of education facilities is often essential to improve access both for refugees and children from the host country. While school and classroom sizes and the number of qualified teachers and learning materials available remain restricted, inclusive policies will be undermined by a lack of school spaces. Studies from Colombia and Ecuador have shown that lack of school spaces has often proved one of the greatest barriers to school enrolment for Venezuelan refugees.[177] A study with refugee teachers reports classrooms with over 100 students in urban schools hosting refugees in Kenya.[178] UNESCO reports similar levels of overcrowding in some of Kenya's refugee camp schools.[179]

This highlights the importance of system expansion to support inclusion (this is discussed further in the Rwanda and Ecuador case studies). Experience globally has shown that investments in education for refugees can contribute to improving the availability of education services in host communities, and thus to reducing tensions between refugees and host communities. For example, Pakistan's Refugee Affected and Hosting Areas initiative directed funds to underserved host communities. Of the 800,000 beneficiaries, 16 per cent were Afghan refugee children, while the rest were Pakistani.[180]

> "You need to invest in bricks and mortar. You need classrooms. You need teachers, and you need equipment in the classrooms. That's going to support the learning, and unless we invest in that we won't be able to move the needle. It's that simple."
>
> **Key informant interview 1**
> GLOBAL, DONOR

Quality of education and learning outcomes

In 2022, an estimated 70 per cent of children in low- and middle-income countries were in learning poverty. This is defined as the proportion of 10-year-olds unable to read and comprehend a text. In 2019, this figure was 57 per cent. The proportions of children in learning poverty in the major refugee-hosting regions of sub-Saharan Africa, the Middle East and North Africa, and Latin America and the Caribbean were, respectively, 89 per cent, 70 per cent and 79 per cent.[181] While disaggregated data on learning levels among refugee students are rarely available, these data show the scale of the challenges faced by education systems in many refugee-hosting contexts.

Programmes to support inclusion of refugees in national education systems must, therefore, support overall education workforce development and, in particular, teachers' professional development, into which upskilling on supporting refugees (*see Section 3.4*) can be integrated. Evaluation of the vast amount of literature available on enhancing learning outcomes overall, and particularly for displaced students, is outside the scope of this report. Some key practices recommended in recent reviews include:

- Increasing the use of formative assessments, so that teachers can accurately gauge students' learning levels

- Expanding the use of remedial teaching to help overcome pandemic-related learning losses, as well as those of refugee children during extended periods out of school

- Prioritizing teaching foundational skills and, if necessary, reducing curricular content to enable mastery of these skills

- Ensuring that teachers have a basic understanding of mental health and psychosocial support and how to make schools safe and welcoming spaces for children.[182]

Without such efforts, initiatives focused on refugee inclusion in national systems may end up failing both refugee and national students. Having outlined some promising practices, the next chapter turns to the question of how these approaches may be financed.

4. Financing inclusion of refugees in national education systems

The international education aid architecture has long been considered unfit for purpose to serve the educational needs of school-aged refugees.[183] The education sector, in crisis contexts, continues to be underfunded, and funding flows to be unpredictable, despite global initiatives to redress these challenges (such as ECW, the Global Programme for Education (GPE), and cross-sectoral RRRPs. In 2012, the United Nations set a modest target to increase the share of humanitarian funding spent on education to 4 per cent. By 2021, however, this percentage was just 3.3 per cent.[184] Analysis by the Geneva Global Hub for Education in Emergencies indicates that, within United Nations-led humanitarian appeals, the education sector has become more seriously underfunded since 2018.[185] Indeed, only 22 per cent of the funds requested by the education sector were disbursed in 2021, a figure far smaller than in other sectors.

Given that around 85 per cent of refugee learners are hosted in low- and middle-income countries, international funding remains critical to sharing the financial burdens. Further, most of the available data are on international funding flows. This is, therefore, the focus of this chapter. The data are not disaggregated by extent of inclusion in national systems.

Although educational costs for refugees are considered a burden to be shared between the international community and refugee-hosting countries (e.g., per agreements such as the Global Compact on Refugees), in countries where refugees are permitted to work in the formal economy, tax receipts can substantially outstrip spending (*see the Poland example in Section 4.2*). This section focuses on public finance and does not discuss either household contributions or private sector contributions to refugee education.

4.1 The financing needed for inclusion of refugee learners

In 2021 a joint study by UNHCR and the World Bank estimated that between US$4.85 billion and US$5.11 billion annually was needed to support the inclusion of 7 million school-aged refugee children and adolescents in national education systems globally.[186,187] This is based on data concerning the existing costs of education in host countries with an additional coefficient to cover programmes to support the additional needs of refugee students. The figures calculated are likely to be an underestimate, however. First, the numbers of refugees per country are probably underestimated, as not all refugee schoolchildren are registered with UNHCR. Second, the model does not take into account new influxes of school-aged refugees that have occurred since 2021.[188]

The annual average cost of accommodating school-aged refugees within national primary and secondary education systems, for the 10 countries with the largest numbers of such refugees, have been calculated by the UNHCR and the World Bank in a joint report (*see Figure 3*).[189] This breaks down the baseline cost of educating national students, and the additional costs required to support the inclusion of refuge learners. Financing needs differ considerably between countries, reflecting a mixture of differing unit costs, and the number of refugees.

Figure 3. **Annual average resourcing needs for school-aged refugee children, from the present up to 2030, selected countries**

A. PRIMARY EDUCATION

US$ millions (2020 constant prices)

● Local student costs   ● Additional costs to support refugee inclusion

Country	Local student costs	Additional costs to support refugee inclusion
Türkiye	761	266
Bangladesh	334	117
Lebanon	250	88
Iran	178	62
Peru	166	58
Jordan	106	37
Pakistan	73	25
Uganda	39	13
Sudan	25	9
Ethiopia	16	6

US$ millions (2020 constant prices)

● Local student costs   ● Additional costs to support refugee inclusion

Source: Adapted from UNHCR and World Bank (2021).[190]

4.2 Expenditure on educational inclusion of school-aged refugees: What is known?

Although there are data on international donors' commitments to education, there is no mechanism to track systematically funding specifically aimed at refugees or refugee-hosting communities. A survey by the OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) in 2020 attempted to estimate the total aid resources available for refugees. However, the main data sets tracking external assistance to refugees (the OECD CRS and the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs Financial Tracking System) do not do this systematically.[191]

There are two major weaknesses in the financial information on humanitarian assistance recorded by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs Financial Tracking System. First, funding requests and pledges are often channelled into what is called the 'multisector' category, making it difficult to distinguish sector-specific expenditure. Second, the data do not clearly distinguish between funding for refugees and for other groups targeted by humanitarian interventions.[192] These two weaknesses make it more challenging to monitor aid given specifically for refugee education. Similarly, with respect to development assistance, while the OECD CRS has a sector code to track how much money donors spend on refugees, this is not broken down by sector and only relates to

resources donors spend within their own countries to support refugees (e.g., 'in-country refugee costs'). The following sections contain discussion of what is known about financing to help support refugee education, and assumptions that can be made.

Domestic government expenditure on refugee-hosting countries

Limited information concerning domestic public expenditure by national governments hosting refugees is publicly available online. Moreover, education budgets rarely separate out budgetary allocations to refugee and non-refugee populations. Some examples where information is available are presented in this section.

In 2020, donors reported to the OECD that they spent US$8.8 billion on hosting refugees in their home countries. However, no sectoral breakdown was provided.[193] Some country-level information sheds a little light on donor host governments' education expenditure. For example:

- **Germany**, the donor with the largest reported in-country refugee spending in 2020, reported spending €5.3 billion on asylum seekers' education.[194] Since 1992, the German Government has also funded the Deutsche Akademische Flüchtlingsinitiative Albert Einstein scholarship programme, which has provided 18,500 refugees and returnee students with access to higher education opportunities.[195] From 2016 to 2019, the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research allocated approximately €100 million to support refugees in higher education.[196]

- **Poland's** Ministry of Education and Science has allocated PLN 180 million (approximately US$41 million) for specialized classes for refugees, which offer psychological and pedagogical assistance in response to the arrival of refugees from Ukraine.[197] To put this in context, one recent estimate concluded that combined spending in 2022 from private citizens and the Government of Poland to assist Ukrainian refugees in the country equalled approximately 1 per cent of Poland's entire gross domestic product (GDP) in 2022.[198] A recent study from the Migration Research Centre at the University of Warsaw estimates that refugees from Ukraine have paid in taxes more than three times (PLN 10 billion) what has been spent on them by the Polish government (PLN 3.5 billion).[199]

Information on the levels of support given to refugees in refugee-hosting countries in the Global South is somewhat harder to find than for OECD countries. However, several countries in the Global South have codified policies relating to the transfer of domestic funds to refugees. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Ethiopia, the Republic of the Congo and Uganda, for example, policies are in place concerning fiscal transfers for refugee-hosting countries.[200] In Uganda, one 2017 United Nations Development Programme study estimated that the Government of Uganda – together with local communities – spent US$323 million on the protection and management of refugees. The majority of this went to the energy and water sector, with just 0.25 per cent (US$700,000) going to the education sector.[201] How much of these funds reached refugees or refugee-hosting schools is not known. It is clear, nonetheless, that funding falls far short of the financial targets identified by the UNHCR and the World Bank. In 2021, it was estimated that annual funding of US$6.95 million was needed for primary education, and US$52.02 million for secondary education.[202]

Bilateral donors

An OECD survey conducted in 2020 found that 32 bilateral donors gave a total of US$44.3 billion[203] in official development assistance (ODA) to refugees in 2018–2019.[204] The top five recipient countries of bilateral ODA for refugees in 2018–2019 were those that either hosted large numbers of refugees or had high levels of internal displacement: Türkiye, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria and Iraq. While host countries in sub-Saharan Africa, South Asia and Latin America had significant needs, these regions were not prioritized by donors as much as the Middle East and North Africa region. For example, despite their large refugee populations, Colombia, Pakistan, Iran and Sudan were and continue to be comparatively underfunded. Further, while countries receiving bilateral aid from OECD donors host the bulk of refugees globally, the survey found that just under half of all aid disbursed to support refugees is spent within donor States (US$20.1 billion), versus the US$24.2 billion disbursed to ODA-recipient countries. Institutions in the United States, Germany and the European Union collectively provided 63 per cent of all bilateral ODA disbursements.[205]

The OECD survey does not capture information on sector-specific aid disbursements, preventing a systematic understanding of donor spending on refugees' education. What is known, however, is that overall aid to education as a share of total ODA averaged 7.3 per cent in 2018–2019.[206] Applying this share to the US$44.3 billion estimated by the OECD survey to have been disbursed to refugee situations, and assuming that the share to education is the same across crisis and non-crisis situations, this would imply that an estimated US$3.2 billion was disbursed by the donors surveyed to education specifically for refugee situations. This is a significantly higher estimate than those in the 2019 Global Education Monitoring Report, which analysed project-level data[207] in the OECD CRS. It found that US$425 million was disbursed for refugee education through 225 humanitarian aid projects in 2016. A further US$840 million was disbursed to refugee education through development aid (of which over half was for Palestinian refugees through the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East).[208]

Multilateral funding

As part of the Global Refugee Forum 2019, three major multilateral funds and funders – ECW, GPE and the World Bank – committed to working together to close the finance gap and provide technical assistance in refugee-hosting countries (*see Table 7*). Within this commitment, they pledged to support governments and in-country partners to better coordinate and align education assistance to refugees and host communities.[209] As the 2023–2026 ECW Strategic Plan makes clear, further strengthening of this coordination is needed, since "an effective EiEPC [education in emergencies and protracted crises] sector relies on transparent funding streams and strong collaboration… Currently, global players are hindered by an overly complex funding landscape and siloed working approach."[210] RRRPs provide a mechanism for this coordination in eight refugee situations (*see Annex 3*). The extent to which this funding supports inclusion of refugee learners varies with countries' overall policies. Education sector elements in these plans are often grossly underfunded, as discussed in chapters 5 and 6.

Table 7. Key multilateral funders

MECHANISM	KEY INFORMATION
ECW	Currently working in 43 countries. In 2019, pledged to support multi-year programmes for refugee and host-community children, with a focus on secondary education. Of students reached to date, 79% are primary-level learners, 34% are refugees, 15% are internally displaced persons, and 51% are from other affected populations.[211]
GPE	Between 2016 and 2020, 78.5% of GPE implementation grants (US$1.7 billion) were intended for countries affected by fragility and conflict. In 2019, it was estimated that GPE partner countries were home to 4 million refugees of school age, equivalent to 45% of the world's school-aged refugee population.[212]
World Bank	Largest multilateral donor to refugee situations. In 2017, the Regional Sub-window for Refugees and Host Communities was introduced to support low-income refugee-hosting countries. Under the 18th Replenishment of the International Development Association, which covered the period 2017–2020, the World Bank created a US$2 billion financing window[213] to strengthen this support.

Source: Authors

Note: ECW, Education Cannot Wait; GPE, Global Programme for Education.

4.3 Funding gaps and disaggregation

While the international community has invested in estimating the financing needs of quality education for refugee children and adolescents since 2015, considerably less is known about the actual resources that go towards funding refugee education. This is starting to change, however; for example, ECW now publishes disaggregated figures for the different groups of children and adolescents reached through its funding streams (although the proportion allocated to support refugees' education is not yet included). The roll-out of RRRPs has also contributed to a better understanding of the specific educational needs of different populations affected by crises (for example, distinguishing refugee and host-community learners). However, current reporting mechanisms do not always adequately capture the resources that are actually being made available for refugee education. This makes understanding the size of the financing gap and the resources needed to ensure that all refugee children and adolescents have access to quality education much more challenging. With the RRRPs, for example, while requirements are disaggregated by sector in appeal documents, the funding actually received by the education sector has not been as systematically reported.[214] Similarly, as discussed in this chapter, data on domestic public expenditure on education for refugees by governments in the Global South are hard to obtain and often do not distinguish between what is spent on refugees and what is spent on the host population. Donor and domestic financing data also do not show resources allocated for specific services to support refugee inclusion, such as language support or remedial classes.

"I don't know that the US government or EU can fund refugee education services for 10, 20, 30 years in a host country. It's a complicated issue, but I haven't seen an effective financing model from a sustainability perspective that would lead to a transition to self-financing in a Member State."

Key informant interview 3
GLOBAL, UNITED NATIONS AGENCY

As well as gaps in data, the interviews conducted during this study also highlighted the scale of funding gaps, and the lack of models for sustainable financing of education for refugee learners. This lack of consideration of long-term sustainable financing of refugee inclusion reflects, in part, overall funding gaps and under-prioritization of education in emergencies. These limit states' capacity to invest in and strengthen education systems so that they can more effectively accommodate refugee students.

Having outlined key insights from the literature on different aspects of inclusion of refugee learners in national education systems, and the challenges associated with insufficient and unpredictable finance, the following section focuses on insights from the varied experiences of two countries – Ecuador and Rwanda – that have promoted the inclusion of refugee learners in national education systems. The case studies focus largely on the inclusion continuum (*see Figure 2*). There is also discussion of the key issues related to each country's overall education system and policies (*see Figures 1 and 2*). These case studies highlight that the overall capacity of national education systems, levels of financing and effectiveness of coordination arrangements greatly influence the effectiveness of specific refugee-focused inclusion policies and initiatives.

5. Case study: Rwanda

5.1 Background

This case study illustrates approaches to educational inclusion taken by a low-income country that is host to refugees from several bordering nations. Although refugees live primarily in camps, Rwanda's overall approach to refugee hosting emphasizes inclusion in national systems. With respect to key elements of the inclusion continuum (*see Figure 2*), refugees are included in national schools across levels, learn from the national curriculum, are allowed to sit for national exams, can earn Rwandan school certificates and are represented in national data systems.

Rwanda is one of the top 30 refugee-hosting countries in the world, accommodating more than 127,000 refugees. This is equivalent to 0.9 per cent[215] of the country's overall population (13.6 million). Approximately 60 per cent of refugees in Rwanda come from DRC, and 40 per cent come from Burundi.[216] Approximately 49 per cent of refugees in Rwanda are children. In recent years, Rwanda has also begun to host a growing number of refugees arriving from Libya under the Emergency Transit Mechanism, under which vulnerable refugees who have been detained in Libya and the Niger are evacuated.[217] Approximately 90 per cent of refugees in Rwanda live in camps managed by UNHCR and the Ministry of Emergency Management (MINEMA).

The majority of Congolese refugees live in one of the five camps spread around the country. Refugees from Burundi primarily live in the country's largest refugee camp, Mahama, or in urban areas, including Kigali and Butare. There have been fewer new arrivals from Burundi since the COVID-19 lockdown and subsequent political changes after the Burundian presidential elections in May 2020, and growing numbers requesting UNHCR assistance for voluntary repatriation.[218]

Cooperation between the Government of Rwanda and the Government of the DRC has improved over time; however, progress toward a tripartite agreement between Rwanda, DRC and UNHCR has been slow. Bilateral cooperation has historically been stronger between the governments of Burundi and Rwanda, which signed a tripartite agreement in 2005. Under the RRRP for Burundian refugees, consistent support has been provided in Rwanda; however, the facilities in refugee camps have deteriorated over the last several years due to the size of the refugee population and limited resources.[219]

Refugee learners' participation in education in Rwanda

Refugees in Rwanda have full access to all levels of the national education system. A joint UNHCR and World Bank report estimated that 48 per cent of refugee children in Rwanda are of primary-school age, 44 per cent are of secondary-school age, and 8 per cent are of pre-primary-school age.[220]

UNHCR data suggest that 94 per cent of school-aged refugee children of the corresponding age groups are enrolled in primary school, 43 per cent in secondary school, and 3.4 per cent in higher education.[221] There are no major differences in enrolment numbers between genders (*see Figure 5*). In 2020, over 59,000 refugee students were enrolled in national primary and secondary schools, alongside children from host communities.[222]

The majority of refugees attend national public schools (*see Figure 6*), which is consistent with trends for national students.[223] Refugees attend schools in refugee camps only where there are no national schools nearby. This is the case for those inside Kiziba camp, which is located in a remote area. Rwandan children who live near Kiziba are also able to access the schools inside the refugee camp.[224]

Figure 5. Refugee student enrolment by gender (number of students), 2021

Number of learners

	ECE	Primary	Secondary	TVET
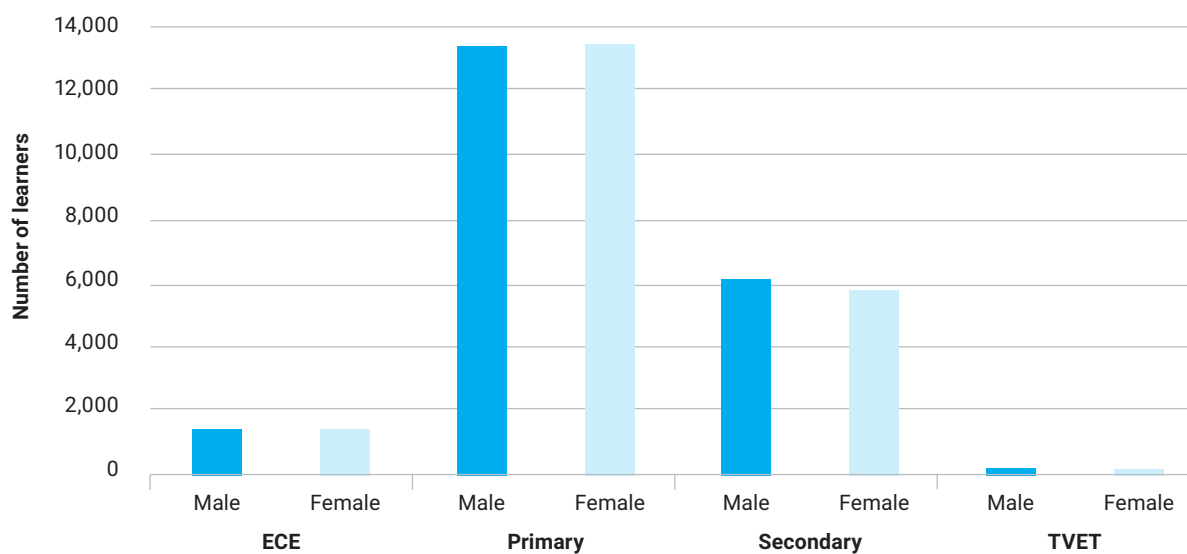
Note: ECE, Early Childhood Education; TVET, Technical and Vocational Education and Training.

Figure 6. Enrolment of refugee learners by type of institution, 2021

Number of learners

Public schools   Government-subsidized schools   Private schools
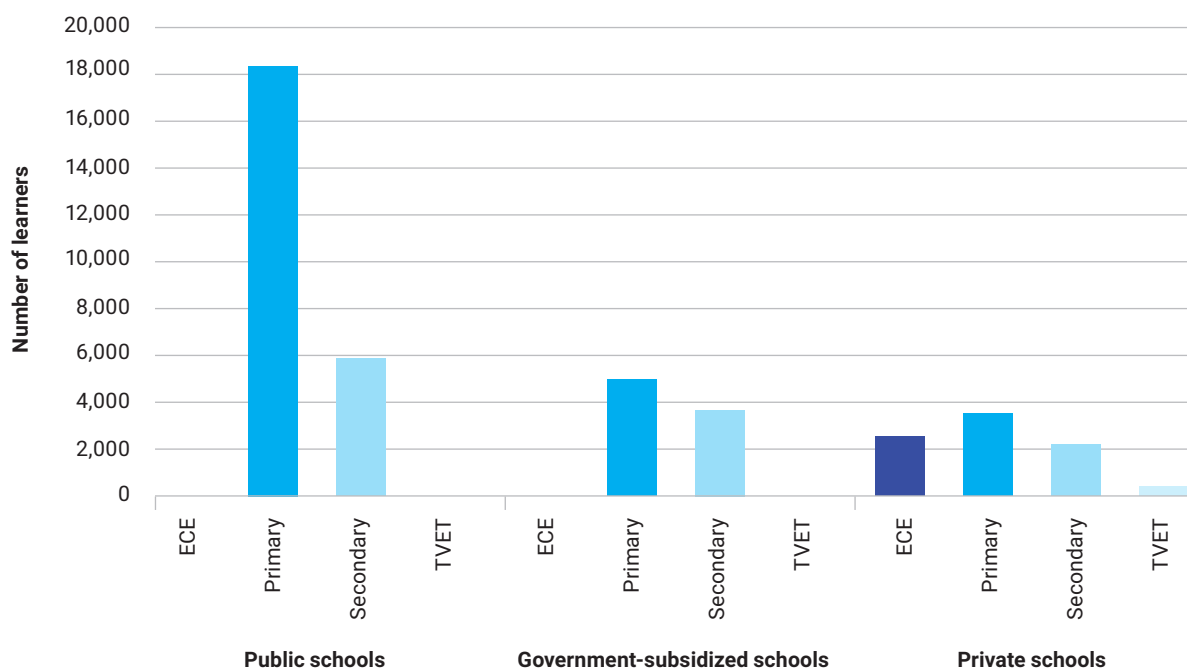
Almost no refugee students are able to access public pre-primary education or Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) (*see Figure 6*). The small number of refugee students who do so access private provision. However, data from 2020 indicate that a greater proportion of refugee children than Rwandan children access public pre-primary education (61 per cent and 29.8 per cent, respectively).[227]

5.2 Overall refugee policy and governance

Overarching policy frameworks

Under the One United Nations initiative, of which Rwanda became a pilot country in 2007, there have been concerted efforts to outline refugee inclusion in Rwandan national plans, instead of operating parallel systems with separate strategies. The Government of Rwanda made a series of pledges at the 2016 Leaders' Summit on Refugees, which led to the adoption of a Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF), and to Rwanda joining the Global Compact for Refugees in 2018. At the 2016 summit, the Government of Rwanda made four pledges, to:

- Promote inclusion through a joint livelihood strategy

- Provide universal access to national identity cards and convention travel documents

- Grant access to national health insurance

- Integrate the 18,000 primary-school-aged and 35,000 secondary-school-aged refugee students in Rwanda into the national education system.[228]

Part of the aim of the CRRF was to attract additional financing for refugee-hosting countries. Under the CRRF, refugees are included in Rwanda's national health and education systems, and all refugees in urban areas and refugee students in boarding schools have access to national health insurance. Additionally, Rwanda's legal framework for refugees, which complies with international refugee conventions, allows all refugees to be included in the national birth registration system (which is available for all children aged four years and under) and provides refugees with "freedom of movement and the rights to work, establish a business, hire employees, lease land and own property".[229] In practice, however, refugees' opportunities for self-reliance are hindered by various issues, including mobility – due to humanitarian financing being tied to camp residency – and by discrimination in the labour market.[230]

In May 2021, MINEMA and UNHCR released the joint strategy on Economic Inclusion of Refugees and Host Communities for 2021–2024. This is a new plan to implement the pledges made at the 2016 Leaders' Summit on Refugees. The plan states that the Government of Rwanda "aim[s] to ensure by 2030, that all refugees and neighbouring communities living in Rwanda are able to fulfill their productive potential as self-reliant members of the Rwandan society who contribute to economic development of their host districts."[231]

Although this plan does not discuss refugees' access to education in detail, its focus on enhancing livelihoods and on socioeconomic inclusion sets an enabling environment for young refugees to transition to the labour market. However, substantial challenges remain (*see Section 5.7.2*).[232]

Governance and coordination arrangements

The central Ministry of Education of Rwanda is responsible for overall policy and governance of the education sector. School administration and policy implementation are the responsibility of district officials (local-level administrations). MINEMA oversees all matters related to refugees and camp management, and is the primary Government of Rwanda partner to UNHCR. MINEMA is a semi-autonomous government agency that reports to the Prime Minister's Office. The Ministry of Education of Rwanda and MINEMA coordinate on matters related to education for refugees.

There are three coordinating mechanisms relevant to education for refugees in Rwanda, including technical working groups at the camp level, a national working group focused on education in emergencies, and a national education working group focused more broadly on the education system. The camp-level working group is led by UNHCR and includes representatives from MINEMA, district education officials, UNICEF and NGO implementing partners. This group focuses specifically on education for refugees, including identifying needs and challenges for refugee learners, and identifying ways in which partners can support inclusion in national systems. Some examples include NGO support inside schools, and the distribution of supplies to schools nationally. The national-level education working groups are not focused on refugee education per se but include representatives focused on refugee education, such as UNHCR, MINEMA and NGO partners. The inclusion of these organizations in sector working groups can help ensure that refugees' needs are addressed and can support partners to identify opportunities to strengthen inclusion, in connection with broader sector priorities.

Coordination between UNHCR and other United Nations partners, under the One United Nations initiative, as well as between United Nations bodies and the Government of Rwanda are considered strengths of Rwanda's refugee-hosting model. Brugha et al. highlight the importance of technical support from UNHCR and UNICEF at an early phase of the refugee response, and from the Ministry of Education to ensure that decisions were led by education specialists rather than being guided primarily by emergency response considerations.[233]

5.3 Legal framework for accessing education

Refugees have full access to all levels of the national education system, including pre-primary, primary, secondary and tertiary, without restriction.[234] There are currently no specific policies or guidelines relating to education for refugees beyond the mandate that all children in Rwanda should be part of the national education system. Refugees are not mentioned in any of the Education Sector Strategic Plans,[235] and there has been limited documentation on the rationale behind including refugees in the education system or how the initial approach to inclusion was informed.[236]

The approach to inclusion has evolved over time. Following an influx of Congolese refugees in 2012, Rwanda took a community-integrated approach and expanded existing schools, as opposed to building new and separate schools for refugees.[237] In 2013, UNHCR worked with the Ministry of Education to design strategies to guide education for refugees. These earlier strategies had been discontinued by 2016. Interviewees hypothesized that this is because the Government of Rwanda considered it unnecessary to have a separate strategy for education for refugees due to the high level of inclusion in national systems. Although this approach provides for inclusion in the current political and resource environment, which is characterized by supportive political leadership and ongoing

UNHCR support, the question remains as to whether a refugee-specific policy, or the more formal inclusion of refugees in national policy, is needed to ensure that inclusion and protection persist over time.

Not naming refugees in national policy could be viewed as a form of full inclusion, as refugee students are not viewed as outsiders or otherwise distinct from national students, thus entitling them to the same rights and opportunities. However, not having a formal policy also means that refugees are not formally protected. This could mean that refugee inclusion is dependent on the political environment remaining stable and on continued UNHCR support. Additionally, not having a policy leaves refugee education open to interpretation to an extent, as what specifically is expected of schools and the education system with regard to refugee education is not defined.

Pre-primary and tertiary opportunities are limited for Rwandan and refugee students alike. Efforts to strengthen access to these levels of education have created targeted opportunities for international partners to support expansion, which can benefit both refugee and host-community children. In some places, early childhood education infrastructure is stronger inside camps than it is in the surrounding communities. UNHCR, UNICEF and Government of Rwanda partners are currently exploring how early childhood education programmes might be expanded to ensure school integration starts at the earliest stage. The Concluding Observations of the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child recommend increasing pre-primary and tertiary access for children, under the development of a vocational training programme benefiting all, including refugee children.[238] They also express concern about low levels of enrolment in secondary education. Like Rwandan students, refugee students who perform exceptionally well in exams are eligible for scholarships for private schools and tertiary-level-related work, which includes TVET internships or apprenticeships.[239]

For primary and secondary education, all refugees (including those living in and outside camps) follow the Rwandan national curriculum and learn in Kinyarwanda and English (Rwanda's official languages), and are eligible to sit for exams and receive certifications.[240] Refugees are entitled to national ID cards, and refugee learners do not require any specific documentation to enrol in Rwandan schools. Unlike in many other refugee-hosting contexts, documentation is not considered a barrier to school access in Rwanda. Additionally, refugee learners are included in national education data systems and do not face additional costs related to accessing schools.[241]

Additional support for refugee learners

Despite not having specific policies relating to education for refugees, various policies and programmes aim to address the additional challenges that refugees may face, although refugee children are not perceived by international actors to be significantly disadvantaged in Rwanda.[242] According to the Republic of Rwanda Ministry of Education Revised Special Needs and Inclusive Education Policy, refugees, returnees and displaced children are primary target groups to promote enrolment, participation and completion of school.[243] Vulnerable refugee families are receiving financial support for school expenditures such as uniforms, learning materials and textbooks, and school feeding through UNHCR.[244] Evidence concerning refugee learners' access to broader national social protection programmes could not be found in the course of this study.

Newly arrived refugees receive language support and orientation and take part in back-to-school initiatives to prepare them for the Rwandan school system. This includes intensive English-language

training led by UNHCR, UNICEF and NGO partners. Since the shift from French to English as the national language of instruction (in 2008), both refugee and non-refugee learners have benefitted from a collective shift in learner-language instruction.[245] Further, because a majority of the learners entering Rwanda speak another Bantu language, that is, Kirundi, Kiswahili or Lingala (there is significant grammatical overlap between Kirundi and Kiswahili with Kinyarwanda), many learners are not starting from scratch. Therefore, they do not require substantial additional support to the same extent as others from more distant language backgrounds in other hosting contexts.

Challenges in the education sector include grade repetition for older students. Among Congolese refugees, secondary-level children who attended schools prior to their inclusion in the Rwandan national education system were initially allowed to finish their studies under the Congolese curriculum. However, once the government transitioned to full integration under Rwanda's curriculum, students sometimes have had to repeat grades due to differences in curricula.[246]

5.4 Financing for refugee inclusion in education

To support the educational needs of all 48,084 school-aged refugees in Rwanda, the resources required total US$77.4 million for the period up until 2032 (to provide education from kindergarten to grade 12 [or equivalent], plus one year of pre-primary education, over a 13-year period). This amount has been estimated on the basis of the following unit costs per student: US$54 at pre-primary level, US$43 at primary level and US$272 at secondary level. This is equivalent to approximately US$6 million annually.[247] However, as discussed in the following sections, there is a substantial gap between these needs and available funds.

Domestic financing

Between 1980 and 2013, domestic public expenditure on education in Rwanda doubled. The Government of Rwanda's commitment to financing the education sector has been integral in allowing for the inclusion of refugees within national education systems. For example, it has enabled the construction of additional infrastructure and expansion of the teaching workforce.[248] In line with its CRRF commitments, the government has mandated fee-free provision of both primary and secondary schooling for refugees, as well as for Rwandan children.[249]

Despite domestic policy and budgetary commitments to education, the Government of Rwanda remains highly dependent on external aid to support the inclusion of refugees in the national education system. This dependence has made it difficult to address financial challenges related to recurrent costs such as the inclusion of refugee teachers on the government wage bill (*see Box 5*).

Box 5: Challenges of including refugee teachers on the government payroll

For refugee teachers, payroll inclusion has been challenging because, in addition to financial constraints, not all refugee teachers possess the necessary national qualifications or identity papers required by the Government of Rwanda. This results in differences in pay between Rwandan and refugee teachers. For refugee teachers, this can further isolate them from their Rwandan counterparts.[250] The issue of teacher pay and registration is common across refugee-hosting countries, and is something the Government of Rwanda and its partners are currently working to solve in Rwanda. However, doing so will likely require innovative solutions. Teachers' salaries comprise the largest single budget item in most low- and middle-income education budgets.[251] However, very few donors support regular recurrent costs such as teachers' salaries. This means that finding a sustainable solution will require the Government of Rwanda to accept additional financial responsibility for refugee teachers' salaries, or for the international community to identify alternative financing mechanisms that can support teachers within the national system. A pooled funding model – such as that used in the Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund, in which 27 donors contributed to a funding modality for recurrent expenditure – may be an option for Rwanda.[252]

Additional financial resources are also needed to help increase host-community schools' capacity through the construction of new classrooms, latrines, laboratories, libraries, information and communication technology (ICT) labs to accommodate the growing number of students. Resources are also required for the current camp-based schools that will be absorbed into the national system once the Ministry of Education's standards are achieved.[253] This raises concerns about the sustainability of Rwanda's model of inclusion. If UNHCR or other donors were to reduce or stop funding education for refugees, the government's capacity to continue supporting refugee inclusion in education might be limited.

International financing

Table 8. Summary of international financing commitments and requests to support refugee education in Rwanda

FUNDER OR MECHANISM	COMMITMENT
UNHCR	In 2022, UNHCR appealed for US$86.7 million for Rwanda, of which US$33.4 million, or 33%, had been received as of November 2022.[254]
World Bank	In 2019, the World Bank approved US$60 million under the International Development Association's IDA-19 Window for Host Communities and Refugees. The funds were intended to benefit six refugee-hosting districts in Rwanda (around Gihembe, Kigeme, Kiziba, Mahama, Mugombwa and Nyabiheke refugee camps), including both the host community (2.1 million) and the refugee (0.1 million) populations.[255]
	In 2019, the World Bank disbursed US$24 million to improve access to basic services (education, health, water). Earmarked education projects included: construction, upgrading and rehabilitation of education facilities; more equipment and facilities for schools; and TVET.[256]

RRRPs	
Burundi RRRP	The 2021 RRRP appealed for US$61.7 million for Burundian refugees in Rwanda. Of this, just 26% was funded (compared with, for example, 37% for the United Republic of Tanzania, 34% for Uganda and 30% for DRC).[257] While sector-specific financial information is not available, a progress report found that 21,106 Burundian refugee children (the equivalent of 85% of school-aged children) in the Mahama refugee camp, where a majority of Burundian refugees in Rwanda live, were enrolled in early childhood education, primary and secondary schools. Funding from the appeal was used to upgrade school infrastructure at the Mahama refugee camp. This included the construction of a library, early childhood development centres and primary school classrooms.[258]
DRC RRRP	The 2022 RRRP aimed to support the enrolment of 4,800 children in early childhood development programmes, 16,120 children in primary education, 9,820 in secondary education and 500 refugee students in tertiary education. To meet these targets, an estimated US$8.3 million was required.[259] The 2021 RRRP aimed to support enrolment of 5,000 refugee children in early childhood education, 15,500 in primary schools and 10,000 in secondary schools. To meet this target, the 2021 RRRP estimated that a total of US$5.7 million was needed.[260]

Source: Authors

Note: DRC, Democratic Republic of the Congo; RRRP, Regional Refugee Response Plan; TVET, Technical and Vocational Education and Training; UNHCR, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

5.5 Challenges

System capacity

Schools hosting refugees are more crowded than those only serving the host population, meaning that additional classrooms and teachers will be required to fully integrate refugee children within the national school system.[261] In 2020, UNHCR identified a need for 200 additional classrooms.[262] Additionally, most schools hosting refugees lack critical facilities such as adequate sanitation, or ICT equipment. These areas have therefore been prioritized to receive IDA funds.[263] Extending and upgrading facilities is a key area of donor financing. For example, UNHCR has been developing a partnership with ProFuturo "la Caixa" Foundation, to provide access to connected learning in line with the Government of Rwanda's policy. This partnership will help improve the quality of education using ICT to enable access to learning materials in the primary education curriculum, and will benefit 14 national schools hosting refugee students (almost 18,000 students).[264]

Disincentives to participate in education

Outside the education sector, refugees face mobility restrictions, which limit movement in and out of camps. They also face difficulties in accessing opportunities to earn a productive livelihood. While the right to work and commitment to self-reliance creates opportunities for local integration in theory, access to productive opportunities and land remains limited in practice. Owing to Rwanda's already high population density, many refugees are unable to access land, limiting their ability to pursue agricultural livelihoods and economic opportunities tied to land.[265] This also undermines families' ability to afford education-related costs. There is also concern that employers' attitudes and lack of awareness about refugees' right to work limit access to labour market opportunities and financial services for refugee entrepreneurs.[266]

Limited employment opportunities can disincentivize young refugees from participating in education. In 2021, the national youth unemployment rate was 21 per cent, and more than 60 per cent of those who were employed were in jobs considered to be low-productivity.[267] The Government of Rwanda and international partners are committed to supporting skills development and strengthening

access to jobs in the coming years. Ensuring that adult refugees have access to productive livelihood opportunities should thus be viewed as an integral part of supporting education for refugee children.

Invisibility

There are many sociocultural overlaps between Rwandans and refugees from Burundi and DRC, including linguistic ties. These similarities have been highlighted as a factor that supports integration and inclusion in Rwanda. However, such similarities can also mean that refugees' needs and vulnerabilities are overlooked. There is some concern that this may also prove to be a barrier, as the Government of Rwanda might overestimate refugees' self-reliance.[268] For example, in the education sector, linguistic similarities shared by Rwandan and refugee students may mask other differences, or unique needs of refugee students. These may be less likely to be overlooked in contexts where refugee populations have more observable differences to the host population.

Positive statistics in education can also mask vulnerabilities faced by young people. For example, positive trends in gender parity and girls' education in Rwanda for both national and refugee students may suggest that girls face few gender-specific barriers to pursuing an education. However, by digging beyond high-level statistics, a more nuanced picture emerges. In refugee communities, stringent camp restrictions, such as on freedom of movement, and limited employment opportunities can worsen economic hardships for families living in refugee camps. Economic hardships, particularly in situations of displacement, can have gendered impacts, with adolescent girls often facing the greatest risks. Although there are few gaps in school participation for boys and girls in Rwanda, adolescent refugee girls still face vulnerabilities inside camps, which stem from persistent economic stressors. In a study with refugee children (aged 12–17) living in camps, Williams et al. found that the combined challenges of material deprivation, lack of economic opportunity and vulnerability result in heightened risk of transactional sex and other forms of exploitation of young girls in and around camps.[269] This highlights the need to look beyond the positive gender parity statistics in education to identify vulnerabilities for young people living in camps that may require additional supportive measures and protections, and which may be masked by otherwise encouraging statistics.

5.6 Factors facilitating educational inclusion and positive practices

A review of the documents and of the interviews conducted for this case study suggests that the following factors have underpinned inclusive policies and practices.

Government leadership: The Government of Rwanda has established a government-wide commitment to inclusion, through leadership, and by taking ownership of the national dialogue around refugee support and inclusion to highlight the benefits of refugee hosting. Several government-led initiatives, such as the 2016 interagency gender assessment and the 2018 action plan, included refugees. UNHCR and other external partners hope that this precedent will help build capacity and interest in refugee inclusion across leadership bodies, and support increased community self-management and equal participation for refugees.

Prior investment in the education system: The increase in public expenditure on education, both before the start of the refugee inflow and subsequently, has played an important role in enabling inclusion of refugee learners. Humanitarian funding has built on and supported investment in the national system to support refugees' education, while also benefiting Rwandan children.[270]

Coordinated systems: Having strong coordination mechanisms between humanitarian partners, the Government of Rwanda, and other actors in the education sector has helped streamline the inclusion of refugees in the national education system. In particular, Rwanda's status (since 2007) as a pilot country of the One United Nations initiative has helped ensure collaboration across United Nations entities, including UNICEF and UNHCR.[271] Cross-sectoral collaboration has underpinned progress in gender equality in education (with data showing gender parity at primary and secondary levels) and sets a precedent for successful collaboration on refugee inclusion.[272]

Commitment to educational inclusion: Rwanda does not have specific education policies or strategies for refugees. Some interviewees considered that the lack of policy for refugee education facilitates inclusion by intentionally not differentiating between refugee and national students. This has been enabled by the government's overarching commitment to refugee inclusion, as well as the relatively small numbers of refugees and the absence of strong anti-refugee sentiment among the Rwandan public. However, as noted above, the lack of policy can also lead to vulnerabilities in the long term, if refugee inclusion is not formally reflected in national policy. For example, if government leadership changes or UNHCR reduces its financial support, refugee inclusion in education could be at risk.

Sociocultural similarities: There are many sociocultural similarities between Rwandans and the refugee groups residing in Rwanda. These similarities, such as in linguistic backgrounds, have made it easier for refugees to transition smoothly to Rwandan life.[273]

In conclusion, while Rwanda's overall approach enables the educational inclusion of refugee learners, it requires effort by UNHCR and other humanitarian partners to identify the needs of refugees and to provide additional support to access and thrive in the national education system. Without this, the specific needs of refugees could be overlooked, and they may face additional challenges in accessing education. In host countries where inclusion is more contested or complicated, the lack of policy could result in exclusion, rather than inclusion.

6. Case study: Ecuador

This chapter highlights the issues and challenges around the inclusion of refugee learners in the education system of Ecuador, an upper-middle-income country, that has become home to around half a million Venezuelans since 2017. In contrast to Rwanda, where inclusive policies are not explicit, Ecuador's supportive legal and policy framework has evolved to facilitate refugee learners' inclusion in the national education system. A combination of political commitment and effective coordination between government and international organizations has led to progressive iterations that ease the constraints facing refugee learners. The case study also shows that attention to the overall capacity of the education system in host countries, and the importance of strengthening services in a way that benefits both local and refugee children, is vital to counter xenophobia. As substantially more documentary information was available for Ecuador than for Rwanda, and it proved easier to arrange interviews, this case study is more detailed than that of Rwanda.

6.1 Background

As of March 2022, there were an estimated 502,214 Venezuelans[274] in Ecuador, which is equivalent to 2.8 per cent of the country's population. The Government of Ecuador refers to its refugee and migrant population as poblacion en movilidad humana (population in human mobility) or poblacion en contexto de movilidad humana (population in the context of human mobility).[275] 'Human mobility' is defined as "the migratory movements made by a person, family or human group to transit or settle temporarily or permanently in a State other than that of their origin or where they have previously resided, a situation that generates rights and obligations regardless of their migratory status".[276]

Under the Regional Migrant and Refugee Response Plan (RMRP), Venezuelans are recognized to be in a refugee-like situation, or to meet the Cartagena Declaration on Refugees definition. The latter includes people fleeing from generalized violence and large-scale public disorder.[277] In this case study, therefore, the Venezuelan population in Ecuador is referred to as refugees.

Ecuador does not have refugee camps, and most of the refugee and migrant population is concentrated in the cities of Quito, Guayaquil and Manta, and those near the northern border (*see Figure 7*). The 2022 joint needs assessment found that, among the 2,240 Venezuelan households included in the sample, most had settled in the largest cities. A total of 25.8 per cent lived in Quito, 13.7 per cent in Guayaquil, 5.7 per cent in Ibarra, 5 per cent in Manta and another 5 per cent in Cuenca.[278]

Not all Venezuelans intend to stay permanently in Ecuador. In the Working Group for Refugees and Migrants (GTRM) joint needs assessment in May 2022, although 91 per cent of respondents stated that they intended to continue living in Ecuador, a few households (2.5 per cent) planned to move to another country, and 6 per cent were unsure about whether to stay or to leave Ecuador.[280] Government interviewees observed that the population in transit has decreased significantly since the COVID-19 pandemic. Most refugees now arriving in Ecuador intend to settle there, and many of those who had arrived earlier have decided to stay once their children are settled at school.

In 2022, the number of Venezuelans in Ecuador declined slightly, from 508,935 in January 2022 to 502,214 in August 2022.[281] This could be related to rumours that the Venezuelan economy is recovering, harsh living conditions for Venezuelans in Ecuador (especially those without regular status), the economic crisis affecting Venezuelans and Ecuadorians alike, and experiences of violence, discrimination and xenophobia.[282]

Before the Venezuelan crisis, Ecuador was home to the largest number of refugees in South America. These were primarily Colombians who had moved over an extended period to escape armed conflict. In 2017, according to UNHCR, 73 per cent of internationally displaced people in Ecuador were Colombian, 10 per cent were Venezuelan, and 16 per cent were of other nationalities.[283] By 2022, however, 84 per cent were Venezuelans, 12 per cent were Colombians, and 4 per cent were of other nationalities. During 2021, most asylum seekers were Venezuelan (7,772 applications), while a total of 3,918 applications were made by Colombians, and 282 were made by nationals of other countries.[284]

Refugee learners' participation in education

As of June 2020, 161,166 refugees in Ecuador were estimated to be of school age. Of these, 82,022 (51 per cent) were of primary-school age, 65,474 (41 per cent) were of secondary-school age, and 13,670 (8 per cent) were of pre-primary age.[285] Children and adolescents made up 40 per cent of the Venezuelan population in Ecuador as of May 2022.[286] Despite a positive legal framework (*see Section 6.3*) a substantial number of Venezuelan refugee children in Ecuador are not accessing educational provision.[287] Estimates vary, owing to the timing of the data collection (i.e., there were lower levels of enrolment in earlier surveys such as the Study of Population in Human Mobility and in Host Communities in Ecuador, and in those undertaken during the COVID-19 pandemic) and the methodologies of different studies (*see Table 9*).

About 96 per cent of Venezuelan children and adolescents studying in Ecuadorian educational institutions in 2018 (the latest date for which data are available) were attending public institutions, compared with 85 per cent of their Ecuadorian peers, indicating a high level of inclusion in the national system.[288] Data also indicate that almost 46 per cent of Venezuelan students enrolled were in Quito canton, and 12 per cent in Guayaquil. Key informants highlighted that overcrowding of schools tends to be more severe in Quito and other urban areas, such as border cities.

Table 9. Estimates of school enrolment and/or attendance rates among Venezuelan children in Ecuador

SOURCE	ESTIMATE
EPEC survey (2019) of 2,300 Venezuelan and Ecuadorian households cited in World Bank (2020)[289]	44% of Venezuelans between the ages of 3 and 17 were enrolled in the educational system
GTRM (2021) joint needs assessment survey of 2,278 households[290]	68% of 5- to 17-year-olds were attending school (including remotely), 32% were not
GTRM (2022) joint needs assessment survey of 2,240 households in May 2022[291]	Overall, 73.5% of Venezuelan refugee and migrant children between the ages of 5 and 17 attended school; among children aged 0–4, only 26.3% attended early education centres, in part because hours were too limited to enable parents to work

Source: EPEC, Study of Population in Human Mobility and in Host Communities in Ecuador; GTRM, Working Group for Refugees and Migrants.

Note: The Working Group for Refugees and Migrants studies reviewed do not disaggregate data by age group.

There were significant differences in enrolment rates between Ecuadorian and Venezuelan children of different ages (*see Figure 8*).

Figure 8. Enrolment rates by nationality

Bar chart showing enrolment rates by age group and nationality:
- 3–5 years: Ecuadorians 64%, Venezuelans 50%
- 5–14 years: Ecuadorians 99%, Venezuelans 64%
- 15–17 years: Ecuadorians 84%, Venezuelans 15%

Legend: Ecuadorians, Venezuelans
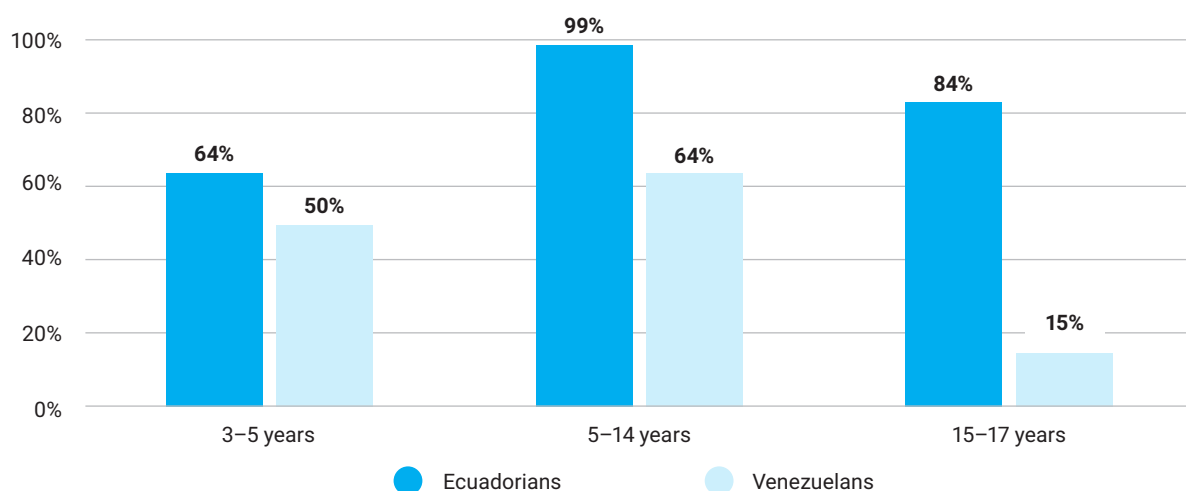
Refugee children's length of stay in Ecuador is another key factor influencing school enrolment (*see Figure 9*).

Figure 9. School enrolment rates, by age and length of stay in Ecuador

Bar chart — Percentage of children attending school/early education centre:
- 5–17-year-olds: >1 year 81%, <1 year 35%
- 0–4-year-olds': >1 year 31%, <1 year 12%

Length of residence in Ecuador
Legend: >1 year, <1 year
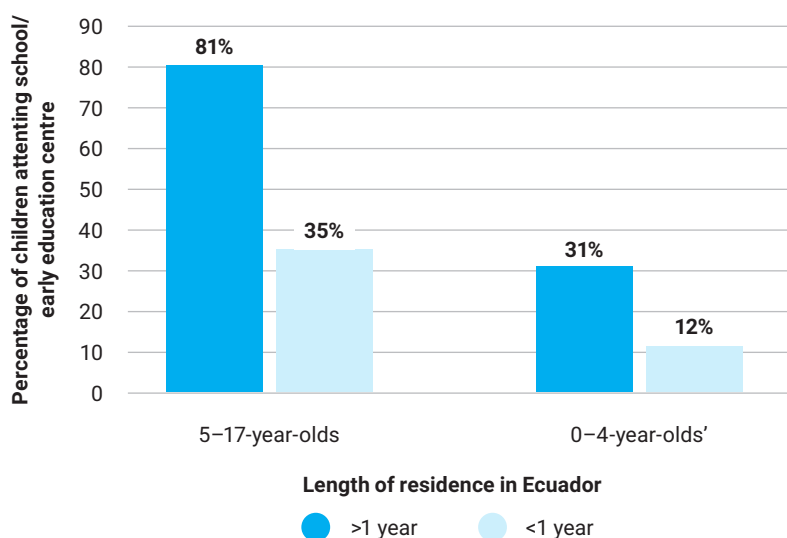
Barriers

Key reasons for low levels of enrolment among 5–17-year-old Venezuelans in Ecuador include lack of school spaces (mentioned by 46 per cent of respondents in the World Bank 2020 study), documentation-related barriers (mentioned by 27 per cent in the World Bank 2020 study), and lack of resources to cover school-related costs (mentioned by 6 per cent in the World Bank 2020 study, and highlighted by the International Organization for Migration, 2021).[294]

Data from 2020 indicate that 9 per cent[295] of Venezuelan children and adolescents in Ecuador were out of school because they had a disability and were unable to access the necessary support.[296] Key informant interviews also identified adolescent pregnancy and the need for adolescents to work, as further barriers to education. For the youngest children, the limited hours of pre-primary education deterred working parents from enrolling them.[297]

Government representatives who were interviewed indicated that migrant and refugee learners can access TVET institutions, but limited documentary evidence was found, and none was found on enrolment rates. The 2021 *Plan Nacional de Educación y Formación Técnica y Profesional* (National Plan for Technical and Vocational Education and Training) includes a strategic action to coordinate with institutions supporting people in human mobility to offer access to the TVET system.[298]

The number of Venezuelan students registered in Ecuadorian schools has fallen dramatically over the past two years. In the 2021/2022 school year, the Ministerio de Educación (MINEDUC) registered 60,146 Venezuelan students. In the 2022/2023 school year, 32,380 – a reduction of 27,766 students.[299] This trend might be explained by some families returning to Venezuela, but there are still no clear explanations.[300]

"The latest numbers are worrying … we had 60,000 Venezuelan children in the educational system, now the number is half so there is a concern. We don't know what happened, if they disappeared, if they didn't enrol, if they left, if their families have prioritized other expenses instead of education."

Key informant interview 2
ECUADOR, UNITED NATIONS AGENCY

6.2 Overall refugee policy and governance

Overarching policy frameworks
Ecuador has developed positive policies and related laws for refugees and migrants. The Ecuadorian Constitution (2008) recognizes an individual's right to migrate or seek asylum, and also the equality of rights between migrants, refugees and nationals (Article 9). It also prohibits discrimination based on nationality or migration/refugee status (Article 3).[301]

The 2017 Ley Orgánica de Movilidad Humana (Human Mobility Law) incorporates the provisions of the Cartagena Declaration on Refugees and lays out commitments to non-refoulement, the non-criminalization of irregular migration, non-discrimination and integration, and migrants' and refugees' access to health care and education.[302] The 2017–2021 Agenda Nacional para la Igualdad de Movilidad Humana (National Agenda for Equal Human Mobility) outlines public policies aimed at reducing socioeconomic gaps, guaranteeing rights, promoting peaceful coexistence, and preventing discrimination against people in human mobility, with emphasis on the best interests of children and adolescents.[303] Ecuador is also a signatory to the 1951 Refugee Convention, the 1967 Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees and the 1984 Cartagena Declaration on Refugees.

Prior to 2017–2018, Ecuador was relatively open to arrivals from Venezuela, but after a surge in numbers in August 2018, the country started to require passports for entry, rather than identity cards (except for children).[304] As residence conditions tightened, some people who entered the country

through regular routes but did not meet changing residence conditions or could not afford to renew residence permits moved into irregular status.[305] Although irregular status does not directly affect children's access to education, schools are not always aware of changing regulations, and some qualitative studies document them demanding proof of regular status.[306] In 2021, the Ecuadorian government introduced the Visa de Residencia Temporal de Excepción para Ciudadanos Venezolanos (Temporary Exceptional Residency Visa for Venezuelan Citizens). This grants Venezuelans who have entered the country through regular routes up to 10 years' residence[307] and facilitates their access to basic services, such as education and health care, as well as employment and self-employment.[308]

Ecuador's overall approach reflects the evolution of the regional response to Venezuelan refugees and migrants through initiatives such as the Quito Process and the RMRP, which focus on supporting socioeconomic integration of refugees and migrants. Government interviewees attributed some of the positive policies for promoting refugee children's access to education, such as Ministerial Agreement 25A to these initiatives.

Governance and coordination arrangements

Though MINEDUC is responsible for the overall coordination of education policy and refugee inclusion, different government bodies are responsible for different levels of the education system.[309]

- Children under three years (attending child development centres) are dealt with by the Ministry of Economic and Social Inclusion

- Children in compulsory education (pre-primary through to unified general baccalaureate) are covered by MINEDUC

- Students in higher education, particularly those who study at university or TVET, are the responsibility of the Secretariat of Higher Education, Science, Technology and Innovation.

MINEDUC provides overall coordination, and is the central ministry involved in coordinating with UNHCR and other humanitarian and development partners, with respect to refugee education. Of these, the most important is GTRM, which coordinates support for Venezuelan refugees in Ecuador. Its Grupo de Trabajo de Educación (Education Working Group) "coordinates actions aimed guaranteeing the right to education of the refugee and migrant population from Venezuela in Ecuador and their link with the communities of host and other migrant and refugee communities in Ecuador".[310] As discussed in section 6.6.3, key informants interviewed highlighted effective coordination between government and donors as a key factor contributing to effective inclusion of refugee learners in the education system. (*For more details of coordination arrangements, see Annex 4*).

6.3 Legal framework for accessing education

The right to education for all people (including migrant and refugee children) is protected by the Ecuadorian Constitution, the Codigo de la Niñez y Adolescencia (Code of Childhood and Adolescence), the Ley Organica de Educación Intercultural (Organic Law of Intercultural Education, LOEI), and the Ley Organica de Movilidad Humana (Organic Law of Human Mobility). Other policies and ministerial agreements have been developed to ensure the implementation of existing laws (*see Annex 4*). Several key provisions enhance the inclusion of refugees in national education systems (*see Table 10*).

Table 10. Selected policies related to the educational inclusion of refugees in Ecuador

POLICY	KEY CONTENT
2017 MINEDUC-2017-00042-A	Allows students to enrol throughout the school year, and to change schools easily in case of transit; it also grants children without school records the right to enrol in a school year based on their age, if they can present documentation to prove that they were registered with basic services (such as health and education) in their original place of residence.[311]
2020 MINEDUC-2020-00025-A	Ministerial Agreement 25A regulates and guarantees access, retention, promotion and culmination of the educational process in the national education system for the population that is in a situation of vulnerability.[312] It states that Ecuador has the "responsibility to register all children and adolescents in the education system regardless of their origin, nationality or legal status".[313]
2021 MINEDUC-2021-00026-A	Reiterates provisions of Ministerial Agreement 25A concerning placement exams. Establishes that in any case "the student may be placed in a grade or course that represents a difference of more than two years, with respect to the other students".[314]

Together, these agreements abolished the requirement for identity documentation in order to access the national education system, and established that students without documentation of prior studies could take a placement exam and be placed in a grade in which they are no more than two years older or younger than the other students.[315] After registering, applicants are allocated spaces through an automated process that takes into account the student's residence, family circumstances and preferences.[316] Documents such as transcripts of previous schooling or parents' identity documents are not required to enrol in any level, from initial (pre-primary) education to unified general baccalaureate (completion of secondary school). However, parents often wrongly believe that they are, and school officials reportedly sometimes demand them, whether through lack of knowledge of current regulations or motivated by discrimination.[317]

A recent initiative aims to translate placement tests, to make them more accessible to refugee and migrant children, and to cater for the small number of children who do not speak Spanish and therefore require the tests to be translated into a different language. While this test cannot demote students, it can hinder their progress. Several key informants observed that, at times, school authorities and teachers consider dealing with the administrative requirements and the placement exam as 'extra work', and thus view admitting refugee children negatively.

Key informants mentioned the Andrés Bello Convention as an important framework that facilitates refugee students' transfer into Ecuador's education system. The signatories, including Colombia, Ecuador and Venezuela, agree to recognize prior primary or general basic, intermediate or secondary education by means of equivalency tables. This agreement has been incorporated into the Law on Organic Intercultural Education and Ministerial Agreement 26A.

Documentation requirements are greater obstacles for students without regular status who aim to continue studying in tertiary education. Without regular status, students receive a code (unique registration number) but not certification of their studies, which is required to enrol in higher education. Further, the increasing shift to online school registration is a barrier to refugee families who do not have access to the relevant technology or who are unfamiliar with such systems.[318] Key informant interviews indicated that some support with online enrolment is offered by civil society organizations, neighbours or via telephone assistance from school districts.

Inclusion in national EMIS

The national EMIS distinguishes data on different nationalities.[319] The accuracy of data on Venezuelan students has been enhanced since online school enrolment was introduced in April 2020.[320] One donor key informant also highlighted Ecuador's effort to monitor and evaluate the educational progress of refugees, which was recently presented by the government at a UNESCO-led regional conference. Although, as noted by government interviewees, MINEDUC does not gather data on refugee learners who are outside the educational system, data collected by the GTRM are used by the government to fill this gap.

Additional support for refugee learners

Various initiatives implemented by development partners in coordination with MINEDUC offer additional support to refugee learners in accessing education, enhancing learning, reducing discrimination and xenophobia, and enhancing social cohesion in schools. Some of the programmes mentioned most commonly in key informant interviews and/or policy and evaluative literature are outlined (*see Table 11*).

Table 11. Selected initiatives to support inclusion of refugee learners in Ecuador's education system

TYPE OF SUPPORT	INITIATIVE/ EXAMPLE	DETAILS
Accelerated learning	Programa de Nivelación y Aceleración Pedagógica	MINEDUC programme for students aged 8–18 years who have been out of the education system for two or more years. Students from the second to the sixth grade can study two grades in one school year, and those in the eighth and ninth grade can be promoted to the first grade of high school in one academic year.[321] Children over 15 years and adults with unfinished schooling and more than three years of lost learning are offered educational support to complete their studies on a blended, face-to-face or online basis.[322] RET International supports refugee students by preparing them for their placement exam, so they can enrol in the school year that corresponds to their age.[323]
Teacher education in inclusive pedagogies	No specific name	In collaboration with the Departamento de Consejeria Estudiantil (Student Counselling Department),[324] MINEDUC is also working to build teachers' capacities in inclusive pedagogical methods and approaches, that "promote collaborative work while reinforcing non-discrimination topics".[325]
Social protection (in-kind support)	Programa de Alimentación Escolar and the Free School Uniform and Textbook programmes	Schools and districts that are deemed vulnerable are prioritized. Data from 2018/2019 suggest that, other than for textbooks, which 99% of Venezuelan and Ecuadorian students could access, Venezuelan students were less likely to benefit from these programmes than their Ecuadorian counterparts. The Free School Uniform and Textbook programme reached 45% of non-Venezuelan students and 30% of Venezuelan students, while the Programa de Alimentación Escolar reached 80% of non-Venezuelan students and 90% of Venezuelan students.[326]
Social protection (financial support)	No specific name	Most cash-based social protection programmes are only available to nationals. Humanitarian agencies are providing cash and voucher assistance, both of which are targeted to support educational costs and multipurpose grants.[327] In 2021, these reached around 10% of Venezuelans in Ecuador.[328]
		An evaluation of a small-scale cash transfer programme for refugees and migrants[329] found that lack of funds became a less important barrier to study (mentioned by 11% of recipients, compared with 21% previously) and that the proportion of children under five attending preschool rose from 4% to 18% among recipients who stayed in Ecuador. Participants also acknowledged the usefulness of the one-off information sessions and accompaniment provided by programme staff in supporting enrolment.[330]

TYPE OF SUPPORT	INITIATIVE/ EXAMPLE	DETAILS
Outreach programmes	'Active search' for Venezuelan boys and girls	Outreach workers visit neighbourhoods that are known to host refugee children. They talk to families, identify the reasons why the child is out of the educational system and encourage the student and the family to re-enrol. With ECW funding, students receive in-kind school support and cash transfers. This initiative usually begins two months before the start of each school year.[331]
Initiatives to reduce xenophobia	Respiramos inclusion (Let's breathe inclusion) Tesoro de Pazita (Pazita's treasure)	Addresses issues such as mental health, identity, diversity, stereotypes, prejudice, inclusion and microaggressions, with the aim of eliminating these barriers to the education system and establishing a common language on non-discrimination and inclusion within educational communities. Since August 2022, these have been operating in 46 cantons.[332] Seeks to develop "skills for peace and peaceful coexistence".[333] The methodology, created by the NGO Nación de Paz, provides practical tools through cinema, literature, traditional games, theatre and street soccer to foster conflict prevention and resolution among children.[334]
Support for particularly vulnerable learners		Ministerial Agreements 25A and 26A recognize children in human mobility (refugees, migrants and internally displaced people) as facing special educational vulnerabilities; 26A also guarantees special protection for "doubly vulnerable" groups. Initiatives mentioned by key informants included supporting Haitian children with language learning until they are competent in Spanish, and system-wide efforts (not targeted to refugees) to enhance the accessibility of all schools in the country for children with disabilities, and to promote the educational inclusion of Ecuadorian indigenous children (those from Venezuela and Colombia were not mentioned). The 2022 RMRP highlights plans to provide specialized attention to Venezuelan adolescents (i.e., aged 15 and above) who are more vulnerable to dropping out of school to support their families financially; unaccompanied or separated children and adolescents; children with disabilities; pregnant adolescents; and those at risk of gender-based violence.[335]

Source: Authors

Note: ECW, Education Cannot Wait; NGO, nongovernmental organization; RMRP, Regional Migrant and Refugee Response Plan.

Though learning outcomes are beyond the scope of this study, the evidence reviewed indicates that refugee children and parents are mostly satisfied with the quality of education they are receiving. For example, the GTRM joint needs assessment found that 55 per cent of parents and caregivers considered the quality of education good, and 30 per cent considered it excellent, meaning that 85 per cent were highly satisfied.[336] Adolescents interviewed in Ceja Cárdenas et al.'s study highlighted the high quality of education they received in Ecuador.[337]

"Classes were another huge shock when I arrived. In Venezuela, it seems, we were behind with the basic knowledge a child should have, and when I arrived I knew nothing that they were covering in these classes, not maths, not history, and I'd never even seen English in my life."

Adolescent girl interviewed in Guayaquil

6.4 Financing refugee inclusion in education

UNHCR and the World Bank estimate that the scale of financing required to fund all school-aged refugees in Ecuador for 12 years of school education and one year of pre-primary education would total US$1 billion for the period up until 2032.[338] This equates to approximately US$77 million annually.[339] The majority of this is made up of resources needed for secondary education (US$593 million), followed by primary education (US$390 million) and pre-primary education (US$17 million).

Domestic financing

Over the past two decades, Ecuador has significantly increased its public spending on education from 1.5 per cent of GDP in 2000, peaking at 5.2 per cent in 2014,[340] which is the largest increase in Latin America and the Caribbean in this period.[341] It has since fallen to 4.1 per cent of GDP in 2020.[342] This growth has supported an increase in teachers' salaries, capital investments (for example, the construction of schools) and, above all, the introduction of free tertiary education. These investments, in turn, have contributed to substantially increased enrolment among the Ecuadorian population, especially in high school. However, as noted in section 6.1, enrolment rates among the Venezuelan population of secondary school age lags behind this. Other sources have highlighted that the government's budget target for education (a minimum of 6 per cent of GDP according to the Constitution) has not yet been met.[343]

According to government interviewees, MINEDUC does not differentiate public expenditure for Ecuadorians and refugees, given that all the budget is spent in the education system as a whole (e.g., on infrastructure, teacher training, provision of school textbooks, school meals, etc.). The same key informants mentioned that there is some government financial contribution to ECW's Multi-Year Resilience Programme (MYRP), although they did not specify the amount.

International financing

Ecuador has received substantial levels of financing from different international partners, to support the education of refugees (*see Table and 4*). Although ECW funds are contributing to important system-strengthening activities, funds are well below the level needed. For example, one key informant indicated that ECW supports 50 schools, but support is needed in around 12,000 public institutions. Likewise, only around 7 per cent of educational funding that had been identified as needed under the 2022 RMRP had been committed by 31 October 2022.

Table 12. **Key current funding streams supporting refugee education in Ecuador**

FUNDER	FUNDING MODALITY AND AMOUNT (IF AVAILABLE)	ASPECTS OF EDUCATIONAL INCLUSION SUPPORTED
ECW	US$7.4 million MYRP from December 2020 to December 2023[344]	Aims to address immediate humanitarian needs and promote system-strengthening, to provide children with safe learning environments; improve access to remote learning and technologies; and provide psychosocial services to help children deal with the trauma of being forcibly driven from their homes.[345] Specific actions: • Distribution of learning materials • Promoting school hygiene, including menstrual hygiene management • Training and supporting teachers in psychosocial support, pedagogy and inclusive education.[346]

FUNDER	FUNDING MODALITY AND AMOUNT (IF AVAILABLE)	ASPECTS OF EDUCATIONAL INCLUSION SUPPORTED
RMRP	The 2022 RMRP requests US$18.3 million to support the education of 140,000 children, including refugees and host-community members in Ecuador.[347] As of 30 September 2022, only US$1.33 million had been pledged.[348]	The 2022 RMRP's priorities were: • To provide remedial classes to support with homework and other school preparation • To pay specialized attention to adolescents aged 15 or above at risk of dropping out • To target the most vulnerable school-aged children (those with disabilities, pregnant adolescents or those at risk of gender-based violence).[349]

Source: Authors

Note: ECW, Education Cannot Wait; MYRP, Multi-Year Resilience Programme; RMRP, Regional Refugee and Migrant Response Plan.

6.5 Challenges

The following challenges emerged from analysis of literature and key interviews.

Insufficient school spaces

As noted in section 6.1, the World Bank's study identifies lack of spaces (particularly at pre-primary level and for children aged 6–14 years) as a key barrier to school enrolment. Key informant interviews likewise reported a shortage of school places, affecting both Ecuadorian and refugee learners, particularly in the cities that are host to the largest number of refugees. Although both domestic and international investments in the education system are being deployed to expand coverage, the scale of investment lags behind the growth that is needed. Although access issues persist in the cities, key informants highlighted that border areas (such as Carchi province) and deprived areas (such as Esmeraldas province) are being neglected.

Although the automated process of allocating school spaces is intended to balance demand and supply, in areas where there is high demand, students may receive a place in a distant institution. Without financial support for the cost of transport, there will be a barrier for most families. Further, parents also may fear sending young children far away from home to study. Few Venezuelans interviewed in the World Bank's study (2020) were aware that it is possible to appeal and request a place at a different school.

Costs and access to learning materials

Both studies and key informant interviews highlight the role of school related-costs as one of the main reasons refugee learners do not attend or drop out of school. For example, in the International Organization for Migration's study, 30 per cent of the Venezuelan parents interviewed reported that their children did not receive any form of schooling. Of these, 67 per cent gave lack of resources as the main reason for this. The 2022 joint needs assessment estimated a similar figure, with 22 per cent of households surveyed reporting that they could not pay school-related costs.[359] It was found that 57 per cent of Venezuelans students aged 5–17 years did not have textbooks and school supplies, and 70 per cent did not have school uniforms.[360]

Although education in public institutions is free of charge, families incur costs for transport, school supplies and, sometimes, expenses related to the running of the school. The World Bank estimated average annual out-of-pocket household expenditure at US$90.[361] Key informants reported that COVID-19 exacerbated the economic needs of refugee households, leading some adolescents to

drop out of school to work or assist with household chores (although a lack of data confirming these observations has been noted).

The literature also highlights refugee students' lack of access to digital devices, which has become more important since the COVID-19 pandemic. The 2022 joint needs assessment found that fewer than 40 per cent of Venezuelan children at school have access to adequate internet, and only 8 out of 100 Venezuelan children have exclusive use of a computer or tablet.[362]

Coordination between different levels of government and agencies

Most key informants observed a lack of coordination between different levels of government, and between different government departments at local level. This leads to a lack of awareness of the national legal framework among staff at the provincial or canton (district) level and other stakeholders in charge of implementing policies for the inclusion of migrant and refugee learners. Key informants thus recommended technical support and capacity-building for subnational levels of government and school staff to implement national policies and regulations.

"Implementation is somewhat decentralized, but it is not accompanied by all the training and capacity-building that it should have. For example, we have a Ministerial Agreement 26A that allows educational inclusion, but its implementation is not always possible because there is a lack of socialization with local authorities and permanent capacity-building. It is not just about sending a circular, with that [document] you are not able to understand an agreement that tries to solve complex problems... so, there is a lack of training, follow-up, accompaniment, and monitoring to know how things are going."

Key informant interview 3
ECUADOR, CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATION

Funding shortfalls, and small-scale, geographically concentrated donor support

Although support from the government and development partners (donors, civil society) has been a crucial positive factor in Ecuador's strategy to promote refugee educational inclusion, these initiatives tend to be small-scale and are rarely evaluated.[363] The 2020 RMRP report recognized a significant need to scale up activities in 2021 to support refugee learners' integration.[364] Interviewees observed that most government and development partners' efforts (including the MYRP initiative) have focused on basic education, especially primary education, and that that larger-scale initiatives have been skewed towards the locations with the largest numbers of refugees, neglecting the fact that there are still local pressures as a result of inflows in less populous areas. The involvement of the private sector in supporting education for refugee learners was also recognized as a gap, despite positive relationships between the current government and the private sector.

Discrimination, xenophobia and safety

Various studies have highlighted that discrimination from other students and teachers undermines the inclusion of Venezuelan children in Ecuadorian schools.[365] Key informants in Ripoll and Navas-Alemán's study reported Venezuelan children experiencing bullying and harassment in schools, being ignored by their classmates or being victims of jokes about the Venezuelan crisis. This discrimination is not new; children of other nationalities, such as Colombians, have also suffered prejudice in class.[366]

Data suggest that, while discrimination is rarely in itself a barrier, in the 2022 joint needs assessment, 3.7 per cent of Venezuelan households reported that one of the reasons their children were not studying was because of discrimination.[367] This undermines children's sense of safety while attending and travelling to school. Reflecting both xenophobia and gender-based violence, Venezuelan girls report feeling notably less safe travelling to school than their Ecuadorian peers. Among Ecuadorian girls aged 8–17 years, 80 per cent felt safe walking to school, compared with 44 per cent of their Venezuelan peers. For boys of the same age, the respective figures were 90 per cent and 81 per cent.[368]

More generalized violence also plays a role. In the 2022 joint needs assessment, only 43 per cent of Venezuelan households surveyed considered that their children's educational institutions were located in a safe place.[368] This insecurity affects both Venezuelan and Ecuadorian learners throughout the country, particularly in border and deprived provinces (e.g., Carchi, Esmeraldas) where violence, kidnapping and extortion are particularly common. Key informants noted that some schools in these areas have been forced to close due to security concerns or because families have migrated to safer regions of the country or abroad.

Key informants also mentioned an increase in discrimination and xenophobia, with rising numbers of Venezuelans being blamed for incidents of crime and violence. Further to this, teachers, who are already under pressure, are being expected to accommodate the needs of refugee learners in the classroom, which can also be experienced as a burden, especially when they have not been provided with the necessary skills and tools. Some civil society organizations (e.g., RET International, UNICEF) offer support to teachers and school authorities to deal with these issues, but are only able to do so on a small scale. Key informants also considered that initiatives targeting the Venezuelan population, whether education-focused or on a broader scale, can contribute to xenophobia from the Ecuadorian population. This is particularly the case where there are high levels of poverty, and in the border regions, where locals perceive that most support is targeted to Venezuelans, while their similar needs are ignored.

Children with intersecting vulnerabilities

As well as the groups highlighted in previous sections (i.e., children from low-income households, those who have been in the country less than a year, and adolescents aged 15 years and over), the following groups of refugee learners face additional challenges to access and thrive in the education system.

Unaccompanied children and adolescents. This group largely comprises older adolescents who are often in transit, seeking work or are parents with responsibilities for young children and therefore are not necessarily interested in accessing education.[370] Some initiatives offer childcare for children of adolescent mothers, so they can continue with their studies.

Children with poor mental health and psychosocial well-being. Children who have had traumatic experiences during transit and initial settlement, who miss their country of origin, have difficult family dynamics or are struggling to adapt to a new school and education system are all at increased risk of dropping out or not enrolling in the first place. These challenges have been exacerbated by long periods of school closure and isolation as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Some civil society organizations provide mental health and psychosocial support for refugee learners and their families, but this is insufficient to meet demand and is only available on a piecemeal basis.

Refugee (and Ecuadorian) children in rural areas. These learners face additional barriers (such as the cost and availability of schools) if they want to progress their studies, and they generally need to migrate to the cities in order to study beyond secondary-school level.

6.6 Factors facilitating inclusion and positive practices

Despite these challenges, interviewees identified several factors that have helped contribute to inclusion of refugee learners in Ecuador's education system.

Previous experiences with migration and support to vulnerable populations

Key informants noted that Ecuador has had previous experience in dealing with large numbers of refugee learners, from Colombia (peaking in 2015–2016), plus smaller numbers from Cuba, Afghanistan and Syria. Although the scale of Venezuelan arrivals, as one key informant noted, "took us by surprise", these experiences gave the government and civil society organizations the knowledge and skills to implement education initiatives to support the inclusion of refugee learners. They also led to coordination platforms that preceded the Interagency Regional Platform for Refugees and Migrants from Venezuela and the GTRM, and enabled the GTRM working groups (which were created in 2018 following the increasing number of Venezuelan arrivals) to run effectively.

Some key informants also argued that the 2016 earthquake helped catalyse effective collaboration between the government and civil society, and led to the development of learning initiatives, and capacity-building for school staff to respond to emergency situations. Ministerial Agreement 25A emerged from these experiences. All these efforts gave Ecuador a strong basis to respond to the arrival of Venezuelan refugees.

Key informants also noted that refugee learners from Colombia and Venezuela share a language and some cultural traits with their Ecuadorian peers, likely making it easier for them than for other nationalities to adjust to the country and its educational systems. This facilitates their inclusion in comparison with refugees from other countries (e.g., Haiti).

Supportive policy environment and political will

Most key informants highlighted the positive legal and policy environment and the commitment of key political actors as key facilitating factors. Among other elements, this includes the Constitution, Ministerial Agreement 26A and the LOEI. They also highlighted the importance of regional refugee- and migration-focused agreements and processes (such as the Quito Process and the Andrés Bello Convention). Interviewees stressed the role of the previous and current ministers of education in promoting the inclusion of migrant and refugee learners. In particular, they attributed Minister Maria Brown's political will to strengthen current policies and legal frameworks on migration and refugee topics to her prior work with UNESCO in this area.

> "We are fortunate that the previous and the current ministers of education have been very supportive of the cause and have supported us in dealing with the political pressure that this entails, since we know that there is a lot of xenophobia and discrimination in the country. So the efforts for the inclusion of refugees in Ecuador comes from above."
>
> Key informant interview 1
> ECUADOR, UNITED NATIONS

Others also highlighted the role of a cadre of young Ecuadorian professionals in different types of institutions (e.g., government, United Nations agencies, civil society or academia) and in different areas (human rights, education of children, migration and refugee topics), who are aware of the needs of refugee leaners and have supported changes in laws and policies to enable their inclusion.

Key informants also noted increased efforts by the current government (in place from 2021), which coincided with the gradual reopening of schools in June 2021 following COVID-19-related closures.[371] This involved a communication campaign (*la educación es el camino*) that promoted access, retention, learning and educational promotion as fundamental entitlements for all children and adolescents in Ecuador, including refugees and migrants. It also aimed to inform families, teachers and educational personnel about the educational routes, available resources, mechanisms and protocols during school closures.[372]

Support from development partners and coordination between stakeholders

All interviewees mentioned the important role that financial, advocacy and technical support and involvement of development partners (United Nations agencies, donors, international NGOs) has played in promoting educational inclusion of refugees in Ecuador. Government interviewees indicated that MINEDUC has benefited from the information gathered by implementing partners, particularly about where the refugee population (whether in transit or settled) is based. The government has used this information to modify public policies and to coordinate the implementation of initiatives, especially through the Grupo de Trabajo de Educación.

Similarly, development partners (particularly United Nations agencies and civil society organizations) have provided technical assistance to the government on different activities, including the design and implementation of protocols and training of front-line implementers working on refugee educational inclusion. This includes support in the drafting of Ministerial Agreement 26A and the provision of technical capacity to implementers in the educational system (e.g., MINEDUC officials who are responsible for receiving and including students in schools).

"At this moment the GTE [*Grupo de Trabajo de Educación*] is the space where a dialogue with the ministry is maintained, and I think that for now it will work because the ministry is very open to listening and understanding what is happening... We have this continuity with the focal points to work together."

Key informant interview 3
ECUADOR, CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATION

In conclusion, the Ecuador case study has highlighted the positive impact of a strong, inclusive legal and policy framework that has progressively sought to remove barriers to refugee learners and has contributed to rising enrolment levels among Venezuelan refugees in the country (until the most recent school year). Efforts to remove barriers include simplifying registration procedures and reducing documentation requirements, on the one hand, and efforts to combat xenophobia and promote socially inclusive environments for all students, on the other.

7. Conclusion

This report aims to synthesize academic and experiential evidence on different policies and practices that contribute to the inclusion of refugee learners in national education systems. It sets out a conceptual framework for understanding refugee inclusion in national education systems (*see Figure 1*) and presents a continuum of inclusion (*see Figure* 2).

Existing evidence of good practice is analysed, as are political and legal frameworks, and implementation arrangements, along with the financial flows that support refugee learner inclusion. The case studies and other examples examined build understanding from across a range of geographical contexts, both in refugee camps and urban settings. This range of research informs the findings and conclusions set out here, as well as a decision support tool, intended to help policymakers enhance refugees' inclusion in diverse education systems (*see Annex 1*).

The report aims to answer the following key research questions:

- What evidence is there of effective policies and practices in the inclusion of refugees in national education systems?

- What factors have underpinned these effective policies and practices?

- What factors have challenged the inclusion of refugees in national education systems?

- What evidence is there of efforts to address intersecting inequalities to boost the inclusion of particularly marginalized groups of refugee learners?

Findings related to each of these are summarized here in turn.

7.1 Effective policies and practices for refugee inclusion in education systems

The most relevant approaches to boosting inclusive practices may look very different from the more macro-level vantage point of education sector planners, and that of schools or teachers who are tasked to implement these measures in practice. They will vary depending on the current mix of education provision (e.g., the proportion of children in refugee camp schools, national public schools or not attending school at all), the numbers of refugees joining each class, and their familiarity with the host country's language or curriculum. The decision support tool that accompanies this report (*see Annex 1*) differentiates these varied starting points and outlines inclusion pathways that respond to these diverse circumstances.

Recognizing the diversity of contexts outlined above, positive shifts towards inclusion of refugee learners have been identified in this report (*see Table 13*).

Table 13. Selected positive practices for shifting to more inclusive approaches

TYPE OF SETTING/ SITUATION	POSITIVE SHIFT	MAIN APPROACHES AND EXAMPLES
Parallel provision (e.g., schools in refugee camps)	Shift to using host country's curriculum, assessment and certification systems	Training of refugee teachers to teach host country's curriculum (Chad)
		Some use of national primary curriculum in non-formal education centres (Malaysia)
Informal provision	Absorption of learners into national education system	Training of host-country teachers to teach speakers of other languages; some language-assistance support (Türkiye)
		Ensure informal provision is aligned with host country's curricula
Mainstream public schools	Including refugee learners who lack fluency in host-country language of instruction or who have missed out on key learning	Training of host country teachers to support speakers of other languages (Brazil, Guyana)
		Language preparation before entering schools (Rwanda)
		Remedial programmes to allow students to catch up on lost learning
Mainstream public schools	Including refugee learners from different cultures and/or those who may have experienced trauma	Cultural orientation for teachers (Türkiye); training in basic mental health and psychosocial support and/or non-xenophobic practice (Ecuador)

Both the Rwanda and Ecuador case studies further delve into the detail of effective practices and challenges encountered in putting them into place. The Rwanda case study highlights the importance of a broad orientation towards education inclusion and non-discrimination, even in the absence of specific educational policies and strategies focused on refugees. It demonstrates what can be achieved through consistent and strategic government–donor partnerships. In Rwanda, these have supported the overall expansion and strengthening of the education system, for the benefit of Rwandan children living near refugee camps, as well as refugee learners (this has also been noted in the Ecuador case study). External finance has also helped meet the specific needs of refugee students (e.g., through cultural and, where necessary, language orientation). The case study points to an increasingly urgent need to address financing challenges – including those related to teacher salaries – through financial mechanisms that can be sustained over the long term and do not rely on UNHCR and other international donors. Additionally, it is important to address the specific vulnerabilities faced by specific groups of refugee learners, particularly adolescent girls, even when broad trends and statistics suggest a positive picture of inclusion.

The Ecuador case study probes a context without refugee camps or parallel provision, where refugee learners have access to all levels of the national education system, from pre-primary through to post-secondary levels. In Ecuador, legal frameworks and policies – which already mandated inclusion of refugee learners in national education systems – have progressively aimed to facilitate the inclusion of refugees, through ministerial directives simplifying admission procedures and outlawing discrimination. The case study and literature review emphasize that these positive policies do not always filter down to those with the responsibility to implement them, and highlight the importance of efforts to ensure teachers, school administrators and district-level staff are aware of new policies and have the capacity to enact them.

Both case studies show that many of the challenges facing refugee and local students are similar, reflecting high levels of poverty and stretched provision, particularly in border areas. This highlights the need for programmes supporting refugees to invest in education more broadly; that is, strengthening infrastructure, expanding supply, training teachers and helping families meet the costs associated with education. Broader-based investment of this kind would also reduce resentment based on the perception that improvements are primarily being targeted to refugees. In both case studies, financial and technical support from international partners has played an important role; however, financing continues to lag far below the scale that is needed to support full inclusion of all refugee learners in the country.

> "The level of learning is catastrophic, and it really needs to be a major wake-up call in terms of what we're supporting in terms of what happens in the classroom."
>
> **Key informant interview 1**
> GLOBAL, DONOR

Neither case study found evidence discussing refugee children's learning outcomes. This highlights the need for policy and practice on refugee inclusion to go beyond access, to consider how far they are ultimately providing young people with the skills and knowledge they need for their adult lives. Where they are not, or are not doing so sufficiently, it will be important to strengthen the focus on the

quality of education in refugee-hosting contexts.

7.2 Factors that underpin effective refugee inclusion practices

Through both the literature review and the case studies, a set of enabling factors that support refugee inclusion in national education systems was identified. These are generally positive factors that often are already in place in principle, but may need strengthening (*see Table 14*).

Table 14. Key enabling factors for effective refugee inclusion in education

ENABLING FACTOR	MAIN ISSUES	SUGGESTED ACTIONS
Positive legal and policy framework	Importance of regulatory framework to define and justify practices that support refugee inclusion	Enact explicit laws and policies that mandate attention to refugees within the education system. When inclusion policy is more implicit, use framing calling for support of marginalized groups
Government leadership combined with international cooperation/coordination	Need for senior figures to lead and call for refugee inclusion in education, including working with international actors in line with national plans	Identify and work with key political champions for refugee education

International technical assistance, accompaniment and financial contributions to work with government-led coordination mechanisms (e.g., Rwanda, Ecuador) |
| Previous experience with migration and natural disasters | Most countries have some experience of refugee learners and have dealt with small-scale crises, and new efforts should draw on these | New responses can be accelerated by drawing on pre-existing knowledge and skills, as well as existing coordination platforms (e.g., Ecuador) |
| ENABLING FACTOR | MAIN ISSUES | SUGGESTED ACTIONS |

Shared language and culture	When refugee language and culture are the same or similar, this supports integration but can also lead to invisibility and overestimation of self-reliance.	Alongside supporting aspects of shared language and culture (e.g., Venezuelans in Ecuador), look beyond surface features and statistics to identify vulnerabilities that need to be addressed (e.g., Haitian example)
Awareness of refugee inclusion throughout education system and workforce	When more extensive awareness of refugee needs and policy provisions exist centrally, at decentralized levels and among schools and teachers, this makes a difference in effective response to refugee learners.	Emphasis on awareness, with a focus on including the education workforce and other stakeholders at district level (e.g., Ecuador), as well as broader awareness campaigns (i.e., back to school)
Existing efforts to strengthen capacity and quality of education systems	The state of existing education systems and their attention to quality is critical when additional refugee learners are added. When ongoing reforms and investment are under way they can be further built on, with an eye to refugees' needs.	Build in refugee inclusion where systems-strengthening has already had attention, and work further on quality improvements in areas where refugees are present (e.g., Rwanda).

7.3 Factors that challenge effective refugee inclusion practices

A range of challenges have emerged as being common, within the literature and in our case studies. These are generally factors that have been in deficit through our research and need active attention to remove a barrier (*see Table 15*).

Table 15. Selected key challenging factors in effective refugee inclusion in education

CHALLENGE	MAIN ISSUES	SUGGESTED ACTIONS
Insufficient school places, facilities and ICT equipment	Additional/upgrading of classrooms, WASH facilities, learning materials and ICT equipment is often needed; automated allocations place students at a distance; transport needed	Additional investments concentrated both where there are large refugee populations and neglected areas. Ensure allocation and transport systems match and are resourced. Greater exploration/use of ICT both in school and for remote learning.
Lack of targeted domestic and international finance	Funding shortfalls are substantial and undermine expansion of provision, but effective practices emerge when more substantial finance is available; limited public–private sector partnership in funding	Strengthen capacity to host refugee learners in an inclusive manner by financing additional recurrent costs, such as teacher training and salaries (e.g., Türkiye, Rwanda), alongside specific inclusion programmes. Sustain funding. Increase efforts to bring in private sector partners.
High cost of access to schools and learning materials for households	Unaffordability of transport, uniforms, school supplies and school contributions; lack of access to books, stationery and digital devices	Greater use of cash transfers and in-kind support to families. Work on cost reductions and subsidies with the school system centrally and at more local levels.
Administrative barriers to enrolment	Documentation-based constraints	Simplify or remove registration procedures; put in place alternatives to documentation (e.g., placement tests); waive administrative requirements (e.g., health insurance); facilitate legal residence through regularization processes.
Children with intersecting vulnerabilities	Certain refugees face higher barriers (i.e., unaccompanied learners, those with mental health issues, learners in rural areas)	Offer childcare for children of adolescent mothers. Expand initiatives for mental health and psychosocial support, and strengthen secondary school provision closer to home for more marginalized learners.

CHALLENGE	MAIN ISSUES	SUGGESTED ACTIONS
Discrimination, xenophobia and safety	Bullying and harassment of refugee learners, along with insecurity, undermines sense of safety; perceived targeting of resources and initiatives to refugees generates resentment.	Support teachers and school authorities to engage on these issues, including gendered harassment, where relevant. Embed support for refugee students within initiatives improving marginalized national students' access to quality education.
Small-scale experience of effective approaches to inclusion	Initiatives tend to be small scale and rarely evaluated.	Donors to invest in scaling up and gathering evidence on promising approaches. Greater use of national EMIS will help provide data on which studies can draw.
Disincentive of limited employment opportunities	Youth and adult refugee unemployment is high, with right to work issues and mobility restrictions at times.	Work to open pathways to refugee employment, particularly youth, including learning to earning to prepare adolescents to earn their own livelihoods.

Source: Authors

Note: EMIS, Education Management Information System; ICT, information and communication technology; WASH, water, sanitation and hygiene.

7.4 Address intersecting inequalities to include particularly marginalized groups

The absence of analysis on diversity among refugee students, and the need to take this diversity into account more meaningfully has been striking both within the literature and the case studies. As highlighted throughout the report, this includes gendered vulnerabilities, including the risk of violence while travelling to/from schools and additional challenges faced by some refugee learners, including adolescent pregnancy, disabilities, and paid or unpaid work responsibilities. Older adolescents are often neglected in policy environments that have focused historically on primary school-aged and lower-secondary school-aged students, and it is heartening that some initiatives (e.g., those of GTRM in Ecuador) are giving this group of children and young people greater priority.

Most of the literature on the inclusion of refugee learners focuses on the level of education systems, and the kinds of large-scale adjustments that are needed to shift from parallel systems, or to train teachers to impart a new curriculum. But, as is widely recognized, the needs of refugee learners are diverse, reflecting their experiences of flight and of seeking refuge, the specific context in which they now live (i.e., levels of safety, provision of infrastructure, etc.,) their prior learning and skills, their family situation (particularly financial resources and familial responsibilities) and aspects of their identities (e.g., age, gender, ethnicity, etc.). These are complex sets of interactions, and it is important not to over-simplify or label whole groups as vulnerable, without fully understanding the factors that underpin marginalization, or recognizing diversity within a country. For example, Carvalho's analysis of barriers to refugee girls' education in Ethiopia found notable variation between refugee camps located in different areas.[350]

Nonetheless, certain common patterns suggest issues that need to be considered if national education systems are to be fully inclusive:

- **Safety concerns and domestic workloads are often important barriers to refugee girls' school participation,** especially in contexts of limited infrastructure or where all adult family members are working to earn an income.[373]

- **Adolescent refugee boys very commonly face pressure to work,** to contribute to meagre household incomes.[374]

- **Refugee children with disabilities** are disproportionately likely to be out of school in many low- and middle-income refugee-hosting contexts.[375]

- **Unaccompanied and separated children** often experience challenges related to missing their families and to changing care and residence arrangements.[376]

The decision-making rubric (*see Annex 1*) seeks to assist with attending more effectively to this diversity among learners.

7.5 Knowledge gaps in further advancing inclusion of refugee learners

As noted throughout this report, there are some substantial weaknesses in the evidence about effective approaches to the inclusion of refugee learners in national education systems. In many ways, little has changed since Compernolle and Hansen-Shearer's (2018) review, which concluded: "There is, however, a severe scarcity of evidence on what works, why and for whom. Much of the literature reviewed acknowledges the scarcity of evidence and data on interventions in the areas of education and employment for refugees."[377] Some key knowledge gaps have been identified in this study (*see Table 16*).

Table 16. Key knowledge gaps and ways to address them

TYPE OF GAP	EXAMPLES	POTENTIAL SOLUTIONS
Data gap	Lack of up-to-date, granular data in many refugee-hosting contexts on: • Enrolment, retention, drop-out and progression through different levels of education systems • Learning outcomes for different groups of refugees in diverse education systems • Additional vulnerabilities by relevant characteristics (e.g., disabilities, language etc.,). Most data are differentiated by sex.	• Include refugees more consistently in EMIS and disaggregate data by protection status or a proxy (e.g., nationality). • Use EMIS or other administrative data to examine relationship between different inclusion models and learning outcomes.
Evaluations	Very few impact evaluations of the effectiveness of policies and initiatives were found.	Strengthen evaluation of different approaches and initiatives to boost inclusion, making use of quantitative EMIS data, and data from learning assessments and national exams, as well as qualitative evidence from students, parents and school staff.
Type of analysis	Policy reports and studies are often descriptive, with little analysis of the factors that have underpinned decisions and adoption of different approaches. Discussion of political factors is often absent, despite their centrality. Academic studies often reveal policy failures; publication lags can mean insights become outdated in rapidly changing policy and practice environments.	Deepen analysis through in-depth case studies examining the reasons for policy shifts and the factors that have facilitated or impeded implementation.

TYPE OF GAP	EXAMPLES	POTENTIAL SOLUTIONS
Students' and parents' perspectives	Few policy-focused studies draw on primary research with refugee students and their parents; those with teachers or school administrators are relatively more common. Thus, students' perspectives on the effectiveness of initiatives such as language orientation and support, arrangements for certification or schools' efforts to promote inclusive environments for refugee learners are lacking, particularly in low- and middle-income contexts.	Draw more systematically on academic studies that are based more centrally on qualitative research with refugee students and their families.
Thematic gaps	Pre-primary education Although refugee learners often have the same rights to access pre-primary education as they do to primary and secondary education, in many countries the shortage of provision for both national and refugee children is more acute than for primary education, and the number of trained teachers grossly insufficient.	Most evidence of pre-primary education for refugee children focuses on either NGO provision or supporting families in early learning; more systematic efforts to synthesise knowledge on effective inclusion at pre-primary level within national education systems are needed.
	TVET Literature on inclusion of refugee adolescents in mainstream TVET provision is sparse. It is not always clear whether literature refers to parallel provision. Certification barriers are clear obstacles that need further attention to enable adolescent and youth learners to enter and thrive in the workforce.	A focused review of refugee-inclusive approaches to TVET would fill an important knowledge gap. This would need to take into account the complexity of arrangements in different countries, which often involve a mix of public and private provision.
	Use of ICT to support inclusion in national education systems Little literature discussed the use of ICT in national education systems to better support refugee learners. This may begin to change as literature from the COVID-19 pandemic, where technology for remote learning, filters its way through publication, though this may reflect limited use of ICT in the classroom and for at-home learning across many of the national education systems where refugees are hosted.	This gap is important to address as technology continues to increasingly feature in the future of education systems.
	Financial allocation: Lack of disaggregation in global aid reporting systems by source, sector (subsectors), or type of crisis (e.g., internal displacement, refugee) limits analysis of funding on refugee inclusion. Data on domestic expenditure in major refugee-hosting countries are often unavailable internationally.	Analyse costs per student before, during and after shifting from less to more inclusive systems, as in Türkiye or Chad in recent years.

Source: Authors

Note: ICT, information and communication technology; NGO, nongovernmental organization; TVET, Technical and Vocational Education and Training.

Concluding comments

In closing, this report provides a current snapshot of effective policy and practices in the inclusion of refugees in education systems. It synthesizes evidence of good practices and sets out a taxonomy of approaches alongside a decision-making tool, which can be used to advance the educational inclusion of refugees in specific settings. There is a critical need to better understand how to support refugee learners in their education, to break potential cycles of marginalization, and lead to better lives and livelihoods for those forced to leave their homes in the most devastating of circumstances. It is hoped that this report can contribute to changing the reality of educational exclusion that is too often experienced by refugee learners, and transforming it into an experience of educational inclusion.

Annex 1: Assessment tool (rubric)

Figure A1.1. Assessing progress on inclusion of refugee learners in national education systems

DIMENSION	CRITICAL QUESTIONS		
Shorter term	**Mostly parallel provision**	**Partial inclusion**	**Part of national system**
Priority considerations for refugees of duration of less than 12 months The dimensions below become increasingly important over time and should have full consideration within a year of a refugee crisis	• Are temporary schools in place and safe? What percentage of refugee learners attend? • Is formal/non-formal education available? Does this lead to certification? • Are there enough teachers and facilitators? • Does curriculum include psychosocial support? • Is there access to learning materials, including remote learning, devices, connectivity?	• Are camp or host-country schools open to refugee learners in existing classrooms or via shifting? Is security considered? • Is there access to home-country curricula and assessment? Does it include socio-emotional learning? • Do accelerated learning or catch-up programmes exist? • Are language bridging programmes available?	• Do refugee learners enroll in host-country schools? Are these at reasonable distances? • Is social protection available? • Are refugee teachers' qualifications recognized, with training available? Are teachers sensitized to promote integration? • Do accelerated learning or catch-up programmes exist? • Will host-country exams be recognized on return?

DIMENSION		CRITICAL QUESTIONS		
Longer term		**Mostly parallel provision**	**Partial inclusion**	**Part of national system**
Governing inclusion	Legal frameworks	Does host country government recognize refugee status? Adequate policies?	Are there policies for progressive inclusion? Documentation barriers removed?	Is there awareness of refugee inclusion at all levels? Active anti-discrimination effort?
	Type of school	Are there pathways from non-formal into formal education?	What percentage of learners are in host-country schools? Separate shifts? Camp schools?	Are refugee learners in classrooms with host-country learners?
Resourcing inclusion	System financing	Who funds camp schools or other provision for refugee learners?	Does external funding contribute to budget support or targeted programmes?	Can the host-country government cover full refugee learner costs?
	Social protection	Are refugee learners given targetd cash, in-kind and other support?	Can refugee learners access national social programmes?	Are additional needs for marginalized learners addressed?
Developing capacity	Social infrastructure	Are temporary learning centres in place? Learning materials available? Remote learning?	Are there adequate camp schools, with facilities and learning materials? Is security considered?	Need for additional classrooms, facilities, learning materials, ICT? Are distance and security considered?
	Teachers	Are there enough teachers or facilitators? Efforts to engage parents?	Who contracts refugee teachers? Scope to hire assistants? Is training available?	Are refugee teachers' qualifications recognized? Trained in host-country curricula/language?
School-level provision	Curriculum	Does the curriculum used include psychosocial support?	Do refugee learners use home- or host-country curriculum? Does it include socio-emotional learning?	Do curriculum and classroom practices promote social integration?
	Language of instruction	Is home-country language or a mix used in teaching-learning?	Are language bridging programmes available?	Do refugee learners share the host-country language? Or is bridging provided?
Evaluation and monitoring	Assessment and certification	Are learning passports or portable qualifications available?	Are remote home-country exams in place and certification possible?	Can refugee learners sit host-country exams and receive certification?
	Education data systems	How are data on refugee learners tracked? Who manages this?	Are data systems aligned with national EMIS? Are there plans to further align?	Does host-country EMIS include and disaggregate for protection status, gender, age, etc?

Source: Authors

Annex 2: Pledges on educational inclusion of refugee learners at the Global Refugee Forum

DOMESTIC GOVERNMENTS	
COUNTRY	PLEDGE
Central African Republic	Pursue the inclusion of refugees and returnees in the national education system and provide them with the same conditions as nationals
Chad	Strengthen the process of integrating refugees into all levels of the education system by including refugees in the national education law
Costa Rica	Access to and integration into the Costa Rican education system for migrants, refugees and asylum seekers
Djibouti	Continue to include refugees into national education systems and integrate refugee teachers into the national budget
Egypt	Commitment to ensuring refugee children can access education within national education systems in line with the national education strategy for 2030 and the new national asylum law
Guatemala	Coordinate with local authorities and education institutions to include and integrate children and adolescents into the national education system
Indonesia	Provide access to basic and secondary education for refugee children
Kenya	Continue enabling refugee children access to the national education system
Nigeria	Include refugees, internally displaced persons, returnees and host communities in national government development plans; ensure the enrolment of all refugees in primary schools by 2023
Sudan	Complete a costed plan of action for refugee education to realize integration of refugee children into the national education system
Thailand	Ensure that displaced populations (e.g., those from Myanmar) have their educational certificates recognized, in order to continue their studies
Türkiye	Construction of classrooms, expansion of TVET and expansion of early childhood development
Zambia	Maintain refugee inclusion in the national education system at all levels (ECE, primary, secondary and tertiary education); plan to establish technical and vocational institutes in the three main refugee settlements

Source: UNHCR (2019)[378]

Note: TVET, Technical and Vocational Education and Training

# Annex 3: Multilateral disbursements to refugee education

A3.1 Education Cannot Wait

Following its inception in 2017, ECW established the First Emergency Response (FER) facility, MYRPs and the Acceleration Facility. The MYRP is a financing instrument that calls for joint planning between humanitarian and development actors, and is spread over three to four years. FERs, on the other hand, are normally active for up to 12 months. Since 2018, the majority of ECW funding has been disbursed through the MYRP window, followed by the FER window (*see Figure A.3.1*). ECW works closely with bilateral and multilateral donors, civil society partners, NGOs (international and local) and host governments. ECW's aim is to work with governments to ensure that context-specific responses are developed and aligned with national education sector plans and strategies. In emergency settings, ECW allows for a rapid education response to humanitarian appeals, while in protracted crises, ECW bridges relief and development interventions by bringing together government, humanitarian and development partners.[379] More recently, as part of its 2023–2026 strategy, ECW plans to improve financing data by providing transparent information on the various funding streams and strong collaborations.[380]

Table A3.2 presents the details of ECW's financial commitments in some of the countries it works in, together with a breakdown of the type of recipients it targets and reaches. ECW projects have reached the highest number of refugees in Palestine (600,000), Lebanon (300,000), Bangladesh (200,000), Chad (200,000) and Uganda (100,000). As a share of total recipients reached by ECW projects, those where refugees make up the largest share include Sudan (100 per cent), Brazil (100 per cent), Palestine (78 per cent), Peru (68 per cent) and Lebanon (62 per cent). The refugees that have been reached by ECW funding are principally in primary school.

In some countries, however, a large share of ECW funding also goes towards supporting children and adolescents at other levels of education. In Bangladesh and Lebanon, for example, 44 per cent and 38 per cent, respectively, of funding recipients were at the pre-primary level. Similarly, in Colombia and Iraq, more than a quarter of all refugees reached were in secondary education; for Ecuador this was 35 per cent (*see Figure A3.2*). A limitation of the ECW data is that, while information is provided on the types of beneficiaries targeted, the MYRP, FER and Acceleration Facility financing windows do not break down funding according to disbursements to different groups of learners.

Figure A3.1. ECW funds invested, by funding window
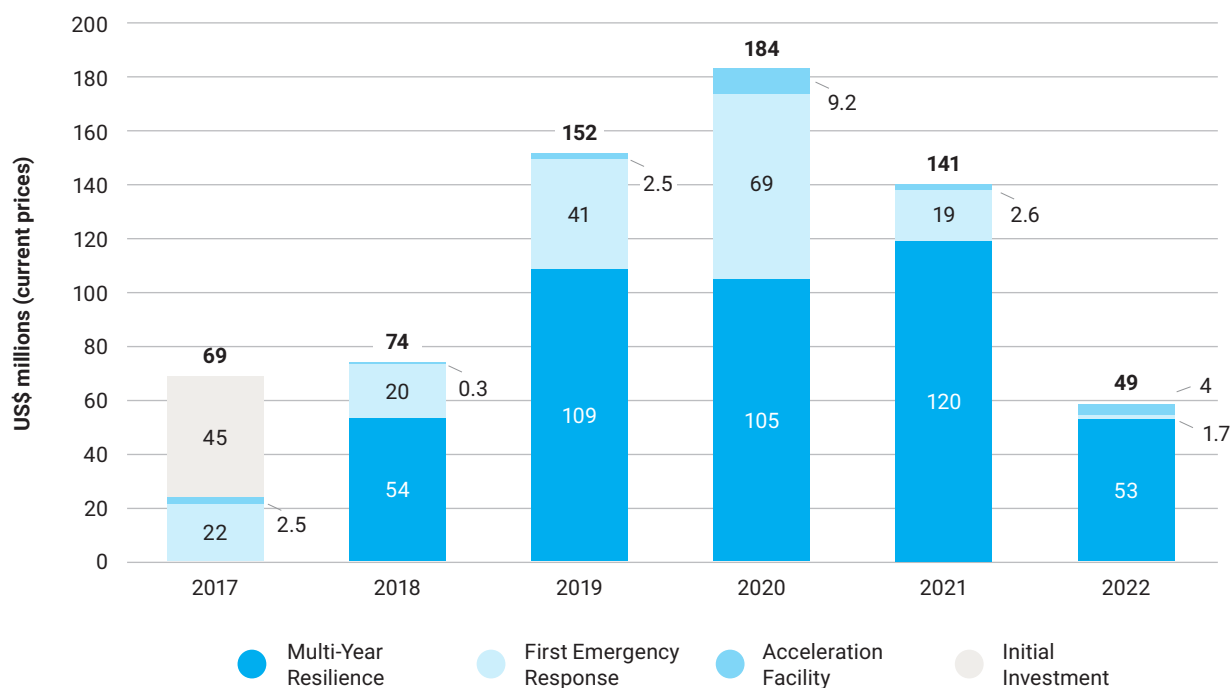
Source: Adapted from ECW (n.d.).[381]

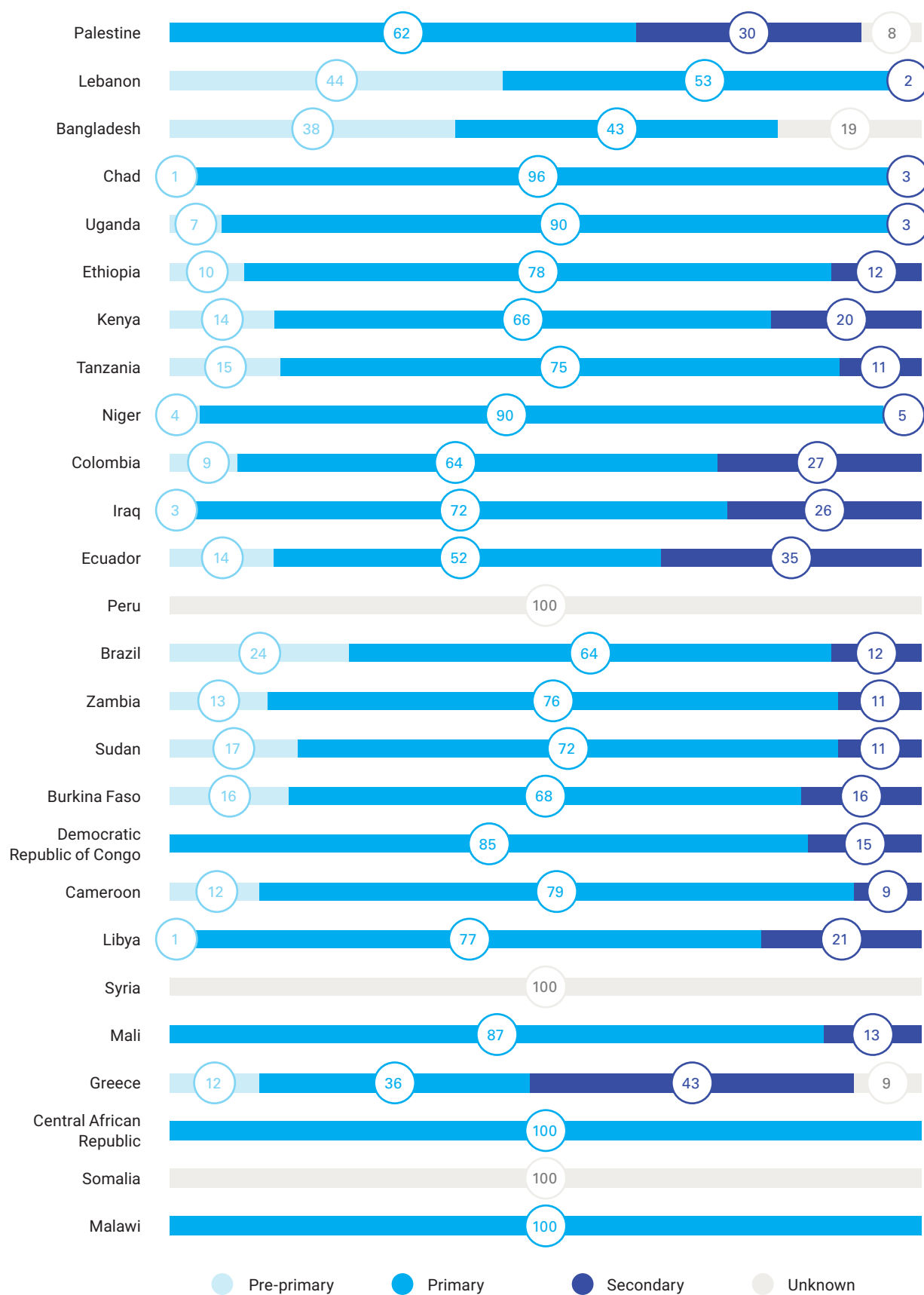**Table A3.1.** ECW financing disbursements per country and populations reached (as of September 2022)

	ECW FUNDING (US$ MILLIONS)					TOTAL NUMBER OF RECIPIENTS REACHED			
	MYRP	FER	COVID-19 FER	OTHER	TOTAL	REFUGEES	INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS	OTHER POPULATIONS	REFUGEES AS A % OF TOTAL
Afghanistan	50.2	7.4	1.3	0	58.9	36,456	63,990	80,686	20.1
Bangladesh	25.2	3.3	2.1	0	30.6	204,003	0	132,911	60.6
Brazil	0	749	250	0	999	11,880	0	9	99.9
Burkina Faso	13.11	8.5	1.5	0	23.11	4,039	129222	178,706	1.3
Cameroon	25	3.8	1.5	0	30.3	3,238	27299	7,804	8.4
Central African Republic	19.5	7	1	0	27.5	818	53,947	191,869	0.3
Chad	20.9	3.5	1.6	10	36	200,979	156,047	477,858	24
Colombia	12.4	2.6	1	0	16	22,844	0	34,841	40
Democratic Republic of the Congo	22.2	5	3.8	0	31	3,668	26,242	46,916	5
Ecuador	7.4	1.9	0.6	0	9.85	14,541	0	72,540	17
Greece	0	3.2	1.3	0	4.5	1,319	0	5,235	20
Lebanon	12	5.3	2.8	0	20.1	321,409	44	196,745	62
Malawi	0	2.3	0.3	0	2.625	9	11,364	340,296	0

	ECW FUNDING (US$ MILLIONS)					TOTAL NUMBER OF RECIPIENTS REACHED			
	MYRP	FER	COVID-19 FER	OTHER	TOTAL	REFUGEES	INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS	OTHER POPULATIONS	REFUGEES AS A % OF TOTAL
Mali	21.1	9.3	1.5	0	31.9	1,686	22,224	308,236	1
Niger	11.1	10.3	1.5	0	22.9	24,563	49,397	213,689	9
Palestine	18	3.9	1.9	0	23.8	625,769	15,638	157,162	78
Peru	0	1.5	0.3	0	1.8	13,499	0	6,485	68
Somalia	21.1	4.9	2.2	0	28.2	639	40,700	137,448	0
Sudan	17.7	4	0	0	21.7	9,660	0	0	100
Syria	30	3	0.5	15	48.5	1,853	53,056	314,881	1
Uganda	46.9	3.4	1	0	51.3	139,069	0	459,972	23

Source: Adapted from ECW (n.d.).[382]

Note: This table includes only those countries ECW works with where some recipients are refugees.

Figure A3.2. Share of refugee children and adolescents reached, by subsector (ECW funding)

Country	Pre-primary	Primary	Secondary	Unknown
Palestine		62	30	8
Lebanon	44	53	2	
Bangladesh	38	43		19
Chad	1	96	3	
Uganda	7	90	3	
Ethiopia	10	78	12	
Kenya	14	66	20	
Tanzania	15	75	11	
Niger	4	90	5	
Colombia	9	64	27	
Iraq	3	72	26	
Ecuador	14	52	35	
Peru				100
Brazil	24	64	12	
Zambia	13	76	11	
Sudan	17	72	11	
Burkina Faso	16	68	16	
Democratic Republic of Congo		85	15	
Cameroon	12	79	9	
Libya	1	77	21	
Syria				100
Mali		87	13	
Greece	12	36	43	9
Central African Republic		100		
Somalia				100
Malawi		100		

Legend: ● Pre-primary ● Primary ● Secondary ● Unknown

A3.2 GPE disbursements to refugees

In 2022, GPE disbursed an estimated US$1.1 billion worth of grants to 20 countries in which refugees can access education using the national schooling system.[384] GPE has also provided US$79 million in accelerated funding to support the educational needs of Rohingya refugee children in Bangladesh, and other refugees and crisis-affected children in Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Sudan.[385] During the COVID-19 pandemic, of the 66 accelerated funding grants GPE disbursed to partner countries, 20 specifically aimed to help support either refugees or internally displaced persons. The value of these disbursements totalled US$3.6 million for recovery purposes and US$3.8 million in mitigation funding.[386] A limitation of GPE disbursement data, however, is that it is currently not possible to disaggregate the funds that are going to refugee and non-refugee recipients.

Alongside funds directly supporting refugees, GPE also works with governments to support them in including refugees in national education sector plans and helping them with the capacity and resources to do so. For example, in Chad, GPE and ECW have helped to incentivize better dialogue and joined-up approaches across both development and humanitarian education structures, such as the cluster, local education group and refugee education working group.[387] While GPE funding is used to support governments to integrate refugees into the national education system, it is also used to fund parallel systems in contexts where refugees do not have access to national education systems, or where provision is insufficient. In Bangladesh, for example, GPE (as well as World Bank and ECW) funding to support Rohingya refugees is channelled through UNICEF and UNHCR.[388]

A.3.3 World Bank disbursements to refugees

The Regional Sub-window (RSW) for Refugees and Host Communities was introduced in 2017 as a dedicated financing instrument to support low-income refugee-hosting countries. By the end of the replenishment cycle, all 14 countries that were eligible for funding from this RSW had received aid for relevant projects.[389] Of these, nine countries used the money to scale up refugee access to government social protection programmes through projects worth US$626 million via the RSW.[390] A midterm review of the RSW found that almost all RSW-eligible countries either enacted or strengthened policies relating to the inclusion of refugees in national education systems.[391]

For example, RSW funding helped support countries such as Chad, Ethiopia and Rwanda to enact or strengthen policies to support the inclusion of school-aged refugees in national education systems. In Rwanda, for example, the Socio-economic Inclusion of Refugees and Host Communities in Rwanda Project provides funding to better integrate children and adolescents into the national education system. Aside from this, the RSW funding also helps support supply-led problems relating to poor infrastructure through construction or renovation of schools/classrooms in areas where refugee camps are situated, such as in Pakistan. RSW funds have been used to assist refugees in parallel education systems, such as in Bangladesh, where the Additional Financing for Reaching Out of School Children II project partially supports Rohingya refugees via disbursements to the government.[392]

Table A3.2 presents an overview of education-related projects funded by the RSW for Refugees and Host Communities (IDA-18) and the Window for Host Communities and Refugees (WHR) (IDA-19).

Table A3.2. IDA-18 RSW and IDA-19 WHR for projects relating to education

RECIPIENT COUNTRY	PROJECT ID	PROJECT TITLE	TOTAL AMOUNT DISBURSED, AMOUNT DISBURSED VIA RSW/WHR IN PARENTHESES (US$ MILLIONS)
Bangladesh	P167870	Additional Financing for Reaching Out of School Children II	25.00 (20.84)
Burkina Faso	P169252	Scale-up and Responding to the Needs of Refugees and Host Communities	100.00 (14.00)
Cameroon	P160926	Cameroon Education Reform Support Project	130.00 (30.00)
Chad	P164748	Chad Refugees and Host Communities Project	60.00 (50.00)
	P172255	Additional Financing to Refugees and Host Communities Support Project	75.00 (67.50)
Djibouti	P166059	Expanding Opportunities for Learning	15.00 (5.00)
Ethiopia	P168411	Additional Financing to GEQIP-E for Refugees Integration	55.00 (55.00)
Niger	P168779	Niger Learning Improvement Results in Education Project	140.00 (40.00)
Pakistan	P166309	Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Human Capital Investment Project	200.00 (125.00)
	P166308	Balochistan Human Capital Investment Project	36.00 (30.00)
Rwanda	P164130	Socioeconomic Inclusion of Refugees and Host Communities in Rwanda Project	60.00 (50.00)
Uganda	P166570	Uganda Secondary Education Expansion Project	150.00 (50.00)

Source: World Bank (2021)

Note: Projects in blue link to an education-only project, while projects in red link to those which include education but are not exclusive to the sector and are multisectoral in nature

A3.4 Regional Refugee Response Plan education requests, 2022

Table A3.3. Refugee Regional Response Plan requests for education, 2022

COUNTRY	DESCRIPTION OR TARGETS	REQUIREMENTS (US$ MILLIONS)	
		EDUCATION	TOTAL
AFGHANISTAN REGIONAL REFUGEE RESPONSE PLAN			
Iran	Provide formal/informal education services for all Afghan children, with a particular emphasis on adolescent girls.	US$27.5 million	US$258.7 million
Pakistan	Support schools in host communities that have refugee children to increase the absorption capacity of education facilities.	US$41.4 million	US$310.4 million
Tajikistan	Provide access to inclusive and protective learning opportunities/settings (formal and informal) for children and adolescents, including identifying and addressing risks and barriers for girls accessing education.	US$2.6 million	US$40.5 million
Turkmenistan	Support gender-responsive and safe education for refugee children, focusing on vulnerable children.	US$0.13 million	US$3.1 million
Uzbekistan	Supply of education materials to children and adolescents in need.	US$0.6 million	US$10.6 million
REGIONAL REFUGEE RESPONSE PLAN			
Angola	• 500 refugee children enrolled in ECD. • 2,100 refugee children enrolled in primary education. • 200 refugee children enrolled in secondary education.	US$1.1 million	US$4.5 million
Burundi	• 4,956 refugee children enrolled in ECD. • 13,720 refugee children enrolled in primary education. • 6,987 refugee children enrolled in secondary education. • 100 refugees enrolled in tertiary education.	US$7.6 million	US$54.3 million
Republic of the Congo	• 1,500 refugee children enrolled in ECD. • 9,076 refugee children enrolled in primary education. • 5,590 refugee children enrolled in secondary education. • 90 refugees enrolled in tertiary education.	US$1.0 million	US$15.5 million
Rwanda	• 4,800 refugee children enrolled in ECD. • 16,120 refugee children enrolled in primary education. • 9,820 refugee children enrolled in secondary education. • 500 refugees enrolled in tertiary education.	US$8.4 million	US$75.4 million
Uganda	• 32,097 refugee children enrolled in ECD. • 132,115 refugee children enrolled in primary education. • 9,591 refugee children enrolled in secondary education.	US$32.9 million	US$325.4 million
United Republic of Tanzania	• 3,933 refugee children enrolled in ECD. • 16,187 refugee children enrolled in primary education. • 7,628 refugee children enrolled in secondary education. • 100 refugees enrolled in tertiary education.	US$5.8 million	US$89.3 million
Zambia	• 1,350 refugee children enrolled in ECD. • 9,700 refugee children enrolled in primary education. • 2,820 refugee children enrolled in secondary education.	US$1.9 million	US$65.2 million

COUNTRY	DESCRIPTION OR TARGETS	REQUIREMENTS (US$ MILLIONS)	
		EDUCATION	TOTAL
SOUTH SUDAN REGIONAL REFUGEE RESPONSE PLAN			
Democratic Republic of the Congo	• 100% of refugee children have access to primary education • 50% of refugee children have access to secondary education	US$1.5 million	US$28.0 million
Ethiopia	• Enhancement of digital enrolment to ensure effective collection, storage and analysis of education data • Facilitation of an out-of-school children assessment and a learning assessment for literacy, mathematics and numeracy	US$23.8 million	US$266.9 million
Kenya	• Different partners will continue to enhance the quality of basic education for children in Kakuma/Kalobeyei and the host community	US$7.7 million	US$115.2 million
Sudan	• Support the Government of Sudan to achieve the GRF pledge to integrate refugees into national education systems	US$20.2 million	US$285.9 million
Uganda	• Ensure equitable access to quality education for 567,500 children and youth in refugee-hosting areas	US$48.0 million	US$491.2 million
UKRAINE REGIONAL REFUGEE RESPONSE PLAN			
Poland	In line with EU legislation, enrol displaced learners in preparatory classes within three months after they have lodged an asylum claim	US$84.5 million	US$740.7 million
Moldova	In line with national education directives, refugee children and their families will be given access to quality, inclusive and safe education services	US$10.6 million	US$414.2 million
Romania	To ensure the best standards of assistance for refugees from Ukraine, the Government Emergency Ordinance provides for the right of education at all levels on an equal footing with Romanian nationals	$9.5 million	US$239.9 million
Hungary	Timely inclusion of displaced learners in the national school system and ensuring access at all levels in Hungary will be key to the education response to avoid learning losses and long-term negative effects on displaced learners	US$3.9 million	US$105.3 million
Slovakia	Partners will ensure access to quality education for all age groups, providing them with sufficient help to learn a new language	US$8.3 million	US$91.9 million
Regional	890,100 children benefitting from national education systems	US$12.7 million	US$258.5 million
VENEZUELA REGIONAL REFUGEE AND MIGRANT RESPONSE PLAN			
Brazil	Of the 91,400 in need, the RRRP targets 17,900 children. The response strategy prioritizes supporting refugees and migrants from Venezuela in the process of accessing formal and informal education activities.	US$4.9 million	US$125.5 million
Chile	Of the 196,000 in need, the RRRP targets 5,370 children. The response strategy will focus on providing specialized assistance at the national level in order to improve refugee access to the education system.	US$1.9 million	US$59.5 million
Colombia	Out of the 3.1 million in need, the RRRP targeted 446,000 children. Among the strategy responses were the provision of school meals and increased opportunities for distance and virtual learning.	US$50.2 million	US$802.9 million
Ecuador	Of the 221,000 in need, the RRRP targeted 140,000 children as part of the response. Part of the response strategy is to strengthen the access of refugee and migrant children from Venezuela to national education systems.	US$18.3 million	US$288.3 million

COUNTRY	DESCRIPTION OR TARGETS	REQUIREMENTS (US$ MILLIONS)	
		EDUCATION	TOTAL
VENEZUELA REGIONAL REFUGEE AND MIGRANT RESPONSE PLAN			
Peru	Of the 763,000 in need, 173,000 children were targeted by the RRRP. The strategy prioritizes supporting access for refuges to the education system, while improving school retention and learning recovery plans.	US$16.5 million	US$304.0 million
Caribbean	Of the 44,100 in need, 16,900 children were targeted. As part of the response strategy, advocacy ensures that all refugees were integrated into the education system, and an effective monitoring system to track enrolment, retention and performance of students enrolled.	US$5.9 million	US$68.4 million
Central America and Mexico	Of the 18,400 in need, 1,720 were targeted. The strategy focused on expanding enrolment and reducing financial barriers to allow refugees to attend school in person and virtually.	US$0.9 million	US$24.1 million
Southern Cone	Of the 60,400 in need, 4,440 children were targeted. The strategy response included advocacy with government officials to allow refugees access to education and coordinate with public institutes to validate certification processes.	US$0.8 million	US$476 million

Annex 4: Additional information on refugee inclusion in Ecuador

Table A4.1. Laws and regulations promoting refugee inclusion in Ecuador

LAW/POLICY	KEY CONTENT
2011 *Ley Organica de Educación Intercultural* (LOEI)	Establishes that education is a fundamental human right held by all residents of Ecuador. Article 234 indicates that refugees and displaced persons and their children will be considered to be in a situation of vulnerability.[393]
2017 MINEDUC-2017-00042-A	Allows students to enrol throughout the school year and to change school easily in case of transit. It also grants children without school records the right to enrol in a school year based on their age, if they can present any documentation that proves that they were registered with basic services (such as health and education) in their original place of residence.[394]
2020 MINEDUC-2020-00025-A	Ministerial Agreement 25A regulates and guarantees access, retention, promotion and culmination of the educational process in the national education system for the population that is in a situation of vulnerability.[395] It states that Ecuador has the "responsibility to register all children and adolescents in the education system regardless of their origin, nationality or legal status".[396]
2021 Reform to the *Ley Orgánica de Educación Intercultural* (LOEI)	Incorporates the following guiding principles: 1) universal access to education, guaranteeing equitable access to quality education; 2) non-discrimination, prohibiting exclusion and restriction; and 3) equality of opportunity and treatment.[397] Article 132.1 identifies discrimination by legal representatives, directors and teachers of educational establishments as a serious infraction, though the regulation for the application of the LOEI is under development.[398]
2021 MINEDUC-2021-00026-A	Reiterates provisions of Ministerial Agreement 25A concerning placement exams. Establishes that in any case "the student may be placed in a grade or course that represents a difference of more than two years, with respect to the other students".[399]

Table A4.2. Key coordination mechanisms and working groups related to refugee education in Ecuador

MECHANISM	ROLE	PROVISIONS IN RELATION TO INCLUSION OF REFUGEE LEARNERS
Quito Process[400] (Proceso de Quito, nd.)	Coordinates social and economic integration of Venezuelans into host nations	• Importance of education in social integration, and as a fundamental right highlighted in Joint Declaration of Chapter VI • Stressed the importance of regional-level dialogue to strengthen connections between educational and migration policy • Government interviewees attributed development of Ministerial Agreement 25A (which recognizes government's responsibility to register all children in the education system regardless of their origin, nationality or legal status) to the normative framework developed around the Quito process.
Grupo de Trabajo para Refugiadas y Migrantes (GTRM)	National coordination body for the regional interagency platform for refugees and migrants from Venezuela (R4V).	• Co-led by UNHCR and IOM, GTRM has a presence throughout the country, with nine local coordination groups (in areas hosting the largest number of refugees), six thematic working groups and three transversal working groups[401] • Comprises 53 members, including government, United Nations agencies, national and international civil society organizations and donors • The 2022 GTRM plan highlights the importance of support to adolescents aged 15 years and over who are at increased risk of school drop-out, UASC, children with disabilities, and pregnant adolescents[402]
Grupo de Trabajo de Educación (GTE) – a GTRM working group	"Coordinates actions aimed at guaranteeing the right to education of the refugee and migrant population from Venezuela in Ecuador and their link with the communities of host and other migrant and refugee communities in Ecuador"[403]	• Comprises 20 government, donor and civil society members • Meets every one to two months, depending on members' preference and the needs of refugee learners at the time, to discuss coordinating efforts among all members and the government
ECW Steering Committee Members of this group include MINEDUC, UNESCO, UNICEF, UNHCR and some civil society organizations	Coordinates the implementation of activities under the Multi-Year Resilience Programme (MYRP)	• Meets twice or three times a year

Table A4.3. Overview of some key international funding initiatives supporting refugee education in Ecuador

FUNDER	FUNDING MODALITY AND AMOUNT (IF AVAILABLE)	ASPECTS OF EDUCATIONAL INCLUSION SUPPORTED	IMPACTS
Education Cannot Wait (ECW)	• First Emergency Response (FER) • COVID-19 FER[404] • Multi-Year Resilience Programme (MYRP): US$27.2 million for support to Venezuelan refugees in Colombia, Ecuador and Peru	• Enrolment processes, educational expenses, teacher training in inclusive methodologies, psychosocial support, construction of WASH facilities, dry rations; • Distribution of learning materials • Promoting hygiene and menstrual hygiene management within schools • Training and supporting teachers in psychosocial support, pedagogy and inclusive education[405]	By the end of 2020, 80% of supported students had completed the school year and 71% had transitioned into formal education. ECW funding had reached 87,081 students in Ecuador, 14,541 of whom were refugees, with approximately equal numbers of girls and boys benefiting.[406] Of the refugee children and adolescents reached, 2,001 (14%) were at pre-primary level, 7,500 (52%) at primary level, and 5,040 (35%) at secondary level.[407]
Inter-American Development Bank (IDB)	• US$20.7 million committed to the Educational Inclusion of Migrant and Host Population project	• Early childhood education activities for three- to four-year-olds. Remedial and accelerated learning aimed at 8- to 18-year-olds who are lagging two or more years behind their grade-appropriate age.[408]	No further information on implementation could be found.
Regional Refugee and Migrant Response Plan (RMRP)	The 2022 RMRP indicates a total need for US$18.3 million, to support the education of 140,000 (both refugees and host-community members) in particular need.[409]	The 2022 RMRP's priorities were: • Providing remedial classes to support with homework and other school preparation • Paying special attention to adolescents aged 15 or above at risk of dropping out • Targeting the most vulnerable school-aged children (those with disabilities, pregnant adolescents or those at risk of gender-based violence)	RMRP funding comprises only a fraction of identified need (US$1.33 million of the US$18.3 million needed, as of 30 September 2022).[410]

Endnotes

1   UNICEF, 'Education, Children on the move and Inclusion in Education, Lessons learned and scalable solutions to accelerate inclusion in national education systems and enhance learning outcomes', UNICEF, 2022, <https://www.unicef.org/reports/education-children-move-and-inclusion-education>; according to international law and UNHCR mandate, the term refugee refers to people "outside their countries of origin who are in need of international protection because of feared persecution, or a serious threat to their life, physical integrity or freedom in their country of origin as a result of persecution, armed conflict, violence or serious public disorder";   UNHCR, 'UNHCR Master Glossary of Terms', UNHCR, www.unhcr.org/glossary/.

2   UNHCR, 'All Inclusive. The campaign for refugee education. UNHCR Education report 2022', UNHCR, 2022 <https://www.unhcr.org/publications/education/631ef5a84/unhcr-education-report-2022-inclusive-campaign-refugee-education.html>; 'Education, Children on the move and Inclusion in Education'; Although the numbers of refugee children (those who flee across international borders) are lower than those displaced internally (an estimated 10 million refugees under 18 globally, compared with 25.8 million internally displaced people), refugee children face specific challenges related to inclusion host countries' education systems. Hence, this report focuses specifically on this group.

3   UNHCR, '2012-2016 Education strategy', UNHCR, 2012 <https://www.unhcr.org/5149ba349.html>; Dryden-Peterson, Sarah, et al., 'Inclusion of refugees in national education systems. Background paper for the 2019 Global Education Monitoring Report', UNESCO, Paris, 2018 <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000266054>.

4   UNESCO, 'Global Education Monitoring Report 2019. Migration, displacement and education: building bridges, not walls', Paris, 2019; this report estimates that around 39 per cent of refugees globally lived in camps or collective centres with these settlements being most common in Africa.

5   UNHCR, 'Refugee Education 2030. A strategy for refugee inclusion', 2019 <https://www.unhcr.org/publications/education/5d651da88d7/education-2030-strategy-refugee-education.html>; Data from 2018 show that 78 per cent of refugees were living in protracted situations, up from 66 per cent the previous year.

6   United Nations, 'Global Compact on Refugees', 2018 <www.unhcr.org/5c658aed4>, paragraph 68.

7   UNHCR, 'Staying the Course. The challenges facing refugee education', 2021 <https://www.unhcr.org/publications/education/612f85d64/unhcr-education-report-2021-staying-course-challenges-facing-refugee-education.html>.

8   'Education, Children on the move and Inclusion in Education'; 'Staying the Course'.

9   'UNHCR Master Glossary of Terms'.

10   Brugha, M., et al., 'Historical mapping of education provision for refugees: A cross-cutting and comparative analysis of three country contexts', Jigsaw Consult, United Kingdom, 2021.

11   'UNHCR Master Glossary of Terms'.

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Acknowledgements

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UNICEF works in the world's toughest places to reach the most disadvantaged children and adolescents — and to protect the rights of every child, everywhere. Across 190 countries and territories, we do whatever it takes to help children survive, thrive and fulfill their potential, from early childhood through adolescence. And we never give up.

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