



# 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

FEBRUARY 2022



# Acknowledgements

This report was prepared by the Education in Emergency (EiE) team through consultations with UNICEF regional and country office education teams from the Regional Offices in Eastern Central Asia (ECARO), Eastern Southern Africa (ESARO), Western Central Africa (WCARO), East Asia and the Pacific (EAPRO), South Asia (ROSA), Middle East North Africa (MENARO) and Latin America and the Caribbean (LACRO), and the Country Office education teams in Antigua and Barbuda, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Burundi, Burkina Faso, Colombia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Egypt, India, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Somalia, State of Palestine, Sudan, Turkey, Thailand and Uganda. The contributions of the 25 regional and country office teams made possible the drafting of this report and to them we extend our deepest gratitude.

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The team would like to recognize the following UNICEF staff members for their contributions and guidance for the creation of this report with special thanks on the following:

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Copy-editing, formatting, and design would not be possible without the support of Small World Stories and Benussi&theFish.

UNICEF is sincerely appreciative of all its partnerships with the many organizations listed throughout this report and others not included here, for our collective effort at promoting inclusion of refugee, IDP and other migrant children in quality education services.



*Children playing in “Children’s friend Area,” in Kaya, in the north central region of Burkina Faso.*

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# Cover note

When UNICEF was established 75 years ago, the world was home to nearly 11 million displaced people due to World War II. Five years later, the 1951 Refugee Convention specified that the State shall guarantee all refugees and displaced peoples have access to education. Today, the world is facing compounding humanitarian, environmental and economic crises that have spurred the migration and displacement of millions of children and their families. UNICEF has remained steadfast in its mission to improve the lives and livelihoods of children and their families. At the core of this mission is ensuring that nearly 9.8 million refugees and 23 million internally displaced children and adolescents have access to quality, inclusive education. UNICEF's work with governments, United Nations partners, the private sector and with civil society has led to longstanding educational solutions for children on the move in search of better opportunities.

The following report summarizes how UNICEF and its partners have contributed to the creation of education solutions that support the skills development and educational attainment of children on the move in countries and regions across the world. Country case studies highlighting best practices from 19 countries and the East African and Sahel regions showcase UNICEF's work with country governments on issues such as the inclusion of refugees in national education systems and improving relations between refugee children, their families, and their host communities.

We hope that the lessons generated from practical experiences in the field can be used to inform strategies and programming of partners to achieve our collective mission of finding durable educational solutions that will improve learning outcomes for children on the move across the world.

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February 2022

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# Definitions

**Children on the move:** International or internal child migrants, refugees and asylum seekers, as well as internally displaced children or returnees.

**Young people and 'youth':** While there is no single definition of 'youth' or 'young people', this report focuses on young people, aged 14 to 24, and uses the terms 'young people' and 'youth' interchangeably.

**Migrant:** A person who is moving or has moved across an international border or within a home country, regardless of whether the move is voluntary or involuntary and regardless of their legal status or length of stay.

**Refugee:** A person who lives outside his or her country of nationality and is unable to return because of persecution or fear of persecution based on race, religion, nationality, political opinion or membership in a particular social group.

**Internally displaced persons (IDPs):** Individuals or groups of people who have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence; in particular, as a result of or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights or natural or human-made disasters, and who have not crossed an internationally recognized state border.



# Acronyms

<b>AAP</b>	Accountability to affected populations	<b>LP</b>	Learning passport
<b>ABE</b>	Alternative basic education	<b>MHPSS</b>	Mental health and psychosocial support
<b>AfL</b>	Assessment for learning	<b>MLCs</b>	Migration learning centers
<b>ALP</b>	Accelerated learning programme	<b>MoE</b>	Ministry of Education
<b>CCC</b>	Core commitments for children	<b>NFE</b>	Non-formal education
<b>CCTE</b>	Conditional cash transfer for education	<b>OECD</b>	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
<b>CLE</b>	Caregiver-led education	<b>PSEA</b>	Prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse
<b>CoTM</b>	Children on the move	<b>PFA</b>	Psychological first aid
<b>EiE</b>	Education in emergencies	<b>SDGs</b>	Sustainable Development Goals
<b>EGRA</b>	Early grade reading assessment	<b>SGBV</b>	Sexual and gender-based violence
<b>EMIS</b>	Education Monitoring Information System	<b>SoWC</b>	State of the World's Children report
<b>GCM</b>	Global Compact for Migration	<b>TaRL</b>	Teaching at the right level
<b>GEM</b>	Global Education Monitoring Report	<b>UNDP</b>	United Nations Development Programme
<b>GCR</b>	Global Compact for Refugees	<b>UNESCO</b>	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
<b>GRF</b>	Global Refugee Forum	<b>UNICEF</b>	United Nations Children's Fund
<b>ICT</b>	Information communications technology	<b>UNHCR</b>	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
<b>IDPs</b>	Internally displaced persons	<b>WASH</b>	Water and sanitation and hygiene
<b>IFC</b>	International Finance Corporation	<b>WB</b>	World Bank
<b>IGAD</b>	Inter-Governmental Authority on Development		
<b>ILO</b>	International Labor Organization		
<b>IOM</b>	International Organization for Migration		



Barranquilla, Colombia, 4 de Septiembre de 2021. Jornada de Preregistro para población migrante venezolana en Barranquilla, Colombia, con ayuda de UNICEF.

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# Executive summary

Internally displaced refugee and migrant children of different categories, collectively referred to here as children on the move (CoTM), continue to face major barriers and bottlenecks to their inclusion in national education systems and in acquiring the skills they need to succeed in life. Current estimates suggest nearly 10 million refugees, and 25.6 million internally displaced persons (IDPs) are aged under 18, with potentially many more undocumented and remaining invisible in current data.

## **Education and learning:**

Prior to the global COVID-19 pandemic, UNHCR estimated that by 2021, 61 per cent of refugee children would be enrolled in primary school and 23 per cent of refugee adolescents in secondary school. Close to half of refugees aged under 18 would remain out of school. For IDP children in fragile settings, opportunities for enrollment in education can potentially be even more dismal. Like their peers in low and middle-income countries, CoTM are also experiencing a 'learning crisis' with up to 80 per cent not achieving expected literacy proficiency levels.

## **The risk of growing caseloads:**

The responsibility for supporting CoTM is falling upon a small number of countries facing developmental, political, and fiscal challenges. Regions most affected by displacement include Africa and the Middle East, which account for 43 of the 50 most fragile countries as ranked by the OECD. Pressures giving rise to CoTM are increasing due to climate change, protracted conflicts, emerging conflicts, and the social and economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. By 2030 the number of

people living in fragile situations is set to increase from 1.8 billion to 2.2 billion and by 2050, 40 per cent of the world's population below 18 years will be concentrated in African countries most vulnerable to fragility, conflict, and climate change.

## **Reaping the dividends by investing in education, inclusion and learning:**

Now more than ever is the need to find solutions to build on the potential of CoTM and reap a demographic dividend by giving them the skills and opportunities to contribute to our collective good. Contributing to youth development through education can boost economic growth and innovation. CoTM attending existing schools or programmes in their new locations, bridges cultural differences between migrant communities and host country natives while fostering new economic opportunities. It allows CoTM to become constructive members of society by adding to their communities' social and political development.

**The time for scaling up solutions is now:** UNICEF and partners have pledged to find solutions for CoTM to access education and skills development, and to open doors to meaningful livelihoods, constructive civic engagement, and participation in decision-making processes. This report contributes to efforts to find education solutions for CoTM by drawing upon the richness of UNICEF-supported programmes implemented across the globe. It identifies lessons learned for removing barriers to inclusion and ensuring that CoTM acquire the skills needed to survive and thrive. Key messages from these lessons are summarized below.

## Key lessons learned for scaling up solutions

### **Risk-informed planning can identify context-specific barriers to inclusion for CoTM underpinned by policy frameworks that remove legal and administrative barriers to inclusion, particularly for refugee and migrant children.**

For Syrian refugees in Turkey, South Sudanese refugees in Sudan, migrants in Thailand, and IDPs in Nigeria, the plans of partners and governments apply multiple evidence-based solutions to remove context-specific barriers. These efforts are often underpinned by policies that remove legal and administrative barriers for CoTM. For refugees in Sudan and Uganda and IDPs in Nigeria, legal and administrative barriers to enrolling in host community schools have been greatly reduced or removed entirely. In Turkey, inclusive government policy has supported more than 700,000 Syrian refugees in the public-school system since 2017. In Thailand, government policies allow documented and undocumented migrants to access education and other essential services, helping an estimated 163,000 migrant children enroll in national education services prior to the global pandemic.

### **Strengthening a country-level enabling environment with improved data and learning assessment tools plays a critical role in including CoTM in national education services.**

In India, strengthening government EMIS at national and subnational levels has helped to include previously 'invisible' migrants in planning and education services. In Turkey, data is used to deliver cash assistance for refugee children, showing how protection risks can be managed to support inclusion. These successes spring from conducive policies that have reduced legal barriers for CoTM, particularly migrant and refugee children. In Sudan, Kenya, and countries like Turkey that recognize prior learning, learning assessments are used to help refugee children transition to the national education system. The use of formative learning assessments in countries like Uganda, Nigeria and Sudan are also helping to enroll refugee and IDP children in appropriate learning pathways, thus enabling them to transition to the national education system. These country-level approaches can be accelerated by leveraging the accountability and norm-

setting role of inter-governmental mechanisms, as is being done via IGAD in Eastern Africa.

### **Removing financial barriers with cash transfers to households with minimal, but important, conditionalities is effective in supporting the inclusion of CoTM into national systems.**

In countries from Turkey to Jordan to Thailand, cash transfers keep CoTM in school and learning. Turkey's National Conditional Cash Transfer for Education (CCTE) programme gives families cash support every two months. The financial support provided by the CCTE programme has helped 700,000 children and their families – including some 4,300 refugee children (2,013 of them girls) – access accelerated learning since October 2021. Donor funding has kept refugee hosting countries from being overwhelmed and has been a tangible and crucial method of 'responsibility sharing' between higher and lower income countries.

### **Effective teaching and learning approaches are overcoming linguistic barriers to inclusion for CoTM in ways that promote learning and inclusion and build social cohesion.**

In Sudan, refugee-hosting schools, with teachers recruited from the refugee population, have been established to help South Sudanese and non-Arab speaking refugees integrate into the national system and engage with host communities. In Thailand, Burmese migrants are hired in MLCs to assist with teaching migrant Burmese children in their mother tongue. Nigeria's TaRL supports IDPs learning in mother tongue at early grade levels, progressively becoming proficient in English at higher grade levels. Teaching in mother tongue has allowed students across multiple countries to learn more quickly, acquire skills, and has provided them with opportunities to transition to national public schools.

### **The pandemic has taught us that digital and home-based learning solutions, when designed to accommodate socio-economic barriers, expand access to education to those who otherwise may remain excluded.**

Jordan's Learning Bridges programme uses high-tech and low-tech strategies to support refugee children's access to weekly curriculum linked activities in printed format, supplemented with access to online learning resources via QR codes.

Burkina Faso's use of radio to connect IDP students with learning demonstrates the importance of utilizing technologies that can be accessed by learners in various socio-economic conditions. In Bangladesh, caregiver-led learning at home, radio programming, community schools and a new curriculum for Rohingya learners supported learning for some 200,000 refugee and vulnerable host community children aged 4–14 years. The use of digital platforms (both on and offline), radio and television, and community-centered approaches need to be scaled up to promote learning continuity for CoTM and the resilience of education systems in relation to conflict, climate change and displacement.

**Measures that support the inclusion of CoTM include the recruitment of teachers from affected populations, teacher capacity development for language of instruction, cultural and gender sensitivity and supporting learning continuity measures.** In Sudan, the use of volunteer refugee teachers has helped refugee students transition into Sudan's national education system. In Burkina Faso, teachers from IDP populations such as Burkina Faso's female coaches, has enabled IDP children to achieve improved learning outcomes and connect with host communities. In Nigeria, the TaRL programme highlights that practical teacher training can lead to quick wins with literacy learning outcomes for children. In Antigua and Barbuda, teachers learn to conduct hazard and risk assessments and to develop school contingency plans by mapping vulnerabilities to climate change and capacities to respond to the environmental disasters giving rise to migrant and IDP populations.

**Inclusion of CoTM requires investment to expand safe learning facilities that are gender and disability sensitive and provide effective learning environments.** In Sudan, schools catering to the needs of refugee children are being built, classrooms expanded, and learning materials are being distributed to CoTM. In Somalia the UNICEF-supported Alternative Basic Education (ABE) programme built 198 gender-sensitive sanitation facilities to ensure girls from IDP and pastoralist communities had access to learning. In Thailand migrant learning centers (MLCS) are distributing gender-sensitive WASH materials to engage girls in learning. In the DRC, the Ministry of Education has

implemented several inclusive gender-responsive education projects targeting refugee and displaced girls while in South Sudan, UNICEF is working with the Ministry of Education to strengthen teacher capacities around school safety and addressing sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) of children – including children who are internally displaced.

**Remedial learning and catch-up education strategies used to overcome learning loss during the COVID-19 pandemic (e.g., condensed curriculum, use of formative assessments, extended instruction time), should become a mainstay of support for CoTM, given the disruptions to learning experienced.** In Nigeria and Uganda, formative assessments are used to tailor learning for CoTM and in Gaza, to shape remedial education programmes. Remedial learning in Gaza also focuses on core learning areas to accelerate recovering losses to learning for children.

**Increasing accountability to affected populations, while a commitment made by all humanitarian actors, when done effectively yields strong gains with improving learning outcomes for CoTM.** In Somalia's ABE programme, community leaders and parents engage with teachers to increase oversight and better support children. In Palestine, parents and caregivers are engaged in remedial learning activities for children through in-person meetings and social media.

**CoTM – and young people generally – at later stages of life will struggle to earn if they do not learn and everything should support the acquisition of foundational literacy and numeracy skills, together with transferrable skills.** Uganda's Skills for Life is a learning-to-earning programme aimed at enhancing students' foundational numeracy and literacy skills to aid in their transition from school into the workforce. Countries such as Burundi are highlighting the need to align learning content to labor market opportunities for older adolescents while retaining a focus on building foundational and transferrable skills among learners. Participation of adolescents is yielding huge benefits for positioning learning opportunities alongside young people's aspirations in countries like Burundi through student-led vocational groups using peer-

to-peer methods to guide each other in transitioning from classroom skills to earning skills.

**Education strategies supporting the mental health and well-being of CoTM will improve learning, acquisition of transferrable skills needed to reach their full potential and reduce risks of violence and exploitation.** The

Ministry of Education in the DRC provides gender-based violence and safety training for teachers and psychosocial support for refugee and displaced students. In Palestine, following the escalation of hostilities in May/June 2021 UNICEF-supported EiE responses included psychological first aid training (PFA) for teachers to address the mental health needs of children affected by both the conflict and feelings of isolation due to COVID-19 school closures.

**Approaches that build social cohesion help to overcome discrimination and bias against CoTM and support their inclusion and retention in education and learning locally.**

In Jordan, integrating sports and art activities for peace in the Nashatati life skills curriculum, coupled with community-based approaches promoting interactions with host communities, contributed to social cohesion and addressing tensions between refugee and host communities. In Iraq, UNICEF and the Ministry of Education partnered with Big Bad Boo Productions through a life skills and civic education

programme (the 1001 Nights series) build shared values and friendships with host community children and provide emotional support for displaced and other children throughout Iraq. In South Sudan, the national education curriculum is taught by refugee volunteer teachers who help refugee students build cultural dialogue and engagement with host communities.

## Next Steps – Accelerate action toward inclusion and learning for CoTM

In combination with partner calls to action to increase financing for inclusion of refugees, and partner pledges to deliver on global compacts for refugees and migration respectively, this report offers practical solutions to accelerate access to quality learning opportunities for CoTM, particularly refugee and IDP children, with IDP children continuing to comprise the greatest caseload in years to come. UNICEF will continue building on its partnerships in support of Member States to scale up these solutions and to generate collective action for CoTM. Most importantly, UNICEF will continue leveraging its programming and operational presence at country-level, further accelerating results for CoTM in education.



## SECTION 1.

# **Migration and children's education – averting a learning crisis to achieve the SDGs**

# Our collective challenge – Children on the move and education

Achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and promoting peace and security requires concerted action to expand effective solutions for marginalized children to access quality learning opportunities. This is especially true for children on the move in low-income countries, in fragile contexts and those who have been forcibly displaced, either internally or across borders, as they have fled violent conflict, disasters and environmental degradation in the context of climate change, poverty or violence. There is widespread consensus that solutions need to be rooted around strategies promoting inclusion into national education systems.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, evidence demonstrates that inclusion strategies also contribute to the economic and social development of communities where children on the move are hosted.

**Children on the move:** Collectively referred to by UNICEF as 'children on the move', the number of internally displaced children, refugees, migrants, and asylum seekers and in some cases, returnees or those re-integrating into their communities after displacement, has increased dramatically in recent years.<sup>2</sup> From 1960 to 2015 the number of migrants more than doubled from 93 million to 241 million.<sup>3</sup> Between 2010 and 2020 alone the numbers of refugee children rose by 116 per cent.<sup>4</sup> By 2021, there were an estimated 89.4 million forcibly displaced people worldwide secondary to persecution, conflict, and violence. Internally displaced persons (IDPs) account for a larger number at 55 million, while 26.4 million are refugees.<sup>5</sup> Children make up around 42 per cent (or 37.3 million) of those forcibly displaced.<sup>6</sup> Roughly 10 million refugees and 25.6 million IDPs are under the age of 18 (around half of all forcibly displaced people).<sup>7</sup> This includes an estimated 2.9 million children living in internal displacement due to natural disasters.<sup>8</sup> According to the International Labour Organization (ILO), the proportion of migrant youth workers (aged 15-24) rose to 16.8 million in 2019.<sup>9</sup> UNICEF estimates that by the end of 2021 there will be 281 million international migrants with one in five, or 20 per cent, being a 'young person' between the ages of 15–24 years.<sup>10</sup> These figures represent only the tip of the iceberg as hidden

populations of CoTM often go unreported. In many cases, data are not regularly collected and quality is often poor. Information comes from a patchwork of sources that provide little comparable global or regional data.<sup>11</sup>

## **Where children on the move are concentrated:**

The majority of migration occurs within the Global South. At the beginning of 2020, fragile and conflict-affected settings contained 23 per cent of the world's population and 76.5 per cent of all those living in extreme poverty.<sup>12</sup> Those regions most affected by forced displacement include Africa and the Middle East, which account for 43 of the top 50 fragile countries as ranked by the OECD.<sup>13</sup> The responsibility for supporting children on the move disproportionately falls upon a small number of countries, many of which face numerous developmental, political, and fiscal challenges. In 2020 Syria, Venezuela, South Sudan, Afghanistan, and Myanmar were the source of approximately 16.6 million refugees globally, with 73 per cent of refugees hosted by neighboring countries. As of 2021 Turkey, Colombia, Pakistan, Uganda and Germany are hosting around 9.5 million refugees, 36 per cent of the global total. 87 percent of all refugees are hosted in developing countries countries.<sup>14</sup> Meanwhile, Somalia, Afghanistan, Yemen, DRC, Syria, and Colombia account for 28.3 million IDPs, or 52 per cent of the global refugee total.<sup>15</sup>

**Education and children on the move:** Prior to the global COVID-19 pandemic in early 2020, UNHCR estimated that 61 per cent of refugee children were enrolled in primary school and 23 per cent of refugee adolescents in a secondary school as of 2020.<sup>16</sup> In low-income countries, the ratio was below 50 per cent in primary and just 11 per cent in secondary education. The overall result is that close to half of all refugee children – 48 per cent – remain out of school.<sup>17</sup> For IDP children in fragile and conflict-affected settings, enrollment in education can potentially be even more dismal. By 2018, fewer than 20 per cent of IDP children in Somalia were enrolled in primary education with even less enrolled in secondary education.<sup>18</sup>

While limited data is available for undocumented migrant children, they are likely to face similarly daunting obstacles in accessing education based on legal and language barriers, issues of bias, and underlying inequalities based on their status.<sup>18</sup>



Figure 1. Children on the move, current numbers tip of the iceberg

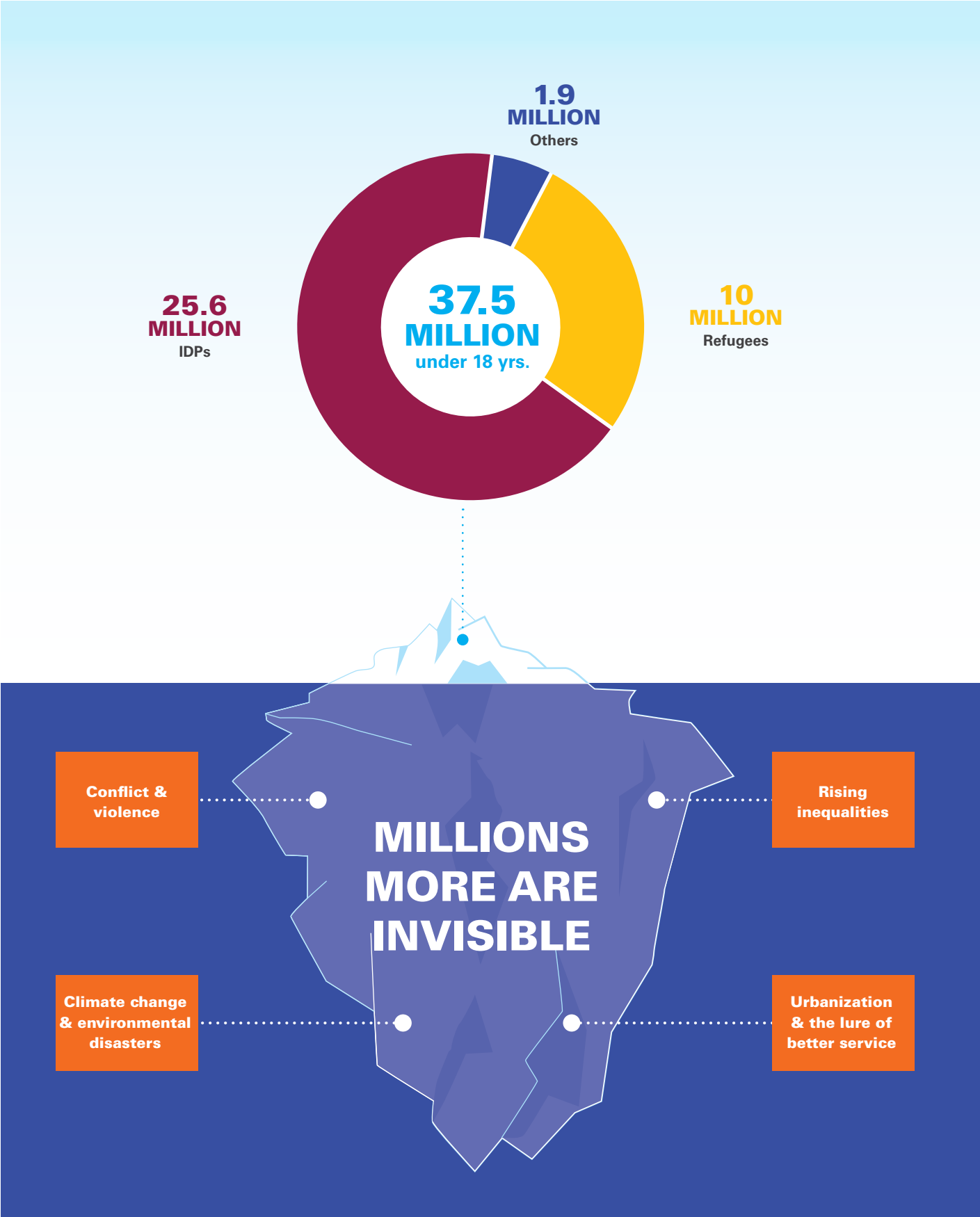
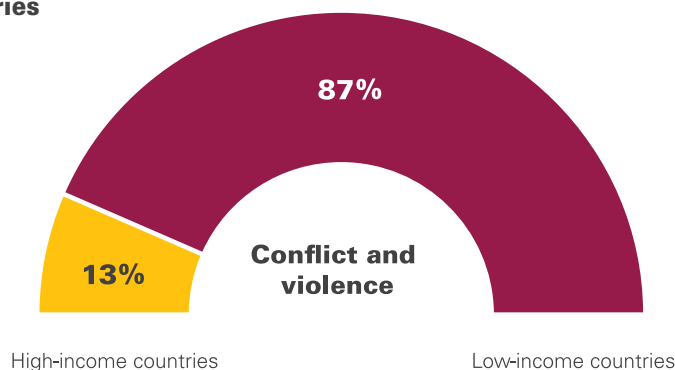


Figure 2. Children on the move, current numbers tip of the iceberg

**Only 1 in 6 refugees is hosted by high income countries**

High income countries, except Germany, are hosting disproportionately low numbers of refugees.



**Concentrated in the 43 most fragile countries**

Africa and the Middle East are the regions most affected by forced displacement. Almost three-quarters of refugees are hosted by neighboring countries

Like their peers in low and middle-income countries, CoTM are experiencing a 'learning crisis'. Recent evidence from the World Bank shows that prior to the global pandemic, 53 per cent of children in low- and middle-income countries suffered 'learning poverty' – the inability to read and understand a simple story by the end of primary school (or age 10).<sup>19</sup> In low-income country contexts, where fragility is higher, the level of 'learning poverty' can be as high as 80 per cent.<sup>20</sup> It is projected this crisis will deepen as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, with rates of learning poverty increasing by as much as 10 per cent in low income settings.<sup>21</sup> In turn, the inability of children to acquire foundational skills such as reading is undermining their 'human capital', and their ability to find employment and constructively engage with their societies later in life.<sup>22</sup> By 2030, at current rates, 420 million people in low- and middle-income countries (including those who are on the move) will not acquire basic skills at key developmental stages of childhood, and 825 million will not acquire the basic secondary-level skills needed to succeed in work and life.<sup>23</sup>

The risk of educational exclusion and the reliance on negative coping mechanisms – for example, engaging in child labor for CoTM – has only worsened with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. During its peak in 2020, some 1.57 billion 5 to 17-year-old children were affected by school closures.<sup>24</sup> The World Bank estimated that five months of school closures could result in a 25 per cent increase of children in lower secondary school failing to meet minimum learning proficiencies. Additionally, a higher proportion of children could be in learning poverty by age 10, with long term economic losses for today's

learners of approximately \$17 trillion in lost earnings over their lifetimes.<sup>25</sup> These impacts are most felt by children from marginalized groups such as children on the move already facing numerous barriers to accessing quality learning opportunities. While data remains unavailable on the potential economic losses that school closures will have on the lifelong earnings of CoTM, available data from the World Bank and OECD do show a decline of 1.7 per cent (or USD \$109 billion) in remittances sent by migrants to families in their home countries.<sup>26</sup>

**Deepening global challenges for CoTM, but hope remains:**

With the impact of climate change becoming more pronounced, and with protracted conflicts continuing unabated, new conflicts emerging and the social and economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic further weakening systems in already fragile contexts, the number of CoTM is projected to increase dramatically. According to the World Bank, by 2030 two-thirds of people living in poverty will be found in regions prone to fragility and conflict,<sup>27</sup> with those living in fragile situations increasing from 1.8 billion to 2.3 billion people.<sup>28</sup> It is estimated that by 2050, 40 per cent of the world's population younger than 18 will be concentrated across African countries vulnerable to fragility, conflict, and climate change.<sup>29</sup> Those at greatest risk will be children and young people.

Nevertheless, like all young people across the world, CoTM offer the potential to yield a 'demographic dividend' across fragile contexts where populations are relatively young, or in developed countries where populations are aging (e.g., Germany). The term

'demographic dividend' refers to the economic growth achieved by having proportionally more working-age people as a share of the population.<sup>30</sup> Capitalizing upon the potential of today's children on the move (e.g.,

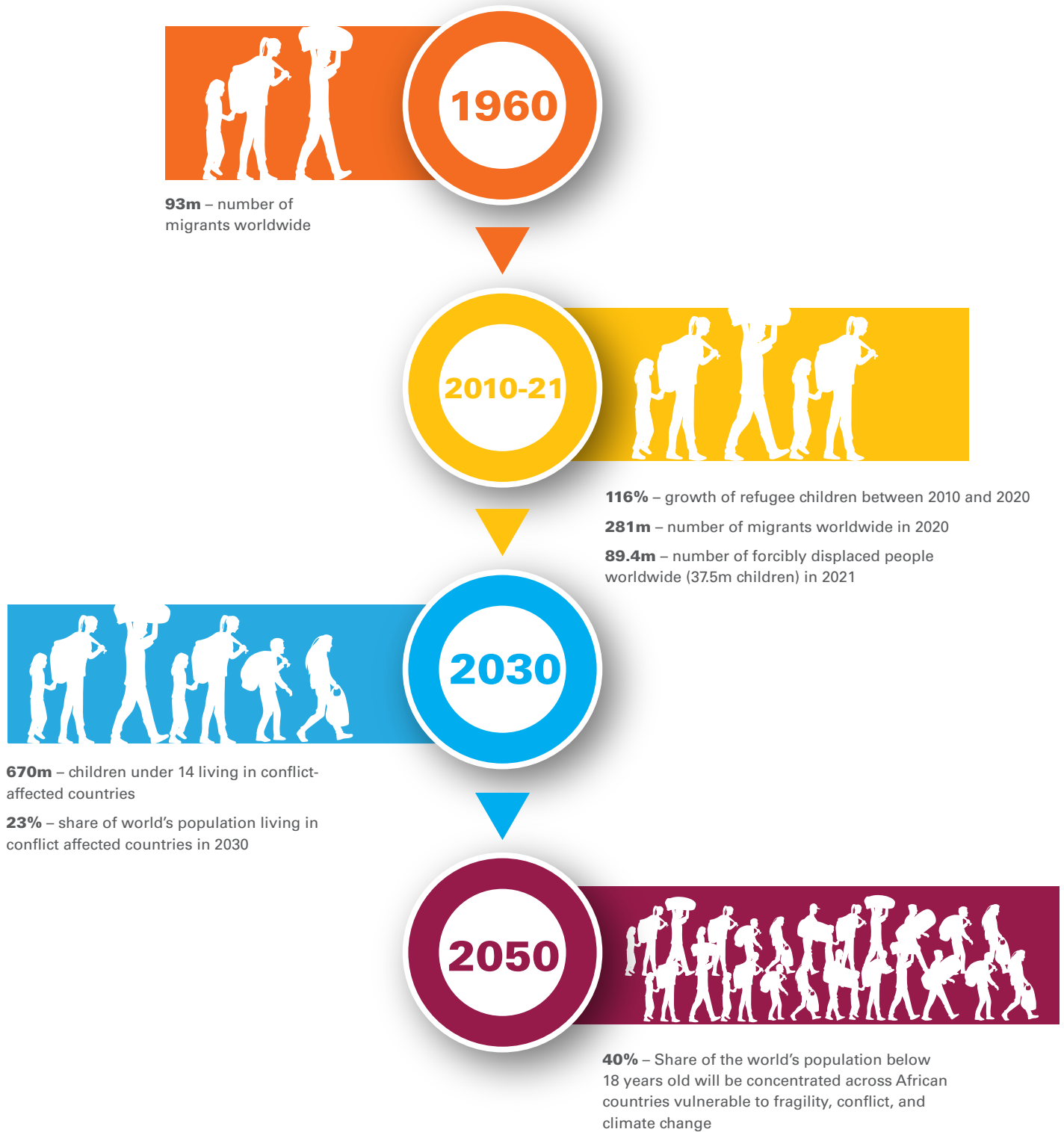
contributing to economic growth, innovation, or to the social and political development of their communities) requires investment to diversify solutions to support their education and skills development.

## Drivers of migration and forced displacement

Decisions to move are often complex, driven by an interplay of aspirations, and personal, family, cultural or economic factors – including gendered roles and responsibilities or family crises.<sup>31</sup> As of 2021, extreme weather events and conflict remained the two main drivers of displacement globally, accounting for the displacement of nearly 30 million people annually.<sup>32</sup> Other key drivers of mobility include, but are not limited to, urbanization; inequity; desire for family reunification; poverty; and aspirations of marginalized communities to access better social services, education, employment and opportunities to improve their lives and futures. The decision to migrate is rarely down to a single driver as children individually, and households collectively, weigh multiple drivers as part of their complex decision calculus.

- **Conflict and violence:** For 87.3 million displaced people in 2017, conflict, insecurity and risk of violence were major drivers of displacement with many fleeing potential persecution. By 2019 in Syria alone, more than 6 million people had fled the country to escape civil war and violence.<sup>33</sup> Of those internally displaced by 2020, 48 million moved due to conflict, roughly half of those being under the age of 18.<sup>34</sup> In 2020, 95 per cent of new conflict-related displacements worldwide occurred in countries highly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change.<sup>35</sup> Reporting from IOM further shows increases during 2021, with conditions for migrants becoming more difficult as a result of restrictions on mobility due to the COVID-19 global pandemic.<sup>36</sup>
- **Climate change and environmental disasters:** Of those people internally displaced in 2017, 18.8 million were due to environmental disasters.<sup>37</sup> By 2020, this figure had risen to 30.7 million new weather-related internal displacements, including 10 million children. It is projected that in the coming decades, climate change will be the main reason for displacement.<sup>38</sup> Countries most at risk will be those in sub-Saharan Africa, Latin America and South Asia.<sup>39</sup>
- **Rising inequalities:** Defined as the growing gap between rich and poor and increasing poverty. For example, between one-third and one-half of youths aged 15–19 years in Ethiopia, India, Peru and Vietnam migrated at least once between 2009 and 2013 in search of better livelihood opportunities.<sup>40</sup> The economic crisis in Venezuela, most felt by the poor, highlights how economic disparities can lead to cross-border movements of children.
- **Urbanization and the lure of better services:** Key factors driving internal and cross-border migration include opportunities for better quality education in urban areas, and seasonal movement within countries. For example, some 21 per cent of Thai learners indicated access to improved education as their reason for migrating. India is home to the highest number of internal and seasonal migrant children in the world, recorded at an estimated 92.9 million. In Dhaka, Bangladesh, climate change is contributing to urbanization where an estimated 70 per cent of slum-dwellers have fled increasingly frequent environmental shocks in rural areas.

Figure 3. Rapidly increasing caseloads set to grow further



## UNICEF education – Toward inclusion and learning for CoTM in national education systems

UNICEF and partners have pledged to find solutions for children on the move that will ensure them access to learning opportunities and skills development and open doors to meaningful livelihoods, constructive civic engagement and participation in decision-making processes. Efforts are increasingly focused on supporting the inclusion of children on the move into national education systems – especially those who have been forcibly displaced – in ways that will also benefit host communities and build social cohesion.

Underscoring this commitment and in support of the Global Compact for Refugees (GCR), in December 2019 UNICEF, together with partners, pledged to support the inclusion of refugees into national education systems.<sup>41</sup> This pledge was based on an emerging global consensus that supporting ‘parallel education systems’ (e.g., such as in refugee camp settings) is a decreasingly feasible solution given the protracted nature of displacement and projections that caseloads of children on the move will increase in the years to come. UNICEF has been working with partners to realize equally important global commitments as laid out in the Global Compact for Migration (GCM).<sup>42</sup> With the support of the Dutch Government and working with the World Bank, the International Finance Corporation (IFC), UNHCR, and ILO, UNICEF has been striving to improve the hosting and protection of refugees in countries in their region of origin under the Global Prospects Programme, which aims to find durable solutions for forcibly displaced populations geared towards inclusion into national systems.<sup>43</sup> More recently, UNICEF has collaborated with

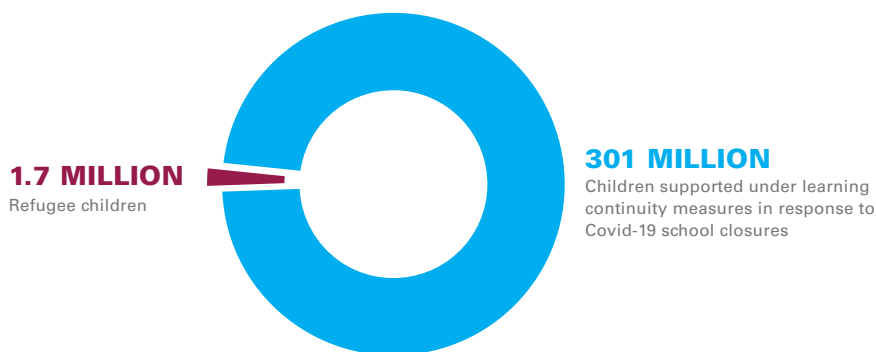
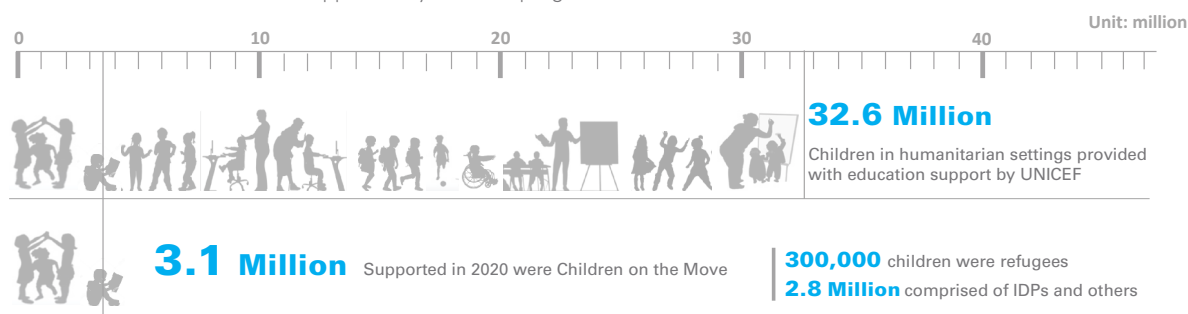
## Blueprint for Action – UNICEF and UNHCR

Piloted across 10 countries that host nearly 18 per cent of refugee children globally, the partnership aims to enroll more than 1 million refugee and host community children into education over a period of two years. Lessons will be used to strengthening inclusion approaches across all refugee hosting countries.

the International Organization for Migration (IOM) to develop technical guidance for the inclusion of migrant children into education systems and programmes and, together with UNHCR, has launched the Blueprint for Action to find solutions at scale for the inclusion of refugee children into national systems.<sup>44</sup>

Recently updated Core Commitments for Children in Humanitarian Situations (CCCs) pledge UNICEF to ensure every child, including those forcibly displaced, has access to quality learning opportunities in safe and protected environments.<sup>45</sup> At country-level, working with partners and governments, UNICEF has leveraged its organizational capacities and field presence to ensure CoTM access to learning, including places where UNICEF is a ‘service provider of last resort’. In the context of a global pandemic, that has aggravated risks for CoTM and during 2020, UNICEF supported some 32.6 million children in humanitarian situations with education support. This included 3.1 million CoTM, of which 300,000 were refugees and 2.8 million IDP children and other categories of CoTM.<sup>46</sup> An additional 301 million children were supported by UNICEF with learning continuity measures in response to COVID-19-induced school closures, which included some 1.7 million refugee children.

Figure 4. Number of children CoTM supported by UNICEF programmes in 2020



## Report focus: Inclusion and effective learning for CoTM in national education systems

This report has its genesis in efforts to find scalable solutions for the inclusion of CoTM into national education systems and primarily focuses on two categories of CoTM – IDPs and refugee children as, a) they represent particularly marginalized populations and, b) this report aims to identify solutions more applicable to these groups of children, rather than seeking to generalize solutions across all categories of migration. For children forced into years of displacement, education is arguably the best means of transforming their futures. When they are included in national education systems and learn side-by-side with host community children, the economic and social benefits are deeply experienced by all, with increased political stability and social cohesion.

This report contributes to learning agendas as set out in the Dutch-supported Prospects programme and the Blueprint for Action with UNHCR. It explores questions related to enhancing capacities to absorb CoTM into national

education systems; MHPSS and life skills-enhancing learning outcomes; strengthening social cohesion; increasing the employability of learners; and learning of approaches that will increase foundational and transferrable skills. It complements other reports produced by partners issuing 'calls to action', often highlighting persistent challenges and the need for increased education financing from domestic and donor budgets.<sup>47</sup>

This report draws upon the richness of UNICEF programming implemented with governments and local actors to identify lessons learned about removing barriers to inclusion. These can be taken to scale to accelerate the inclusion of children on the move into national education systems. Areas considered include the use of cash transfers for poor households to increase access to education; enhancing skills; teacher capacity development; strengthening data and analytics; reinforcing education systems; the use of digital platforms; and overcoming learning losses created by disruptions to learning.

Section 2 of the report summarizes key lessons learned for removing barriers to inclusion and scaling up solutions, while Section 3 presents a sample of country examples that explore how solutions were applied in practice.



## SECTION 2.

# **Lessons learned to scale up solutions for inclusion into national education systems**

Children on the move face multiple barriers to their inclusion into national education systems. These range from government recognition; inclusion in planning and budgeting processes; limited capacities of education systems to support the learning and retention of CoTM; insecurity; financial challenges; and cultural biases or discrimination.<sup>48</sup> Barriers are experienced to varying degrees for different groups based on their status, their gender, and on context-specific factors that need to be addressed concurrently to ensure CoTM access quality learning opportunities. Evidence in this report identifies several promising solutions to overcome those barriers and ensure that CoTM acquire the skills they need to thrive and survive, noting there remain additional solutions for further exploration. These solutions draw upon the country case studies presented in this report and are framed around key lessons organized thematically in relation to different barriers.

## 1. Risk-informed education sector planning

The exclusion of CoTM is often traced to the limited attention they receive in the education sector strategic plans of member states and the strategies of development actors. While CoTM bridges both humanitarian and development action, it is often relegated to the margins by both humanitarian and development actors. To this end, humanitarian actors regularly fail to prioritize education services as lifesaving. Conversely, development practitioners often allow CoTM education to slip through the cracks because they erroneously view CoTM as an element of humanitarian action only, and humanitarian action is (again, incorrectly) deprioritized. This results in weak (or absent) measures and insufficient budget allocations to support their sustainable inclusion in education to learn needed skills and competencies.

**Risk-informed planning is required to identify context-specific barriers to inclusion for CoTM, underpinned by a policy framework that removes legal and administrative barriers to inclusion, particularly for refugee and migrant populations.**

### **Risk-informed education sector planning (and programming) will help to remove multiple contextually relevant educational barriers.**

CoTM experience multiple barriers concurrently, varying in their depth and severity depending on unique political, social, cultural, historical and legal context as well as on age, gender and other vulnerabilities such as disability. For Syrian refugees in Turkey, South Sudanese refugees in Sudan, migrants in Thailand, and IDPs in Nigeria, the plans of partners and governments apply multiple solutions. These are based on evidence to support teaching and learning strategies in classrooms; expanding infrastructure; addressing trauma of displacement; creating safe learning environments; and building social cohesion with host communities to removing financial barriers at the household level. In Antigua and Barbuda, mapping available resources in schools and the local capacity to host displaced children is reducing potential disruptions to learning due to climate change risks.

### **Prioritize policies to support inclusion and remove legal and administrative barriers.**

For refugees in Sudan, migrants in Thailand, and IDPs in Nigeria, legal and administrative barriers to enrolling in host community schools are now greatly reduced or removed entirely. Since 2017 in Turkey, the government has supported more than 700,000 Syrian refugees to integrate into the public school system by removing many legal and administrative barriers. In Sudan, legal measures and official policies guarantee that most refugee children can access host community schools. In Thailand, government policies allow all children, including documented and undocumented migrants, to access education and other essential services.

**Focusing on context is more important than status.** Observed throughout country examples in this report is that CoTM (whether migrants, IDPs or refugees) face similar barriers in accessing learning. So long as rights to asylum are respected by refugee hosting countries, how CoTM are categorized is often less important than context-specific factors that underpin their exclusion from national education systems. Countries that use risk-informed approaches





Umaema, 8, practices English and Burmese words at a UNICEF supported learning centre in the Rohingya refugee camps in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh.

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to remove context-specific barriers to education do better than others at accelerating inclusion of CoTM into national education services and minimizing future disruptions to education and learning losses for children.

## 2. Enabling environment and government capacities

The inclusion of CoTM requires a conducive, enabling environment created through supportive policies and strengthened by the capacities of systems to absorb and retain learners. CoTM are sometimes required to produce birth certificates, residency papers, or learning transcripts, creating barriers to access schools, continued learning at the appropriate age level, or completing exams. Fear of deportation can add further barriers to enrolling in host community schools and to accessing other essential services, especially for refugees and migrants. Even when conducive policies exist, education systems often lack the capacity to collect information on CoTM, their numbers, their location, and their learning needs, thus undermining efforts to develop risk-informed plans and programmes to support inclusion and quality learning.

### **Strengthening the enabling environment and education system capacities underpins successful and sustainable approaches to including CoTM in national education services.**

**Reforming guidelines for EMIS can lead to CoTM being accounted for in national data and improve strategies for inclusion in national education systems.** In India, government EMIS was strengthened at national and subnational levels ensuring 'invisible' migrant children were counted and leading to the enrollment of previously out-of-school children in Uttar Pradesh. In Thailand, efforts to collect data on migrant children helped refugee and migrant children from Myanmar be included in local schools, while countries such as Turkey are using data to assist refugees to receive cash assistance – providing examples of how sensitivities and protection risks can be managed to support inclusion. These successes spring from a positive enabling environment created by governments, particularly for refugee children where residency and administrative barriers are removed.

**National education assessments tools can promote the inclusion of refugee children into the national education system.** In Turkey, Sudan, and Kenya assessments are being used to help refugee children transition to host community schools and national education systems. The use of assessments in Turkey, combined with recognition of prior learning, is further supporting inclusion of refugee learners into public schools. However, **formative assessments** have proven more effective in tailoring teaching strategies to support the learning needs of CoTM across most contexts explored in this report. In Uganda and Nigeria, formative assessments through TaRL have led to teaching approaches tailored at the right learning level for students, while in Sudan, formative assessments support refugee children to enroll in appropriate learning pathways, enabling them to transition to the national education system.

**Leveraging the accountability and norm-setting role of inter-governmental mechanisms helps to strengthen the enabling environment at national level.** For example, the IGAD partnership of Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, and Uganda is, with national use data, supporting ministries in decision-making to encourage the inclusion of refugees in national education systems

### 3. Removing financial barriers

Families of CoTM often face economic difficulties and struggle to pay hidden fees for enrolling children in learning (e.g., books, uniforms, administrative fees, etc.). Frequently CoTM supplement household incomes by engaging in seasonal agricultural labor or supporting household work.<sup>49</sup> When they are IDPs in their own countries or are refugee and migrant children, they sometimes find themselves trapped in exploitative job conditions, including forced labour, to support their families, with girls at risk of early marriage.<sup>50</sup> Economic barriers result in sporadic school attendance, lower learning achievements, and higher rates of school dropout for CoTM. With that come negative life-long impacts in terms of well-being, human capital, poverty and inequality, and a higher likelihood of engagement in child labor.

**Combined with strategies to address supply-side barriers to improving quality education, removing financial obstructions with cash transfers to households with minimal, but important, conditionalities is effective at supporting the inclusion of CoTM into national systems.**

**Cash transfers are an important safety net helping children to access education and keep them learning.** In countries such as Turkey Jordan and Thailand, survey respondents indicated that cash transfers helped keep their children in school and increased attendance, with parents using the cash transfers to buy food and school supplies. Modalities for receiving cash transfers varied (e.g., conditional cash transfer to households, student scholarships paid to households, bank transfers) but their significant features were predictability and consistency. Conditionalities for receiving assistance are effective due to requirements that tie cash transfers to school attendance and to minimal documentation to prove status/residency. Use of community outreach teams in Turkey has also been important in ensuring compliance with conditions to receive cash assistance but also in strengthening a sense of social inclusion among refugee families.

**The success of cash transfer programmes relies on donors for their viability, especially in countries hosting large refugee populations.** In several examples listed in this report, donor governments play a critical role in supporting cash assistance schemes for CoTM to access quality education. This is especially true in Turkey, which has carried the greatest responsibility for hosting Syrian refugees. The importance of donor funding in this regard cannot be understated as it has kept refugee hosting countries from being overwhelmed. Donor funding has thus been a tangible and crucial method of 'responsibility sharing' between higher and lower income countries. At the same time as financial benefits accrue for local economies through business and trade generated by refugee, IDP or migrant families, and demographic dividends begin to yield returns for local economies, the capacity of hosting governments to finance support for CoTM to receive similar assistance will increase.

## 4. Removing linguistic barriers to inclusion and learning

Language is often a learning barrier where classroom instruction does not take place in a child's mother tongue. This is often compounded for IDPs who may be required to learn in the language of other ethnic groups from within their own country, or for refugee children hosted in neighboring countries that use languages different to their own. Language of instruction can become contested when associated with identity politics; social and political inequities within conflict-affected and fragile settings where political authority may be contested; or when parents expect children to learn a dominant language for reasons of social mobility and access to economic opportunities.

**Effective strategies are being utilized to overcome linguistic barriers to inclusion for CoTM in ways that promote learning and inclusion and build social cohesion.**

**Refugee schools and migrant learning centers catering to language needs of CoTM are a bridge to integration in host community schools and promote learning.** In Sudan, refugee-hosting schools with teachers recruited from the refugee population have been established to help South Sudanese and non-Arab speaking refugees integrate into the national system and engage with host communities. In Thailand, native Burmese migrants are hired in MLCs to assist in teaching Burmese children in their mother tongue. Teaching in mother tongue has allowed students to learn more quickly, acquire skills, and transition to national public school. This is often complemented with specialized classes for refugees, to help learners become proficient in the host country's language, as in the case of Turkey and Uganda's TaRL programme. In Uganda, teaching lessons in the learners' mother tongue for the first 45 days before transitioning to English is part of the national education system through TaRL. These approaches yield multiple benefits by addressing the learning needs of CoTM while creating possibilities for transition to public school and improving social cohesion between refugee or migrant communities and host communities.

**Programmes which provide learning materials in mother tongue are more successful in achieving learning outcomes for CoTM.** Whether it is Turkey, Somalia, or Nigeria, the provision of textbooks and other learning materials in mother tongue has improved learning outcomes and inclusion into national education systems. In Uganda's TaRL programme, learning materials and assessment tools have been developed in four local languages – and two languages are commonly spoken among refugees in western Uganda. Nigeria's TaRL similarly supports IDPs learning in mother tongue at early grade levels, progressively becoming proficient in English at higher grade levels. These examples highlight how social and political tensions around language of instruction can be overcome to promote learning and inclusion.

## 5. Addressing the growing digital divide with multiple learning continuity solutions

The COVID-19 global pandemic has highlighted barriers CoTM experience in accessing digital learning solutions – also experienced by children from poorer households in low-income settings.<sup>51</sup> Forcibly displaced children are among those with the lowest access to electricity, modern communication technologies, and finances to access digital solutions. For example, UNHCR notes that refugee children are 50 per cent less likely to have access to internet-enabled phones than other groups in countries of asylum.<sup>52</sup>

**The pandemic has taught us that digital and home-based learning solutions, when designed to accommodate socio-economic barriers and challenges of children's isolation, can expand access to quality learning. The use of digital platforms (both on and offline), radio and television, and community-centered approaches needs to be augmented to promote learning continuity for CoTM and to strengthen the resilience of education systems in relation to conflict, climate change and displacement.**



**Successful programmes use a combination of physical, virtual, and technology-assisted learning solutions to reach the most marginalized CoTM.**

Jordan's Learning Bridges programme uses high-tech and low-tech strategies to support refugee children's access to weekly curriculum linked activities in printed format, supplemented with access to online learning resources via QR codes. Content was zero rated on the government's DARSAK online learning platform, with refugees provided with 10GB data monthly for learning support. Burkina Faso's use of radio to connect IDP students to learning demonstrates the importance of utilizing technologies that can be accessed by learners in various socio-economic conditions to bridge the digital divide.

**Remote learning modalities must meet the demands of the local community.**

In Uganda, printed learning packages and online resources offered through the [MoES website](#) and the [Kolibri platform](#) enable education continuity for millions of students, including CoTM, who face exclusion from education due to COVID-19. In Bangladesh, caregiver-led learning at home, radio programming, support to host community schools and piloting a new curriculum for Rohingya learners are key pillars of the education response for nearly 200,000 young students aged 4–14 years.

## 6. Recruitment and training of teachers to support learning and retention for CoTM

A common challenge faced by many countries in supporting CoTM to access quality learning opportunities is a low supply of qualified teachers with an understanding of inclusion, cultural diversity, language of instruction, and pedagogy. This is made worse by barriers to recruit teachers from IDP or refugee communities. As a result, children often lack adequate support to acquire literacy, numeracy, and transferrable skills and in some cases, to continue their learning.

**Strategies that support the inclusion of CoTM include teacher capacity development for language of instruction, cultural and gender sensitivity, and supporting learning continuity measures.**

**Recruitment and training of teachers from refugee and IDP populations helps with the inclusion of CoTM and should be reflected in the teacher training and recruitment strategies of refugee-hosting countries and for IDP-hosting communities.** In Sudan's national education system, the coupling of volunteer refugee



teachers with MoE-appointed teachers helps refugee students transition into Sudan's national education system. Refugee teachers speak the language of refugee students and share linguistic and cultural commonalities that make learning the national curriculum easier. Teachers from IDP populations, such as Burkina Faso's female coaches, enable IDP and migrant children to connect with an educational community and grow into the local education environment.

**Regular and practical in-class teacher training to strengthen teaching pedagogy rapidly improves teacher capacities to promote student learning.**

In Nigeria, successes of the TaRL program highlight that through practical teacher training, quick wins can be achieved with improved teaching quality and literacy learning outcomes for children.

**Female coaching and leadership help to overcome gender disparities for girls in migrant, IDP and refugee education settings.** In Burkina Faso, for example, a key factor contributing to success with IDP girls' education is the use of female coaches at the community level, supporting learning through radio-based programming. These locally recruited coaches are themselves often IDPs and are able to communicate with girls on key issues to overcome cultural and language barriers.

**Teacher training about climate and other hazards to education helps to reduce disruptions to learning and strengthens the capacity of schools to enroll displaced children.** For example, in Antigua and Barbuda, teachers learn to conduct hazard and risk assessments, and to develop school contingency plans by mapping vulnerabilities to the impacts of climate change and capacities to respond to the potential environmental disasters giving rise to migrant and IDP populations.

## 7. Improving capacities to absorb CoTM by expanding safe learning facilities

CoTM experience obstacles in accessing education facilities that are child, disability and gender-sensitive and which provide safe, non-violent, inclusive, and effective learning environments.<sup>53</sup> In contexts of displacement in particular, school infrastructure has been destroyed or damaged, few suitable temporary learning facilities are in place, or classroom space is not available to absorb CoTM. Classrooms can be overcrowded, with insufficient numbers of qualified teachers, a lack learning resources and materials, a lack clean water and safe hygiene facilities, or

limited electricity and access to digital networks. Travelling to schools also exposes CoTM to risks of attack or abuse, especially in areas where security remains problematic. Once in school, they can be exposed to violence and bullying made worse by discrimination and xenophobia, with girls particularly exposed to risks of SGBV.

**Inclusion of CoTM requires investment to expand safe learning facilities that are gender and disability-sensitive and which provide effective learning environments.**

**Constructing physical learning spaces with appropriate amenities ensures that CoTM will access quality education opportunities and remain in school and learning.** Whether new schools, expanding classrooms in existing schools, or building other types of learning spaces, the increased capacity of education systems to host CoTM translates into benefits for marginalized host community children, yielding dividends for everyone. For example, in Sudan the construction of schools catering specifically to the needs of refugee children, expanding classroom capacities, and distributing learning materials is increasing access to education for all children.

**Infrastructure solutions that include gender-sensitive WASH facilities and address the menstrual health needs of girls are universally relevant and should be included in all school expansion activities to keep female CoTM in education and learning.** Gender-sensitive approaches feature in virtually every country example listed in this report. In Somalia, the UNICEF-supported Alternative Basic Education (ABE) programme has constructed 198 gender-sensitive sanitation facilities to ensure girls from IDP and pastoralist communities are able to access learning opportunities. In Thailand, migrant learning centers (MLCS) distribute gender-sensitive WASH materials to engage girls to enroll and keep them learning.

**Preventing and responding to GBV and SEA should feature in all education responses for CoTM.** For example, in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Ministry of Education has implemented several inclusive gender-responsive education projects targeting refugee and displaced girls. In South Sudan, UNICEF is working with the Ministry of Education on the creation of continuous training for teachers on life skills and school safety to address sexual

exploitation and abuse (SEA) of children – including children who are internally displaced by teachers and educational personnel in UNICEF-supported schools.

## 8. Accelerated and remedial learning solutions

Disruptions to learning can lead to potentially devastating education losses for CoTM. School closures during the COVID-19 pandemic highlight the importance of addressing these risks for learners globally.<sup>54</sup> Key challenges to overcome learning losses for CoTM spring from teachers without training; a lack of resources tailoring learning strategies to learner needs; a curriculum not adapted to focus on learning priorities; and negative views among communities about remedial learning itself.

**Remedial learning and catch-up education strategies to overcome learning losses during the COVID-19 pandemic (such as focused learning, tailored strategies addressing learner needs, extended instruction time, etc.), should be applied equally for CoTM and host community children. Moreover, these strategies should become a mainstay of support for CoTM given the disruptions to learning they experience during periods of displacement and migration.**<sup>55</sup>

**Formative assessment tools play a crucial role in supporting learning across multiple contexts for CoTM.** In Nigeria and Uganda TaRL has tailored education for CoTM to improve children's learning and retention, while in Sudan, formative assessments are used to get children back on track with learning. In Palestine, these are used to tailor remedial education programming to overcome children's learning losses due to conflict and school closures.

**Remedial programmes that take a targeted approach to develop core learning competencies that are focused on literacy and numeracy yield tremendous gains for getting children back on track with learning.** For example, in Palestine, remedial education programmes in Gaza targeted children at primary school level, focusing on recovering learning losses experienced during the pandemic and the recent escalation of violence with Israel during May 2021, helping affected children return to learning.