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Education Uprooted

For every migrant, refugee and displaced child, education



Whether a migrant, refugee or internally displaced, a child is a child. And every child has the right to an education.

Yet many of the 50 million uprooted children in the world are in desperate need of education – not despite being uprooted from their homes but because they are uprooted from their homes. For without education, how will they gain knowledge and skills to rebuild their lives? How will they be able to chart a path to a more peaceful and prosperous future for themselves, their families, their communities and the world?

Finding ways to provide education for uprooted children will require funding, creativity and commitment. Together, we can, and must, find solutions so every child can go to school and learn. Children's futures – and our own – depend on it.

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1 Uprooted

Gunshots in the middle of the night signalled the start of Tamam Jany's life on the move – and the disruption of his education.

It was December 2013 and the outbreak of conflict in South Sudan drove Tamam, his parents and siblings from their Juba home to a United Nations Protection of Civilians (POC) camp for families seeking shelter from the fighting.

Though Tamam's extended family tried to find learning opportunities for him in Kenya and Uganda, the costs were prohibitive and he feared for his family's safety, so he returned to the camp. Now 15, Tamam attends classes in the camp and hopes to complete his primary education soon. Eventually, he wants to become a mechanical engineer (see page 11).

"My future may seem bleak for now, but with education, and hopefully peace in my country, a better day will come for me, for my family and for the people of my country," Tamam said.

Like Tamam, children who are uprooted from their homes lose much more than the roof over their heads. Many lose family members, friends, safety and routines.

Without an education, they risk losing their futures.

Regardless of whether they are migrants, refugees, or internally displaced, children are children. They have a right to education. And they have a right to the safety, stability and opportunity that education can provide.

However, for many millions, leaving home puts an end to their education. There is little data on migrant or internally displaced children and education, 1 but there is information on refugees:

- Refugee children are five times more likely to be out of school than other children.
- Only 50 per cent of refugee children are enrolled in primary school.

- Less than 25 per cent of refugee youth are enrolled in secondary school.
- In countries affected by conflict, girls are 2.5 times more likely to be out of school than boys.²



Children, not terms

Refugee, migrant, displaced. They are categories that have specific legal meanings that correlate to a child's status in a country.

- 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 the length of stay.
- Refugee: A person who lives outside the country of nationality and is unable to return because of persecution or fear of persecution based on race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion.
- Asylum seeker: A person who seeks refuge in a country to which they have fled because of persecution.
- Internally displaced persons: People who fled their homes – but not their countries – because of armed conflict, violence, disaster or a violation of human rights.
- Uprooted: A general, non-legal term used in this report for people who have left their place of origin for any reason. They may be migrants, refugees or internally displaced.

Source: United Nations Children's Fund, *Uprooted: The growing crisis for refugee and migrant children*, UNICEF, New York, September 2016, pp.

















Failure to provide learning opportunities for children who have been uprooted has profound consequences for individuals and nations.

Without education, children lack the skills and knowledge they need to build their adult lives, support their families and provide for their future. They are forced to the margins of society.

Without the skilled workforce and engaged citizenry that comes with high-quality education, nations falter. And the discontent that grows out of lost potential can put communities and economies at risk.

Providing learning opportunities for children who have been uprooted presents challenges. It requires overcoming obstacles driven by conflict, danger, transience, poverty, xenophobia, psychological stress, and language and cultural barriers.

The obstacles are not insurmountable.

For four years, 17-year-old Tasneem struggled to continue her education even after her family fled conflict in Syria and settled in the Za'atari Refugee Camp in Jordan. Her hard work resulted in top scores on the exam that paves the way to university studies. But the effort took dedication – from Tasneem and others (see page 18).

Children uprooted

In 2016, UNICEF issued An Agenda for Action on Children, Migration and Displacement. The six-point agenda calls on governments and world leaders to place children at the centre of policy decisions about migration. The fourth item on the agenda focuses on education and other services. It states:

Keep all refugee and migrant children learning and give them access to health and other quality services.



Agenda for Action on Children, Migration and Displacement

UNICEF calls on governments and world leaders to:

- **1.** Protect child refugees and migrants, particularly unaccompanied children, from exploitation and violence.
- **2.** End the detention of children seeking refugee status or migrating.
- **3.** Keep families together as the best way to protect children and give children legal status.
- **4.** Keep all refugee and migrant children learning and give them access to health and other quality services.
- **5.** Press for action on the underlying causes of large-scale

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