

# LEARNING WHILST MIGRATING: THE CASE FOR EDUCATION IN EMERGENCY



ISPI

ITALIAN INSTITUTE  
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## Learning Whilst Migrating: The Case for Education in Emergency

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# Introduction:

## What this work is about

International migration is often envisioned as the movement from an origin country, A, to a destination country, B. In reality, however, migration trajectories are not simple and straightforward, but much more broken-up and “turbulent” (Schapendonk 2012). A person may first decide to head one way, then stop only to migrate further after some time. The reasons why a person moves and stops are often personal, but are related to external conditions: these may be structural (e.g. demographic, economic, or socio-political trends) or more personal, and be constrained by legal, financial or practical issues. For instance, a person may lack a visa, have ended money they had saved for moving, or be unable to find help to move across borders irregularly. Overall, migration pathways are complex: they can be constituted by multiple movements, and these movements can occur over the course of a lifetime or just a few months. A person can move with their own family for a certain period, and then alone the next.

This study aims to look at what it is that **drives, diverts or deters migratory movements across borders**, in particular to shed light on the **personal factors** that shape migration decisions. To do so, we are especially interested in the impact of

the **education services in emergencies**, (especially) **in countries of transit** and how providing **education services in emergency conditions** may affect migratory decisions of those who have been forcibly displaced from their homes.

Focusing on **education in emergencies** (EIE) is important because it implies talking about one of the subsets of international migrants that are among the most vulnerable: refugees and forced migrants. This subset has been growing in size over the past years. Last June, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees estimated that in 2018 almost 71 million people had been forcibly displaced from their homes by persecution or conflict. Of these, close to 26 million had been forced to leave not only their homes, but their countries as well - the highest level ever recorded, and a sharp reversal from the post-Cold War trend that shrank the world’s refugee population from 20 to 13 million between 1990 and 2005.

What is the impact of education in emergencies on the living conditions of the forcibly displaced people in countries of transit? How does the perspective of education in emergency affect the decisions on when, where, and how to migrate further? In the following, we set out to dig deeper in this relationship.

# Personal conditions of migration

1

## 1.1. MIGRATION THRESHOLDS AND FRAGMENTED MIGRATION: AN OVERVIEW

Today, approximately 3.3% of the world's population lives outside its country of birth. Quite intuitively, migration discourse focuses on migrants, thus the people who do migrate and the determinants that push them to do so. However, this focus risks hiding a general observation: only a minority of people in the world actually migrates. The norm is in fact one of immobility **rather than mobility**: people that live under very similar conditions (income levels, living conditions, etc.) are not all going to migrate: only a part of them eventually chooses and is able to do so (M. van der Velde and T. Naerssen 2011). Martin Van der Velde and Ton van Naerssen (2011) have identified three “migration thresholds”, both physical and psychological, that a person has to overcome in order to migrate.

The **indifference threshold** is crossed when a potential migrant stops being indifferent to the idea of migrating and instead starts to see it as something that could be beneficial for its own wellbeing. This happens when the migrant is mentally ready to leave his/her *space of belonging*, i.e. the place where he/she feels at home. The factors that lead potential migrants to cross the indifference threshold vary and are hard to pin down: it is often a mix of causes, for example economic insecurity and underdevelopment, conflict and violence, human rights abuses.

Once they cross the indifference threshold, potential migrants still face the **locational and trajectory thresholds**, i.e. they have to choose where to head to, and how to get there. The decision-making process concerning where to go is largely shaped by locational objectives. These objectives tend to be universal, quite general, and usually comprise security, employment, schooling opportunities, and decent living conditions (Hagen-Zeanker and Mallet 2016). Finally, for migration to actually occur a potential migrant has to decide on more practical aspects regarding **which route to take**. Whether or not potential migrants overcome this threshold depends heavily on a series of factors, that vary from the financial capital they have available, to their social networks, etc. Usually, they also comprise the policy field, i.e. how easy it is for potential migrants to move across borders (for instance, the requirement of a visa, and how easy/hard it is to get one). All these factors can largely influence the destination choice or even completely prevent migrants from migrating.

One important thing to bear in mind is that the relation between locational and trajectory thresholds is not necessarily sequential: whilst one may plan its route based on a particular locational objective, the route that one is willing and able to take might also guide locational choices. This means that one's intended destination might change during actual movement – in some cases, even drastically.

Migrants' journeys evolve and change as they move along, and are influenced by their own "spatial evolutions" (Schapendonk 2012). Both migration trajectories, and how their perception of the world and their intended destination evolves during the journey, are not linear, from a certain origin A to a certain destination B. On the opposite, most of the time these **trajectories tend to be chaotic and fragmented**, with breaks that can last a few days, weeks, months or even years. Moreover, migrants are not physically "on the move" the whole time: trajectories comprise a mix of periods of mobility and periods of immobility. In a nutshell: the *velocity of migration* is not constant (Schapendonk 2012). With time, trajectories are becoming longer and fragmented. Whilst on the one hand new technologies increase the ability and willingness to migrate, as migrants gain knowledge about different destination possibilities, on the other always stricter border controls make migration more difficult and perilous (Collyer 2007).

Therefore, the **decision-making process of migrants is continuous and irregular**. As migrants move, they might gather new information which leads them to choose a different route for the same destination, or even a different destination altogether. As time passes, other factors may contribute to the decision to where to head next, and how: for example, an area may become too dangerous as a consequence of a new conflict, or new laws criminalising or facilitating migration may be enacted. Furthermore, during long, fragmented journeys migrants do not only engage with changing circumstances but also changing aspirations. Migrants may change their mind about where to head to, or whether they want to move forward after having reached a certain place. Gadi BenEzer and Roger Zetter (2015) highlight the formative experience of the journey: migrants' **aspirations evolve** with the experience of the

migrants themselves, as they move or as they stay. Along the trajectory migrants thus face the three migration thresholds multiple times, as the journey changes and evolves.

## 1.2 DIFFERENT PEOPLE RESPOND IN DIFFERENT WAYS

It is essential to acknowledge that how, why and what decisions migrants take vary from person to person, and not all people affected by similar circumstances respond in the same way. Too often, the personal aspects of migration aren't taken enough into consideration. As seen, chance is an essential aspect of migrant journeys, but migrants' responses to chance are key as well. These depend both on the social environment that surrounds them and their personal characteristics (Gladkova and Mazzucato 2015).

In particular, when analysing Eritreans in Ethiopia, Mallett et al. (2017) have identified **three types of "movers"**: rapid movers (those who move on immediately, and tend not to settle in one place); immobile movers (those who aspire for onward movement, but cannot currently achieve it); and settled (those who do not aspire to move on). **Rapid movers** have crossed the indifference threshold and manage to cross the locational and trajectory thresholds within days or weeks of their arrival. **Immobile movers** have also crossed the indifference threshold, and often also have a relatively clear idea of where they want to go (locational threshold). However, due to financial costs or the likelihood of physical danger, they have not managed to overcome the trajectory threshold. Finally, **settled movers** are those who might feel indifferent to moving on (for instance, because they are aware of the enormity it would entail) and believe the risks of the journey are not worth the movement. While these three are stylised models and there are no distinct boundaries between them, they are useful nonetheless

to envision how circumstances and **policy interventions can mean different things to different people.**

In the following, we focus on one specific case of “policy intervention”: **education in emergency (EIE).** Providing education services to people living in precarious situations after having fled their homes is increasingly recognised as crucial by the development community at large. Nonetheless, the potential impact of EIE on migration itself is seldom explored in the literature. Immobile movers might finally cross (or not cross) a movement threshold due to additional schooling and its different social, personal and psychological effects. Rapid movers might decide to stop in a location where EIE services are provided for longer. And settled movers might be able to integrate better into host societies.

We therefore ask: what role does education play in migrants’ decision-making process? Remembering that migrants are on the move but so too are their aspirations, what might change when they are subject to EIE interventions?

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> As written by J. Schapendonk (2012), “the spatial evolution of a trajectory influences the continuation of the same trajectory. Being ‘here’ might evoke the longing to reach ‘there,’ and once one has arrived ‘there,’ another ‘there’ might emerge – or the aspiration to return ‘here’ might become prominent again”.

<sup>2</sup> Many of the migrants reaching Italy between 2013 and 2016 were rapid movers, travelling fast across Italy to reach its northern cities (Milan, in particular) and catching every chance available for the next onward movement towards other European countries such as Germany, France, Sweden, Austria, or Switzerland.

## 2

# Education in emergencies

## 2.1 DISPLACEMENT AND ACCESS TO EDUCATION

Education in emergency (EIE) occurs when **children lack access to their national education system due to man-made crises or natural disasters** (Sinclair 2001). In particular, among the literature emergencies are classified into three categories: **natural disasters, conflicts and silent/chronic emergencies** such as HIV/AIDS and extreme poverty (M.J. Pigozzi 1999). There is also a fourth category, complex emergencies, which combines the three emergencies mentioned above. Depending on their type, scale, and phase, emergencies restrict or deny access to education (Nicolai et al. 2015). They do this for a variety of reasons, that range from lawlessness/disruption of systems, destruction of infrastructure, or redirection of resources to forced displacement, i.e. children and youth forced to leave their school to move somewhere else.

Given our research question on the role of EIE on migration, especially on those who already moved due to emergencies themselves, our focus will be on **forcibly displaced people**. Today, **the number of displaced people is rising sharply**, reaching in 2018 an unprecedented 70.8 million displaced, with 25.9 million refugees among them (UNHCR 2019a).

The topic of displacement and education is extremely vast and context-specific: access to education for a refugee in one place might be

completely different for a refugee in another place depending on a variety of factors, most generally whether it happens in a **camp or non-camp setting**, and whether it takes place **in a developing country or not**. Overall, however, only 16% of refugees today reside in developed regions, whilst one third lives in least developed countries. Moreover, 4 in 5 refugees live in countries neighbouring their countries of origin, thus close to the emergency that has led them to leave and at a high risk of contagion. Furthermore, **half of the refugee population is under the age of 18**, up from 41% in 2009 (UNHCR 2019a). Across 35 crisis-affected countries, education has been disrupted for **75 million children** between the ages 3 to 18 (Nicolai et al. 2016). In the face of the scale of this problem, **only 63%** of refugee children attend primary school and **only 24%** of refugee children attend secondary school (UNHCR 2019c). That is why EIE projects are extremely significant, and even more so today.

## 2.2 EDUCATION IN AN EMERGENCY CONTEXT

EIE is a **catch-all term** that we use to indicate both the immediate and ongoing nature of the challenge (Nicolai et al. 2015). Its application thus develops and transforms with time. UNHCR (2015) divides EIE into two main phases: a **first immediate response** where children can stay in informal child-friendly spaces, and a second phase of **transition**



**from an informal education system to a formal one.** Initially, trained community members, teachers and staff protection offer recreational and basic educational activities, as well as life skills training. Once the early response phase has passed, usually after a few months, there is a shift to formal schooling. Thus, children follow a formal programme and receive official certifications that allow them to proceed to further education/work.

In general, it is encouraged that refugees gain **access to the national systems of host countries.** Whilst home curricula can be followed at first, it is discouraged to extend it into the stabilisation stage of EIE. Out-of-school children should access **accelerated learning programmes** that allow them to catch up the classes they have lost and, once completed, be integrated into formal schooling. **Language acquisition** is an essential part of EIE, as refugees might not know the language of the host country, an essential requirement for entering formal schooling of the country but also living and adjusting to the new context. Finally, focus must be given both to primary and **secondary education**, both targets of the SDGs, and it is important not to underestimate the latter.

In the last few years, the **role of technology** (and information technology, IT, in particular) has been gaining ground in the field of EIE. Its characteristics and application vary greatly according to the context it is applied in. Technology in EIE counts on different types of tools that range from handset devices typically used in formal and informal settings, to portable hardware suitable for classrooms (Joynes and James 2018). IT can thus be used to either enhance or create learning environments, and can also blend formal and informal education in situations where schooling often gets disrupted. Furthermore, technology helps bridge the gap between refugees and forcibly displaced children and host students associated with trauma,

language barriers and having been out of school for some time.

In general, technology interventions to support education for refugees can be divided into three main categories: **formal mobile learning** in classrooms, **non-formal mobile learning** in education settings and **location-independent mobile content** and tutoring (UNESCO 2018). One of the most well-known examples of the application of technology in EIE is the Instant Network School programme set up by UNHCR and Vodafone in Kenya, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Tanzania and South Sudan. The programme facilitates formal schooling by providing IT devices that connect students to educational online resources and offers training to students and teachers. First evaluations of the programme indicate an increase in enrollment and retention levels.

Technology applications in non-formal schooling in education centres also relies on onsite devices but rather than counterbalancing a lack of resources it acts as a temporary bridge to formal schooling, keeping children into education until they can get back to formal schooling. For example, the E-learning Sudan project allows children aged 7 to 9 to use solar-powered tablets for 45 minutes a day to practice education mathematical games. Evaluations show that children's mathematical skills have improved significantly.

The use of technology is instead rarer and also less evaluated in location-independent mobile-learning projects. The only example identified by UNESCO (2018) is Eneza's Short Message Service Shupavu291. This project, set up by UNHCR, Eneza Education, Lutheran World Federation and the Xavier Project, supports education in Kenya and Ghana, reaching 5 and 1 million users respectively. Services are mainly delivered via SMS and consist in lessons based on the host country's curriculum, the possibility to send live

questions to teachers and access to Wikipedia (Eneza Education 2019). The bring-your-own-device approach is helpful in upscaling efforts, however, the depth of the content taught is limited in comparison to formal classes.

Whilst EIE efforts concentrate on primary and secondary education, the use of technology to improve **access to higher education** for refugees and forcibly displaced people has been gaining ground. Tertiary education is an important investment for the future of refugees, however, only 3% of refugees are enrolled in higher education classes (UNHCR 2019c). In this case, IT applications differ from typical use in EIE, and is more similar to location-independent mobile learning projects. Higher education projects in fact are much less dependent on formal learning in classrooms, as students are older and are more independent, and can thus rely on universities' already existing online platforms and technologies. In Kenya's Dadaab refugee camp, one of the only seven refugees out of 200,000 people enrolled in a master's degree manages to study at Canada's York University thanks to the computer lab where he has access to an online learning platform (UNHCR 2019c). The course is part of the Connected Learning in Crisis Consortium, chaired by UNHCR and University of Geneva, which allows more than 12,000 students to have access to higher education courses (UNHCR 2019c).

The application of technology to EIE carries with it a variety of opportunities and plays an important role in increasing access to education for all displaced children. Nonetheless, it is important for it to act as a support to schooling and not replace it, as evidence shows substituting teachers with technology is often associated with diminishing learning outcomes (M. Tauson and L. Stannard 2018). To do this, it is important that teachers are trained accordingly and that education programmes offered with technology are linked to the national curricula of host countries (UNESCO

2019). Furthermore, applying technology to EIE has its costs, and interventions must consider the long-term feasibility of projects, for example taking into account maintenance costs. It is important that technology, humanitarian and education actors bear in mind the challenges and objectives associated with the application of technology in EIE for the product of their coordination to be successful (UNESCO 2019).

### 2.3 EDUCATION IN EMERGENCY: MULTIPLE RATIONALES

The activation of EIE programmes and their prioritisation is supported by a variety of **rationales**. First of all, it is **a way to protect children**, both by giving them access to a safe space and by teaching them skills that help them cope with the new circumstances that surround them and their related risks. For example, education can be an alternative to child labour or even being coopted into regular or irregular armed forces, and also has significant consequences in relation to female access to school and protection. In particular, by having the possibility to study in safe spaces, girls are less likely to be forced into early marriage and pregnancy (UNHCR 2019c). According to UNESCO (2013), if all girls completed primary school, child marriage would fall by 14%, and if they all finished secondary school, it would drop by 64%. Second, EIE offers **psychological help** to children in emergencies who have experienced traumatic situations. In fact, education is a way to give children a sense of normality and the possibility to engage with their peers. Third, support for EIE can derive also from **a more "economic" reasoning**: education is an essential determinant of development as it preserves or boosts human capital, a rationale reflected in the SDGs. Finally, key support for EIE is based upon the delineation of **education as an inalienable right** (as sanctioned also

by the 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child, ratified by all UN countries except the United States).

Arguments in favour of the prioritisation of EIE inevitably put it in comparison with other interventions, opening up questions concerning the **hierarchy of policies** that should be implemented. Is the right to education more important than other rights? In emergency contexts, staff is often scarce: is it correct for it to focus on education? Similarly, to what extent should limited funding be allocated to EIE? In emergencies, the allocation of funding and resources requires **careful programming**: especially when underfunded, it is normal for initial interventions to focus on food security and protection and consider instead **education as a mid-to-long term objective**. However, attention must be paid to the extent to which EIE is postponed. The reason is at least twofold: first, as mentioned above, EIE policies are significant also in the initial response to emergencies; and second, the more time passes from the onset of an emergency, the more time is wasted for children that should be in education.

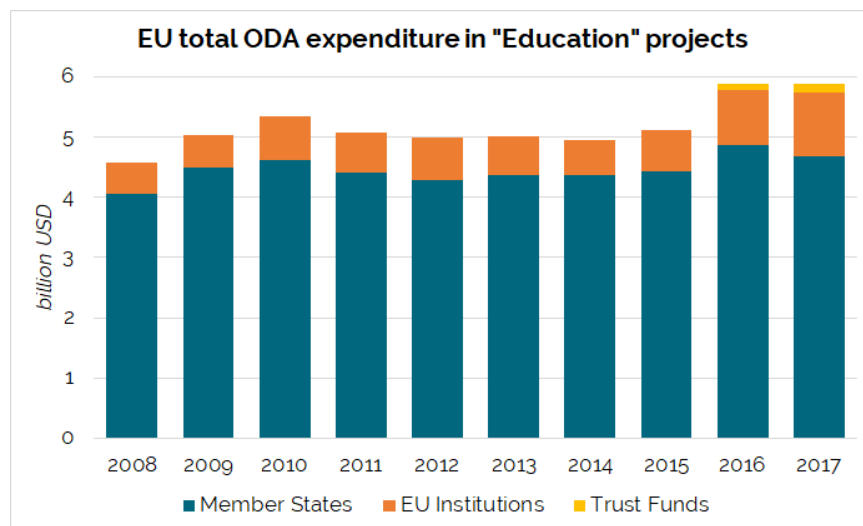
Alongside careful considerations on timing and resources, there is also the issue of how to fund EIE actions. In general, there are **four main sources** of funding for EIE projects, and these are: (1) domestic public spending, and (2) private household expenditure, (3) humanitarian aid, (4) development aid (Nicolai et al. 2015). The first two income streams can be relied upon only when a country is willing and able to

face an emergency by allocating some of its public funds to respond to it. Often times, this is unlikely because emergencies affect disproportionately more poor and fragile countries, who usually have little to no budgetary leeway and need to rely on external aid. The same applies to private households, who tend to be poor and – especially if they cross an international border – might have moved leaving what little property and savings they had behind. The majority of EIE funding worldwide therefore **comes from development funds**: among the 8 Humanitarian Response Plans in protracted crises out of 16 launched by UNOCHA in 2013, 8% of education was funded with humanitarian aid, and the remaining 92% with development aid (UNESCO 2015). Currently, funding for education is not sufficient to cover the **education gap**. The latest figures show that, across 35 crisis-affected countries, more than 75 million children aged between 3 and 18 are in need of an education. This equals to a funding gap of \$8.5 billion, \$113 per child per year (Nicolai et al. 2016). As a response to the funding gap and in recognition of the importance of access to education for all children, in 2016, during the World Humanitarian Summit, international humanitarian and development aid actors founded the **Education Cannot Wait Fund (ECW)**. The fund allows governments, multilateral institutions and the private sector to finance EIE projects, with the possibility to support both first emergency actions and longer-term programmes.

## HOW THE EUROPEAN UNION FUNDS EIE

In the last few years, EU attention towards EIE has increased greatly. Most recently, in May 2019, Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management Christos Stylianides announced new funding for EIE together with the launch of the social media campaign #RaiseYourPencil for #School4All<sup>3</sup>.

Within the EU, **humanitarian and development assistance are organisationally separated**. EIE policies draw from both humanitarian assistance and development funds. On the **humanitarian side**, the EU has set itself a 10% target for EIE-related projects in 2019, which is within reach, would represent a tenfold increase from 1% only four years before, and is well over the global target of 4%. In absolute terms, this would entail an increase from 13 million euros to almost 290 million euros. Moreover, this sum only refers to humanitarian assistance funds managed by the European Commission (i.e., the “multilateral channel”).



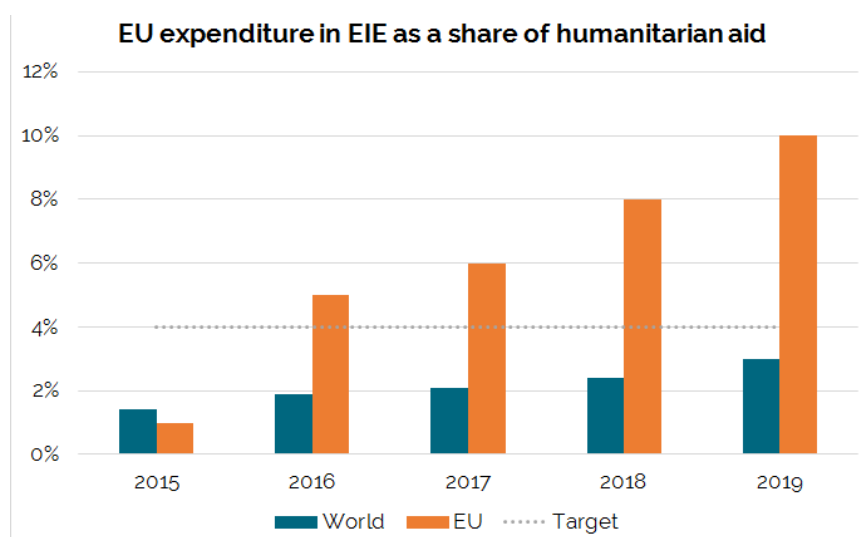
Data: EU Aid explorer

Humanitarian aid is just a small part of **total official development assistance** (ODA), which in turn is dominated by development assistance itself. Overall ODA figures from the EU (both multilateral and from the 28 Member States) show that **EU expenditure on education items went up by 28%**, from USD 4.6 to 5.9 billion between 2008 and 2017 (OECD DAC data). However, over the same period total EU ODA almost doubled, from USD 43 to 85 billion. This means that the proportion of ODA allocated by the EU and its Member States to education **fell from 11% to 7%** over a decade. This means that, while the EU as a whole remains the top donor worldwide, the EU has decided to invest more heavily in other development and humanitarian areas.

What will happen in the foreseeable future? The **seven-year financial programming cycle** of the EU (Multiannual Financial Framework, or MFF) is coming to an end in December 2020, and in May 2018 the European Commission has put forward its **proposals**

for the next MFF, covering the years 2021-2027. These proposals see **spending for humanitarian aid** going up by 20%, from 8.5 billion to 11 billion euros for the seven-year period. Also, **development and neighbourhood spending** are set to increase by 30% to almost €90 billion. These funds will mostly be managed through a new instrument, the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI). **It is not clear** how much of the allocated financial resources the EU is aiming to reserve for EIE-related projects, and anyway the shift to a novel instrument will make it hard at first to assess changes. However, the Commission proposal is to divide actions into **three pillars**, the third of which is the “rapid response pillar”. While just €4 billion have been allocated there, through this pillar the Commission aims to **strengthen the link between humanitarian assistance and development**, by providing more flexible funds when needed. This could be **one of the best avenues to push for EIE projects**, in a context of protracted crises that blurs the lines between development and humanitarian assistance.

In an evaluation of DG ECHO’s EIE actions during the years 2008-2015, ICF authors Wilkinson et al. (2016) highlight the difficulties encountered in achieving sustainability of the actions it implemented. They identify as particularly problematic the scarce level of interaction between the various DGs in charge (in particular DG ECHO, DG DEVCO and DG NEAR), a division that reflects the divide especially pronounced in the EU between humanitarian and development assistance. Once ECHO actions come to an end, missing exit strategies and missing plans to carry them on mean that Linking Relief, Rehabilitation and Development (LRRD) depends heavily on the willingness of host governments or development donors. Further than the missing coordination, also the length of ECHO actions themselves is not deemed appropriate: whilst actions of the Children of Peace initiative (regarding access to education for children affected by conflicts) increased from 12 to 18 months, it is still limited time period to achieve sustainable results (Wilkinson et al. 2016). These considerations are particularly problematic in a context of protracted crises.



Data: UNOCHA Financial tracking services, European Commission

#### 2.4 PROTRACTED CRISES, EIE, AND ONWARD MIGRATION

During the last few years, the **average length of emergencies** has been on the rise: the average length of Humanitarian Response Appeals (HRPs) has increased from 5.2 years in 2014 to 9.3 years in 2018 (UNOCHA 2019). As crises become always more protracted, the forceful displacement of people also increases. In 2018, 15.9 million refugees, or more than 3 in 4 refugees globally, were in protracted refugee situations. Of these, 5.8 million, or more than 1 in 4, were in a protracted crisis that lasted for 20 years or more (UNHCR 2019a). In such a context where **many grow up/are born in situations of emergency**, the provision of education is all the more important.

The provision of education for refugees, especially in protracted crises, is not only important for the development, economic, security and human rights rationales mentioned above, but also when considering the **potential impact it can have on irregular migration**. To evaluate this impact, we turn back to the three (broad and only hypothetically distinctive) types of movers identified in section 1.2.

**EIE policies can have an effect on all three groups** (rapid, immobile and settled movers), and this effect can be both direct and indirect. EIE can affect their decisions on whether to continue/stay/go back, thus increasing the likelihood that a person shifts from one type of mover category to the other – *i.e. change his/her position in relation to the various thresholds*. If, along with Cristina Ramos (2018), we define **onward migration** as “a reaction to the first migratory experience”, then including education into the picture will have an effect on the experience and thus inevitably impact the reaction to it.

The impact of EIE policies on irregular migration can **range from deterrence to encouragement**. First of all, access to safe

spaces can motivate forcibly displaced people (especially young migrants or families with children) to stay in the host country, especially considering they have moved because of a crisis. Would-be rapid movers, for example, might instead **decide to stop** in a place where they know they are protected. The prospect (and then with time the actual policy) of having access to the formal school system of the host country and from there, possibly, its labour market can further induce would-be rapid or immobile movers not to move further. Furthermore, EIE can increase the family’s attachment to the host country’s culture, through language acquisition and by learning about the living context, also encouraging migrants to stay.

Further than deterring onward movement, EIE can also **encourage migrants to move** either forward or to return to their home countries. On the one hand, as mentioned above, as education levels increase with access to formal schooling, aspirations change. Generally, displacement reduces access to education, but EIE might actually counterbalance this trend and its consequences. Data shows that **education increases the probability of migrating** as the more educated are generally better able to gather information, respond to economic opportunities, utilize transferable skills and finance emigration (UNESCO 2019). Therefore, EIE policies and the process of integrating displaced people into formal schooling might eventually increase the latter’s aspirations to migrate and, for instance, settled movers who initially did not aspire to move further might change their mind.

Also, when looking at the potential encouraging effect of education on onward movement, an interesting connection can be made regarding the topic of resettlements. Richard Mallett et al. (2017) findings regarding Eritreans in Ethiopia show that **resettlement can slow down irregular migration** for a limited time period if migrants believe there

is an actual possibility of being resettled. And in this regard, EIE may increase the likelihood to be resettled, as countries tend to open up spots for resettlement that follow a number of criteria. As resettlement moves from ethical rationales (i.e., selecting persons among the most vulnerable) towards more economic rationales, better educated forcibly displaced persons should benefit from EIE actions and be more likely to be resettled.

On the other hand, further than encouraging migrants to move on, EIE could have an **impact on returns** of migrants to their countries of origin. This impact, however, is likely to heavily depend on the politics and technical decisions surrounding the effective implementation of EIE. On the one hand, it may depend on how EIE actions are carried out, for instance on the choice of teachers, or on the curriculum offered by EIE projects: offering the host country's curriculum should increase the likelihood to stay, while teaching activities that are more connected with the country of origin could encourage people to go back. On the other hand, the effect of EIE interventions is also affected by a number of

other policies chosen by the host country: in particular, a more “liberal” approach to the access to the host country's education system and, eventually, its labour market should increase the likelihood of migrants to settle, while a more constrained environment will most likely encourage them to either move on, or go back to their origin countries.

## NOTES

1 The term forcibly displaced people includes internally displaced people (IDPs - persons forced to flee from their home, but who did not leave their country of origin), and refugees and asylum seekers (persons who were forced to leave their homes, and also their countries).

2 <https://www.educationcannotwait.org/>

3 [https://ec.europa.eu/echo/resources-campaigns/campaigns/raiseyourpencil\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/echo/resources-campaigns/campaigns/raiseyourpencil_en)

4 Protracted refugee situations are defined by UNHCR as those where at least 25,000 refugees are in exile for 5 years or more.

## EIE IN TRANSIT COUNTRIES: THE CASE OF NIGER

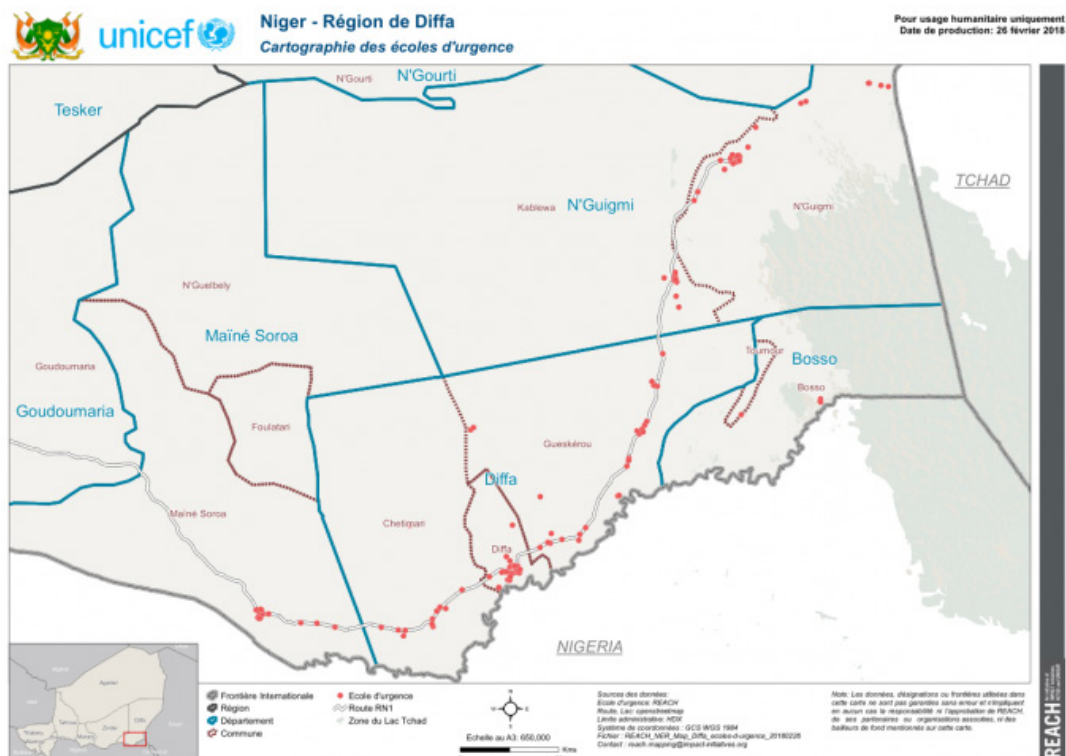
Since 2013, conflict and insecurity in the Lake Chad region has led to displacement, and whilst there have been signs of improvement between 2017 and 2018, a new upsurge of violence hit the area at the end of 2018. The **Diffa region** in south-east Niger, at the border with Nigeria, has been particularly affected by Boko Haram activities: in September 2019 it counted approximately 120,000 refugees, all from Nigeria, representing 55% of the total refugee population in the country, and almost 110,000 IDPs (UNHCR 2019b).

Due to conflict, education in the region has been heavily affected. In particular, 30 schools have been closed throughout 2018 (151 schools were closed in 2015-early 2016), 44 faced temporary suspensions during the school year and 150 have been moved and are operating in temporary locations. The children affected are many: 114,300 children, 80% of whom are either IDPs or refugees. They do not have access to education, and almost 144,000 internally displaced children and refugees are in need of education assistance (ACAPS 2019).

Consequently, education in the region very much depends on EIE interventions. To understand to what extent, if any, EIE has an impact on onward movement in the Diffa region ad-hoc evaluations are meant to be set up. Nonetheless, it can be reasonably assumed that sponsoring education in the region facilitates migrant families to settle. Data collected at the end of 2017 shows that 82% of displaced persons in the region intended to remain there and of the remaining 18%, the vast majority (92%) wished to return to their country of origin (IOM Niger 2018). In fact, contrary to other regions in the country, for example the one surrounding the city of Niamey, the Diffa region is not an area of transit for migrants aiming north, and, as mentioned, is instead characterized by Nigerian immigration who often settles.

The case study of the Diffa region thus highlights the difficulties that arise in applying EIE in countries or areas neighbouring the regions of origin of migrants, often at a high risk of contagion, but also its relevance. Between November 2017 and February 2018, during the new rise in violence in the Lake Chad basin, the proportion of children attending emergency schools increased from 57% to 62% (UNICEF and REACH 2018).

Due to the emergency, the Diffa Regional Directorate for Primary Education (DREP) together with UNICEF both set up and transformed existing schools into emergency schools, counting a total of **191 emergency schools** in the area by February 2018. All the 191 emergency schools in the region are primary schools, complementing 42 kindergartens. 29% of students are IDPs, 24% refugees, 38% natives and 9% returnees. Notwithstanding humanitarian efforts, the EIE gap in the Diffa region is still very pronounced: on average, there are 40 students per teacher, thus a lack of staff, and, in their research, UNICEF and REACH (2018) indicate the need of 150 additional classes, 950 latrines, 140 water points, 500 washing facilities, 6,340 desks, 80 canteens.





# Conclusion and policy recommendations

## **EIE for forcibly displaced people is a challenge, but is also an essential service.**

Forcibly displaced populations are often on the move, and tend to perceive themselves as only temporarily in a place that is not home. However, as shown, EIE interventions have a crucial importance in the initial response to emergencies, contributing to strengthen the protection and support of those most vulnerable. Also, with the increase in the number of protracted crises, somewhat “stable” living contexts tend to rise as well as forced migrants settle in. And as the period spent in a crisis situation lengthens, EIE interventions become all the more crucial by supporting the specific needs of those on the move. It is not only a matter of education for all, which in itself could anyway be a worthy goal to achieve. In addition, EIE services help to build resilience and peace, laying the foundations to social cohesion and leaving no-one behind, therefore contributing to the Sustainable Development Goal 4 (“Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all”) in those places where it is most in jeopardy.

Therefore, the following recommendations are proposed to governments, multilateral institutions, donors, and the private sector whom we call on to:

1. **Prioritise education on the humanitarian agenda.** Education should be included in response design from the early stages of

a crisis, supporting inclusive education delivery for refugee and host populations to mitigate the effects of these crises, especially on children and young adults. Education in emergency has an impact in terms of protection by providing physical and psychological support, as well as safe spaces for children and the youth. Education for all those affected by emergencies should be guaranteed and provided as a fundamental part of the humanitarian package of interventions and solutions and strictly linked to the ones often delivered in emergencies as shelter, nutrition, water and sanitation, and social protection.

2. **Invest in education of migrants and displaced people in protracted crises as bridging humanitarian and development aid.** EIE comprises both immediate actions in emergency situations and more long-term policies, thus requiring to adjust aid modalities at different phases, as the crisis develops and especially as it becomes protracted and people on the move settle (even if not permanently). Providing support and safe spaces for children and their families helps to mitigate the effects of the conflict by offering support, contributing to the physical and psychological safety of children and protecting them from attack, abuse and exploitation. Increasing new investments in inclusive education systems at times

of man-made crises builds resilience and social cohesion between displaced people and host communities, supports peace-building, and it is fundamental to overcome the negative impact caused by emergencies that affect the communities. EIE becomes a milestone in the path towards the collective outcomes set out by the Agenda for Humanity and to fulfil the “New Way of Working” initiative commitment since 2016.

3. **Scale up the proportion of spending on EIE interventions.**

Funding for EIE interventions remains limited, despite having grown considerably over the past few decades especially in EU programmes. Reflections regarding the limited funding available for EIE are important, as the impact these policies can have both on the education of people on the move and on their migration decision-making process can only be assessed if projects are well designed and sufficient funding is available to carry out the expected interventions. Moreover, protracted crises complicate the scenario: the funding available for single crisis situations tends to shrink over time while, as shown, the need for EIE programmes rises with time. It is urgent to address the financial gap for education in crises, by catalysing predictable multiyear funding and pooling together resources allocated to humanitarian and development interventions, for example:

- by funding the Education Cannot Wait (ECW) global fund, therefore contributing to close the \$8.5 billion gap, in order to reach 75 million children and youth in crisis-affected countries by

2030. Allocating firstly and urgently the \$3.7 billion required to fulfil the goal of 8 million children and youth supported by delivering of quality education by 2021 (which was matched only at 16% by pledges as of 22 January 2020);

- ensuring that the new MFF 2021-27 becomes more flexible in delivering/allocating funds in support for EIE interventions, by strengthening the link between humanitarian assistance and development, and by envisaging an adequate spending target for EIE objectives in the new Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI).
4. **Improve the data collection system and invest in research.** Data gaps hinder decision makers from assessing issues and responding effectively. Knowledge on EIE needs and interventions are a case in point. In order to develop needs assessment capacity effectively, as well as to plan and budget accordingly, it is necessary to:
- collect systematic data on the education status of migrants and refugees, in a consistent way across time and localities;
  - develop data monitoring systems that are better able to gather intelligence on refugees, and especially IDPs who are not in refugee camps where the data tend to be collected, by combining diverse and alternative data sources;
  - foster rigorous and periodic research to identify relevant and holistic solutions needed to ensure sustainable programmes that are tailor-made to the educational needs of these children and young adults.

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