

LEARN: AUGUST 2017 -- BACK-TO-SCHOOL EDITION

As we prepare to send our own children back to school, we take a moment to learn about the refugees around the world whose access to education has been interrupted by war, displacement, and disasters.

“Refugees have skills, ideas, hopes and dreams... They are also tough, resilient and creative, with the energy and drive to shape their own destinies, given the chance.”

UN High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi

Why is it important to worry about the education of refugees?

The returns on investing in education are immense and far-reaching. Quality education:

- gives children a place of safety;
- can reduce child marriage, child labor, exploitative and dangerous work, and teenage pregnancy
- gives children the opportunity to make friends and find mentors
- provides skills for self-reliance, problem solving, critical thinking and teamwork;
- improves their job prospects; and
- boosts confidence and self-esteem.

Education enables children and youth to thrive, not just survive. Failing to provide education for 6 million refugees of school-going age, on the other hand, can be hugely damaging, not only for individuals but also for their families and societies, perpetuating cycles of conflict and yet more forced displacement. It means lost opportunities for peaceful and sustainable development in our world. As this report illustrates, education is central to both those goals – peace and development – and to helping refugee children to fulfil their potential.

[Missing Out: Refugee Education in Crisis \(UNHCR\)](#)

What is the current state of education for refugees?

Making sure that refugees have access to education is central to the UNHCR mission of finding long-term solutions to refugee crises. However, as the number of people forcibly displaced by conflict and violence rises, demand for education naturally grows and the resources in the countries that shelter them are stretched ever thinner.

- Of the six million primary and secondary school-age refugees under UNHCR’s mandate, **3.7 million have no school to go to.**

- Refugee children are **five times more likely to be out of school** than non-refugee children.

The vast majority of refugees (86%) are hosted in developing regions, with more than 25% in the world's least developed countries. These host communities are already struggling to educate their own children. Governments face the additional task of finding school places, trained teachers and learning materials for tens or even hundreds of thousands of newcomers, who often do not speak the language of instruction and have missed out on an average of 3-4 years of schooling.

[Missing Out: Refugee Education in Crisis \(UNHCR\)](#)

What are the benefits of caring about the education of refugees abroad?

By educating tomorrow's leaders, we are giving refugees the intellectual tools to shape the future of their own countries from the day they return home, or to contribute meaningfully to the countries that offer them shelter, protection, and a vision of a future.

If we neglect this task, we will be failing to nurture peace and prosperity. Education provides the keys to a future in which refugees can find solutions for themselves and their communities.

[Missing Out: Refugee Education in Crisis \(UNHCR\)](#)

Who is working on this issue?

The UNHCR (UN Refugee Agency) works with governments, agencies, and private entities to address education issues for refugees. Catholic Relief Services is also an important part of this effort.

Catholic Relief Services provides educational support for the most vulnerable and marginalized children around the world, many of them refugees.

- **4.3 million people** served by CRS education projects
- **70 education projects** in 2016
- **32 countries** hosted CRS education projects

Source: [CRS](#)

Catholic Charities of Southwestern Ohio works locally with resettled families to enroll their children in school quickly and helps them navigate the paperwork and cultural issues that arise.