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Mitigating escalating global challenges: meeting the educational needs of millions of disadvantaged and 'left behind' children

Zurich, Switzerland: 14th December 2023

As the second inter-governmental Global Refugee Forum meets in Geneva, Switzerland, this week, Education.org, UNHCR and the Governments of Uganda and South Sudan co-hosted a Roundtable Dialogue with national leaders to explore how 'Inclusive Education Systems' can better integrate the 15.5 million refugee children – and more than 80 million out-of-school children and youth (OOSCY) - around the world. To inform government policies addressing this huge, and growing, problem, Education.org published the second edition of its High-Level Policy Guidance on Accelerated Education Programmes for OOSCY, [*Steering Through Storms: Five Recommendations for Education Leaders to Close the Learning Gap in Times of Crisis*](#).

The Roundtable heard from Hon. Awut Deng Acuil (Minister of General Education & Instruction for South Sudan), Hon. Joyce Moriku Kaducu (Minister of State for Primary Education, in the Ministry of Education & Sports, the Republic of Uganda), Hon. H.E. Alan Hama Saeed Salih (Kurdistan Regional Government Minister of Education), and Ms. Jennifer Roberts, Senior Education Officer at UNHCR, on the challenges to inclusive education for displaced learners and those with disabilities, focusing on the transition from non-formal to formal education systems in emergency settings. They shared and discussed with other country education leaders the successful strategies developed in Uganda, South Sudan, and Iraq to address these challenges, highlighting progress in school enrolment and integration of refugee children within national education systems, along with improvements in coordination among implementing partners as main advances. Persistent challenges raised included the current aid architecture, which can unintentionally work against national education systems, teacher shortages, adolescent girls remaining in secondary schools, and significant cultural and language barriers to enrolment and retention.

Accelerated Education Programmes (AEPs) are an important route to access education and improve learning recovery for OOSCY, including refugee children, and *Steering Through Storms* offers governments five key recommendations for

governments around the world who want to develop, expand or increase the cohesion and oversight of AEPs. The Guidance identifies the critical features governments can support to make AEPs in their countries most effective, as well as how best to assess and strengthen the alignment of AEPs with their national education systems. The Guidance is based on Education.org's [*Accelerated Education Programmes: An Evidence Synthesis for Policy Leaders*](#) which was produced through a ground-breaking process that included a global literature review, the crowdsourcing of difficult to find evidence, analyses of national AEP policies, and case studies of successful country AEP programmes.

Dr Randa Grob-Zakhary, Education.org's Founder and CEO said: "There could be no more appropriate event to unveil 'Steering Through Storms' than here, as some of the world's education and development leaders meet to discuss the many challenges created by the displacement of populations, and to find the most effective ways of supporting, educating and assimilating refugee children within their formal and non-formal education systems."

Notes to Editors:

- For further information, and interviews with Dr Grob-Zakhary, please contact Dorothy Lepkowska at dorothy@education.org.
- To find out more about Education.org's work, including our research and publications on AEPs, go to: <https://education.org/evidence-synthesis>

About Education.org

Education.org is an initiative of Insights for Education, a foundation created to advance evidence and improve education for every learner. Our mission is to make the best available evidence easier for education leaders to access and use in their plans, policies and guidelines. Operational since 2020, Education.org is supported by a visionary co-investor collective and is growing partnerships with governments, inter-governmental agencies and bodies, NGOs, universities, businesses and foundations around the world.

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