OVERALL CONTEXT

Located in the Turkana County (north-western part of Kenya), the Kakuma Refugee Camp established in 1992 is one of two camps in the country. The camp, and nearby Kalobeyei Settlement, were established in 2015 to improve the social-economic conditions of refugees and host communities through an integrated service delivery approach currently host approximately 185,000 refugees and asylum seekers, about 15% of the total population of the Turkana County.

The refugee influx from South Sudan continued throughout 2017 with 21,866 (10,549 female) new arrivals, most of them women and children. The increasing refugee population has overstretched available resources and capacities including that of education.

IMPACT

In 2017, UNHCR in collaboration with partners and through the EAC partnership undertook various activities to improve primary education access, quality and management. Initiatives such as expansion of school infrastructure (7 classrooms and 16 latrines), salaries/incentive payments for 726 teachers, training and capacity development for 369 teachers and strengthened partnerships with communities through enhanced dialogue and sensitisation were undertaken. Additionally, an accelerated education programme to meet the education needs of over-age children was supported as well as provision of teaching supplies, desks and support for children’s participation in extra-curricular activities.

As a result of the above interventions and coupled with increasing refugee arrivals, primary education access improved by 15.1% from 65,572 (25,852 female) in 2016 to 75,472 (30,457 female) students by the end of 2017. Out of school children numbers decreased by 10% from 7,427 (4,213 female) children recorded at the end of 2016 to 6,680 (4,767 female) by the end of 2017. Quality improvements were noted with the 4,742 (1,197 female) refugee children who sat the national primary exam achieving a 87.8% pass rate (higher than national average of 76%) and producing two candidates who managed to be in the top 0.5% percentile of the nearly one million children who sat the exam nationally. Both of these candidates received a fully funded scholarship to study in some of Kenya’s best secondary schools.

In order to ensure greater opportunities for more equitable, predictable and sustainable education services, UNHCR, in collaboration with UNICEF and other partners has supported the Kenyan Ministry of Education to carry out an education sector diagnosis with a specific focus on the inclusion of refugee children in the national planning process as envisioned in SDG4 and the New York Declaration on refugees and migrants within the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework which Kenya has signed. Consequently a policy framework on inclusion of refugees is set to be in place in 2018. Additionally, the MoE has continued to register refugee schools as public entities, carried out quality assurance assessments, and has provided 9,000 textbooks to schools in the camp. A Kakuma refugee
education strategy paper, that highlights key priority areas, has been developed and there is greater focus to install an Education Management Information Systems (EMIS) that ensures availability and use of quality data and a multi-sectoral mechanism to monitor and enforce safe schooling approaches and the quality delivery of education services.

Three hundred and five national and refugee teachers were provided with continuous professional development support through an innovative and tailored in-person competency-based training around teachers’ roles and well-being, child protection and inclusion, as well as pedagogy and curriculum planning. Teachers will receive further support through peer coaching and mobile mentoring which will lead to improved teacher practice and student learning.

**CHALLENGES AND LESSONS LEARNED**

Despite achieving greater access to primary education (85%), 15% of primary school aged children are still out of school. The significant growth in school enrolments without comparable investment in school infrastructure expansion has resulted in overcrowding and diminishing quality in education standards as 160 children shared a classroom on average with a teacher pupil ratio 1:103, textbook pupil ratio 1:7, and desk pupil ratio 1:7. The implementation of double shifts, training of teachers, community engagement, and construction of classrooms have helped mitigate some of the adverse impacts of school congestion but greater investment is urgently needed to undertake improvements.

While girls enrolments increased by 17.8% over the reporting period, they still constitute nearly 70% of out of school children population as they face greater barriers to accessing and completing their studies. This is due to negative cultural practices such as early marriage, in school factors such as overcrowding that can act as push out for girls and increased responsibility for domestic work that makes it difficult to balance with academic requirements leading to drop out.

A key lesson learnt is that in the face of increasing school enrolments and pressure on existing facilities, provision of access has to be balanced with the necessary quality inputs required for conducive, safe and stimulating learning environments.

School drop outs are difficult to monitor due to high class sizes and an overwhelmed teaching force. As a strategy to monitor children who show erratic attendance and drop out, a digitized attendance platform that will facilitate early identification of such categories of children is being developed.