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PROSPECTS-powered Solutions

Testing and scaling new approaches to forced displacement

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Introduction: The PROSPECTS Partnership

Responding to the challenges of today's protracted displacement crises requires a new paradigm – one in which development and humanitarian actors, governments, the private sector, and forcibly displaced persons and host communities themselves are meaningfully engaged as partners in designing and implementing solutions.

This is the vision of PROSPECTS – a groundbreaking multi-year programme financed by the Government of the Netherlands that aims to improve living conditions for millions of people who have been forced to flee their homes and for the communities that host them. First launched in 2019, PROSPECTS brings together the **International Finance Corporation (IFC), International Labour Organization (ILO), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the World Bank,** and other stakeholders to test and scale new approaches to forced displacement in eight hosting countries in the Middle East and North Africa and Eastern and Southern Africa regions – ***Egypt, Ethiopia, Iraq, Jordan, Kenya, Lebanon, Sudan, and Uganda.***

In close coordination with host country governments, the PROSPECTS programme works to:

- Boost the agency and resilience of forcibly displaced persons (FDPs) and host communities (HCs).
- Improve access to rights and protection for FDPs and host communities of all ages, gender, and disability status.
- Reinforce the hosting capacity of governments by improving national-level policies and strengthening local and national education, child protection, and social protection systems, as well as national data systems, to be inclusive of FDPs.

- Support the school-to-work transition for forcibly displaced and host community youth, by expanding access to quality education, skills-building opportunities, and dignified employment and entrepreneurship.
- Strengthen social cohesion.

In a first phase of the PROSPECTS partnership between 2019-2024, the six partner agencies collaborated on a multitude of joint interventions at global, regional, and country level, ranging from policy engagement and advocacy to technical assistance and programming, and knowledge generation to capture learnings on what works in responding to forced displacement. Displaced children and youth are too often left out of the decision-making for financing, policy, and programmes that shape their futures, so PROSPECTS ensured displaced and host community children and youth were systematically and meaningfully engaged in programme design and delivery, including through a dedicated Youth Workstream led by UNICEF's Adolescent Development and Participation team in collaboration with the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, UNHCR, and ILO. This included the establishment of several youth advisory groups.

The first phase was organized around four key pillars: 1) Education and Learning, 2) Employment with Dignity, 3) Protection and Inclusion, and 4) New Ways of Working. The second phase, launched in 2024 and running through 2027, includes an additional focus on Social Protection under Pillar 3 and Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) sector under a new Critical Infrastructure pillar.

The distinctive combination of UN agencies, International Financial Institutions (IFIs), and a donor government – each with its own comparative advantage with regards to the humanitarian-development nexus – has allowed the programme to leverage synergies and break down sectoral boundaries for more sustainable solutions that meet forcibly displaced and host communities' comprehensive needs.

With an emphasis on innovation and learning, PROSPECTS has also sought to create a community of practice on the key themes of education, employment, and protection and to influence global policymaking and knowledge generation on forced displacement well beyond its geographic area of focus.

This paper showcases a selection of flagship programmes that have been developed, tested, and scaled with PROSPECTS support. These PROSPECTS-powered case studies demonstrate what works in responding to forced displacement, with the aim of inspiring replication across PROSPECTS countries and beyond.


Lebanon
Jordan
Iraq
Egypt
Sudan
Ethiopia
Uganda
Kenya

Partners' combined impact under PROSPECTS Phase 1 (2019-March 2024)[1]



462,000

FDPs benefitting from case management services (SGBV, child labour, etc.).



742,000

FDP and HC members supported through PROSPECTS who are receiving partner-led social protection benefits (including cash transfers).



37,000

frontline service providers and other stakeholders trained on protection and social protection issues.



102,000

people provided with mental health and psycho-social support services.



1.1 million

children/youth enrolled in primary/secondary education programmes, including acceleration programs and early childhood education.



100,000

children provided with in-kind or financial support for retention in formal and non-formal educational programs.



655,000

children and youth completed primary and/or secondary education, including accelerated programmes and early childhood education.



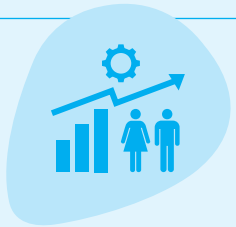
218,000

people issued work permits and/or business registrations as a result of PROSPECTS interventions.



39

policies, plans, laws related to forcibly displaced and host communities adopted and/or amended that address inclusive access to quality social protection and protection services with a contribution from PROSPECTS.



119,000

people assisted by business development services and financial institutions to develop earning and livelihoods opportunities.



25,000

apprenticeships, on-the-job training and work-based learning opportunities, and social enterprises created or developed.

Why do we need a new approach to forced displacement?

In 2022, the world reached a sobering record high of over 108 million forcibly displaced persons (FDPs) globally.[2] Children and youth are dramatically overrepresented in the forcibly displaced population – while children make up less than one third of the global population, they account for more than 40 per cent of all forcibly displaced people globally,[3] and 50 per cent of the forcibly displaced population in PROSPECTS countries.[4]

Violence and conflict are the hallmarks of too many childhoods and a common denominator in nearly all the countries of origin for large numbers of displaced children. In the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) and Eastern and Southern Africa (ESA) regions in particular, ongoing and (re)emerging conflicts in several countries, including Syria, Sudan, South Sudan, Ethiopia, Somalia, and Democratic Republic of the Congo among others, have created large-scale displacement, with millions of people forced to flee their homes to seek refuge in neighboring countries or remain internally displaced. Conflict as a driver for displacement is increasingly overlapping with climate-induced shocks in these regions, eroding livelihoods, social cohesion, and food security.

Some of the key challenges of forced displacement impacting children and families in these regions include:

- **Increasingly protracted displacement and lack of real prospects for durable solutions:**
  With the average length of displacement ranging from 10 to over 20 years,[5] most children displaced today will spend their entire childhood in displacement, creating a new generation with no active connection to their countries or communities of origin. Far too many displaced children and families are living in poverty and dependent on humanitarian assistance for decades, with no clear prospect of returning to communities or countries of origin, local integration and/or naturalization, or finding a durable solution

in a third location as resettlement rates remain relatively low. Meanwhile, the humanitarian system is overstretched and not designed to provide long-term protection and durable solutions.

- **Protection challenges:**
  Forced displacement often intensifies the vulnerability of children and families who are already in precarious situations, due to the disruption and mental health impacts of the displacement itself, as well as reduced access to services, community networks, economic opportunities and broader rights in the new place of residence. They are more likely to live in poverty, lack food security, miss out on school, work in hazardous conditions, suffer from ill health, and experience violence, including gender based violence (GBV) and violence against children, abuse and exploitation, child labour, and child marriage. They face a range of protection challenges including lack of legal and civil documentation, limited access to justice, and the risk of statelessness. Restrictive laws, policies, and discriminatory practices often impede their enjoyment of basic social and economic rights, such as access to labour, social security, access to finance, and rights to housing and property. In some countries, the difficult political, security, economic, and social context has undermined the protection space and challenged solidarity with FDPs.

- **Low levels of inclusion:**
  The majority of the displaced population remains only partially included in the provision of basic services (e.g., education, health) through national systems. While there is an increasing trend toward an out-of-camp settlement approach[6] and the urbanization of displacement, in some countries, encampment and parallel humanitarian service delivery continue to be the default approaches to address forced displacement. The institutional interests and logic of parallel service delivery remain entrenched in national-level refugee governance structures and present an ongoing challenge to meaningful inclusion of FDPs in national systems, services, budgets and plans. Unpredictable and ad hoc assistance through parallel humanitarian systems cannot properly address the structural barriers confronting forcibly displaced persons and leaves them unable to invest in rebuilding their lives in a meaningful manner. It may also leave host communities feeling neglected and create tensions between HCs and FDPs, as host communities are less prioritized by humanitarian responses. Host communities tend to be among the most marginalized and poor population groups in their countries and often face similar risks, socioeconomic challenges, and barriers to opportunities as FDPs.[7]

- **Lack of learning and earning opportunities**:
  Forcibly displaced children and youth are often excluded from national school systems or face barriers to access them, such as documentation needed for enrolment. Globally, only 68 per cent of refugee children are enrolled in primary school.[8] Less than half of refugee children who start primary school make it to secondary school, with a gender disparity in favor of boys at 36 per cent compared to only 27 per cent of adolescent girls.[9] Limited access to education and training pathways and decent work opportunities makes it difficult for forcibly displaced youth to transition from learning to earning and start adulthood on the right foot. They have enormous potential but few chances to develop it. Refugees are six times more likely to be unemployed than non-refugees.[10] Certain barriers inhibit the ability of FDPs to actively participate in the formal economy, including personal factors and qualifications, prohibitive labour laws, restrictions on mobility, or lack of internet connectivity, with barriers disproportionately impacting adolescent girls and young women. There is a need for education reforms that leverage innovative online, offline, and blended learning with a focus on digital skills and life skills to enable displaced youth to make a smoother shift to meet 21st century labour market demands.

Addressing these challenges requires a comprehensive approach that supports the needs of displaced populations as well as their host communities, strengthens the systems and services FDPs and host communities rely on, and promotes solutions that are sustainable, durable, and socially cohesive. PROSPECTS puts this new approach to the test.

PROSPECTS-powered solutions

A selection of programmes tested under PROSPECTS are presented below. These particular case studies are featured because their success hinged on the unique setup of the PROSPECTS partnership – leveraging the complementary mandates of partner agencies; demonstrating a multi-sectoral, nexus approach; and embodying the localization and whole-of-society principles set out in the Global Refugee Compact by partnering with national actors, sub-government, or local NGO actors, including refugee-, women- and youth-led community partners, to sustainably strengthen their capacity. These PROSPECTS-powered solutions serve as proof of concept on what works in responding to forced displacement, offering a menu of good practices that can be replicated and adapted to fit various contexts.

The case studies are divided across three overarching outcomes:[11]

- **Improved access to rights and protection:**
  National-level policies on refugee hosting, as well as the capacity of governments to host and protect forcibly displaced populations are improved. FDPs have access to basic rights, such as status/registration, legal identity, civil documentation, freedom of movement, and socioeconomic rights, such as access to education and employment. Risks and vulnerabilities facing FDPs and HCs are mitigated by strengthening systems to protect them from violence, exploitation, abuse, and neglect, to ensure their births are registered, and to prevent and reduce poverty and social exclusion.

- **Improved access to quality education through inclusion in local and national systems:**
  FDPs are included at systems, community, and individual level, meaning service delivery is aligned to national standards rather than humanitarian standards so that FDPs enjoy the same living conditions as nationals, and systems are strengthened to improve quality of life for everyone – FDPs and host community members alike. This also includes inclusion of FDPs in often-overlooked national data systems, so that financing decisions are

guided by accurate data and displaced communities are included in local development plans, strategies, and budgets.

- **Improved access to socioeconomic opportunities:** FDPs and HCs have expanded access to quality education, skills, and learning opportunities that fit their needs and prepare them for the labour market and expanded economic opportunities through access to entrepreneurship and employment with dignity.

Improved access to rights and protection



EGYPT

EGYPT: Family Clubs – A 'one stop shop' for addressing the needs of the most vulnerable refugee, migrant, and Egyptian children

Many of the most vulnerable FDPs are undocumented and 'invisible' – often living outside the formal employment sector and not attending public schools, they may go undetected and suffer from a lack of access to essential services.

One of the public services undocumented migrants and displaced persons are most likely to use is primary healthcare, which tends to be accessible regardless of nationality or legal status. Therefore, UNICEF collaborated with Egypt's Ministry of Health and Population and Caritas to establish Family Clubs within public health centre units across the country to integrate child protection and psychosocial support services along with primary health services provided on site. Launched in 2017, the Family Clubs serve refugee and migrant children of all nationalities alongside Egyptian children, thereby helping with integration and social cohesion in the host community.

In the "Protect Yourself" programme offered in the Family Clubs, children learn how to protect themselves through introducing them to their rights, the concept of personal space, forms of violence, and how to seek help. In the "Child for Child" programme, children and adolescents aged 13-18 learn age-appropriate tactics for helping their peers. Service providers on-site help identify cases of children at risk and refer them to child protection committees. In addition to the structured programmes and referrals, the

Family Clubs more generally provide a safe environment for children and youth, where they can have fun, build friendships, have their voices heard, and increase their self-confidence.

The 'one stop shop' model of the Family Clubs is not only effective in reaching vulnerable populations and addressing their needs, but also extremely cost-effective because it makes use of existing health centre staff and space. Support from PROSPECTS has allowed the programme to scale rapidly, with **81 family clubs established since 2019 and reaching over 231,000 displaced and host community children with child protection services.**

National ownership of the programme contributes to its sustainability, and advocacy is ongoing to ensure that the operating costs are assumed by the Ministry of Health and Population, the Ministry of Social Solidarity, or the National Council for Childhood and Motherhood. The model's success offers a blueprint for replication in other countries based on government interest and health workers' capacity to provide these additional services. Many countries already have existing child-friendly spaces within health centres that can be built upon.

MOHAMMED

6 YEARS OLD



EGYPT
Family Clubs

Six-year-old Mohammed is a Syrian boy spending a day at a Family Club established by UNICEF in Alexandria, Egypt. In Family Clubs, children of refugee and migrant backgrounds and Egyptian children engage in activities together, thereby helping with integration and social cohesion in the host community.

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JORDAN

JORDAN: Hajati Cash Transfers – Maximizing the impact of cash assistance for the protection and wellbeing of vulnerable children

The protracted Syrian refugee displacement and years of economic challenges made worse by COVID-19 have had dramatic consequences for the lives of the most vulnerable people in Jordan. 81 per cent of Syrian refugees in Jordan live in non-camp settings, in towns or cities, and generally have to cover their own living expenses.[12] Fifteen per cent of Jordanians and 78 per cent of Syrian refugees in Jordan live below the poverty line.[13] This widespread poverty affects children in particular, who may be pushed to forego education and engage in labour or marry early due to the family's financial struggles. Thirty-one per cent of Syrian refugee children aged 6-15 years old were not in school in 2017-18.[14]

To reach the most vulnerable children in Jordan, irrespective of their nationality or status, support their enrolment and retention in basic education, and mitigate negative coping mechanisms, UNICEF launched its 'Hajati' cash assistance programme (Arabic for 'My Needs') in 2017 and scaled it up with PROSPECTS support from 2019 onward. Hajati identifies families with children already out of school or at risk of dropping out and supports their economic resilience through a package of social protection services consisting of cash transfers, case management, behaviour change communication, and referrals to additional support services. Hajati cash transfers are unconditional, but households are informed that the assistance is meant to support their children's education. A child-sensitive multidimensional targeting methodology consisting of 16 vulnerability detection indicators is used to identify eligible beneficiaries. Hajati does not target specific nationalities, but nearly 90 per cent of beneficiaries have been displaced Syrians living in Jordan, outside of refugee camps.

Between 2019-2023, **an annual average of 10,000 children benefited from Hajati**.[15] An impact evaluation conducted by the UNICEF Office of Research-Innocenti in 2021 found that children benefitting from Hajati were more likely to attend and stay in school through secondary, less likely to be engaged in child labour, more likely to have basic material items (e.g. winter shoes) and sufficient nutrition, and more likely to display positive indications of psychosocial wellbeing.[16] For the 2022/2023 school year, survey results found that **99 per cent of Syrian children and children of other nationalities and 98 per cent of Jordanian children aged 6-15 and benefitting from Hajati were enrolled in school**.[17] The programme's results demonstrated how the benefits of social protection can be multiplied

when linked with education objectives and delivered along with referrals to additional services as an integrated package.

Over time, Hajati's design has been improved as lessons were learned. For example, the programme improved its age-sensitivity by increasing the amount of the transfer for older children, who tend to be taken out of school more often to work, and improved the accuracy of vulnerability measurement to better identify recipients.[18]

Hajati has bridged the humanitarian-development divide by transferring the lessons learned from this direct implementation to support government partners in the development of a sustainable, child-sensitive national social protection system. Jordan's National Aid Fund (NAF) launched an initiative to improve the state's existing 'Takaful' cash transfer scheme for vulnerable Jordanian families inspired by Hajati's design. NAF doubled the number of children it serves through improved targeting, is exploring innovative payment solutions such as mobile money, and drew on Hajati's rapid monitoring model for its own Monitoring, Evaluation and Research Framework.

In Jordan, and other similar contexts, an eventual integration of humanitarian cash responses like Hajati into the national social protection system would address funding volatility and enhance the reliability of this support, while contributing to social cohesion between refugees and host communities.

NAJMA

40 YEARS OLD



"I am glad that the support from UNICEF is unconditional because I can use it for the most important needs, like keeping a roof over my family. It is very challenging to meet my children's basic needs. As a mother, their education for me is fundamental and it's my duty to ensure they complete their education. Yet, if I didn't have this financial assistance, I would have to choose between paying for their food and shelter or their education. I wait every time to receive the support, so I can put bread on the table and pay some of the debts I have at the grocery store."

JORDAN
Hajati Cash Transfers

At 40, Najma shoulders the responsibility of raising her 10 children alone, while her husband is away in Syria. Despite the multiple challenges, she insists on education for her children. It is sometimes difficult to motivate them to continue to go to school, especially when they feel that they don't have what their classmates have.

In the face of dire financial vulnerability, Najma finds support and hope through the Hajati cash transfer programme supported by UNICEF. With the support from the Hajati programme, Najma receives essential financial assistance to keep her children in school and pay for their accommodation, even as they share a home with many other female-headed households. Hajati offers a lifeline to countless mothers like Najma, helping them to navigate and overcome the daily challenges of providing for their families.

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Improved access to quality education through inclusion in local and national systems



ETHIOPIA

ETHIOPIA: SPEED Schools – Accelerated learning for out-of-school children in contexts of forced displacement

Ethiopia is facing a severe humanitarian crisis due to the compounding impacts of conflict and climate change, which are driving large-scale internal displacement. Too often, when children are displaced, their education is disrupted for months or years, leaving them too far behind to reintegrate into formal schools when they return to their communities of origin or permanently settle elsewhere. Moreover, while primary education is free to all in Ethiopia, there are still various costs such as learning materials that parents – internally displaced and host community parents alike – may have difficulty meeting. There are over 7.6 million out-of-school children (OOSC) in primary and lower secondary levels in Ethiopia, and an additional 4.6 million students affected by conflict and environmental events at risk of dropping out,[19] with girls more likely to be out of school.

To provide IDP and host community children with a second chance at schooling, UNICEF partnered with Geneva Global Ethiopia (GEE), the Organization for Welfare and Development in Action (OWDA), and regional and local governments including education offices, to set up SPEED Schools in the Afar and Somali regions, which are among the worst impacted by recurrent drought and displacement.

Launched in 2021, the aim of the project was to provide an estimated 4,000 OOSC (50 per cent girls) aged 9-14 from select internally displaced and host communities with accelerated learning opportunities to allow them to catch up and integrate into formal schools at an age-appropriate level the following year. The SPEED Schools model condenses the first three years of the formal primary curriculum and delivers it in ten months, with a focus on foundational literacy, numeracy, science, and life skills, and integrated psychosocial support to help students cope with the challenges induced by the humanitarian crisis. To minimize the barriers to access related to the direct cost of education, the SPEED School program is offered at no cost for learners and families who enroll in the program.

Class sizes are limited to 30 children to enable students to receive

individualized attention from teachers and more easily engage with peers. Instructors are recruited from within the communities, thereby ensuring linguistically and culturally appropriate instruction, and are trained in mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) and prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA). SPEED Schools utilize existing available facilities or construct temporary shelters, with intentional effort to create a child-friendly, visually stimulating, and playful environment. Potable water, latrines, and hand washing facilities are standard at each site, and some schools also include a feeding programme.

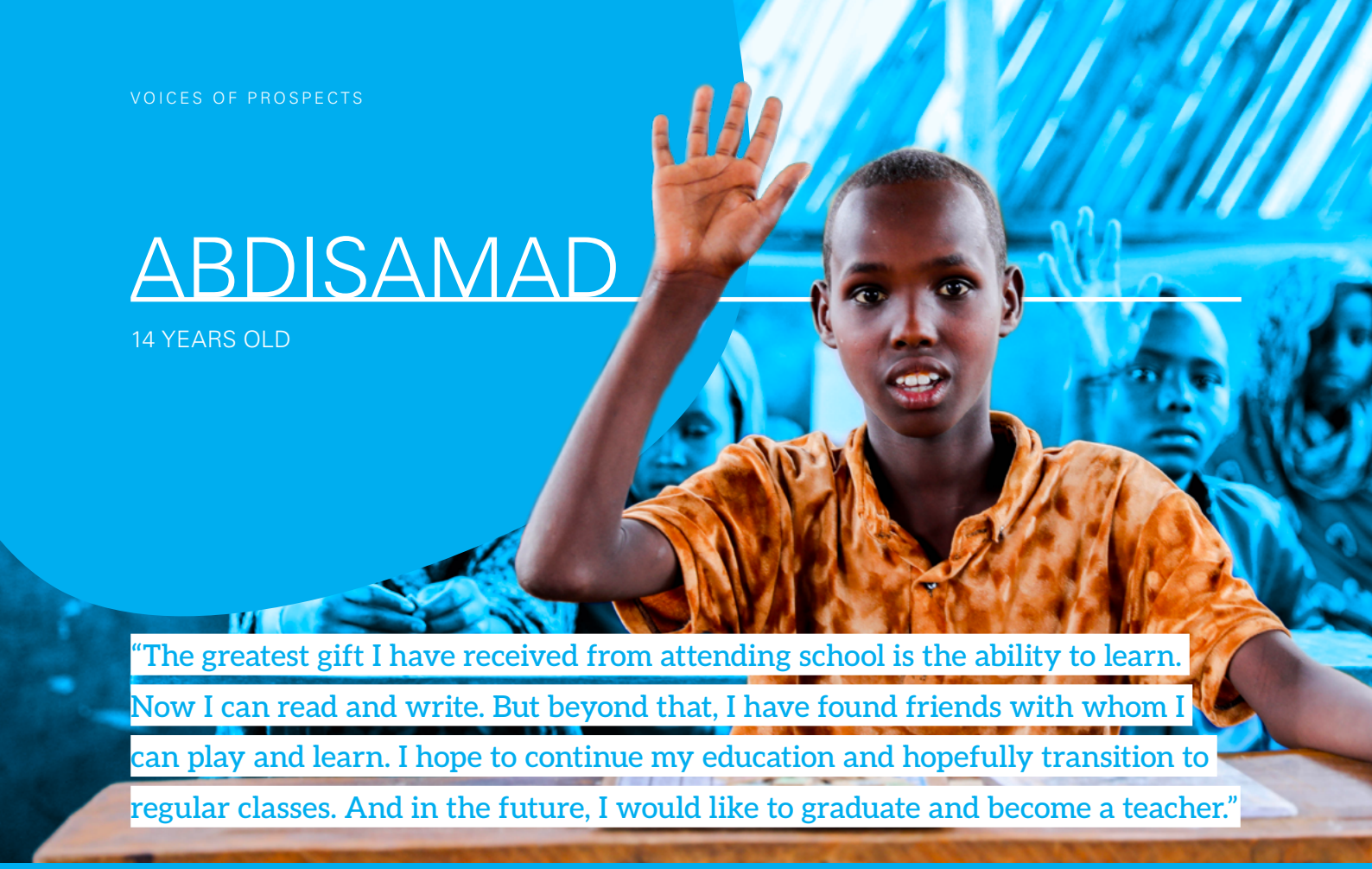
The model incorporates conflict sensitivity, so that the learning in the SPEED Schools and the transition to government schools the following year occur in an atmosphere of greater social cohesion among displaced and host communities. The model is also gender-sensitive, working with communities, teachers, and school authorities to achieve full gender parity among students and staff and weaving gender equality approaches into teacher training, supervision, and support. It also includes a robust parental engagement component, through the organization of Self-Help Groups for the mothers of each class and Class Management Committees.

At the end of the 10 months, a formal assessment is conducted using testing tools prepared by the local government to measure students' readiness for the formal curriculum. From 2021 through 2023, **4,070 students (50 per cent girls) have been enrolled in SPEED Schools, with 90 per cent completing the programme** and successfully integrating into the appropriate grade level in formal schools.[20]

Key factors contributing to programme success have been government buy-in, close coordination between stakeholders, and good data collection. Implementing partners, regional and district education offices, primary schools, and nearby colleges of teacher education have collaborated to train instructors and conduct joint supervision site visits to resolve challenges and make real-time improvements. SPEED School staff utilize tablets and SMS messaging to share students' attendance and progress, track dropouts, and communicate to parents and guardians regularly to help get them back in class. Incorporating these lessons learned, plans for scale up include expanding the SPEED School model to reach adolescents in the 15+ age group, with a special focus on girls.

ABDISAMAD

14 YEARS OLD



"The greatest gift I have received from attending school is the ability to learn. Now I can read and write. But beyond that, I have found friends with whom I can play and learn. I hope to continue my education and hopefully transition to regular classes. And in the future, I would like to graduate and become a teacher."

ETHIOPIA
SPEED Schools

"I love participating in the class. I enjoy interacting with my teachers and classmates. It's fun and gives me confidence," shares Abdisamad Abdunnasir, a 14-year-old internally displaced person (IDP) from Qoloji, in the Somali region of Ethiopia.

Previously, Abdisamad's days were filled with caring for livestock and helping with household chores. But his life took a turn when he started attending Walid primary school. Recognizing the need for a smooth transition into the regular class, Abdisamad enrolled in the Accelerated Learning Programme (SPEED School), an initiative designed to provide an interactive learning platform to displaced and out-of-school children.

The SPEED School programme aims to equip these children with the necessary knowledge and skills to complete three grades within just 10 months. Abdisamad has already completed two grades and is currently working towards finishing the remaining curriculum. His commitment to his studies has made him a good example.

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LEBANON

LEBANON: Dirasa school-bridging programme – Multiple flexible learning pathways

Since 2019, Lebanon has experienced a dramatic increase in out-of-school children (OOSC) particularly affecting migrant and displaced children, propelled by the deteriorating economic, social, and security situation. To bring children back into classrooms, UNICEF and Lebanon's Ministry of Education and Higher Education partnered in February 2022 with support from PROSPECTS to develop and implement a new and innovative School Bridging Programme called 'Dirasa.'

Dirasa provides a pathway back to education for out-of-school Lebanese and non-Lebanese children aged 8-14, providing them with access to quality education in private schools in host communities while facilitating their re-entry back into the formal public education system or Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) programmes. Dirasa supports students and builds the capacity of host private schools simultaneously through a comprehensive package consisting of:

- Coverage of children's tuition/enrolment fees
- Financial support to help cover school's operational costs, the development of inclusive policies, projects to enhance school environments, and children's transportation
- Capacity building of teachers and school staff to enhance quality education
- A gender-responsive social and behaviour change (SBC) communication and community engagement plan, encouraging participation of girls and boys in non-gender-stereotypical clubs, and strengthening and awareness-raising of GBV support services and referral pathways in schools
- Curriculum approach and modality based on the Lebanese official curriculum
- Distribution of education material and hygiene kits for all children in the target schools
- Access to digital learning platforms
- Complementary supports to enhance student and teacher wellbeing, including psychosocial support sessions, sports for development activities, and establishing Parent Teacher Associations

After the first year in Dirasa, participants take a placement test that assesses their education level and transitions them to the most suitable grade based on their level and age group, either in the same private school or a nearby public school. Children that require further support continue for an additional year in the programme and are offered multiple referral pathways, including continuation in the same private school programme at no cost, transition to a public school, or TVET programmes.

Between February 2022 and February 2024, **Dirasa enrolled over 73,000 children across all eight of Lebanon's governorates**. Ninety per cent of the children reached were 8 to 11 years old and had either never been to school, dropped out of school more than two years ago, or had formerly been enrolled in non-formal education (NFE) programmes but were not able to transition into formal education. The remaining 10 per cent were aged 12 to 14 years, had been out of school for two years or less, and unable to directly reintegrate into formal education.

What makes Dirasa innovative is its provision of multiple and flexible pathways based on learners' age group, academic level, and specific needs; its basis in the Lebanese curriculum to ensure children can catch up on lost learning and transition smoothly back into the formal school system; its gender-responsiveness tackling specific accessibility barriers faced by girls; and its focus on children's overall wellbeing via connections to other services and support. Furthermore, the program is cost-efficient: the use of existing private and public school capacity means Dirasa can reach OOSC at a greater scale than the traditional NFE model, which is built on smaller, more costly centres. Firmly grounded in the Ministry of Education and Higher Education's programming, Dirasa is now being scaled up, with plans to develop a regulatory and legal framework and link the Dirasa data management system with the Ministry's School Information Management System.

Partnership has been key to Dirasa's success. At the outset, UNICEF collaborated with UNHCR, the World Food Programme, and the Education and Child Protection sectors to identify priority localities across Lebanon with high concentrations of marginalized OOSC. UNHCR supported outreach and referrals of displaced OOSC to Dirasa, and referral of children already in Dirasa to specialized services including child protection and health services. Further, collaboration between UNICEF, UNHCR, and the Netherlands Embassy at the systems and policy level has supported programme sustainability and scale-up.

MARYAM

10 YEARS OLD



"Going back to school is a dream that came true. Education is crucial for every child to succeed in life."

LEBANON
Dirasa school-bridging programme

Maryam is a Syrian girl who fled with her family from the raging war a few years ago and settled in Bar Elias Camp, in Baalbek, one of the most vulnerable areas in east Lebanon. In the camp, Maryam refused to leave her tent to avoid facing bullying from other children. But all of that changed when UNICEF's community engagement partner reached out to Maryam's family to enroll her in the Dirasa programme, which aims to provide a pathway back to education for out-of-school Lebanese and non-Lebanese children.

On her first day at school, Maryam was really shy, scared of all the new things, and didn't know how to deal with her classmates. But after a couple of months of joining the new school, she has become one of the best students in her classroom, and is the most active child in the classroom, according to her teacher.

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SUDAN

SUDAN: Inter-agency integrated programmes to address the learning and protection crisis

In Sudan, multiple crises and the war that broke out in April 2023 have caused one of the largest child displacement crises in the world, and with it, a severe learning crisis for an estimated seven million children 6-18 years of age who are out of school. Most formal schools have closed since the war began. Even before the war, violence in schools, including violent discipline, was identified as one of the reasons causing students, especially girls, to drop out.

To get children back to learning, PROSPECTS partners UNICEF, UNHCR, and ILO partnered on a flagship programme targeting displaced and host community children in localities of Sudan's East Darfur State and West Kordofan State to ensure they can access learning opportunities and be safe while learning, in their communities and with their families.

Between March 2019 and February 2024, **46 'back-to-learning' campaigns with a focus on girls were conducted annually** through this initiative, resulting in **54,046 children (28,889 girls, 25,157 boys; 23,239 from host communities, 21,618 refugees, and 9,189 internally displaced children) re-enrolling in school (pre-war) and in safe and child-friendly learning spaces** since the onset of the war. UNICEF also distributed **over 50,000 teaching and learning supplies and supported 46 schools in the two states with grants. Over 5,000 dignity kits** – which include buckets, soap and menstrual hygiene management items – **were also distributed as part of the campaigns to keep girls learning.**

To cultivate safer learning environments, UNICEF supported the establishment of school social workers in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Social Development. Thirty-one social workers were appointed, and mobile teams established for the provision of psychosocial support in 26 schools. Teachers and local social workers participated in training-of-trainers programmes on subjects including protection and provision of psychosocial support, life skills for vulnerable children and adolescents, and non-violent alternative disciplines.

This programme took advantage of the inter-agency nature of PROSPECTS to enable a holistic and integrated approach: UNHCR and UNICEF partnered to implement the program in UNHCR-supported refugee schools, where **UNICEF enhanced the skills and competencies of 669 teachers** (314 female) in using learner-centred teaching methodologies, and UNICEF and ILO collaborated on WASH interventions at schools to ensure children had access to drinking water, safe latrines, and hygiene practices. UNICEF led the **rehabilitation of 35 classrooms and the construction of an additional 40 classrooms, including construction of 20 latrines and 5 water yards, which enabled the enrolment of at least 60,000 children and adolescents**.

Notwithstanding the challenges caused by the war in Sudan, including school closures, the integrated education and child protection approach pioneered by the programme has been scaled up in UNICEF's Makanna centres (meaning 'our space' in Arabic), where the social workers trained in previous school-based iterations of the programme continue to provide psychosocial support. Makanna are safe and child-friendly learning spaces where displaced and host community children can process, play, and recover through an integrated package of critical services, including structured learning, psychosocial support through recreation, referrals to healthcare and protective services, and water, sanitation, and hygiene – all in one space. The success of these integrated programmes has relied on robust engagement with the displaced and host communities, Parents Associations, the Ministry of Education, and the Ministry of Social Development, whose participation also helps ensure long-term sustainability.

FATIMA

10 YEARS OLD



"Sometimes I would go to the street in the morning to watch other girls going to school. Whenever I saw a girl my age running to school, I would cry. But when I found out that I could go back to my class, I was so happy! I could not sleep that night - I was awake all-night waiting for morning to come."

SUDAN
Integrated programmes to address the learning and protection crisis

Fatima is a displaced 10-year-old girl living in an IDP camp in East Darfur who is passionate, dedicated and loves going to school. She dreams of becoming a teacher and helping girls like her in her village access better education. However, a few years into her education journey, Fatima had to stop going to school because her father could no longer afford the school fees.

UNICEF and its partners launched a girls-back-to-school campaign in her area to support vulnerable, out-of-school children like Fatima to return to school and access quality pre-primary, primary, and alternative learning opportunities. As part of this campaign, the girls received dignity kits and learning materials to support their learning while back in class, in addition to psychosocial support and awareness from social workers on protection issues and social norms that can impact them.

Thanks to this initiative, Fatima was able to go back to school and re-enrolled in third grade. Although she joined the class a month later, she worked hard and was ranked among the top ten in her class by the end of the year.

Since the war broke out in Sudan in 2023, causing many schools to close, the programme's integrated education and child protection approach has been scaled up in UNICEF's Makanna centres, so children like Fatima can continue to receive support.

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Improved access to socioeconomic opportunities



UGANDA

EASTERN AND SOUTHERN AFRICA / UGANDA: Digital learning-to-earning pathways for marginalized youth

In an era marked by rapid digitalization and evolving job markets, acquiring digital skills has become not just an advantage, but a necessity. This is particularly urgent in Africa, the youngest continent globally, where 70 per cent of the population is under 30 but where youth are three times more likely to be unemployed compared to older adults.

A holistic Digital Learning-to-Earning (L2E) pathway was launched in 2022 in the Eastern and Southern Africa region with PROSPECTS support. It offers an innovative and accessible framework designed to equip young people with digital skills, offering them a direct route to employment and economic empowerment. This new L2E pathway was designed, rolled out, and documented in a partnership between UNICEF, Umuzi,[21] the Youth Agency Marketplace (Yoma),[22] the African Coding Network,[23] and private sector partners with a focus on reaching marginalised youth, particularly displaced youth, young women, and youth with disabilities.[24]

The programme consists of asynchronous, fully remote training in market-relevant digital skills accompanied by personalized learner support to accelerate participants' transitions into work, preparing them for roles in data analytics, IT support, project management, marketing, web development, and more. The programme leverages online learning platforms such as the Computing Technology Industry Association, Meta Blueprint, and Grow with Google so that participants receive industry-recognised certifications. It also incorporates activities to develop soft skills and employability, such as CV-building workshops, interview skills, social emotional skills, business communication, ethical leadership, and 'design thinking', a problem-solving approach which equips youth to become social innovators and entrepreneurs addressing issues in their communities. Participants culminate their training with a three-month internship placement for on-the-job learning.

In its pilot phase, the programme was promoted through targeted online and offline outreach, utilizing PROSPECTS-backed networks, including relationships with local non-profit organizations and UNHCR information and communication technology (ICT) centres in refugee settlements. More than 5,000 youth applied, evidencing the high demand for programmes of this nature. Based on aptitude test results and equity targets, **550 learners were selected to test the programme between 2022-2023, 76 per cent of whom were female**. In Uganda, the pilot was rolled out with an intentional focus on displaced youth in a collaboration between UNICEF and UNHCR. **Fifty displaced youth were enrolled and offered targeted support**, including access to computers and internet at UNHCR ICT centres and stipends to encourage their progress through the learning pathway. At the end, they were matched with work experience opportunities with local Ugandan companies.

The findings of this work are now guiding the replication of the programme in other PROSPECTS countries, including Ethiopia and Kenya, and beyond. In addition, the proof of concept resulting from this pilot is informing the scale-up and plans for institutionalization of digital skills training in Uganda through a Digital Agenda Strategy (2024-2027) co-developed by Uganda's Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES) and UNICEF. In line with the strategy, UNICEF Uganda provided the MoES with technical assistance leading to the development of a Digital Competency Framework for Children and Youth, contextualized to Uganda's unique cultural, social, and economic landscape. Based on the framework, a three-level Digital Skills Toolkit was developed, including facilitator and learner guides, learning materials, and assessment instruments.

The Toolkit has been rolled out with the support of Umuzi and local partners in 15 schools and non-formal education centres across Uganda, with an aim to institutionalize this model more widely. UNHCR supported the pilot by providing ICT equipment. To date, **2,347 young people (50 per cent refugees), have improved their digital skills through the training delivered based on the Toolkit**. The experience of developing the Digital Competency Framework and Toolkit in Uganda is now being shared in the region to assist other countries in incorporating digital skills into their systems based on unified curricular benchmarks for a 21st-century-ready young workforce.



PATRICK

25 YEARS OLD

"The courses offered by Umuzi are really good and easy to navigate, everything is well explained - even for a beginner, and I really enjoyed it. I feel like this opportunity has helped me grow professionally and personally in the digital world. The Umuzi team has been very supportive and being able to learn online from home was a big benefit. The skills provided are relevant in the world and this makes it easier to get a job."

UGANDA
Digital learning-to-earning pathways for marginalized youth

Patrick Kumi is a 25-year-old South Sudanese youth advocate and child soldier survivor living in the Bidibidi refugee settlement in Uganda. He signed up for a training offered by a UNICEF partner, Umuzi, aimed at supporting displaced youth to kick-start their careers in the digital space.

Despite the challenges Patrick faced with limited access to the internet and laptop issues, he completed both a Google Data Analytics specialisation certificate and a Google Digital Marketing & E-commerce specialisation certificate. His commitment and dedication to the programme showed his resilience and willingness to overcome challenges. Additionally, he participated in paid work experience with a local Ugandan company as a Digital Marketing Intern.

Patrick is currently working as a digital marketer for a university in Uganda and serving as a part-time Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Data Analyst Officer with a community organization. He has also started his own business focused on providing IT services, including training.

© PATRICK KUMI



IRAQ

IRAQ: Improving learning-to-earning opportunities through life skills training, entrepreneurship, and meaningful youth engagement

Leveraging the Life Skills and Citizenship Education Framework for the Middle East and North Africa[25] developed jointly by UNICEF and the World Bank in 2019, UNICEF and ILO are collaborating in Iraq to support vulnerable displaced and host community youth to develop life and entrepreneurial skills that are in demand in today's job market and help them transition from learning to decent employment opportunities.

The collaboration links youth aged 18-24 who are enrolled in UNICEF-supported life skills and entrepreneurship training programmes in youth centres under Iraq's Directorate of Youth with ILO-supported employment service centres run by the governorate's Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs for further training and capacity building to enhance their employability.

Youth who complete the skills-development sessions are provided with career guidance and job-matching services to connect them with potential employers. ILO coordinates with local private sector actors as potential employers to accelerate the learning-to-earning approach of the program. Those who are interested in starting their own businesses are referred to advanced entrepreneurship and financial literacy training programmes provided by ILO, who also helps facilitate access to banks and financial institutions to get their businesses up and running.

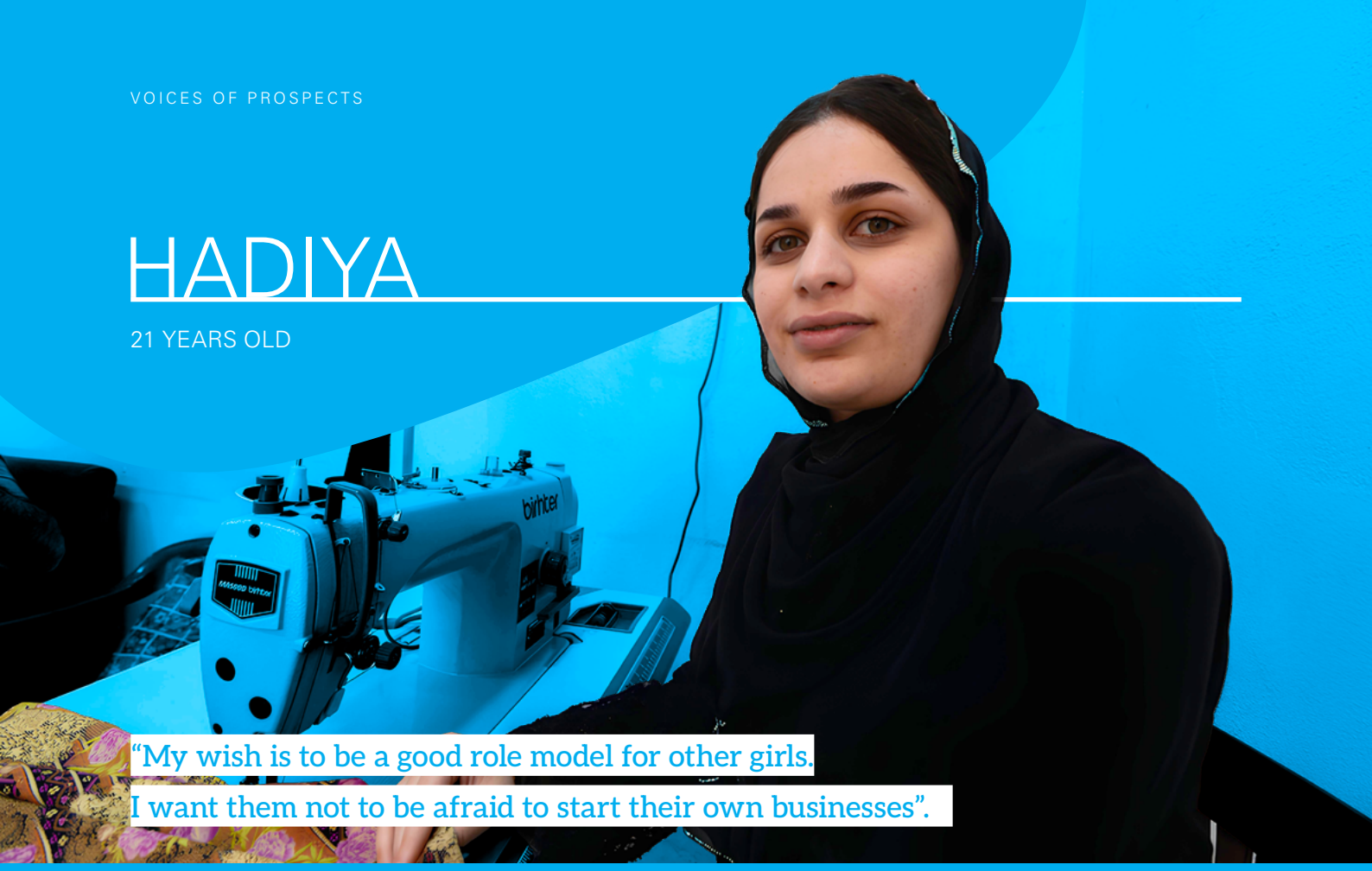
To date, **473 displaced and host community youth (215 female and 258 male) have participated in the programme, with 286 participants securing opportunities in the labour market following training (134 female, 152 male)**. The programme is showing benefits not only for the youth starting their careers, but for entire communities. In one of the youth centres in Mosul, programme participants have developed their own social initiatives, including one to help younger peers learn how to read and another to serve older generations in elderly homes, and many have gone on to work for or launch their own service-providing businesses, ranging from electronics to designing and tailoring clothing. The programme is also contributing to Iraq's climate-resilient future through a specialized on-the-job training track focused on green jobs, including improvement of irrigation systems on farms, sustainable waste management and forest restoration. Participants who complete this track have the opportunity to become team leaders, providing

technical support to new partners and organizations to help mainstream employment intensive approaches into planned infrastructural improvement.

This programme benefitted from the unique synergies available through PROSPECTS, bringing together UNICEF's expertise in youth skilling and meaningful youth engagement with ILO's expertise in employment and entrepreneurship and its access to the private sector and financial institutions, while integrating the UNICEF-World Bank Life Skills Framework.[26] The collaboration is innovative in its approach to linking employment creation with poverty reduction and local economic, social, and infrastructure development. It leverages local labour and resources, increases the capacity of local institutions, and invests in Iraq's future changemakers. Further, joint advocacy resulted in Iraq's Ministry of Youth and Sports committing in March 2023 to a national rollout of the UNICEF-World Bank Life Skills and Citizenship Education Framework, to equip every young person in Iraq with the needed skills to transition to adulthood and employment and become responsible active citizens.

HADIYA

21 YEARS OLD



"My wish is to be a good role model for other girls. I want them not to be afraid to start their own businesses".

IRAQ
Improving learning-to-earning opportunities through life skills training, entrepreneurship, and meaningful youth engagement

Hadiya, 21, from Dohuk, Iraq started her own entrepreneurial sewing business with SEED funding from PROSPECTS. The project, jointly implemented by UNICEF and ILO, supports displaced and host community youth with skills to start their own social and businesses initiatives. It also provides them with access to employment services and referrals to on-the-job training to further boost their skills to access paid employment or self-employment.

Through the Innovation Lab, Hadiya enhanced her entrepreneurial skills and learned how to start a women's clothing project. Hadiya's endeavor revolves around crafting traditional clothes through her sewing skills.

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JORDAN

JORDAN: Nahno Youth Platform – Improving communities and youth employability through volunteerism

In Jordan, the National Youth Engagement and Volunteering Movement Platform (Nahno) was launched in 2019 to simultaneously incentivize volunteerism and increase youth employability by making volunteer projects and internship opportunities easily accessible online. The platform was launched by the Crown Prince Foundation and UNICEF Jordan in a strategic partnership with the Ministry of Youth, with funding from PROSPECTS. Nahno targets youth across Jordan between the ages of 15 and 24 years old with a focus on those most vulnerable and in the greatest danger of being left behind, including girls, youth with disabilities, displaced youth, and those from varied socioeconomic backgrounds. The platform is designed to be accessible, flexible, and adaptive to the needs and interests of the participating youth and partners.

Youth can register on the platform to be matched to relevant meaningful opportunities near them. Partners who are interested in providing volunteer and internship opportunities are carefully vetted and assessed on basic requirements, such as their legal status as well as practices that conform to UNICEF policies on prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse. Once eligible, the partners can post opportunities on the portal. Partners include government entities, private sector companies, civil society (local community, faith-based, and nongovernmental organizations), academia, and social enterprises. At the end of their engagement, youth have an opportunity to both receive feedback about their performance and share feedback about their experience with the hosting organizations.

Youth are also encouraged to bring forward their own initiatives within their communities. Youth 'Volunteer Ambassadors' have been established across all major educational institutions to act as a coordinating body tasked with creating engagement opportunities for their peers, encouraging participation, and documenting activities. To address the financial costs that may limit youth engagement in volunteer activities, a Youth Volunteer Incentive Fund was established, allowing young people to access micro-grants for qualifying activities, with grant sizes proportional to the number of volunteers and duration of engagement.

As of 1 April 2024, **534,594 opportunities from over 2,993 entities have been posted on Nahno, and over 155,032 youth (65 per cent female, 13 per cent refugees, and 2 per cent people with disabilities) are registered on the platform. Over 4.2 million volunteering hours have been logged**.

Hundreds of these volunteer opportunities have had an environmental focus, including water conservation, waste collection, and tree planting.

To help recognize efforts by volunteers and incentivize engagement, a mechanism to convert volunteering hours to points was implemented. Each volunteer opportunity posted on the Nahno platform carries a points value, determined based on factors such as the degree of impact on the community, skills-building potential, the degree of difficulty, and the location. Participants can accumulate and redeem their points for a range of incentives that match their personal and professional interests and needs, ranging from phone credit, movie passes, and discounts, to more focused employability offerings, such as e-courses, mentorship, internships and technical trainings offered by private sector partners. While fostering community engagement, Nahno enhances volunteers' skills and CVs, preparing them for their transition to adulthood and work.

The programme has a triple bottom line of success:

- **Youth** can engage in their communities while acquiring new experiences, building their CVs, and networking to improve future career prospects;
- **Partners** can access a diverse and flexible pool of talented youth and harness their innovative ideas while advancing Corporate Social Responsibility goals;
- **Communities** benefit from the active citizenship of an engaged and empowered generation leading the country forward.

Nahno's success underscores the high demand for volunteering opportunities in Jordan and their crucial role in skills development and youth employability. The platform was catalytic in securing government endorsement of a National Volunteering Charter[27] and the establishment of a National Volunteering Steering Committee by the Jordanian Cabinet in 2021 and the launch of the Crown Prince Award for Voluntary Service in 2022.[28] In 2023, the Ministry of Youth tasked UNICEF to lead on the process of developing a National Volunteering Strategy. The Ministry of Youth adopted Nahno as the national official volunteering platform to be rolled out in public schools and universities across Jordan. Nahno has been presented as a proof of concept for UNICEF's Global Learning to Action Initiative[29] and has been successfully replicated in Lebanon and Iraq, demonstrating its potential to drive youth volunteerism and engagement on a broader scale.



RAWAN

20 YEARS OLD

"I see Azraq camp as a place where I can be successful and productive. This is because by facing up to challenges, we can learn from them and be successful from them".

JORDAN
Nahno Youth Platform

Having arrived in 2016 in Azraq Refugee Camp, Jordan, Rawan had hoped that leaving Syria would lead to a brighter future. While Rawan continued to study and work hard at school, it wasn't until she first saw Nahno in action that she felt real hope for the first time since fleeing Syria. Nahno, a volunteering platform that ensures that the most vulnerable young people have opportunities to engage in their communities and improve their employability skills, inspired Rawan to think about volunteering as a way to enrich her life.

Soon after she registered and began volunteering, she was selected for an ambassador role in Nahno, which involved speaking to other young people about the importance of volunteering and why they too should get involved in the movement. Her volunteer experience helped Rawan land a scholarship to obtain a degree, and also a new role in the camp as a library assistant. Recruiters told her that being a volunteer ambassador showed that she had strong leadership skills and was good at working with people from different backgrounds.

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KENYA

KENYA: Making hands-on STEM education accessible in refugee camps

Like many countries, Kenya has recognized STEM education as fundamental to national development, productivity, economic competitiveness and society's wellbeing, but has seen low uptake and performance of STEM subjects, with mean scores below 40 per cent[30] and a gender disparity leaving girls farther behind. Access to STEM learning and career pathways are even further out of reach for displaced children and youth than the national population.

To bridge these gaps and break displacement, gender, and disability barriers, UNICEF teamed up with Windle International Kenya in 2020 to promote the uptake of STEM subjects and improve learning outcomes in Kakuma, Kalobeyei and Dadaab refugee camp secondary schools, in coordination with UNHCR who manages the camp schools. PROSPECTS provided funding for this joint initiative to build the capacity of teachers and equip schools with STEM teaching and learning materials for virtual and physical laboratories, including equipment, textbooks, and supplementary revision materials in physics, chemistry, and biology. **These supplies have benefitted 26,608 learners**.

In addition to equipment, the intervention involves mentorship and career guidance to help boys and girls break gender stereotypes. Secondary school girls are matched with female role models to encourage them and spark interest in STEM careers. Hands-on experiences to promote real life application of their learnings, including participation in science competitions and national science fairs, helps girls build their critical thinking, creativity, and confidence to pursue STEM professions.

The innovative virtual labs have enabled learners to undertake practical science experiments amidst the challenges of inadequate physical laboratories and equipment in high-density camp settings. The learners use laptops and projectors provided through the initiative to carry out virtual science experiments and can do so even in the absence of teachers. The availability of the virtual labs has increased the experience and confidence of learners since they can do practical experiments at their convenience.

Performance trends in Kakuma and Dadaab reveal significant improvement in learning outcomes across multiple subjects in the four years since the STEM initiative began in 2020. **In Kakuma, a consistent upward trend has been observed in STEM subject scores between 2020 to 2023, with Mathematics scores rising from 1.04 to 1.55, Biology scores from 1.98 to 2.09, Chemistry scores from 1.33 to 1.74, and Physics scores from 2.52 to 2.93. Similarly, in Dadaab, performance shows notable improvement, with Mathematics scores escalating from 2.52 in 2020 to 4.40 in 2023, Biology from 2.78 to 5.10, Chemistry from 2.30 to 4.40, and Physics from 5.80 to 7.30 over the same period.**[31]

At the national level, UNICEF is working with the Ministry of Education on the development of a national STEM strategy and a policy to promote inclusive, quality, and relevant STEM education at the secondary school level and initiatives to boost interest in STEM education and careers, particularly among girls. With support from UNICEF, the Ministry of Education is reviewing the virtual laboratory model for a possible nation-wide scale up to reduce challenges around teacher shortages and infrastructure. The innovative model implemented within the camp settings has demonstrated the potential of technology to enhance access to quality education throughout the country.

MELVIN

18 YEARS OLD



"I don't look at tackling and conquering the boundaries in STEM related subjects as a challenge anymore because my school has created an inviting climate to study science."

KENYA
Making hands-on STEM education accessible in refugee camps

In 2021, Melvin was one of 400 students attending a secondary school near the Kakuma refugee camp in Kenya's northwest. At the time, she was the only girl from her grade at the school taking physics, and she was a top student in other sciences. A PROSPECTS-supported project at Melvin's school which placed an emphasis on STEM subjects allowed her to cultivate her passion for science and apply her talents.

"I have revision books, our teachers have the best knowledge, and they are very supportive. I have attended sessions for counselling and mentorship and I feel like my dream to become a medical doctor is soon meeting reality."

"I will be a doctor and find treatment to diseases like COVID-19," said Melvin in 2021, **"No challenge will stop me from achieving my dreams."**

Melvin went on to excel in her Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE) in 2022 and received an admission to Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology in Kenya to pursue a Bachelor of Science course.

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UNICEF's 'Youth on the Move Fellowship' Programme in Jordan, Lebanon, Kenya, and Uganda

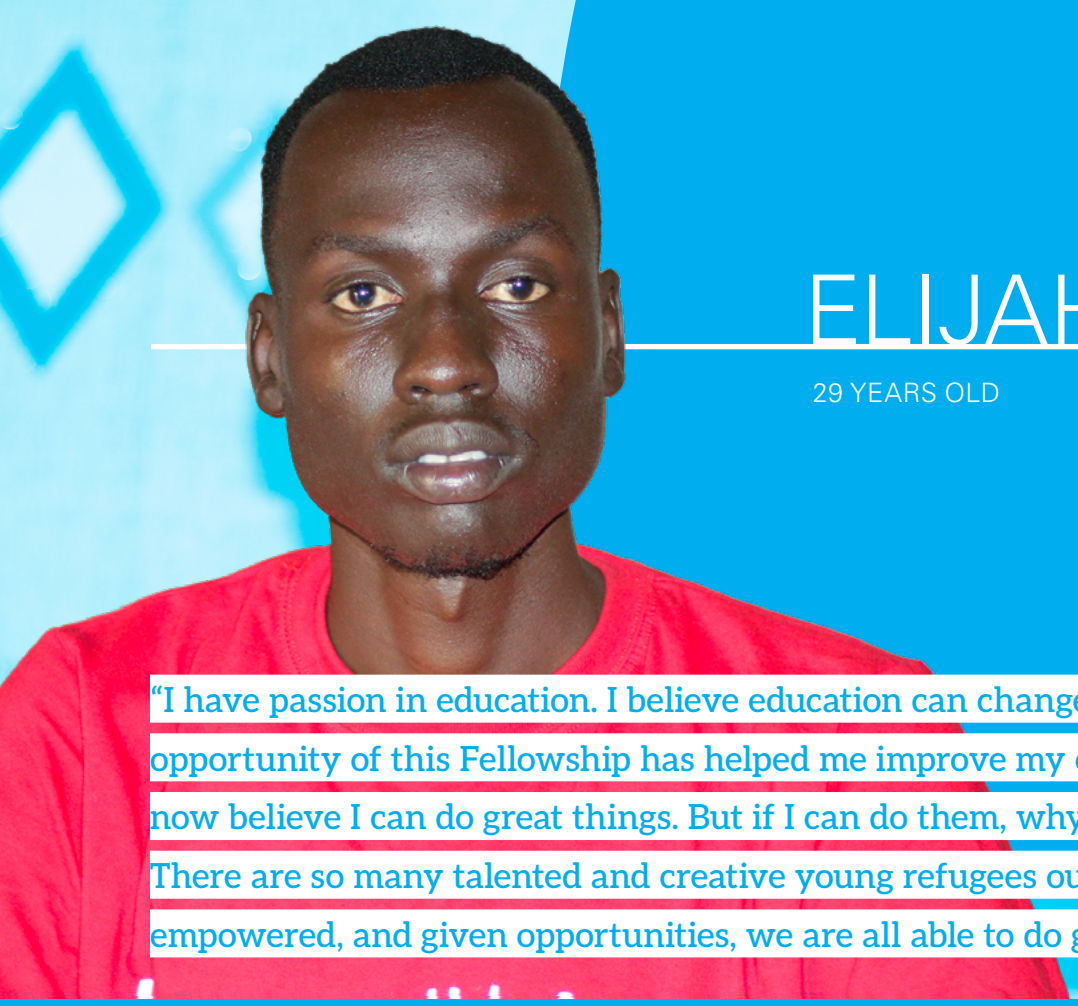
For many youth on the move, internships and entry-level positions – including those at UN agencies – are out of reach due to stringent and exclusionary criteria. Their talents and potential remain undiscovered because of the circumstances they were born into, their migratory journeys or other legal, administrative, financial barriers beyond their control. Despite having valuable experiences and qualifications, they may lack the formal proof required by many internship and job postings. This reinforces disadvantage and discrimination in an already uneven playing field.

In response, UNICEF and Children and Youth International/Migration Youth and Children Platform (MYCP), with funding support from PROSPECTS, launched a paid fellowship programme in 2022 that offers talented and passionate youth on the move opportunities to work with UNICEF for 3-12 months.

Twenty-three fellows in three cohorts have joined UNICEF Headquarters, Regional, and Country Offices, including in Jordan, Lebanon, Kenya, and Uganda. Fellows are between the ages of 18-30 and identify as refugees, asylum-seekers, internally displaced persons, or migrants. To qualify for the programme, candidates do not need to be enrolled in undergraduate or graduate studies or have recently graduated, which is the typical requirement for UN internships. While candidates must have basic digital/computer skills, UNICEF hosting offices and teams offer support to ensure access to connectivity and devices as needed. Although on-site options are preferred, remote work modalities are possible to ensure that mobility constraints or high living costs at duty stations are not barriers to accessing the fellowship.

The programme is mutually beneficial to Fellows and UNICEF hosting offices. Fellows are extensively supported through mentorship and capacity-building to enhance their work skills, develop their career goals, and establish invaluable connections through networking. Fellows become an integral part of UNICEF's day-to-day work, with their perspectives, contributions, and ideas helping to strengthen the quality of programmes. To culminate their experience, each Fellow completes a capstone project that they lead from start to finish, resulting in a concrete deliverable in their portfolio to demonstrate their accomplishment. Even after fellowship completion, they remain part of a supportive community where they can continue to network and exchange experiences and advice with previous and future Fellows.

After a successful pilot phase, UNICEF is now working to scale-up the programme, including exploring how to institutionalize the Fellowship into the organization's regular employment offerings and HR processes and encouraging external partners to create similar opportunities for migrant and displaced youth.



ELIJAH

29 YEARS OLD

"I have passion in education. I believe education can change minds. The opportunity of this Fellowship has helped me improve my confidence, and I now believe I can do great things. But if I can do them, why not other refugees? There are so many talented and creative young refugees out there. If we are empowered, and given opportunities, we are all able to do great things."

UNICEF's Youth on the Move Fellowship programme

Elijah grew up happily in a South Sudanese village at his parents' farm. When civil war and intercommunal conflict broke out in South Sudan, he had to make the hard choice of leaving and came to Kakuma refugee camp in Kenya with his younger brother. As the sole carer for his young brother, life in the refugee camp wasn't easy for 16-year-old Elijah. Coming back from school, he often had to worry about finding food for him and his brother. Despite the challenges, Elijah managed to graduate from high school and was awarded a university scholarship that allowed him to earn a teaching degree. His goal was to give back to the refugee community, helping other refugees get an education. He returned to Kakuma eager to share his knowledge, and started teaching at a high school in the camp, where he taught a class of 250 refugee learners of all ages, many older than him. Wanting to reach even more young refugees, he founded a community initiative called 'Lift me up' that provides mentoring to young refugees to help them continue their studies or find job opportunities.

In 2023, Elijah joined UNICEF Kenya as a Youth on the Move Fellow, working with the Education team to help them include refugees in the design and implementation of education programmes. One of the highlights of his Fellowship was the opportunity to represent refugee youth at the Global Refugee Forum in Geneva, where he contributed his perspectives on the challenges faced by refugees and appealed to world leaders to design programmes that prioritize the best interests and needs of refugees.

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Conclusion and looking ahead

Results from the first five years of PROSPECTS demonstrate the potential of a multi-sectoral approach that leverages the comparative advantage of humanitarian and development partners and reliable, multi-year funding to transform the lives of displaced and host community children and youth in protracted displacement situations.

Across countries, the PROSPECTS interventions are driving inclusion and showing a return on the investment in strengthening child-critical systems. An emphasis on delivering solutions and services through local and national systems rather than parallel humanitarian service delivery is resulting in **stronger systems that benefit everyone – forcibly displaced persons, host communities, and host governments**. These interventions provide the social safety nets so urgently needed to achieve vital protection, education, and employment outcomes for children and youth, and thereby contribute to social cohesion and community resilience. At the same time, systems strengthening is helping countries achieve their long-term development outcomes and the Sustainable Development Goals, while fulfilling commitments under the Global Compact on Refugees. Moreover, evidence is showing that the right inclusion policies and development support can reduce the cost of hosting forcibly displaced populations and bring economic benefits.

Further, the PROSPECTS experience has confirmed that meaningful participation of displaced and host community children and youth is not a nice-to-have, but essential in creating an enabling environment for inclusion, programme effectiveness, and long-term sustainability. Including children and youth in decision-making and programme design has created important opportunities to unlock talent and forge solutions. Close coordination with community-based committees, local implementing partners, and government entities ensure PROSPECTS' interventions are responsive and contextualized to communities' needs while simultaneously fostering local ownership. As proof of the sustainability and scalability of this localized approach, many interventions incubated under PROSPECTS are now transitioning to government-run programmes thanks to time, sustained funding, and joint engagement.

As an added benefit, PROSPECTS' integrated programming is inspiring the UN system to work differently, bridging the UN/IFI divide, and bringing in the private sector as a co-creator of solutions, showing positive spillover effects in the way these actors deliver together even beyond the PROSPECTS context.

Looking ahead, PROSPECTS finds itself at a critical juncture with great opportunity. While the needs of forcibly displaced and host community children and youth have never been greater and their contexts remain complex, the tools to address these challenges – from evidence-based policies and programmes to integrate FDPs into national systems, to new learning-to-earning pathways, to youth participation mechanisms – are now available to governments and partners in PROSPECTS countries. As the partnership kicks off a second phase (2024-2027), it will continue to leverage its unique position, sitting at the heart of the humanitarian-development nexus, and continuing its efforts to innovate, incubate, and scale.

Endnotes

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11 These outcomes are outlined in the PROSPECTS 2023-2027 Narrative Theory of Change.

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15 PROSPECTS contributed to the coverage of 3,200 children for the first year, and 1,600 children for the following years.

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17 United Nations Children's Fund, 'Supporting Vulnerable Children's School Participation and Wellbeing: UNICEF's Hajati Cash-Transfer Programme - Post-Distribution Monitoring Report for the 2021/2022 School Year' (unpublished).

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20 According to a regular report from implementing partner Geneva Global Ethiopia.

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22 Yoma is an ecosystem of value-aligned partners that partner to drive scalable impact connecting youth, in particular the most marginalised, to opportunity and impact.

23 The African Coding Network supports young people to select quality learning-to-earning pathways, train in in-demand digital skills, and accelerate their careers in tech.

24 For more information, see: Umuzi slide deck on Digital Learning-to-Earning Pathways in Eastern and Southern Africa

25 United Nations Children's Fund and the World Bank Group, *Measuring Life Skills in the Context of Life Skills and Citizenship Education in the Middle East and North Africa*, 2019. A joint effort of UNICEF and the World Bank, this publication aims at providing a standardized approach for assessing life skills proficiency and distribution across school-based populations, to inform education decision makers and practitioners on potentially useful education interventions to enhance life skills. Findings of this research informed the development of a new standardized instrument to measure life skills. Designed for national large-scale assessment, the instrument has been tested in Egypt, Tunisia and the State of Palestine in 2019, in order to represent much of the diversity across the region so that the final instrument can be used widely in the MENA region.

26 Ibid.

27 moy.gov.jo

28 alhusseinvolunteeraward.jo

29 UNICEF's Learning to Action Initiative is a partnership that aims to empower 50 million young people (aged 10-24) around the world by 2030 to reach their highest potential through volunteerism and skills-building opportunities that support the issues they care about – education transformation, gender equality race equality, climate change, mental health, nutrition and healthy diets, humanitarian action, peace building, and more. Learning to Action is being rolled out in Iraq, Honduras, Poland, Ukraine, Pakistan, Indonesia, and Egypt, utilizing online platforms to connect young people to opportunities to take action in their communities.

30 As reported by the Kenya National Examination Council (KNEC) between 2018-2021.

31 Score results out of 12 points total. Results reported by the Kenya National Examination Council (KNEC).

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