

## Futures Dialogue

### Migration, Emergencies and Education

**Date and time:** Wednesday 29 April 2026, 14:00–15:30 CET (Paris time)

**Languages:** English, French

**Format:** Zoom meeting - [Please click here to register](#)

#### Overview

Migration, forced displacement, and emergencies are increasingly shaping the global context in which education systems operate. According to UNHCR, more than 123 million people worldwide were forcibly displaced by the end of 2024, including millions of young people whose education pathways are disrupted by conflict, environmental crises, and economic instability. While international efforts have focused largely on access to primary and secondary education, significant gaps remain in access to tertiary and higher education, with only about 9% of refugee youth have access to higher education globally<sup>1</sup>.

At the same time, education systems are operating in an increasingly uncertain and rapidly evolving environment characterized by overlapping emergencies often described as a “polycrisis” in which climate change, migration, geopolitical tensions, technological transformations, and economic volatility interact and reinforce one another<sup>2</sup>. These interconnected disruptions create complex and rapidly changing challenges for education systems, often exposing structural vulnerabilities and placing additional pressure on institutions already responding to emergencies and displacement.

Looking to the future, recent global foresight work conducted through the GPE KIX Global Horizon Scan on Education System Resilience<sup>3</sup> highlights how emerging changes across political, economic, social, technological, environmental, legal, and value-related domains are likely to transform education systems in the coming decades. These shifts include geopolitical realignments affecting education financing, rapid advances in artificial intelligence and digital technologies reshaping learning environments, and increasing climate-related disruptions affecting mobility and migration patterns. Understanding how these forces interact is essential for anticipating disruptions and strengthening the resilience of education systems in the long-term.

Within this changing landscape, tertiary and higher education institutions play a critical role in strengthening social and educational resilience and supporting long-term development pathways. Universities not only expand access to learning opportunities for displaced and crisis-affected learners but can also equip them with advanced skills, research capacities, and professional qualifications that enable meaningful participation in the world of work and contribute to social and economic development. In this sense, higher education can act as a bridge between humanitarian response and longer-term development planning, supporting recovery, innovation, and sustainable livelihoods in both host communities and countries of origin.

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<sup>1</sup> United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. (n.d.). [Higher Education and Skills](#). UNHCR.

<sup>2</sup> Morin, E., & Kern, A.-B. (1999). *Homeland Earth: A manifesto for the new millennium*. Hampton Press.

<sup>3</sup> Global Partnership for Education Knowledge and Innovation Exchange. (2026). [Global Horizon Scan: An Overview of Disruptors and Transformers Impacting Education Systems](#). GPE KIX.

Looking to the future, and beyond teaching and training, universities could function as key knowledge hubs, generating research and evidence to better understand the complex intersections between migration, emergencies, education systems, and labour market dynamics. Through interdisciplinary research, policy engagement, and international collaboration, academic institutions should contribute to identifying emerging trends, informing policy responses, and developing innovative solutions to address the challenges of displacement, and contributing to post-conflict reconstruction and reconciliation of populations. Academic networks and partnerships are particularly important for fostering knowledge exchange, strengthening research capacity, and supporting evidence-based policymaking between countries and world regions. Anticipating emerging trends and disruptions has become essential for building resilient, adaptive, and future-oriented education systems.

UNESCO's approach to Education in Emergencies (EiE)<sup>4</sup> is built around six key areas of action, all aimed at protecting the right to education during crises. It follows an "all-hazards, all-risks" approach, addressing overlapping challenges such as conflict, climate events, and displacement, and spans all phases of a crisis—before, during, and after—with a strong focus on long-term system resilience, for all levels of education.

[Futures Dialogues](#) are a platform to identify, analyze, and debate emerging issues and trends related to the mandate of UNESCO across education, the sciences, culture, and communication. Through a forward-looking and horizon-scanning approach, the sessions aim to articulate key debates, highlight emerging areas for research and policy attention, and promote interdisciplinary and intersectoral exchanges that draw on insights from diverse fields and knowledge systems.

This dialogue on Migration, Emergencies and Education led by UNESCO's Section for Migration, Displacement, Emergencies and Education<sup>5</sup>, will bring together members of the UNITWIN/UNESCO Chairs Programme as well as other researchers and junior scholars, development partners, policymakers, and civil society organizations. The discussion will explore how collaboration among universities, research networks, and policy actors can strengthen education responses in contexts of displacement and crisis, while contributing to more inclusive, resilient, and future-oriented education systems.

**\*\* [Register Here](#) \*\***

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<sup>4</sup> See [UNESCO Strategic Framework for Migration, Displacement, Emergencies, and Education \(2024-2029\)](#)  
*Protecting and prioritizing education in times of crisis*

<sup>5</sup> For more information see [UNESCO's work in Education in Emergencies](#)

## Provisional Agenda

<b>Migration, Emergencies and Education</b> Wednesday 29 April 2026, 14:00-15:30 CET (Paris time) (TBC)	
14:00-14:05	<b>Welcome</b> <b>Min Jeong Kim</b> , Director, Education 2030, Education Sector, UNESCO
14:05-14:15	<b>Keynote</b> <i>A changing future vs. education resilience</i> , <b>Serhiy Kovalchuk</b> , Senior Programme Officer, Knowledge and Innovation Exchange (KIX), International Development Research Centre, Canada
14:15-14:45	<b>Panel discussion</b> <b>Moderator: Min Zhang</b> , Project Officer, Section for Education in Emergencies, Education 2030, Education Sector, UNESCO <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Presentation of Inzone programme</i>, <b>Karl Blanchet</b>, Professor in Humanitarian Public Health, University of Geneva and Global University Academy, Switzerland</li> <li>• <b>ChaoJing Sun</b>, Designated Assistant Researcher, School of History, Nanjing University, Assistant to UNESCO Chair on Peace Studies, China</li> <li>• <b>Elif Çetin</b>, Associated Professor, Chair, Department of International Relations, Yaşar University, UNESCO Chair on International Migration, Türkiye</li> </ul>
14:45-15:15	<b>Comments and discussion</b>
15:15-15:25	<b>Concluding Reflections</b> <b>Lily Neyestani</b> , Chief, Section for Education in Emergencies, Education 2030, Education Sector, UNESCO Paris
15:25-15:30	<b>Closing remarks and next steps</b> <b>Keith Holmes</b> , Research Coordinator, UNITWIN/UNESCO Chairs Programme

**\*\* [Register Here](#) \*\***