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United Nations Institute for Training and Research

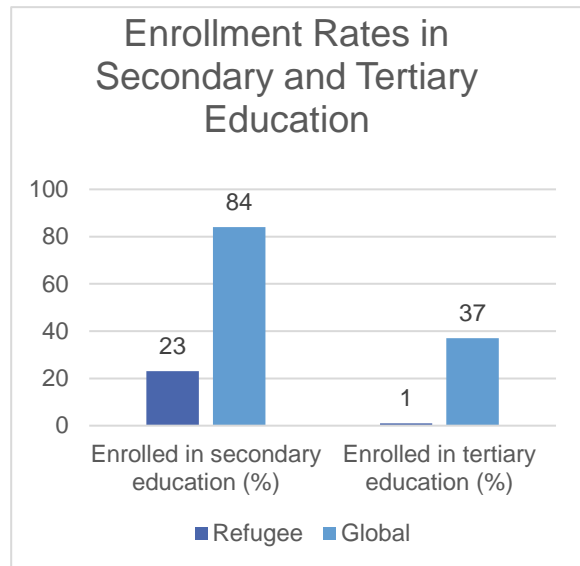
Leave No-One Behind: Bringing Vocational Education and Training to Vulnerable Populations

CONCEPT NOTE

Background

According to UNHCR latest figures, in 2018 an unprecedented **70.8 million** people around the world have been forced from home as result of conflict or persecution. This figure has never been higher since UNHCR records began in 1950. Among them are nearly **25.9 million refugees, over half of whom are under the age of 18.**

A large proportion of this youth growing up in refugee settlements lack the relevant knowledge and skills needed in the labour markets or further studies, which affects their livelihood prospects and opportunities. Difficult access to quality education is a major challenge in refugee settings. Only 23% of refugee adolescents are enrolled in secondary education (compared to 84% globally) which, in the refugee context mostly consists of unaccredited short courses. As for tertiary education, enrolment for refugees worldwide is just 1%, compared to 36% of the global population. A large proportion of youth growing up in such settings lack the relevant skills, competencies and expertise needed to integrate the national or regional labor markets, which affects durably their livelihood prospects and opportunities.



A prevailing gender disparity in the provision of education at all levels must also be noted. Young girls in refugee camps face a distinctive set of barriers to learning and are disproportionately affected by the lack of quality and accessible education. The refugee girls at secondary level are only half as likely to enroll in school as their male peers, although girls make up half of the school-age refugee population. Furthermore, as girls grow older, the gender gap grows. At the level of tertiary education and vocational training, this translates into marked inequalities in provision and access, thus widening broader gender inequality trends in livelihoods and economic opportunities.

Leave No-One Behind (LNOB) introduces an implementation model of flexible pathways to skills and competency development, resulting in recognised qualification i.e. access to a lifelong learning path, based on Finnish vocational education and training model. The LNOB pathways are designed as modular competency-based programmes with elements such as recognition of prior skills and learning. This allows for personalized study paths focusing on transition to employment and or entrepreneurship within a short time frame. The priority target populations of this initiative are persons of concern including refugees, persons in refugee-like situations, internally displaced persons and returnees; asylum seekers; and stateless persons. In addition, by paying particular attention to tackling the specific obstacles faced by women and girls in such settings in accessing vocational and professional education and training; to providing a gender-responsive learning environment; and to ensuring gender parity among project beneficiaries, the present LNOB model upholds the promotion of gender equality as a primary cross-cutting goal.

Goal and Outcomes

LNOB contributes to strengthening local capacities for Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) hence providing and ensuring inclusive quality education, and promoting lifelong learning for all, which in turn allow beneficiaries to contribute effectively as part of the workforce, regardless of location. In doing this, the project contributes directly to the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development and Goals of availability, accessibility, acceptability, adaptability and gender equality.

The initiative also contributes directly to creating and delivering a roadmap for sustainable development of skills. The model builds on local competency development, anticipation of growth sectors and training for related qualifications. Local recognition of qualifications is built into the model, and Finnish qualifications, mapped to the

European Qualification Framework, facilitate mobility within the EU. The proposed LNOB model is a holistic approach including supporting the development of local technical and vocational education and training (TVET) tracks, boosts job creation through a strong entrepreneurship focus, while providing paths to employment locally, regionally and internationally.

The focus and key components of the LNOB model

The LNOB model offers youth and adults access to quality technical and vocational education and training programs by providing access to lifelong learning and professional skills development opportunities. The operational model allows for quick adaptation to local circumstances and supports delivery through local partnerships.

LNOB **short-term** outcomes are enhanced capacities of local agencies to plan and deliver quality technical and vocational education and training and increased availability of culturally appropriate, inclusive, safe technical and vocational education and training opportunities, delivered through blended learning solutions. LNOB **long-term** outcomes are increased access for populations in hard-to-reach locations (including refugees, returnee refugees, internally displaced people and asylum seekers) to quality technical and vocational education and training (based on flexible models, recognizing prior learning and skills).

By offering the vulnerable populations an opportunity to obtain an accredited diploma granted by a licensed Finnish TVET provider, the programs increase their employment opportunities and open doors to further studies regardless of present or future location. The diploma programs offered are based on Finnish vocational and professional qualifications (EQF levels 4 and 5) and uphold Finnish quality standards. Students will experience an empowering learning journey with tangible outcomes. The Finnish qualifications are recognised with the EU and selected OECD countries. A process of recognition in target countries will be part of the projects.



Partnerships

Scalability and local ownership are a crucial element in host communities. Local partnerships and co-development models are cornerstones of vocational and professional education and training. The model includes training and certifying local trainers as well as quality assurance measures for long-term support. The programmes lead to recognized Finnish diplomas – these diplomas are recognized globally, and important stepping stones for further studies at tertiary level, employment and entrepreneurship. Job creation is an important element in the training programmes, thus entrepreneurial skills are embedded in the pedagogical approach as well as the skillset.

Key elements boosting the local image of TVET:

- Anticipation practices to support long-term match of training and employability;
- Impact measurement of training;
- Support to local transition from vocational short courses to lifelong learning paths;
- Reinforcement of local community development into learning partnerships and ultimately a learning ecosystem with recognition of a win – win through active participation.



The cooperation in partnerships takes many forms: joint TVET policy-making, apprenticeships, collaborative top-down and bottom-up innovation, entrepreneurship hubs, teacher professional development within companies, etc. The LNOB initiative envisages a public-private partnership between the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) and Omnia Education Partnerships (OEP), acting as the central body reaching out to a network of Finnish and international partners for implementation of specific projects and activities. Finland University network, consisting of University of Turku, Tampere, Eastern Finland and Åbo Academy, contribute to evidence-based scientific evaluation of projects.

UNITAR, an autonomous UN body established in 1963, the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (www.unitar.org) is a dedicated training arm of the United Nations System, having the mandate to enhance the effectiveness of the UN through diplomatic training, and to increase the impact of national actions through public awareness-raising, education and training of public policy officials. UNITAR provides training and capacity development activities to assist mainly developing countries with special attention to Least Developed Countries (LDCs), Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and other groups and communities who are most vulnerable, including those in conflict situations.

Omnia Education Partnerships (OEP) is the international commercial arm of four Finnish organizations excelling in delivering education and training with an impact nationally and globally. As a collaborator, Finland University combines the power of leading Finnish research universities to provide expertise for research and impact measurement.

The results from a pilot project in Uganda involving training and certifying of trainers for the Finnish Diploma for Entrepreneurs has yielded promising results. 20 trainers were initially trained and certified, with selected trainers then delivering training to 60 participants at a refugee settlement. Six months after the training was completed, 73% of the participants were self-employed, reaching on average an income ten times the country's minimum wage.