

Launch of the GEM Report paper: Migration, Displacement, and Trauma

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The conditions under which migrants and refugees have to leave their homes and homelands can be traumatic in the extreme. Whether they have crossed the Mediterranean in an overcrowded and unsafe boat, been barricaded in a Syrian basement for protection from shelling, or been chased away from a burning village in Myanmar, the events of their departures and their journeys can leave permanent scars on those affected – and none more than on children. Even those fortunate enough to find a sanctuary often face further hardship or discrimination in their host communities that can further exacerbate their trauma.

The crucial role of education in helping address the trauma of displacement is increasingly being recognised. Education can stimulate resilience, nurture learners' social and emotional development and give children and communities hope for the future. It can help communities rebuild, by healing some of the trauma and thus in the long term encouraging social cohesion, reconciliation and peacebuilding. Schools can help migrant and refugee children deal with trauma through psychosocial support integrated with social-emotional learning interventions, helping to build self-confidence, resilience and emotional regulation skills, and teaching children to create relationships based on trust with others. Far from taking over the role of specialized mental health professionals, teachers can be trained to recognize the signs of trauma and deploy teaching methods to help mitigate its effects on learning.

This event will launch a new GEM Report paper looking at formal and non-formal education interventions, notably those focused on social-emotional learning, as a promising approach to providing psychosocial support for mitigating the negative effects of trauma on migrants and refugees. The review covers emergency settings as well as host communities and countries; it deals with access and the learning environment; the content of teaching and learning both for children and their parents; and the role that teachers and other professionals can play.