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Challenges and Opportunities for Youth in the Democratic Republic of Congo

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ABSTRACT: This document is a bibliography of various documents related to youth programming, youth demographics, and vulnerable populations in conflict-affected environments and the Democratic Republic of Congo in particular. The document is the result of a systematic review of the development experience literature. Sources referenced include: USAID Development Experience Clearinghouse; various United Nations agencies, the World Bank, the Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies, the International Rescue Committee, Global AIDS Alliance, Human Rights Watch, Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, the United States Department of Labor, Women for Women International, and the Women's Refugee Commission. The document is organized by youth programming, youth demographics and issues in the DRC, and youth and vulnerable populations. Relevant links for articles that are accessible online are included.

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Youth Programming

Baxter, P. and Bethke, L. (2009). *Alternative education: Filling the gap in emergency and post-conflict situations.* **Paris, France: UNESCO and CfBT Education Trust.**

http://www.ineesite.org/uploads/documents/store/Alternative_education.pdf

This book reviews the types of alternative education programs that are available in emergency and post-conflict situations, with a focus on accelerated learning programs (ALP) and home-based or community-based schools. Chapter 3 provides an explanation of ALPs, which condense the primary cycle of school into a shorter period of time for older students who have missed out on primary schooling due to conflict. It further explains that ALPs are not merely about shortening the amount of time it takes for a student to complete their primary education, but about how people learn best so that a variety of different methods can be applied to help students learn more effectively and therefore more quickly. This chapter also includes case studies of how ALPs have been implemented in Sierra Leone, Nepal, and Liberia, and highlights some of the key issues, such as teacher training and challenges of targeting the age range of children who are allowed to participate in ALPs. For now, while there are some promising signs of the impact of ALP, information on the success of ALPs is still limited. Better information is needed for program planners and implementers to design or redesign programs to better meet the needs of beneficiaries.

Berghof Research Center for Constructive Conflict Management. (2005). *Youth in war-to-peace transitions: Approaches of international organizations* **(report no. 10). Berlin, Germany: Kemper, Y.**

http://www.berghof-conflictresearch.org/documents/publications/br10e.pdf

This paper discusses the importance of youth in participating in the war-to-peace transition, yet the challenges that exist because of the difficulty in conceptualizing their role, particularly given the varying definitions of "youth" (primarily with regard to their age). It also examines the three general approaches of international organizations to youth programming: the rights-based approach, the economic approach, and the socio-political approach. In addition, it explores the strengths and weaknesses of each approach to supporting youth, particularly in post-conflict environments, and suggests a more holistic approach. This paper includes an example of a Save the Children Demobilization and Reintegration Program (DRP) for former child soldiers in the DRC, illustrating important aspects of the rights-based approach and areas where it falls short in addressing the economic desires and prospects of youth to successfully sustain their reintegration.

Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies. (2011). *Education for crisis affected youth: A literature review.* **New York, NY: Zeus, B. and Chaffin, J.**

http://www.ineesite.org/uploads/documents/store/INEE_AYTT_LitReview_2012-02-14.pdf

This paper presents the importance of providing targeted assistance to youth in crisis situations, and explores the field of education for conflict-affected youth using three categories: Secondary and Tertiary Education; Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) and Livelihoods Training; and Life Skills, Peace Education and Recreational Activities. Given the limited amount of program experience in this field, this paper provides a review of the lessons learned in each category, followed by a summary of lessons across all three categories, so that stakeholders can better design and advocate for successful education programming for youth in crises.

The review finds a strong call for "holistic approaches that offer a continuum of services to facilitate the transition from education/training to income generation, and that have strong family and community linkages" (p. 3). Moreover, it concludes that the success of any programmatic intervention requires economic, political and sociocultural environments that allow youth to "safely explore, prove their skills and gain agency" (p. 3), and strong and effective cross-sectoral partnerships.

The Mitchell Group. (2011). *An evaluation of the core education skills for Liberian youth (CESLY) program and recommendations for future non-formal education programming in Liberia.* **Washington, D.C.: Evans, D., Jackson, M.B., Rodriguez, L. and Yalley, B.**

http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PDACT297.pdf

This is an end-of-project evaluation of the USAID-funded Core Education Skills for Liberian Youth (CESLY) project in Liberia undertaken to identify whether or not the project met its objectives, and to make recommendations to USAID/Liberia regarding how to expand access to and improve the quality of basic education for over-age and out-of-school youth in Liberia. The evaluation determined that there was 1) an increase in access to nonformal education (NFE) and ALP; 2) improvement in core literacy, numeracy, life skills, and work readiness skills (though with some mixed results); 3) improvement in teachers' skills; 4) an increase in the number of quality learning materials in the classrooms; 5) inadequate use of Learning Resource Centers because the materials they housed were not completely level-appropriate; 5) success in working with district Ministry of Education (MOE) staff and in influencing the design of the MOE's Alternative Basic Education strategy; and 6) limited impact of the Training for Employment Program. Based on the evaluation of the project, the report recommends: 1) starting slowly and building on success, especially given the limited capacity of the MOE; 2) establishing clarity regarding the program's purpose; 3) fostering an environment of experimentation and testing of different approaches; 4) encouraging the MOE to provide resources to the program; 5) being proactive and building capacity within the MOE; 6) fixing small things that can end up hampering project success; 7) using a "whole school" approach so that teachers can use NFE and ALP materials in the regular formal school program; 8) designing a low-cost model for replication so that the program can be scaled out; 9) enhancing the role and responsibility of parents and the community in the schools and districts; and 10) integrating programming into planning by the Government of Liberia.

USAID. (2006). *Youth and conflict: A brief review of available literature.* **Washington, DC: Sommers, M.**

http://www.crin.org/docs/edu_youth_conflict.pdf

This paper highlights key themes, trends, and promising prospects for war-affected youth and the programs that aim to support them. An analysis of programmatic responses reveals several widely shared program themes related to class, gender, advocacy, participation, work, and holism. This paper also reviews the six main youth programming areas emerging from the literature: vocational training, reproductive health, basic skills, peace education, empowerment, and psycho-social programming. In terms of enhancing youth programming, the document suggests the following:

- "significantly expanding the participation of female and lower-class youth in programme development
- immediately addressing the scarcity of quality evaluation documents
- dramatically enhancing and disseminating documentation of:
    - programme approaches that can yield lasting positive results
    - strategic planning, coordination and networking
    - the context of youth programming, including the role that international agencies play in war and post-war economies
- highlighting youth resilience and consistently demonstrating effective partnerships with youth in programming
- more effectively positioning programmes where youth increasingly reside
- seriously exploring possibilities for expanding youth access to capital
- upgrading the overall quality of youth programme documentation, and youth empowerment programmes in particular" (p. 2).

World Bank. (2009). *Changing the trajectory: Education and training for youth in Democratic Republic of Congo* **(working paper no. 168). Washington, D.C.: Bashir, S. (Available upon request.)**

With millions of out-of-school youth in the DRC, and many of these youth with only six years of primary education or less, the long-term economic growth in the DRC will depend on the government's ability to raise the educational attainment of these new entrants into the labor force. Given the demographic pressures in the DRC—with a demographic growth rate of 2.5 percent per year, the total population of 12–24 year olds will grow from 16.9 million in 2006 to 20.65 million in 2015 and 25.1 million in 2022—it is even more imperative for this challenge to be addressed. This report presents analyses and options to inform policy makers of ways to develop a holistic policy for the DRC's youth, including the results from a simulation model that incorporates enrollment in alternative education programs and considers alternative scenarios for developing the post-primary sector. Some of these suggested alternatives include the expansion of opportunities for alternative education and training for out-of-school children, the

extension of primary education, and the reorganization of secondary and technical/vocational training.

This paper breaks down the broad definition of "youth" into three subcategories and provides an overview of their status:

"*Status of Youth Population 12–14 Years*
Approximately 4.35 million young people belonged to this age group, of which:

- Approximately 68 percent (3 million) were out of school and hence had terminated their education.
- Only 10 percent reported being in the labor force. The majority, comprising 59 percent (2.5 million), was neither in school nor in the labor force, although underreporting of working, given the legal age limit, is a strong possibility. It is likely that a significant proportion of these young people are working as unpaid family workers.
- Of the 3.0 million who were out of school, almost all did not have basic literacy or numeracy skills: 27 percent had never enrolled in formal education, and 71 percent had some primary education but had not completed 6 years. These children could potentially continue their education, particularly those who had at least some primary education, although there could be demand side constraints if there were engaged in family work, which had an opportunity cost.
- Just over 30 percent (1.35 million) were in school, overwhelmingly in formal education, about equally divided between primary and secondary school, even though they should have been in the latter.

Status of Youth Population 15–19 Years
Of the 6.62 million individuals in this age group:

- Close to 80 percent (5.2 million) were out of school.
- Approximately 33 percent (2.18 million) were categorized as in the labor force.
- Of the 5.2 million who were out of school, 90 percent were functionally illiterate.
- Eighteen percent had never attended school; 70 percent had some primary education; 8 percent had completed 6 years of primary education; and 4 percent had completed 8 years of schooling.
- Approximately 20 percent of this age group (1.4 million) were still enrolled, the overwhelming proportion in secondary education.

Status of Youth Population 20–24 Years
Of the 5.9 million in this age group:

- Approximately 93 percent (5.4 million) were out of school.
- Sixty-one percent (3.6 million) were in the labor force. The remaining 1.9 million were not in the labor force.

- Of the 5.4 million who were out of school, 75 percent were functionally illiterate. Ten percent had no formal education, 65 percent had some primary education, 22 percent had a primary education leaving certificate, 11 percent had completed 8 years of education, and 3 percent had completed 12 years of upper secondary education.
- Only 7 percent of 20–24 year-olds (0.4 million) were still enrolled in education. Over half of them were still enrolled in secondary education" (p.15).

Youth Demographics and Issues in DRC

International Rescue Committee. (2008). *Mortality in the Democratic Republic of Congo: An ongoing crisis.* **New York, NY.**

http://www.rescue.org/sites/default/files/migrated/resources/2007/2006-7_congomortalitysurvey.pdf

The IRC conducted a nationwide mortality survey between May and July 2007 to estimate national and regional mortality rates; to evaluate mortality trends through comparisons with recent historical data; and to estimate the number of deaths in excess of the sub-Saharan baseline occurring throughout the DRC. Some of the key findings of the survey include:

- "More than four years after the signing of a formal peace agreement, the DR Congo's national crude mortality rate (CMR) of 2.2 deaths per 1,000 per month is 57 percent higher than the average rate for sub-Saharan Africa….As with previous surveys, mortality rates are significantly higher in the volatile eastern provinces than in the west of the country"(p.ii).
- "While insecurity persists in the eastern provinces, only 0.4 percent of all deaths across DR Congo were attributed directly to violence. As with previous IRC studies in DR Congo, the majority of deaths have been due to infectious diseases, malnutrition and neonatal- and pregnancy-related conditions. Increased rates of disease are likely related to the social and economic disturbances caused by conflict, including disruption of health services, poor food security, deterioration of infrastructure and population displacement" (p. iii).

United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs. (2011). *United Nations world youth report 2011: Youth employment: Youth perspectives on the pursuit of decent work in changing times.* **New York, NY.**

http://unworldyouthreport.org/index.php?option=com_k2&view=itemlist&layout=category&task=category&id=1&Itemid=67

The 2011 report focuses on youth employment issues, particularly as the current employment scenario for young people has been exacerbated by the global economic crisis. Youth unemployment rates are significantly higher than adult rates worldwide, and youth are also more likely to work in vulnerable employment. And despite gains in

education among women, their employment rates and prospects continue to lag behind those of men.

"Chapter I introduces the status of young people in the labour market and youth employment trends. It provides a snapshot of key youth employment-related demographics, highlighting the critical role of youth employment in social development. The chapter also considers positive and negative trends across countries in various stages of development to illustrate the state of youth employment world-wide.

Chapter II explores education, as the foundation for working life, with focus on views regarding educational quality and utility. Vocational education, life skills and entrepreneurship are highlighted. The chapter examines what some schools are doing, and what more can be done, to help young people transition to work. It considers ways for educational systems to be more responsive to the changing needs of economies and societies, and labour markets in particular. It also looks at ways in which young people may hold policymakers and decision-makers accountable for fulfilling the right to quality education.

Chapter III focuses on the transition of young people into work, particularly the search for a first job. It examines the availability among youth of information on labour markets and job seeking, and explores various mechanisms and tools to inform and advise young people, from networking to subsidized employment programmes. The chapter also looks into potential emerging areas of opportunity for young people.

Chapter IV explores the quality and conditions of jobs held by youth, and how young people's working situation interacts with their family and home lives. It addresses high rates among youth of underemployment, participation in the informal economy, vulnerable employment, wages and working conditions. The chapter also examines how a lack of decent work opportunities can influence family life, social processes such as marriage and fertility, as well as health and well-being. (pp. 12-13)"

This report cites a success story of a young woman's journey to make the DRC a Youth Employment Network (YEN) Lead Country, which is a partnership of the UN, ILO, and World Bank to mobilize action for decent and productive work for young people. She was also heavily involved in the drafting of the DRC's National Action Plan on Youth Employment, which was finalized in 2008. Her story can be found here: http://www.ilo.org/public/english/employment/yen/whatwedo/success/alice.htm

United Nations Economic Commission for Africa. (2011). *African youth report 2011: Addressing the youth education and employment nexus in the new global economy.* **Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.**

http://www.uneca.org/ayr2011/African%20Youth%20Report_2011_Final.pdf

This report focuses on the youth-education-employment nexus in a global economy, based on the assumption that having access to education and then to employment, is necessary for poverty reduction, political stability, peace and security, and sustainable development. It notes a prevailing theory of the pending demographic transition in Africa—that Africa will experience a demographic dividend resulting from declining mortality and fertility rates. To capitalize on the demographic dividend, it is imperative to

invest in education and skills development for youth in Africa by providing basic education, higher levels of education, and technical and vocational training. This report provides information and highlights best practices, as well as poses questions that policymakers and development stakeholders should take into consideration when addressing youth development issues.

United Nations Population Fund. (2009). *The adolescent experience in-depth: Using data to identify and reach the most vulnerable young people: Democratic Republic of Congo 2007.* **New York, NY.**

http://www.popcouncil.org/pdfs/PGY_AdolDataGuides/CongoDemRep2007.pdf

This report provides data on adolescent girls and boys and young women from ages 10-24, collected for the 2007 DRC Demographic and Health Survey. The data is separated into three main sections: 1) Mapping the Vast Diversity among Adolescents, 2) Key Transitions among Very Young Adolescents that Lead to Disadvantage, and 3) Context of Sexual Activity: Child Marriage, Gender Norms and Reproductive Health. The data includes information on population distribution, parental residence in households, parental survival, school enrollment, marital status among females, adolescents not in school and not living with parents, illiteracy, child marriage, pregnancy and childbearing, sexual activity, knowledge of HIV prevention methods, and use of contraception, among others.

World Bank. (2006). *World development report 2007: Development and the next generation.* **Washington, D.C. (Available upon request.)**

This report focuses on the importance of investing in youth for achieving growth and poverty reduction. In light of the many challenges that youth face—persistent illiteracy and unemployment, for example—this report offers a framework and provides examples of policies and programs to address these issues. It focuses on the five major life transitions that youth experience as areas for intervention: continuing to learn, starting to work, developing a healthful lifestyle, beginning a family, and exercising citizenship. It further presents three strategic areas for reform: broadening opportunities for developing human capital, developing youths' capabilities, and providing youth with second chances through targeted programs. This report also discusses demographic transitions and notes that the relative size of the youth population is still increasing in the DRC as it has not yet experienced its peak in fertility and youth population; in fact, the DRC is projected to have continuing rapid growth of its youth population for the next several decades and therefore dependency ratios have yet to fall, placing more pressure on resources for youth.

Youth and Vulnerable Populations

Global Aids Alliance. (2006.) *Zero tolerance: Stop the violence against women and children,* **stop HIV/AIDS. Washington, D.C. (Available upon request.)**

Children, orphans and other vulnerable children (OVC), refugees and displaced persons, 80% of whom are women and children, are particularly at risk for becoming victims of

violence. Violence is also inextricably linked to HIV—women who have experienced violence may be up to three times more likely to acquire HIV. This document provides a framework for a comprehensive response to violence against women and children comprised of several different pillars: 1) political commitment and resource mobilization, 2) legal and judicial reform, 3) health sector reform, 4) education sector reform, 5) community mobilization for zero tolerance, and 6) mass marketing for social change. It also includes case studies of instances where sub-Saharan African countries have assumed one of these pillars to mitigate violence against women and children. For example, in 2006, the National Assembly of the DRC adopted a bill on sexual and gender-based violence, which was drafted as a result of the advocacy efforts of a women's organization from eastern DRC, where some of the worst conflict-related sexual assaults have occurred.

Human Rights Watch. (2006). *What future? Street children in the Democratic Republic of Congo.*

http://www.hrw.org/reports/2006/drc0406/drc0406webwcover.pdf

This report is based on interviews with more than fifty street children in the DRC—those "for whom the street, more than any family, residence or institution, has become their real home" (p. 2). "Conflict, internal displacement, unemployment, poverty, disease, the prohibitive cost of education, and myriad other factors have all contributed to the growing number of children living and working on the streets in the DRC" (p. 3), and while exact numbers are unknown, it is estimated that the number of street children in Kinshasa and other urban areas has doubled in the last ten years. Street children are often victims of physical, sexual and emotional abuse, and lack secure access to food, shelter, and other basic needs. They are often exploited by adults, including law enforcement personnel— for example, police, soldiers, and members of the military police are reported to approach children and demand their money and other possessions. Street girls are especially vulnerable to being raped by police and soldiers, and street boys are also at risk of sexual abuse. In addition, street children are often accused of sorcery or witchcraft and are forced to undergo abusive "deliverance" ceremonies led by pastors, cult leaders, or "prophets." The growing number of street children and increases in accusations of sorcery are strongly linked to the spread of HIV/AIDS in the DRC; while the estimated national HIV/AIDS prevalence rate is 4.2%, lower than many countries in eastern and southern Africa, approximately one million Congolese children have been orphaned as a result. This report goes on to provide recommendations to the government of the DRC, the UN, and donors to promote the rights and to protect street children.

Internal Displacement Monitoring Center. (2009). *Internal displacement: Global overview of trends and development in 2008.* **Geneva, Switzerland.**

http://www.internal-displacement.org/8025708F004BE3B1/(httpInfoFiles)/82DA6A2DE4C7BA41C12575A90041E6A8/$file/IDMC_Internal_Displacement_Global_Overview_2008.pdf

This report provides a comprehensive review of internal displacement in 2008, examining global trends and diversity among internally displaced groups, revealing the vulnerabilities of children, women, the elderly, and minorities. It also provides country-

specific overviews, including for the DRC, which has the fourth highest number of IDPs worldwide and has recently experienced large-scale displacements and returns.

Mels, C., Derluyn, I., Broekaert, E., and Rosseel, Y. The psychological impact of forced displacement and related risk factors on Eastern Congolese adolescents affected by war*. (2010). *The Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry, 51* (10), 1096–1104. (Available upon request.)

In light of more common research on the mental health effects of displacement on refugees in industrialized countries, "this paper examines the impact of war-induced displacement and related risk factors on the mental health of Eastern Congolese adolescents, and compares currently internally displaced adolescents to returnees and non-displaced peers" (p. 1096). The results of this study show that "as IDPs are highly exposed to violence and daily stressors, they report most psychological distress, when compared to returnees and non-displaced peers. The distinct mental health outcomes for returned youngsters illustrate how enhancing current socio-economic living conditions of war-affected adolescents could stimulate resilient outcomes, despite former trauma or displacement" (p. 1096). The findings of this study suggest that to support these displaced adolescents in the process of healing, there is a need for non-specific, community-oriented interventions that provide a safe and stable environment; the removal of continuing stressors such as socioeconomic hardship and social exclusion; and education-based interventions aimed at enhancing IDP youth's resilience and psychosocial health. Furthermore, "the fact that youngsters appear more resilient once dislocation has come to an end calls for governments and international agencies to prioritise return for displaced children" (p. 1102).

Tamashiro, T. (2010). *Impact of conflict on children's health and disability.* (Paper commissioned for the EFA Global Monitoring Report 2011, The hidden crisis: Armed conflict and education).

http://www.sak.se/wp-content/uploads/2012/03/21-Education-for-all-Global-Monitoring-Report-2011-Impact-of-Conflict-on-Childrens-Health-and-Disability.pdf

This paper explores the impact of conflict on children's health and includes specific case study from the DRC. It explores how armed conflict impacts children in four main ways: 1) Displacement often forces children into living conditions that negatively affect their health and hygiene, ultimately exposing them to infectious diseases that can cause longer-term disabilities, such as irreversible blindness. 2) Children are at greater risk for food insecurity and malnutrition, which is then correlated with high mortality rates, stunted growth, and further susceptibility to disease. 3) Women and girls are particularly vulnerable to sexual violence that can also lead to chronic disability if untreated. 4) Conflict can create long-term physical and psychological disability in children, especially among child soldiers.

UNAIDS. (2009). Country visit to Democratic Republic of Congo: Summary report.

http://data.unaids.org/pub/BaseDocument/2009/20090622_sie_countrysummaryreport_drc_en.pdf

"DRC is experiencing a generalised HIV epidemic. HIV prevalence in adults aged 15-49

years is estimated at 4.1% by the Programme National de Lutte contre le SIDA et les IST (PNLS). An estimated 300,000 people with HIV are eligible for antiretroviral treatment. Available data suggest that HIV prevalence is twice as high in young women aged 15-24 years as in young men in the same age group.... Conflict and poverty provide favourable conditions for the spread of HIV and have adversely affected prevention and control efforts. The highest prevalence rates are found in areas of the country and in population groups, especially women, most affected by conflict. Prevalence in victims of sexual violence is 25.6% compared with 4.1% in the general population (UNGASS report 2007). Transmission rates are also higher in areas where displaced people are concentrated and in mining centres, ports and along rivers" (p. 2).

UNICEF. (2006). Africa's Orphaned and Vulnerable Generations: Children Affected by AIDS. New York, NY.

http://www.unicef.org/publications/files/Africas_Orphaned_and_Vulnerable_Generations_Children_Affected_by_AIDS.pdf

This report discusses the scale of the AIDS/orphan crisis in sub-Saharan Africa, and the impact it has on family structures and on children's physical and emotional well-being. It includes data on the DRC, including the projected number of orphans in the DRC in 2010 (4,600,000), which is13 percent of all children in 2010, and the percentage of orphans in school.

United States Department of Labor. (2011). *2010 Findings on the worst forms of child labor - Congo, Democratic Republic of the.*

http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/publisher,USDOL,,COD,4e8c3978c,0.html

This report describes the worst forms of labor that children in the DRC are engaged in, including as child soldiers and in agriculture and mining. Street children are prone to sell food, carry packages, unload buses, engage in prostitution, and distribute drugs and alcohol. This report also describes the government of the DRC's efforts to combat child labor in the country through laws, regulations and policies, but the need to strengthen its efforts for the most vulnerable children.

Women for Women International. (2010). *Stronger women, stronger nations: 2010 DRC report: Amplifying the voices of women in Eastern Congo.*

http://www.womenforwomen.org/news-women-for-women/assets/files/dr-congo-report-2010.pdf

This report includes results of a survey of women in Eastern DRC, and highlights their experiences and challenges particularly in the context of high insecurity and sexual violence. Based on these results, the report provides recommendations for policymakers and practitioners to increase women's social capital in Eastern DRC including increasing their security, reducing sexual violence, addressing their emotional well-being and increasing their access to healthcare, and fostering their skills development to increase their opportunities for income generation.

Women's Refugee Commission. (2008). Disabilities among refugees and conflict-affected populations.

http://womensrefugeecommission.org/resources/doc_download/609-disabilities-among-refugees-and-conflict-affected-populations

This report explores the needs of displaced persons with disabilities, with a particular focus on women (including older women), children and youth. The study showed that less information and fewer services were available for people with mental disabilities than those with physical and sensory disabilities and that data on the number of displaced persons with disabilities is often not available from the government, UNHCR or its implementing partners. Existing data is often inconsistent or inaccurate. The study found that access to education for children with disabilities was one of the most successful areas in all the countries surveyed, and though children with disabilities were not actively excluded from school, they were neither actively encouraged to attend and dropout rates were high. It also found that access to vocational and skills training, income generation and employment opportunities for refugees with disabilities varied considerably. The lack of available information about protection risks faced by persons with disabilities also highlights weaknesses in protection reporting and response, and a gap in addressing the protection needs of persons with disabilities. Women, children and older persons with disabilities are often the most at risk. Children and youth with disabilities are also vulnerable to sexual and physical abuse, exploitation and neglect (including hiding children away, restricting them to the home and, in extreme circumstances, tying them up). They are often excluded from education and not provided with the support to help them develop to their full capacity.

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