

UN forum in Paris to spotlight mobile learning for refugees and displaced persons

17 March 2017 – Education experts and government officials will gather at the Paris headquarters of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) from 20 to 24 March, to discuss ways of expanding the use of mobile technologies to “reach people where they are” and improve education opportunities for refugees and displaced persons and others in emergency situations.

This year’s edition of Mobile Learning Week, on the theme “Education in Emergencies and Crises,” will introduce participants to projects such as ‘Teachers for Teachers’, a portal that connects instructors around the world through WhatsApp, a mobile messaging service.

Through this network, peers offer psychosocial and professional support and advice for challenges that instructors face in what the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) called “perhaps the toughest classroom in the world”: one that includes refugees learners.

Mobile learning involves the use of mobile technology, either alone or in combination with other information and communication technology (ICT), to enable learning anytime and anywhere.

There are 180 students in the class of the primary school teacher Romans Manyiel Garang, who will be part of a panel discussion during Mobile Learning Week. He teaches in the Kakuma Refugee Camp, in Kenya, where he started in 2015, equipped with a secondary school degree and no previous teaching experience.

Tools such as the ‘Teachers for Teachers’ portal allow him to be in touch with a larger community of instructors and receive support and feedback from peers, as well as exchange problem-solving techniques.



Mobile learning in the Kakuma Refugee Camp, Kenya. Photo: UNHCR

“Comparing my ideas with others helps me grow as a teacher,” Mr. Garang told UNESCO, adding: “I have a lot I can share to help teachers overcome their challenges.”

Practical and psychosocial support offered by programmes such as ‘Teachers for Teachers’ are among the many ways educators, students and ministries of education are using cheap and widely available mobile technologies to expand and improve educational programmes to displaced people, whose numbers, according to UNHCR, surpassed 65 million in 2015.

This accounted for an average of 24 individuals being forced out of their homes per minute during every single day of 2015. Nearly 21.3 million of these people are refugees, and over half of these refugees are under 18 years old.

“We have to reach people where they are,” said Mark West, the UNESCO coordinator of the five-day mobile learning event. “Our work indicates that mobile technologies offer unique advantages for making education accessible to displaced people and others on-the-move. Mobile Learning Week is where solutions and cutting edge ideas are shared.”

The meeting in Paris will be structured in five parts: the symposium, which will include more than 70 breakout presentations; a total of 16 workshops, which aim to support learners, teachers, and systems; the strategy labs, to help guide the development of projects; the policy forum, which will bring together government officials and members of the private sector to examine how governments can facilitate the acquisition of essential digital skills, particularly for disadvantaged or displaced learners; and side events such as art exhibitions and demonstrations.

One of these side events, the Family Tent, which will be set up outside UNESCO for the duration of the conference, will show participants the living conditions of refugees.

Mobile Learning Week 2017 is organized by UNESCO in partnership with UNHCR and the International Telecommunication Union (ITU). This is the 7th edition of the meeting.

Toll on refugee and migrant children continues to mount one year after EU-Turkey deal – UNICEF

17 March 2017 – The United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) warned today that one year after the Balkan border closures and the European Union-Turkey Statement, which were aimed at stopping mass migration flows, refugee and migrant children face greater risks of deportation, detention, exploitation and deprivation.

“While there has been a major decrease in the overall numbers of children on the move into Europe since last March, there has been an increase in the threats and distress refugee and migrant children endure,” said Afshan Khan UNICEF Regional Director and Special Coordinator for the Refugee and Migrant Crisis in Europe.

UNICEF staff in Greece report deep levels of distress and frustration among

children and their families, including one child as young as eight attempting self-harm. Despite recent improvement in living conditions some unaccompanied children in shelters, suffer psychosocial distress, with high levels of anxiety, aggression and violence and demonstrating high risk behaviour such as drugs and prostitution.

War, destruction, the death of loved ones and a dangerous journey exacerbated by poor living conditions in camps around Greece or the lengthy registration and asylum procedures, can trigger post-traumatic stress disorders.

“It has become a vicious circle – children flee suffering, and they end up either fleeing again, or facing de facto detention, or just utter neglect,” underscored Ms. Khan.

In response, UNICEF, in collaboration with the Greek Government and non-governmental organization partner, are prioritizing appropriate care for refugee and migrant children to meet their mental health and psychosocial needs. Imminent transfers back to Greece in line with so-called ‘Dublin regulations,’ are likely to add even greater strain to the situation facing children and further pressure to existing services.

RELATED: ‘Refugees need protection, not rejection,’ UN says in wake of EU-Turkey deal

Instead of stemming the flow, border closures and the EU-Turkey statement, have led to children and families taking matters into their own hands and embarking on even more dangerous and irregular routes with smugglers, as UNICEF and partners warned a year ago.

Even in 2017 nearly 3,000 refugees and migrants – with about a third children – have arrived in Greece despite the full implementation of the EU-Turkey Statement and strict border control. Many continue to slip through borders into Bulgaria, West Balkans and Hungary, said UNICEF.

Children stranded in Greece and West Balkans have already lost nearly three years of education and now face several hurdles like different languages and education systems and yet another year without schooling. UNICEF is supporting the Ministry of Education’s strategy to integrate stranded refugee and migrant children in Greek schools. However only 2,500 children out the 15,000 school age children so far that benefit from the national scheme in Greek language.

Despite significant efforts – from government and partners – about half of the 2,100 unaccompanied children are still living in substandard conditions, including nearly 200 unaccompanied children in facilities with limited movement early March (178 in reception and identification centres on the Islands and 16 in “protective custody” in police cells).

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Speech: “Central African Republic needs more than just plans and pledges”

I would like to begin by welcoming President Touadera to the Council and thanking him for his briefing, as well as the other briefers for theirs.

It has been a significant twelve months for the Central African Republic. The peaceful and credible elections that saw you, Mr President, elected were a welcome moment of hope for a country that has endured crisis for far too long. And the National Plan for Recovery and Peacebuilding, agreed in November, sets out a clear pathway forward. It will move the country on and away from the cycle of conflict.

In that effort the Central African Republic will have the international community's support, including \$44 million from the United Kingdom.

But the Central African Republic needs more than just plans and pledges. What it really needs is implementation delivery, both by the Government and by us in the international community.

Because as the past twelve months have sadly shown, progress is fragile. The hope of March 2016 risks being replaced by the violence, displacement, humanitarian urgency, and fear of the past. Having come so far, the risk of reversal, the risk of deterioration, a return to the chaos of the past, is now a painful reality that we must confront. In response, we see four steps.

First, the Government of the Central African Republic, with support from

MINUSCA, must secure an agreement with armed groups to cease attacks on civilians as well as for their disarmament and demobilisation. They can't be allowed to derail progress in pursuit of their own short term self interest.

Second, more effort needs to be made on disarmament, demobilisation, and reintegration of ex-Seleka faction and anti-Balaka groups. We welcome the President's Consultative Committee as the formal framework for DDR with all armed groups represented, as we heard today. Efforts to support mediation, in particular the Angola-led African Initiative, are all welcome. Any initiative must support the President's authority, be in coordination with the UN, and respect the will of the Central African Republic people to end impunity as demonstrated at the Bangui Forum.

Third, for long term stability, it's essential that the Central African Republic's own armed forces can provide the security and stability that the people deserve. That means reform of the armed forces. And we stand ready to support the country in that effort.

Fourth, and finally, if the Central African Republic is to move beyond the violence, there must be accountability. Not only will that bring justice for those who have suffered but it will also send a clear message to armed groups that they cannot kill and maim with impunity. This Council has given our support for the development of a Special Criminal Court and we've mandated MINUSCA to help make it happen. And now we need to see implementation.

In conclusion, the Central African Republic is at a critical juncture. There is a possibility for sustainable peace, but that possibility narrows as the security situation deteriorates. Having endured conflict and chaos for so long, having stepped away from the brink of genocide in 2014, the people of the Central African Republic deserve a peaceful future, not a return to a hateful past. Mr President of the Republic, we stand ready to support you so that the Central African Republic can finally break the cycle of conflict.

Thank you.

Press release: Planned roadworks in and around the M25: weekly summary for Monday 20 March to Sunday 26 March 2017

The following summary of planned new and ongoing road improvements over the coming week is correct as of 17 March 2017 but could be subject to change due to weather conditions or unforeseen circumstances. All our improvement work is carried out with the aim of causing as little disruption as possible.

M1 junction 2 Mill Hill, Greater London: bridge investigation

Work to maintain safety by carrying out bridge investigations will start this week. The northbound entry slip road will be closed overnight, between 10pm and 5am, from Monday 20 March for 5 nights. Work on Friday will start at 11pm. A clearly signed diversion will be in place via the A1 and A41 to M1 junction 4.

M1 junction 6a (M25), Hertfordshire: electrical repair

Work to maintain safety by carrying out electrical repairs continues this week. The southbound link roads to the M25 in both directions will be closed overnight, between 10pm and 5am, on Monday 20 March. A clearly signed diversion will be in place via the M1 junction 6, A405 eastbound and M25 junction 21a.

M3 junctions 2 (M25) to 4a Farnborough, Hampshire: smart motorway improvement

Work to reduce congestion and improve journey times continues this week between junctions 2 and 4a with narrow lanes and a 50mph speed limit in place on both carriageways, with a free recovery service operating 24 hours a day.

The northbound carriageway between junctions 3 and 2 will be closed overnight, between 8pm and 5.30am, from Monday 20 March for 5 nights. Work on Saturday will finish at 7am. A clearly signed diversion will be in place via the A322, A30, M25 junction 13 and M25 junction 12.

The southbound carriageway between junctions 4 and 5 will be closed overnight, between 8pm and 5.30am, from Monday 20 March for 5 nights. Work on Saturday will finish at 7am. A clearly signed diversion will be in place via M3 junction 4, A331, A30 and A287 to M3 junction 5.

The southbound carriageway between junctions 2 and 3 will be closed overnight, between 8pm and 5.30am, from Wednesday 22 March for 3 nights. Work on Saturday will finish at 7am. A clearly signed diversion will be in place via M25 junction 13, A30, A322 to M3 junction 3.

The northbound exit slip road at junction 4a will be closed overnight, between 8pm and 5.30am, from Monday 20 March for 4 nights. A clearly signed diversion will be in place via M3 junction 4, A331 and the M3 southbound to junction 4a.

The northbound carriageway between junctions 4a and 4 will be closed overnight, between 8pm and 7am, on Saturday 25 March 2017. A clearly signed diversion will be in place via the A327, A30 and A331 to M3 junction 4.

The scheme is due to be completed in June 2017. For further information [visit](#)

[the scheme website.](#)

M4 junctions 3 (A312) to 1 Chiswick, West London: electrical installation

Work to improve safety by carrying out electrical installation continues this week. The carriageway in both directions, including Heston Services and junction 2, will be closed overnight, between midnight and 5.30am, from Monday 20 March for 5 nights. Work on Saturday morning will finish at 6am. A clearly signed diversion will be in place via the A312 and A4.

M4 junction 4b (M25), Greater London: carriageway survey

Work to maintain safety by carrying out carriageway surveys will start this week. The dedicated link roads from the M4 in both directions to the M25 anti-clockwise will be closed overnight, between 10.30pm and 5am, on Sunday 26 March. A clearly signed diversion will be in place via the M25 clockwise to M40 junction 1 and return.

M25 junction 2 (A2), Kent: resurfacing

Work to improve journeys by carrying out resurfacing will start this week. The dedicated link road from the M25 anti-clockwise to the A2 westbound will be closed overnight, between 10pm and 5am, on Sunday 26 March. A clearly signed diversion will be in place via the junction 2 roundabout.

M25 junction 10 (A3), Surrey: communications

Work to maintain safety by carrying out communications work will start this week. The anti-clockwise carriageway between the slip roads will be closed overnight, between 10pm and 5am, on Thursday 23 March. A clearly signed diversion will be in place via the exit and entry slip roads.

M25 junction 10 (A3), Surrey: carriageway repairs

Work to improve journeys by carrying out carriageway repairs will start this week. The anti-clockwise exit and entry slip roads will be closed overnight, between 10pm and 5am, from Monday 20 March for 3 nights. A clearly signed diversion will be in place for the exit slip road via junction 9 and return. A clearly signed diversion will be in place for the entry slip road via junction 11 and return.

The anti-clockwise carriageway will be closed overnight, between 10pm and 5.30am, from Thursday 23 March for 2 nights. Work on Friday will start at 11pm. A clearly signed diversion will be in place via the exit and entry slip roads.

M25 junctions 10 (A3) to 11 Chertsey, Surrey: bridge joint replacement

Work to improve journeys by carrying out bridge joint replacement on the structure that carries the M25 over the River Wey and the South West Trains railway line continues this week. The clockwise carriageway and junction 10 entry slip road will be closed overnight, between 9pm and 8am, on Saturday 25 March. A clearly signed diversion will be in place via the A3, A245, B374 and A317 to junction 11.

M25 junction 12 (M3), Surrey: smart motorway improvement

Work to improve journeys by carrying out smart motorway improvement continues this week. The dedicated link roads from the M25 in both directions to the M3 southbound will be closed overnight, between 8pm and 5.30am, from Wednesday 22 March for 3 nights. On Saturday work will finish at 7am. A clearly signed diversion will be in place via M25 junction 13, A30, A322 to M3 junction 3.

M25 junction 14 and Terminal 5 spur road, Heathrow, Greater London: inspection

Work to maintain safety by carrying out inspections continues this week. The anti-clockwise exit slip road will be closed overnight, between 10pm and 5am, on Sunday 26 March. A clearly signed diversion will be in place via the M25 clockwise to junction 13 and return.

M25 junctions 20 Hemel Hempstead to 21a St Albans, Hertfordshire: electrical repair

Work to maintain safety by carrying out electrical repairs continues this week. The clockwise carriageway will be closed overnight, between 10pm and 5am, on Wednesday 22 March. A clearly signed diversion will be in place via the M1 northbound to junction 8, M1 southbound to junction 6, A405 eastbound to M25 junction 21a.

M25 junctions 30 Thurrock to 31 Lakeside, Essex: street lighting

Work to maintain safety by carrying out street lighting maintenance continues this week. The clockwise carriageway will be closed overnight, between 10pm and 5.30am, from Monday 20 March for 2 nights. A clearly signed diversion will be in place via the dedicated link road between junctions 30 and 31.

The dedicated link roads between junction 30 and 31 in both directions will be closed overnight, between 10pm and 5.30am, on Wednesday 22 March. A clearly signed diversion will be in place via the A13, Wennington Interchange

and the A1306 and vice versa.

A1(M) junctions 3 Hatfield to 4 Hertford, Hertfordshire: tunnel maintenance

Work to maintain tunnel safety by carrying out repairs will start this week. The northbound carriageway will be closed overnight, between 10pm and 5am, on Saturday 25 March. A clearly signed diversion will be in place via A1001.

A282 junction 1a Swanscombe, Kent: tunnel maintenance

Work to maintain safety by carrying out tunnel maintenance will continue this week. The northbound entry slip road will be closed overnight, between 9pm and 5.30am, from Monday 20 March for 4 nights and on Saturday 25 March. A clearly signed diversion will be in place via the A282 southbound to junction 1b and return.

A282 (M25) Dartford – Thurrock Crossing: routine maintenance

Work to improve journeys by carrying out routine maintenance at the Dartford Crossing continues this week. The following closures will be in place overnight, between 9pm and 5.30am, with fully signed diversions in place during the northbound east tunnel closures for oversized vehicles.

- Monday 20 March: northbound west tunnel
- Tuesday 21 March: northbound west tunnel
- Wednesday 22 March: northbound west tunnel
- Thursday 23 March: northbound west tunnel
- Friday 24 March: northbound east tunnel
- Saturday 25 March: northbound west tunnel
- Sunday 26 March: northbound east tunnel

General enquiries

Members of the public should contact the Highways England customer contact centre on 0300 123 5000.

Media enquiries

Journalists should contact the Highways England press office on 0844 693 1448 and use the menu to speak to the most appropriate press officer.