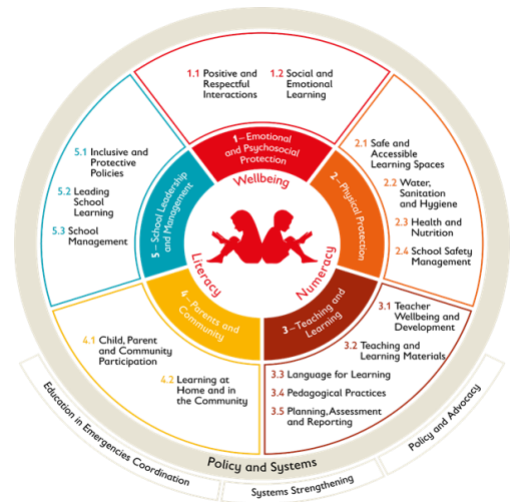


Return to Learning

Restoring Learning and Wellbeing for Forcibly Displaced Children

Background

The Return to Learning (RtL) program is an education program designed for use in the first phase of humanitarian response, or in protracted crises to improve school readiness before out-of-school children transition into non-formal education programs or formal school. RtL supports children (ages 4-15) in regaining access to education that addresses the needs of the whole child. Aligned with Save the Children’s Quality Learning framework, RtL uses a play-based approach to develop basic literacy, numeracy, and social-emotional skills, contributing to children’s learning and wellbeing.



RtL provides quick access to education as longer-term opportunities are identified, reducing the amount of time displaced children spend out of the classroom. The program aligns with the goals outlined in the United Nations’ 2018 Global Compact on Refugees, which commits States to providing refugees with access to education within the first three months of arrival. In addition to programmatic activities, RtL includes a robust global advocacy agenda and a strategy for capacity building of Save the Children staff, local partners, and education cluster members to ensure that children in humanitarian crises gain access to the lifesaving support education provides as soon as possible following displacement.

Why Now?

An unprecedented **70.8 million** people around the world, including **28 million children**, have been forced from their homes due to violence and conflict.¹ During emergencies, education is typically the first service interrupted and the last restored. As a result, more than half of all refugee children—4 million—are not in school.² With the average displacement lasting 18 years, an entire generation of children is losing out on education³—and the chance to acquire the skills and knowledge they need to rebuild their lives. Additionally, millions of children were affected by school closures during the COVID-19 pandemic without access to any ongoing education support. Education can be extraordinarily protective for children during emergencies—it plays a critical role in keeping children safe, helping them regain a sense of normalcy, and ensuring they have a viable future. The RtL program helps ensure that children have learning and wellbeing support, even in times when education is interrupted or inaccessible.

¹ UNHCR. (2019). Global Trends: Forced Displacement in 2018.

² UNHCR. (2019). Stepping Up: Refugee Education in Crisis.

³ Brookings. (2017). What makes displacement different today

The Return to Learning Program

Program Objectives

- Children affected by forced displacement, emergencies, or school closures have access to quality learning opportunities in the first phase of humanitarian response.
- Teachers and/or community facilitators are equipped with the skills necessary to provide holistic support activities that address both learning and wellbeing.
- Community members understand their role in supporting children's learning and wellbeing, and have the ability to further develop these skills.
- Education clusters and working groups have increased capacity to effectively respond to the educational needs of children affected by sudden, forced displacement or those in protracted crisis that have been excluded from accessing education.
- Increased global awareness of the importance of providing forcibly displaced children and children affected by emergencies with immediate access to learning opportunities.

A young Venezuelan student enjoys his new Save the Children workbook, part of our remote learning programs in Colombia.

Program Components

1. A toolkit of play-based learning activities to support basic literacy, numeracy, and social-emotional skills. There are three activity packs designed for varying developmental levels: Emergent (ages 4-6); Foundational (ages 7-11); and Intermediate and Advanced (ages 12-15).
2. An implementation manual for facilitators to deliver the RtL activities. As long as there is a safe space to implement the program, any trained community facilitator—regardless of prior teaching experience—can deliver RtL activities.
3. The Holistic Assessment of Learning and Development Outcomes (HALDO) that gives front-line staff an overview of children's development so they can make informed programming decisions.

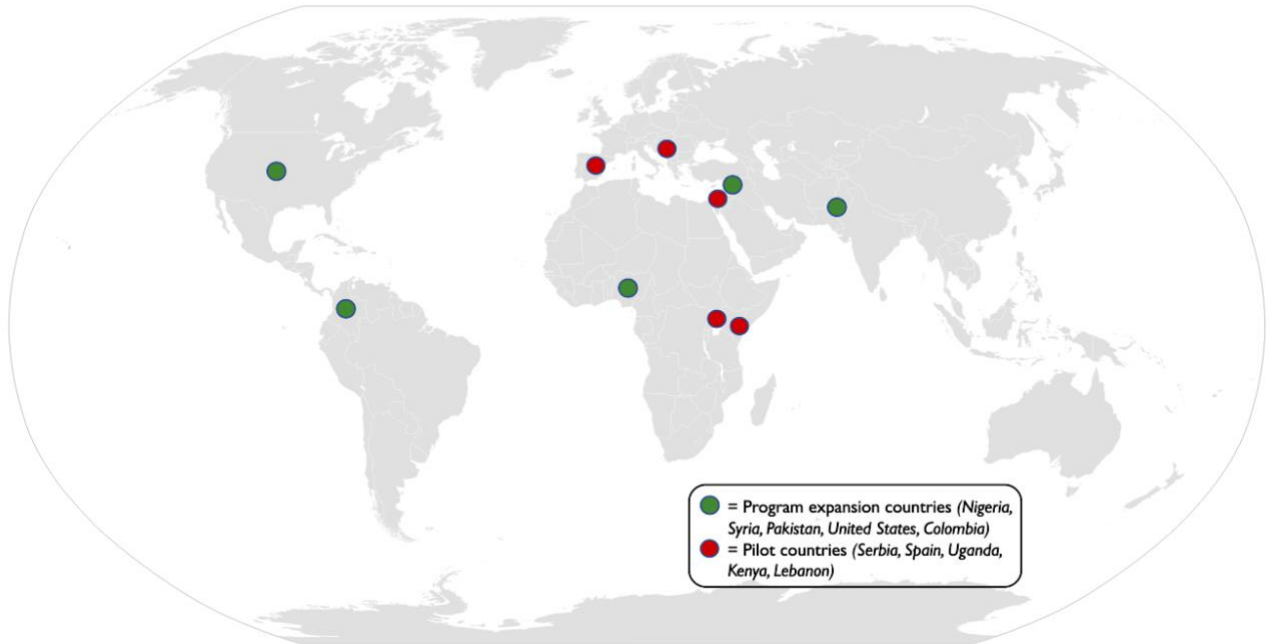
Program Implementation

As a short-term, emergency program, RtL ensures children impacted by displacement, conflict, natural disaster, or school closures do not miss out on learning. When education is interrupted, RtL can be used to provide educational opportunities to out-of-school children and/or to provide additional support to children who are enrolled in formal school but are at risk of dropping out or falling behind their grade level. For out-of-school children, the program can be implemented in any child-friendly or community space. For children at risk of dropout or falling behind, the program can be implemented in formal schools as an after-school program. Upon completion of RtL, Save the Children aims to enroll as many children as possible into longer-term education programs—formal and non-formal—depending on children's learning needs, availability of non-formal education programming, and the capacity of formal schools.

Progress to Date

Since 2017, **77,571 children** have participated in RtL programming (HALDO, RtL activities, or both) **across ten countries**: Spain, Serbia, Kenya, Uganda, Lebanon, Colombia, Syria, Nigeria, Pakistan, and the United States.

Return to Learning Geographic Reach (2017-2022)



Return to Learning 2022 Strategy

The 2022 RtL Strategy includes programming, research and learning, and advocacy activities. The Strategy will enable the continued expansion of RtL in Save the Children-supported projects and globally through training and professional development of Save the Children teams and partner organizations. RtL expansion in 2022 and beyond will **contribute to Save the Children's 2022-2024 Strategy**, specifically the **Safe Back to School and Learning Global Goal** that **41 million children annually achieve well-being and learning outcomes**.

Want to Learn More About Return to Learning?

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