

‘Education: A Pathway of Hope That Opens Doors to a Better Future’

***ICMC Statement on the Occasion of the International Day of Education, 24 January
2025***

On the occasion of the International Day of Education 2025, celebrated on 24 January, the International Catholic Migration Commission (ICMC) echoes Pope Francis’ call for action to address the “educational catastrophe” affecting displaced children and youth around the world.

“All children and youth have the right to go to school, regardless of their immigration status,” said the Holy Father in his January 2025 prayer intention [‘For the Right to An Education’](#).

“Education is a hope for everyone. It can save migrants and refugees from discrimination, criminal networks, and exploitation, and so many minors are exploited.”

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child guarantees the right to an education for every child and young person, regardless of their status or circumstances. Yet an estimated 7.2 million displaced children - just under half of all such children around the world - are not enrolled in education.

Education provides protection for displaced children, and school a place of safety and normality that stands in stark contrast to the conflict, violence, and hunger that so many have witnessed or experienced. Education also provides a barrier between refugee children and those who would seek to exploit them, and a safe and supportive environment in which children can express their feelings and reactions through play and learning. For refugee girls, education provides an important protection from early marriage, early pregnancy, and Sexual and Gender-Based Violence.

ICMC pays tribute to the many organizations and individuals around the world working to ensure that refugee children can exercise their right to an education, including those within our worldwide network of member Catholic Bishops Conferences and Catholic-inspired organizations. We pledge our continued support and solidarity in the crucial fight to ensuring every displaced child can play, learn, and pursue a future in safety and with hope.

On this International Day of Education, we recall and draw guidance from the words of Pope Francis. *“Let’s never forget that whoever welcomes the foreigner, welcomes Jesus Christ. Let us pray for migrants, refugees and those affected by war, that their right to an education, which is necessary to build a more human world, might always be respected.”*

The International Catholic Migration Commission (ICMC) protects and serves uprooted people, including refugees, asylum seekers, internally displaced people, victims of human trafficking, and migrants, regardless of faith, race, ethnicity or nationality.