



Barriers and Enablers to Education in Libya

Libya | APRIL 2024



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A world map is shown in a light gray, semi-transparent style, overlaid on a background of a light gray geometric pattern of interconnected lines forming various polygons. A large, bold red number '1' is positioned in the center of the map, over the European continent.

1

Main Objectives & Research Questions

Main Objectives

Factors Influencing Enrolment and Attendance :

Provide a comprehensive understanding of the obstacles and enablers to continuous enrolment and regular attendance of school-aged children.

Impact of legal status:

Shed light on how the importance of these barriers and enablers may vary based on whether the child is part of the Libyan host community, is a migrant, or a refugee.

Factors Among Vulnerable Groups :

Explore how some barriers and enablers play a more central role for the following vulnerable groups: children in rural areas, children within households of low socioeconomic status, girls, children with disabilities, migrant and refugee children, children with lacking documentation.

Geographical differences :

Shed light on how the importance of these barriers and enablers may vary per region.

Research Questions

01

What are the main factors (barriers) that contribute to non-regular attendance and dropouts ?

02

What are the main factors (enablers) that promote enrollment and regular attendance?

03

How do these factors vary across : Regions, and Population groups.



2

Methodology & limitations

Methodology

28 Focus Groups Discussions with Children : including structured FGDs with participants aged 12-14 and semi-structured FGDs with participants aged 15-18. The discussions involved both Libyan and non-Libyan children from refugee, migrant, and asylum seeker backgrounds. These sessions were held in groups of 5-10 individuals at non-formal education centres.

23 Key Informant Interviews : 9 with teachers and 14 with social workers within non-formal education centres.

KIIs				FGDs			
Teachers		Social Workers		Children 12-14		Children 15-18	
Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
1 _{participant}	9 _{participants}	4 _{participants}	10 _{participants}	7 _{FGDs}	7 _{FGDs}	7 _{FGDs}	7 _{FGDs}

An illustrative table detailing the number of participants by group, data collection tool, gender, and the frequency of data collection methods conducted.

Duration : Data was collected from 16/08/2023 to 07/09/2023.

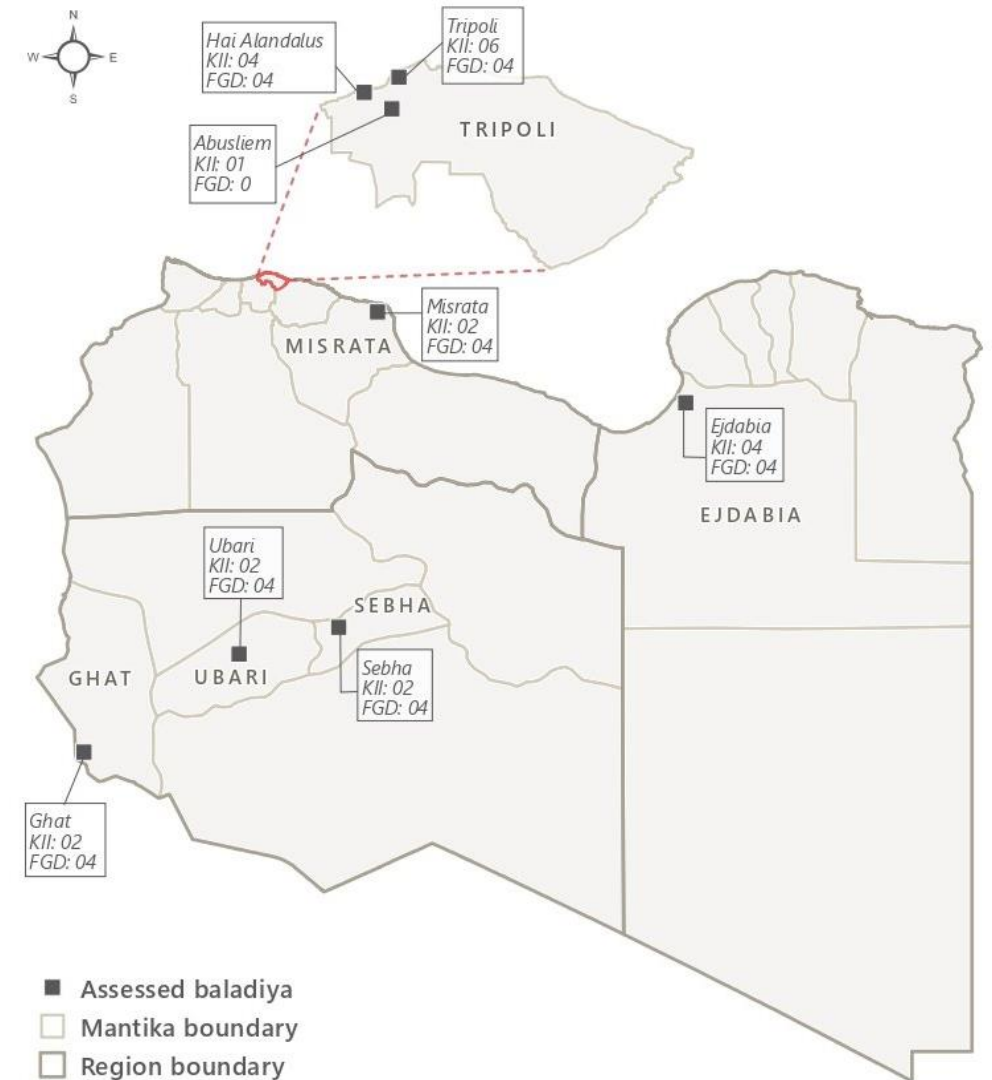
Enumerators : Members of the ECW consortia participated in the data collection at non-formal education centers. The collection of data involving children aged 12-18 was overseen by the teachers of these children, while the REACH assessment and field team gathered data with teachers and social workers.

Geographic Coverage

Three regions of Libya with 8 Baladiyas overall :

Region	Mantika	Type	Baladiya	KIIs		FGDs	
				Teachers	Social workers	Children 12-14	Children 15-18
East	Ajdabiya	Urban	Ajdabiya	1 _{participant}	3 _{participants}	10 _{participants}	10 _{participants}
South	Ghat	Rural	Ghat	1 _{participant}	1 _{participant}	12 _{participants}	13 _{participants}
South	Ubari	Urban	Ubari	0 _{participant}	2 _{participants}	12 _{participants}	13 _{participants}
West	Misrata	Urban	Misrata	1 _{participant}	1 _{participant}	14 _{participants}	12 _{participants}
West	Tripoli	Urban	Hai-Andalus	1 _{participant}	3 _{participants}	12 _{participants}	10 _{participants}
South	Sebha	Urban	Sebha	0 _{participant}	2 _{participants}	14 _{participants}	11 _{participants}
West	Tripoli	Urban	AbuSelim	0 _{participant}	1 _{participant}	0 _{participant}	0 _{participant}
West	Tripoli	Urban	Tripoli	5 _{participants}	1 _{participant}	10 _{participants}	10 _{participants}
TOTAL				9 _{participants}	14 _{participants}	84 _{participants}	79 _{participants}

A table illustrating the detailed distribution of participants by the method of data collection and by Baladiya.



Map illustrating the location of the different FGDs/KIIs

Limitations

Although efforts were made to involve **non-Libyan children** in data collection, their participation was somewhat limited. As a result, the assessment may not have fully captured the experiences of this demographic.

The partial representation of the **formal education sector**, particularly at the level of social workers and teachers, as the participants were exclusively sourced within the ECW consortia.

Certain indicators may be under-reported or over-reported due to a **respondent bias** (subjectivity and perceptions of respondents).

The assessment scope is limited by the absence of **quantitative data** collection, which makes it difficult to extrapolate the findings to the broader Libyan context.

A world map is shown in a light gray, semi-transparent style, overlaid on a background of a light gray geometric pattern of interconnected lines forming various polygons. A large, bold red number '3' is positioned in the center of the map, over the European continent.

3

Key Findings

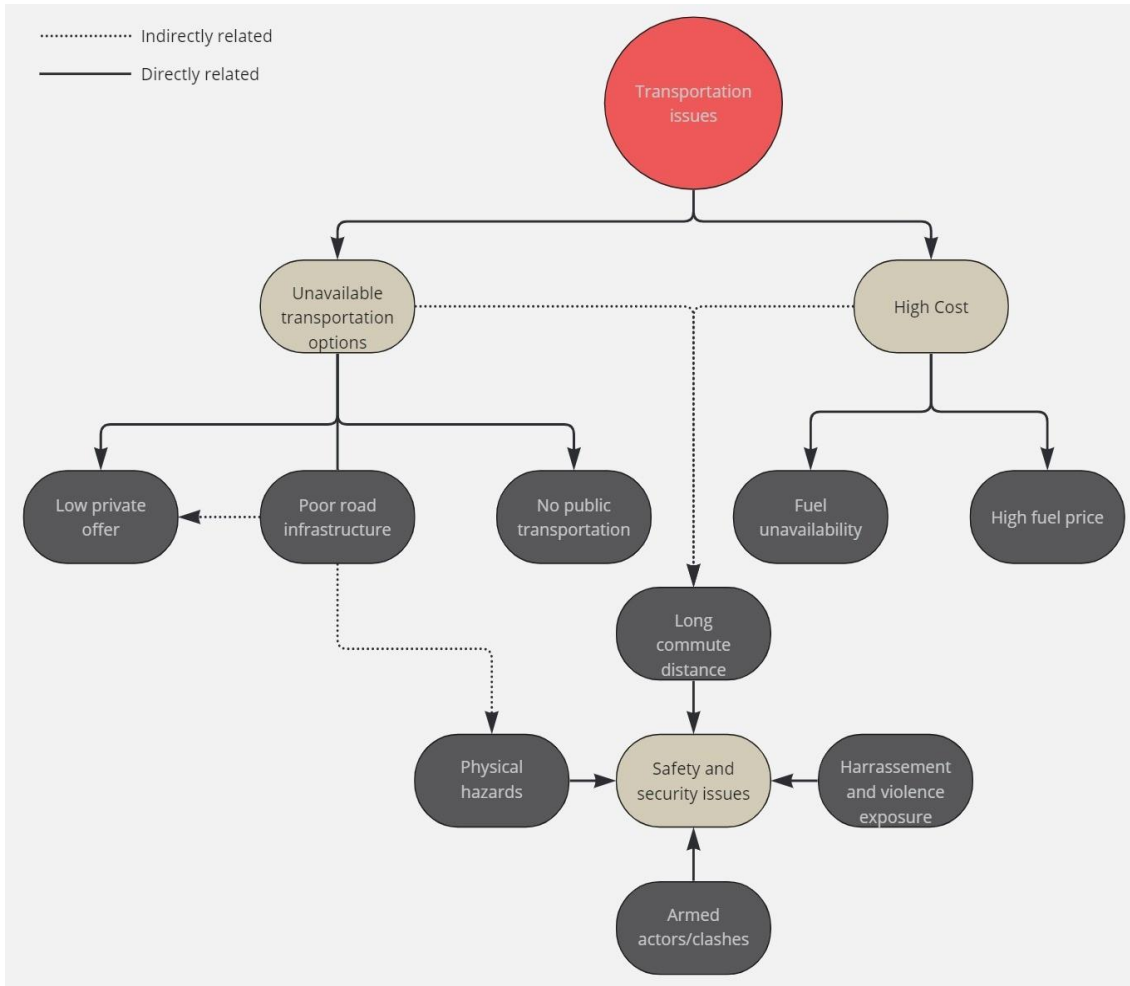
3.1

Physical access to schools

"The scarcity or unavailability of fuel, coupled with high prices, leads children to drop out of school and not attend the center; those living in remote areas unfortunately cease their learning due to the lack of transportation. There were about 10 to 12 children who dropped out of school during the 2022-2023 academic year due to the transportation issue".

-Social worker in Ghat.

Commuting Challenges



Transportation Barriers:

- All participant groups highlighted transportation issues. **Lack of public transportation** exacerbates the problem, making daily commutes unaffordable for children affecting their access to education.
- Fuel scarcity, **high fuel prices**, and limited private transportation options contribute to children irregular attendance.

Safety and Security Risks associated with commuting:

- Long distances between homes and schools expose children to **safety hazards**. Children aged 15-18 reported instances of students being struck by cars due to road inadequate infrastructure and congestion.
- Bullying, harassment, and attempted kidnapping were reported along commuting routes.
- **Armed conflicts**, pose significant security concerns in Hay-Andalus, Ajdabiya, Sebha, and Ghat as reported by social workers, teachers, and children aged 15-18.
- Bullying, harassment, and attempted kidnapping were reported along commuting routes.
- **Migrants and refugees** face risks of arbitrary arrest or capture at checkpoints or on the streets reported by social workers and teachers.

Enablers for access



Providing Transportation

All participants across the entire geographical scope of the assessment highlighted the significance of accessible, safe, and affordable transportation in maintaining regular attendance.

- Mitigate the risks associated with instances of **bullying and harassment** during the commute to and from educational facilities
- Mitigate exposure to **harsh weather** conditions along the way.



Subsidizing Transportation

Participants have stated that providing Transportation/offering transportation allowance is necessary for regular attendance.

→ Social workers noted that this solution is both expensive and has ramifications for security and safeguarding.

3.2

Child protection concerns & well-being enablers

"The spread of bullying is a problem. We became a target of our classmates in school or on our way home. We are constantly subjected to constant use of profanity and verbal abuse, which negatively affects our self-confidence and increases our feelings of psychological stress."

-Child aged 12-14 in Sebha

Child Protection concerns



- **Safety and security concerns** within schools' environment were reported by all participants: such as physical altercations, verbal abuse, bullying, harassment, racism, sexism, and other forms of discrimination, affecting both boys and girls.
- Instances of **corporal punishment** for not having uniform or for not properly understanding the lesson were reported by children aged 12-18.
- Heightened risk of **kidnapping** and **rape** for females has been highlighted by social workers and children aged 15-18 within school commute. Families are anxious about their daughters' safety due to harassment.
- **Armed conflicts** perpetuating chronic stress in children and families as reported by social workers and teachers.
- **Child labour** was reported by social workers and teachers. They reported that children work in blacksmithing, carpentry, and carrying loaded carts. These activities often result in irregular school attendance or dropout.
- **Stress**, particularly in relation to exams was mentioned by children aged 15-18.

Physical and mental well-being enablers



Legal framework & Security

- Promotion of awareness to address issues of bullying, violence, and corporal punishment,
- Establishment of a legal framework to protect and condemn these practices
- Proposed by social workers, teachers and children aged 12-14.
- Providing security in the vicinity of the school and during their commute was suggested by Children 12-18.



Psychosocial Support

The provision of psychosocial support for children within education facilities was suggested by all participants in all assessed Baladiyas.

3.3

Financial constraints related to education

"They study and work in other jobs after school hours. Some even work full-time throughout the year, including summer holidays, to meet their needs during the academic year."

-Teacher in Hay Al-Andalus

Financial Constraints



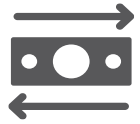
- The lack of financial resources as a barrier to cover **essential educational needs** such as school uniforms, stationery, and school bags this was emphasized by all participant groups.

Financial constraints : barriers of children of low-income families



- **High fees** for remedial courses in private non-formal education centers have been reported by children aged 15-18. This is significant as they require more additional academic assistance to pass their national exams. Access to such a privilege is limited to children from low-income families.
- Families with multiple school-aged children may struggle to cover educational expenses, impacting opportunities for each child within the household. This was reported by children aged 15-18.
- Children of this population tend to participate **income-generating activities** either by making and selling sweets, working in parents' shops, sheep herding, and trading as reported by teachers, social workers, and children aged 15-18.
- Teachers and social workers note that older adolescent boys are more likely to work compared to younger boys, especially in comparison to younger girls.

Material & Monetary Aid



In-kind support

All participants across all the assessed Baladiyas have asked for **stationery such as** : notebooks, pens, school bags...

Also, all participants emphasized the provision of **uniform which** will ensure better classroom activity participation, removing the fear of stigmatization or exclusion.



Financial support

Implementing **scholarships or funding programs** tailored to students in need was suggested by children 15-18 to cover educational expenses.

Financial support : enablers for children of low-income families



- Children 15-18 proposed to have **discounts on remedial classes** when there are multiple children of the same household attending these classes.
- Offering vocational training.
- Scholarship & offering meals was also mentioned by children 15-18.

3.4

School infrastructure and equipment

"Because of the widespread lack of sanitation facilities for girls in schools, I felt uncomfortable and anxious during school."

-Adolescent girl in Tripoli

Schools' infrastructure and equipment needs



- The scarcity of education centers in rural areas was reported by children 12-14 years old and social workers in Ubari, Hay Andalus, Ajdabiya and Sebha,
- All participants reported the **poor infrastructure** condition within formal education institutions, characterized by the absence or insufficiency of sanitation facilities.
- Children 15-18 reported lack of access to clean drinking water within the school they normally attend.
- Children aged 12-18 also reported **unavailable or inadequate equipment**, including desks, seats, and unsuitable classrooms lacking ventilation, power outages, and a shortage of technology such as computers and tablets.
- **Sanitation facilities** with gender disaggregation were requested by Some adolescent girls .

Infrastructure & equipment enablers



WASH

Participants have consistently advocated for well-maintained, clean WASH facilities within school that has access to **clean water**.

Children aged 12-14 have expressed readiness to participate in cleaning campaigns for their schools.



Equipment

Children aged 12-18 have emphasized the need for proper classrooms with decent seating and desks to support academic performance. They also requested more classrooms and teachers to tackle **overcrowding**.

Children aged 15-18, both girls and boys in Ubari and Ghat, have emphasized the importance of providing **computers, tablets, and internet access** to ensure that children have access to up-to-date learning materials.

Children aged 12-18 stress the necessity of **air conditioning** during hot and cold weather.



3.5

**Barriers and Enablers to access education:
Groups of children**

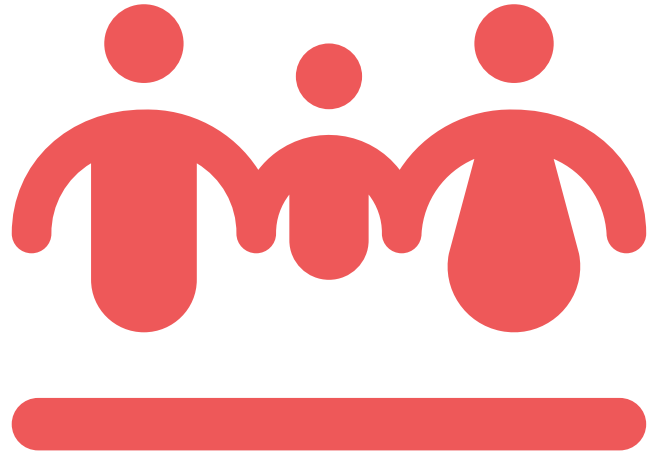
3.5.1

Children with special needs

"In government schools, there is a failure to accept children with major disabilities, including those who are blind or hearing impaired, due to a lack of capabilities to integrate and care for them. The center's equipment, in general, is considered inadequate for their needs and was not equipped in the required manner."

-Teacher in Sebha

Barriers: children with special needs



- The lack of specialized educational initiatives.
- The **mainstream curriculum** may not cater to this population learning needs as reported by teachers.
- Teachers in Ajdabiya and social workers have reported **lacking the necessary capabilities** to address these needs.
- **School's infrastructure** is hindering physical access for this population. All participants reported the infrastructure inadequacy includes classrooms that lack necessary accommodations such as wheelchair ramps.
- **Bullying** affects retention since children may avoid school to escape bullying situations, as reported by social workers, teachers, and children aged 12-14.

Enablers: children with special needs



- Installing a **sense of belonging** within the school community and educating parents and the community about the rights of children with special needs has been suggested by teachers and social workers..
- A social worker in Tripoli highlighted the importance of ongoing awareness sessions for individuals with special needs and their families, motivating them to overcome challenges and prioritize education.
- **Adequate infrastructure** is deemed essential by social workers, teachers, and children aged 12-14. This encompasses inclusive facilities such as WASH facilities, classrooms, and entrances designed to accommodate diverse needs of these children.
- Eliminating school fees was highlighted by social workers as a step in removing financial barriers to education.
- Teachers and social workers advocate for **tailored learning** programs and **psychosocial support** to integrate this population of children.

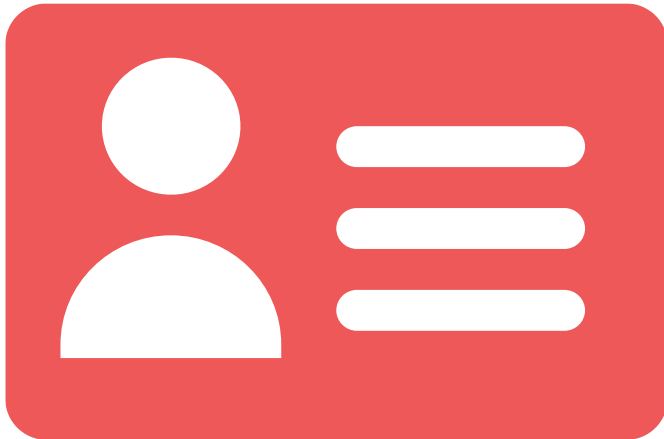
3.5.2

Children from Migrants and Refugees' Communities

"These individuals face greater problems and challenges because public schools require administrative procedures for student registration, and some do not possess the necessary documentation, leading to failures in school enrollment or scrutiny by the education office."

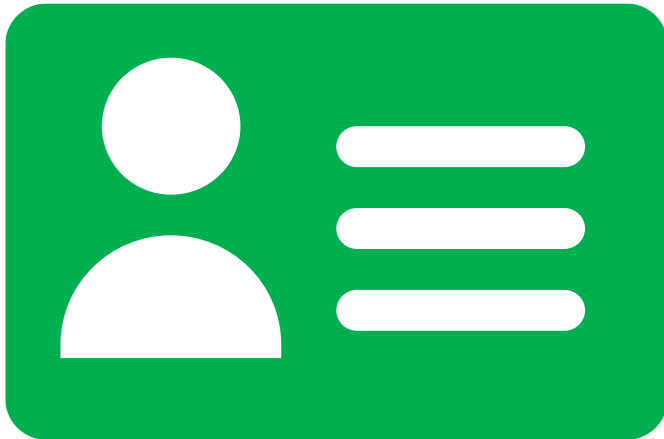
-Teacher in Ubari.

Barriers: Children from MR communities



- The lack of documentation, as reported by social workers and teachers, **prevents them from registering** and enrolling in formal education facilities.
- Social workers and teachers also highlighted that even if some children and their caregiver manage to provide the required documents, they often face another obstacle- the need to pass a test conducted in **Arabic**, a language unfamiliar to many non-libyan children.
- Some families of this population settle for NFE centers run by INGOs as an alternative. However, the number of places are limited as reported by social workers. Consequently, children find themselves with no access to education unless they can afford a substantial fee for private education facilities, which may be unaffordable for many.

Enablers: Children from MR communities



All participants emphasize the role of community centers in providing accessible education free of charge to children without documentation, as other options are either expensive or inaccessible.

Social workers advocate for interventions to alleviate barriers, such as **eliminating documentation** requirements in educational facilities, simplifying access for children.

- In Hay Andalus, social workers coordinate the registration of children in public schools if they can provide the required documents.
- Similarly, in Ajdabiya, children lacking documentation are referred to the **Legal Affairs Office** at the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) for assistance.
- In Abu-Selim, families facing document-related challenges receive **legal advice** and assistance in obtaining identification documents through a dedicated **lawyer**.
- In Tripoli Educational Facilitators, as highlighted by social workers, play pivotal roles in guiding students through registration processes, whether in formal educational institutions or centers.

Teachers propose offering **Arabic** courses to facilitate children's integration into the formal education system, recognizing the necessity of Arabic proficiency for enrollment tests.

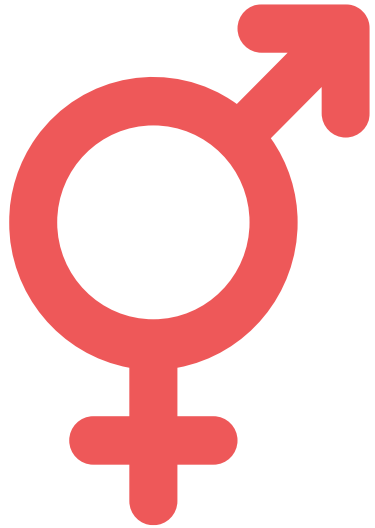
3.5.2

Adolescent girls

"I was influenced by the concept of girls' education being insignificant compared to boys, which affected my confidence in my academic abilities."

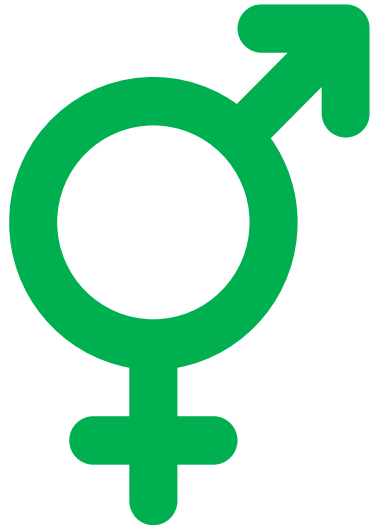
Adolescent girl aged 15-18.

Barriers: Adolescent girls



- **Assigned gender-biased roles**, such as household chores or early child-rearing responsibilities, that limit girls' academic pursuits. This was noted by teachers and social workers.
- Some parents consider **girls' education unimportant**, preferring early marriage or household duties over schooling. This observation was made by teachers and adolescent girls aged 15-18.
- **Gender-mixed classrooms** is not preferred by some girls, they suggest gender separation expressed by girls aged 15-18 and by parents through social workers. Also, they received complaints about this issue consistently.

Enablers: Adolescent girls



- Awareness campaigns and advocacy aimed at adolescent girls, their parents and the wider community aiming to reduce socially constructed barriers was proposed by social workers and teachers
- Effective communication with adolescent girls and their parents identified by social workers as a strategy to promote attendance.
- There is a specific request for increased representation of female teachers to cater to **cultural preferences**, particularly for female students. In addition, some children aged 15-18 advocate for gender-segregated classrooms, while others aged 12-14 propose removing this segregation.

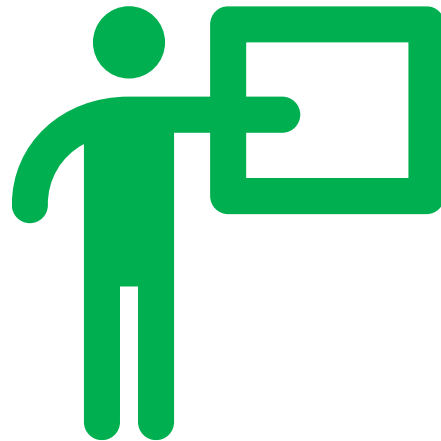
A world map is shown in a light gray, semi-transparent style, overlaid on a background of a light gray geometric pattern consisting of interconnected lines forming various sized triangles and polygons. The map is centered on the Atlantic Ocean. A large red number '3.6' is positioned in the center of the map, over the European continent.

3.6

Children's Opinions on Pedagogy

Children's opinion on pedagogy

- More qualified teachers and providing training opportunities for them was suggested by children aged 15-18. The innovative teaching methods is appreciated and enhanced their attendance within community centres run by INGOs.
- Beyond academics, factors like clean and maintained facilities, access to healthcare within school, and the provision of free food contribute to the retention of children, as reported by children aged 15-18.
- Providing recreational spaces and activities was requested by children aged 12-18.
- Information sessions and the preparation for labour market was proposed by children aged 15-18.



- Reducing the formal education curriculum, providing free educational resources, and adopting distance learning to enhance accessibility and flexibility was mentioned by children 15-18.
- Children motivation to enrol in community centres, includes attending remedial classes to improve formal school performance, preparing for exams, and acquiring new skills. Legal ineligibility prompts some to rely solely on community centres for education access.
- Receiving valid certification upon completing their courses within community centres run by INGOs, were requested by children 15-18 with Moroccan and Sudanese nationalities.

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4

Conclusion

Conclusion

- Based on participants' input, **transportation, safety concerns, infrastructural inadequacies, and financial constraints** remains significant factors contributing to non-regular attendance and dropout.
- These challenges disproportionately affect vulnerable populations, including migrants, refugees, and low-income families.
- Enablers also emerged, such as providing more **educational opportunities, promoting awareness** on education importance, enhancing **teacher qualifications**, and offering **psychosocial support**.



Thank you for your attention



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