



We're for teachers

MEDIA RELEASE

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Teachers Health and Australia for UNHCR partnership to transform the lives of refugee mothers and babies in the Democratic Republic of the Congo

Australia for UNHCR and Teachers Health are launching a three-year program that will help deliver neonatal care to 11,000 displaced mothers and their newborns in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC).

There are currently 4.5 million people displaced by conflict within DRC, and 541,000 refugees in DRC from neighbouring countries. Humanitarian needs are enormous, and pregnant women and infants are amongst the most vulnerable.

Through the partnership, Teachers Health, a not-for-profit health fund for members of the education community, will help fund antenatal, obstetric and postnatal care in DRC. This support will include providing equipment such as infant incubating heaters and portable ultra sound machines, as well as medicines and disposal equipment for delivery kits.

Australia for UNHCR is the Australian national partner of the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) – the lead agency for the protection of refugees, displaced and stateless people globally.

Teachers Health quote: “Our partnership with Australia for UNHCR allows us to take action and extend the reach of our health and wellbeing support, making a real and positive global impact where it’s urgently needed; saving the lives of refugee mothers and their babies in the Democratic Republic of the Congo,” said Brad Joyce, Teachers Health’s CEO.

Naomi Steer, National Director, Australia for UNHCR, said: “Teachers and health workers have been longstanding supporters of Australia for UNHCR, helping empower refugees with education, healthcare and livelihood opportunities. I am delighted that Teachers Health will take this to a new level by helping deliver life-saving neo and post-natal services for 11,000 refugee mothers and their babies.

“This support from Teachers Health comes at a critical time for UNHCR as record levels of displacement leave its global relief operations underfunded by almost half. I am very grateful to Teachers Health for taking a leadership role and supporting refugees through this important and innovative partnership.”

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About Australia for UNHCR

Australia for UNHCR is the National Partner of the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR). Australia for UNHCR is an Australian charity, which fundraises to provide life-changing humanitarian support to refugees and other displaced and stateless people supported by UNHCR.

About Teachers Health

Teachers Health is Australia's largest industry-based health fund, built from day one to benefit the education community. Today the not-for-profit health fund looks after over 330,000 teachers, education staff, and their families around Australia.

About the DRC situation

The DRC is one of the most complex humanitarian situations worldwide, with multiple conflicts within and around its vast territory. Every year, 96,000 newborns die before the end of their first month of life - up to half of these babies don't survive their first 24 hours. Breathing problems, infection and hypothermia are the three key threats to newborns.

UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, is working across DRC to protect men, women and children displaced by the ongoing conflict, as well as refugees in DRC who have fled conflict in neighbouring countries. UNHCR relies almost entirely on voluntary contributions to fund its global humanitarian relief operations. Its programs to protect people in the DRC are currently only 11 percent funded.

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