



SEND my
FRIEND
TO SCHOOL

Let My Friends Learn

How the UK Government can protect children's education during emergencies

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Acronyms

COP	Conference of the Parties
CSE	Comprehensive sexuality education
CSSF	Comprehensive School Safety Framework
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
ECW	Education Cannot Wait
EiE	Education in Emergencies
FCAS	Fragile & Conflict Affected States
FCDO	Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office
GRF	Global Refugee Forum
GNI	Gross National Income
GPE	Global Partnership for Education
ICAI	Independent Commission for Aid Impact
MHPSS	Mental Health and Psycho-social Support
ODA	Overseas Development Aid
OPD	Organisations of Persons with Disabilities
SEL	Social Emotional Learning
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal(s)
SGBV	Sexual and Gender Based Violence
SRHR	Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights
UNCRC	United Nation Convention on the Rights of the Child
WASH	Water, and Sanitation and Hygiene

Glossary

Anticipatory Action: acting ahead of a predicted hazard to prevent or reduce the impacts on communities before they fully unfold. This includes Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR), Conflict Mitigation, Climate Change Adaptation and Resilience Building activities to mitigate the risks of identified hazards and bridge the gap between response and longer-term development.

Child Protection: the freedom from all forms of abuse, exploitation, neglect, and violence, including bullying and sexual exploitation for children and youth.

Crisis-sensitive educational planning: cost-effective planning that analyses the risks to education posed by conflicts, natural hazards, climate change, epidemics and other dangers. This enables decision-makers to prevent, prepare for, respond to, and recover from crises to ensure educational continuity, and ensure plans are equitable and inclusive.

Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR): aims to identify, assess and reduce the likelihood of impact of hazards in the long term, and is foundational to anticipatory action.

Displacement: forcible or voluntary movement of people from their homes by violent conflicts, gross violations of human rights, natural hazards, and other traumatic events or threats.

Early warning systems: the provisions of timely and meaningful information to enable individuals and communities to prepare and act in an appropriate way to reduce the impact of threats, and to prepare effective responses.

Education in emergencies (EiE): the provision of quality learning opportunities for all children and youth in situations of emergencies and protracted crises. This includes early childhood development, primary, secondary, and non-formal education, incorporating the physical, psychosocial, and cognitive protection that can sustain and save lives.

Emergency: situations in which man-made or natural disasters destroy the usual conditions of life, care and education facilities for children and disrupt, deny, hinder progress, or delay the realisation of the right to education.

Gender-responsive EiE: promotes equal learning outcomes by addressing the specific needs and capacities of girls and boys to empower them equally. It considers the gender-based barriers to education to close existing gaps in enrolment, participation, and attainment to ensure all children can access education in emergencies.

Gender-Transformative Education: equips and empowers stakeholders to examine, challenge, and change harmful gender norms and power imbalances. It requires strategies and programmes that intentionally challenge inequalities in gender roles and power dynamics within communities and the education systems.

Hazards: a potentially damaging physical event, phenomenon, or human activity that may cause loss of life or injury, property damage, social and economic disruption, or environmental degradation. The risk posed by a hazard depends on how likely it is, and where, how often, and with what intensity it takes place.

Inclusion: all children being counted, participating and achieving with no one left behind. This includes children with disabilities, girls, refugee and internally displaced children, as well as many other groups currently at risk of exclusion. Inclusion is the process of transforming the education system to take diversity and multiplicity of needs into account, respect and value such diversity, and eliminate all forms of discrimination.

Inclusive Education: the design and implementation of education policies that respond to learners' diverse needs, and ensure they fulfil their right to education regardless of physical, intellectual, social, emotional, linguistic, gender differences, and can learn and participate equally and effectively free from bias.

Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS): the provision of support that aims to protect or promote psychosocial well-being and/or prevent or treat mental disorders for people in crisis situations. Within this, Socio-Emotional Learning (SEL) helps children and young people develop the social and emotional skills to understand and manage emotions, set and achieve goals, show empathy, maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions.

Preparedness: having the knowledge, capacity and resources to effectively anticipate, respond to and recover from the impacts of potential or current hazard events or conditions.

Protracted Crisis: prolonged situations are characterised by recurrent natural disasters and/or conflict, longevity of food crises, breakdown of livelihoods and insufficient institutional capacity to react to the crises.

The Send My Friend to School coalition

Send My Friend to School is the UK civil society coalition of international development NGOs, teachers' unions and charities. We bring together young people, politicians, teachers, civil society and the media in joint campaigning to demand quality education for all children across the globe.

Each year thousands of schools and young people take part in our campaign, teaching young people the power and importance of using their voices globally to create positive change. Our unique mass schools campaign supports schools across the UK to actively engage with their local Member of Parliament.

From 2023-2025, we are launching a two-year campaign focused on education in emergencies. We will work with schools across the UK to campaign for changes to UK international policy that will enable more children and young people around the world who are affected by emergencies to receive quality, inclusive education.

Children and young people in the UK know the profound impact that COVID-19 had on their learning and wellbeing. Unlike the disruption they experienced during the pandemic, learning disruption for our 222 million friends in crises risks becoming permanent. That's why we are asking the UK Government to Let My Friends Learn.

Foreword

Campaign Champions

We are the Send My Friend to School Campaign Champions – a group of 14-15 year olds from all the UK, who are united by our belief that every child in the world should have a chance to learn, whatever their circumstances.

Every child deserves access to school, and that's not up for debate. This does not change in times of emergencies. The UK Government has a duty of care to use its wealth humanely for the benefit of the poorest in the world. For politicians, it is all too easy to worry more about the next election than about the next generation. But the duty that they have extends much deeper than the electoral fortunes of their respective parties. Issues such as climate change, conflict, COVID-19 are stopping children from learning, and this is wrong. Education is the most fundamental part of the creation of a better future.

Send My Friend To School has empowered us with the knowledge that anyone can make a difference in the world, and has provided us with the tools to do so. We want to see our government protecting children's right to education in times of emergencies. This is imperative to achieve inclusive and quality education for all children by 2030.



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Youth 4EiE

We are the Youth for Education in Emergencies (Youth4EiE) Global Panel - a group of 16 youth activists from 8 different countries who are advocating for education in emergencies, supported by Plan International and Education Cannot Wait (ECW). We have seen first-hand the devastating impacts that a disrupted education can have for children and young people all over the world.

We are aware that during crises, children and youth are at risk of further harm, abuse and exploitation. That is why we, as young people, want to partner with, lend our voice and propose solutions to raise awareness of the obstacles to education in emergencies. We know that when children and young people have access to education, it helps to relieve them of traumatic experiences they may have suffered. It also saves students' lives in emergency situations, especially for girls and young women.

This is why we need the UK government to prioritise funding for education in emergencies and ensure the right to inclusive, quality, gender-transformative education is upheld in times of crisis. We are taking action. And we need the UK Government to take action too.



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Executive Summary

In recent years the world has increasingly witnessed how sudden disruptions can deny millions of children their opportunity to learn. From the conflict in Ukraine, to floods in Pakistan, to the ban on girls' education in Afghanistan, 222 million school-aged children are affected by emergencies and protracted crises globally and require urgent educational support.

Conflict, climate change, food crises, forced displacement and the aftermath of COVID-19 are obstructing children's right to education on an unprecedented scale. These factors are worsened by widespread deficiencies in preparedness to confront these hazards. The most marginalised children are disproportionately affected including girls, children with disabilities, refugees and children who have been forcibly displaced.

Emergencies threaten the hopes and dreams of a whole generation

Deadly earthquakes in Türkiye and Syria have halted the education of millions of children. In Syria, 2.4 million children were already out of school at the beginning of this year.¹ In south-

eastern Türkiye access to education is disrupted for nearly 4 million children, including 350,000 refugee and migrant children, who were already experiencing high dropout rates and a lack of quality education.²

Meanwhile, the Horn of Africa region is currently facing its worst drought in decades, with 3.1 million children and adolescents affected in Somalia alone. Almost one million children in Somalia are at risk of dropping out of education, this is on top of 4.2 million children already out of school.³

Over the last five years in the world's largest refugee camp in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh, half a million children have lived without formally recognised education. Taslima, 15, is one of those children, she says *"There is no formal school. In previous times, we studied in schools run by community-based organisations, but now they have been destroyed and closed. They taught us English, Burmese, and mathematics with Rohingya language translation. With their instruction, we understood the lessons very clearly."*

*Now, Bangladeshi teachers teach us in Bangla, which we don't understand at all."*⁴

The war in Ukraine is pushing even more children out of school, with recent estimates indicating the conflict has impacted 5.7 million school-aged children.⁵

A child's right to education does not end in times of crisis

Education in emergencies (EiE) is life-saving and life-protecting. Safe and supportive learning spaces can provide children with the skills to escape crises, build their resilience and adaptive capacity to withstand hazards, and most critically, children tell us that education sustains their hope for a brighter future.

When children are asked about what is most important to them, education tops the list. Several surveys have shown that children and youth from crisis-affected countries identify education and safety as their highest needs, with children twice as likely to rank going to school as their top concern, compared with immediate needs like food, water, shelter or money.⁶

Zuhal, 16, used to dream about all the things she wanted to do with her life and how she would become an advocate for children in Afghanistan. But in the last year, her life has changed dramatically. Insecurity, poverty, and the Taliban's ban on girls attending secondary school classes, means she no longer attends school.

She says 'If girls don't get an education, and a voice, they can't meet their own needs. Being kept away from my education and my dreams makes me depressed. My message to people living abroad is that the world should help us to go to school and take children's rights seriously'.

Despite record need, EiE is chronically underfunded and under-prioritised

Education is one of the least funded humanitarian areas, receiving just 3.1 % of global humanitarian financing in 2021, with appeals for education receiving just 22 % of the funds required.⁷ Funding is often diverted to other emergency-response priorities with education often the first service suspended and the last to be restored during a crisis. Even less is invested in preparedness and anticipatory action⁸, meaning that when emergencies and protracted crises do occur, education systems are weak and unable to withstand shocks.

The UK has made commendable commitments to provide inclusive and quality education to children and youth living in emergencies. Yet drastic cuts to UK Overseas Development Assistance (ODA), threatens the education of children living in crisis. Moreover, the risks facing children's education today will be compounded tomorrow because of more frequent and protracted crises, including conflict and climate-related events. Without urgent action and investment, millions more children will be denied their right to education.

Despite the unprecedented scale of threats facing children's education, progress remains possible. Most of the shocks driving humanitarian needs are somewhat predictable, meaning risks can be planned for in advance. Ensuring that education systems are more inclusive and resilient to adapt and withstand hazards is a cost-effective solution to protecting children's learning in future crises and achieving Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4.

Wherever and whatever the crisis, children want one thing above all else: to go to school and learn. The UK must act now and step up on the delivery and financing of its commitments to protect children's learning during emergencies.

Recommendations

The Send My Friend to School coalition is calling on the UK Government to support crisis-affected countries to build and invest in inclusive, resilient and gender-responsive education systems that can withstand all hazards to protect the learning of all children during emergencies.

We are calling on the UK Government to take the following measures to **PREPARE, PROTECT, INVEST, and ACT** to secure children's learning in emergencies:

1. PREPARE: Strengthen preparedness and anticipatory action in education systems

The UK should prioritise education as a core component of all humanitarian preparedness, anticipation and early response by supporting crisis-affected countries to co-develop and implement integrated preparedness and early action plans; investing in disaggregated EiE data and endorsing the revised Comprehensive School Safety Framework (CSSF).

2. PROTECT: Ensure children are safe, protected and learn during an emergency

The UK should prioritise foundational learning, child protection, mental health and psychosocial support services (MHPSS) and social-emotional learning (SEL) in emergencies by ensuring full adoption of the RAPID framework; mainstreaming whole-of-school approaches to child protection and school safety; and improving the recruitment and wellbeing of teachers.

3. INVEST: Scale up financing for education in emergencies and systems strengthening

The UK should maximise the impact of UK ODA on EiE to reach the most marginalised by restoring UK ODA to 0.7 % of GNI and increasing education's share to 15 % with at least 10 % from its humanitarian budget dedicated to EiE; and ensuring Education Cannot Wait (ECW) and Global Partnership for Education (GPE) are fully-funded.

4. ACT: Provide global leadership to protect children's right to education in emergencies

The UK should leverage its role globally to secure action and investment to tackle the barriers that prevent children's learning in emergencies by championing the rights of children and youth in decision-making, and securing ambitious new commitments in global forums, including COP28 and the Global Refugee Forum (GRF).



School children in a village near the town of Mongu, in Western Province, Zambia. During the flood season, the school becomes an island, and the children need to use canoes to get to class. © Daphnee Cook / Save the Children

1. Education Under Threat

Emergencies are disrupting children's right to education on an unprecedented scale

Globally 222 million school-aged children are estimated to be affected by emergencies and protracted crises and require immediate educational assistance.⁹

78.2 million

are out-of-school (54% girls, 17% children with disabilities or functional difficulties, 16% children who are forcibly displaced)

119.6 million

are in school but are not achieving minimum proficiency in reading or maths

24.2 million

are in pre-primary, primary or secondary school and achieving minimum proficiency in mathematics or reading but are still affected by crises

This represents a 196 % increase from 2016.¹ Emergencies are also becoming increasingly complex and protracted, with the average humanitarian crisis lasting more than nine years.¹⁰ Nearly 84 % out-of-school crisis-impacted children now live in areas with protracted crises.

In the context of this report we refer to education in emergencies and protracted crises under the terms of emergencies and EiE.

A crisis or shock may lead to children being denied the chance to learn or prevent them from accessing education in the first place. Education disruption can occur suddenly through physical or man-made means, such as floods, hurricanes or violence, or gradually, such as slow onset environmental changes that deteriorate a population's capacity to respond. In many countries concurrent crises are exacerbating one another.

At the same time, the world is experiencing a "learning crisis" whereby hundreds of millions of children are not receiving the critical foundational skills of literacy and numeracy which are necessary to support their overall development.

1 Note slightly different methodology used

This is an acute problem for children and youth living in crisis-affected contexts. Only 10 % of all crisis-impacted children in primary or secondary education are achieving minimum proficiency in maths or reading.⁹ This is within the backdrop of a growing global funding gap to achieve SDG4, currently estimated at \$148billion, which could increase by up to a third as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.¹¹

Emergencies have a detrimental impact on children and youth's ability to learn and thrive

Emergencies also impact children and youth's mental health and wellbeing. Children exposed to conflict often experience severe psychological and social consequences which are compounded when children lose access to education.

There is a strong link between the length of school closures and the levels of reported

increase in negative feelings in children. Research conducted by Save the Children across eight regions during the COVID-19 pandemic showed that reports of negative feelings were very high for most children (96 %) when schools had been closed for 17 to 19 weeks.¹² Furthermore, out-of-school children miss out on essential services, such as child protection, mental health and psychosocial support services (MHPSS), food and more. For children with disabilities, school closures also affect their access to rehabilitation services and isolates them further, reducing the opportunities to engage and play with their peers.

In many crisis-affected contexts child protection systems are weak or non-existent. This puts children at a high-risk of violence and exploitation, including sexual abuse, child labour or child, early and forced marriage. All of which threaten children's safety as well as their access to learning.



"We know that everyone has the right to education, but it is also lifesaving during emergencies, especially for girls and young women, because we learn to protect ourselves and others against gender-based violence which also gives us better opportunities for the future."

Nataly, 21, Youth 4 Education in Emergencies Panel Member, Ecuador

How does education intersect with different types of crises?

Conflict

Violent conflicts are increasingly impacting children's education, with a record 452 million children living in violent conflict zones.¹³ Children and youth, especially those out of school, are at greater risk of exploitation, abuse, abduction, and sexual violence when living in conflict settings. Evidence suggests that exposure to violent conflict may also have a significant lasting impact on children's ability to learn.¹⁴ In particular, shocks in a child's early years of development (0-8 years) are likely to have long-term irreversible consequences to their wellbeing, learning and ability.

Even when children can access education, school is not always a safe place for them. In 2020 and 2021, there were more than 5,000 reported attacks on education in 85 countries, causing injuries and fatalities to over 9,000 students, teachers, and academics.¹⁵

Climate change

Climate change is a threat multiplier, compounding and intersecting with existing challenges in emergency settings.¹⁶ Approximately 1 billion children - nearly half of the world's children - live in countries that are at an 'extremely high-risk' from the impacts of climate change, where high exposure to climate and environmental shocks is exacerbated by inadequate essential services and poor climate resilience measures. Extreme climate related disasters can lead to greater risk of food insecurity, water scarcity, displacement, violence and exploitation, as well as infrastructural damage, and injury to students or teaching personnel. All of which can result in children missing education for long-periods of time.

Climate-related events currently disrupt the education of 40 million children each year.¹⁷ It is estimated that by 2025 climate change will be a contributing factor in preventing at least 12.5 million girls from completing their education each year.¹⁸ As climate change worsens, we can expect to see increased frequency of flooding, extreme heat waves and droughts. The challenge of providing quality learning to children will increase as these factors hinder access routes to school, create unteachable working environments and impact food security.

Hunger crisis

The global hunger crisis has pushed an additional 23 million children into acute food and nutrition insecurity, bringing the number of affected children to 153 million.¹⁹ Poverty, climate change, economic downturn and COVID-19 have reinforced its impact on children's access to education, health and nutrition.

Food security is among the top concerns of families unable to afford an education for their children.²⁰ Under these circumstances, girls are often the first to drop out of school and often never return, risking generational setbacks in gender equality.²¹ For those who do attend school, increased levels of hunger in the classroom affect children's ability to learn, as they are more likely to have problems with memory and concentration. In low and middle-income countries, 43 % of children under five risk not reaching their full developmental potential due to extreme poverty and stunting, with children living in conflict zones most affected.²²

COVID-19

At the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, over 190 countries closed schools affecting 1.6 billion children and youth globally.²³ For many of the school-aged children and youth living in crisis contexts, this meant losing access to education as well as vital provisions of food, protection, water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) facilities, and MHPSS.

The pandemic represented a 'crisis upon a crisis' as it exacerbated pre-existing vulnerabilities and worsened the impact of structural and systemic inequalities that affect children and youth in humanitarian settings. Girls, children with disabilities, displaced children and those living in low-income households were most likely to report learning nothing at all while out of school.²⁴ COVID-19 is not the only global health threat facing education systems, with other epidemics including Ebola on the rise. The provision of continuous inclusive and quality education throughout future crises is now vital to prevent the level of disruption witnessed during COVID-19.

Supporting teachers to keep learning alive during COVID-19



During COVID-19, schools in Uganda were closed for more than 80 weeks – the longest school closures anywhere in the world. The education system faced huge challenges due to the lack of availability and connectivity of technology, and restrictive lockdowns for all citizens.

The government in Uganda acted quickly to find ways to provide learning resources to children, using channels including television and radio. Teachers were also expected to maintain learning in their communities, however with little support provided.

In partnership with the Ministry of Education and Sports, STiR Education worked to leverage its expertise, capacity and networks within Uganda to help meet this need. They developed a programme of continuous professional development for teachers which was delivered over national and regional radio stations. Recordings of the sessions and other resources were also shared directly with teachers over WhatsApp.

Each broadcast was led by teachers sharing their own learning and international best practice, and district leaders were mobilised to maximise listenership and collect feedback on the emerging needs of teachers. Topics included effective checking for understanding, to help teachers to respond to gaps in learning, and building teacher belief in their ability to create change. There was also a focus on supporting the social and emotional wellbeing of teachers and children through these difficult times.

After planning for an initial four radio sessions, this programme ultimately continued for more than 18 months. A survey of 3,000 teachers across Uganda in late 2021 showed that up to 77% of teachers had listened to every session, and 60% said that the practices shared had helped them to connect with their students and peers.

© STiR Education

The poorest and most marginalised children are at greatest risk

Emergencies can deepen existing inequalities and have a disproportionate effect on those who are most marginalised. Children and youth facing multiple and intersecting challenges such as gender discrimination, poverty, disability, malnutrition, living in a rural location, being displaced, or belonging to a minority ethno-linguistic or religious group, are most likely to be excluded from education before, during and after an emergency occurs.

Girls and young women face multiple pressures in emergencies

Emergencies compound the barriers girls face in accessing primary and secondary education. During a crisis, girls tend to experience higher rates of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) in and around schools. Unintended pregnancies and increased unpaid care work can also surge. Additional barriers include lack of adequate facilities and menstrual hygiene management, lack of female teachers, attacks against schools, families in economic hardship favouring boys' education, and more.

Research by Plan International in three crisis contexts (South Sudan, the Lake Chad Basin, and the Rohingya refugee camps in Bangladesh), found that although girls expressed a clear desire for continuing their education during times of crisis, barriers such as pre-existing discrimination, fear of attack, or lack of education facilities nearby, hindered their access to school or vocational training.²⁵

Rates of child, early and forced marriage and adolescent pregnancy also increase during emergencies. School closures can lead to a rise in adolescent pregnancy by as much as 65 %.²⁶ The Global Girlhood Report 2022 identified that girls affected by conflict are over 20 % more likely to marry as children than those living outside of conflict zones.²⁷ Girls are also less likely to return to school after conflict or a hazard, being 2.5 times more likely to be out of school than boys.²⁸

Refugees are among the most excluded

Children who are refugees, or who have been internally displaced, are more likely to experience educational disengagement, disruption, and dropout. Approximately 36.5 million children were displaced from their homes at the end of 2021 - the highest number recorded since the Second World War.²⁹ A staggering 7.3 million children were newly displaced because of natural hazards. The World Bank estimates that in just three regions - Sub-Saharan Africa, South Asia and Latin America - more than 143 million people could be internally displaced because of climate change by 2050.³⁰

As the number of children who are displaced increases, the impact on their education worsens: children who are refugees are five times more likely to be out of school, with only half of all refugee children enrolled in primary school. If they return to school, they not only need to make up for lost learning time, but also manage the stress and trauma associated with their displacement.³¹

Crises increase the challenges children with disabilities face in accessing education

Globally, children and youth with disabilities have been among the most excluded from all levels of education – a situation that is compounded during emergencies. This is due to multiple reasons including inaccessible temporary shelters, learning spaces and evacuation plans. All of which lead to children and youth with disabilities being denied their right to education in humanitarian situations. For example, a report by Syria Relief found that four out of five children with disabilities living in the Syrian Arab Republic reported not having access to education.³²

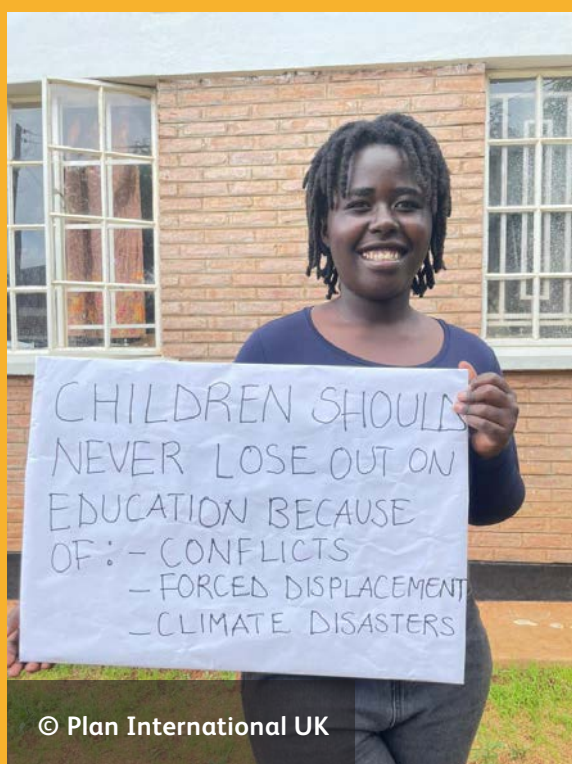
Existing impairments or medical conditions can worsen as access and reliance of a young person's regular care provisions, rehabilitation services, medication, or assistive devices are disrupted with limited or no alternatives. Girls and women with disabilities are at higher risk of being abandoned and among the last to receive emergency assistance and access to education during a crisis.

Children in crises are demanding their right to a good education

Children from crisis-affected countries have self-identified education and safety as their highest needs, with children twice as likely to rank going to school as their top concern, compared with immediate needs like food, water, shelter or money.³³

Despite the importance that young people and their communities place on education, it is too often overlooked by governments and donors.

The imperative is on the international community to act now and uphold the right to education for all children and youth in crisis. The UK must urgently step-up on the delivery and financing of its commitments to protect children's learning during emergencies.



“Education in emergencies is important because it is not just a right, it is a need for every child. When crises occur, education is not prioritised as it should be, it is usually put on hold, and at times the learning spaces are occupied and used as evacuation centres. When children access education it helps them to relieve themselves from the traumatic experiences they encounter such as losing their loved ones, their homes etc. Education gives them hope, education gives them a future.”

Angela, age 23, Plan's Youth for Education in Emergencies Panel Member, Malawi

Addressing child, early and forced marriage in marginalised refugee communities in Lebanon

Lebanon hosts more than a million refugees, including those from Palestine and Syria. Several studies² show that child marriage rates have increased in refugee communities because of displacement and poor living conditions, including a lack of access to education and health services, livelihoods and future prospects.

Naba'a, a member of Girls Not Brides: The Global Partnership to End Child Marriage – is a non-profit formed in 2001 to support marginalised communities in Lebanon, including those displaced from Palestine and Syria. They do this by building protective environments where children and young people can thrive regardless of their gender, religion or nationality. They work with communities to improve the status of adolescent girls and women and support their equal treatment, awareness of their rights and ability to make informed decisions and build a more fulfilling future for themselves, beyond marriage.

They aim to achieve these outcomes by:

1. Building girls' agency through life skills, education and vocational trainings

2. Mobilising communities to build a safe environment for girls

3. Providing services tailored to the specific needs of adolescent girls

As of 2021, over 2,700 girls in South Lebanon had enrolled in Naba'a activities since 2017, participating in sessions on public speaking, negotiation, action planning and group dynamics, and learning about laws, child protection and women's and children's rights. Girls have also met with leaders in municipalities and camps so they can express themselves directly and more powerfully to decision makers.

"The Syrian refugee girls I work with — Nariman, Iman, Rania — face barrier after barrier to their education and still they are fighting. They are fighting to go to school because they know it is their only hope for a better future [...] As a result of our work and conversations, mentalities are changing. Girls are speaking out, parents and communities are listening — but there's still a lot of work to be done." - Naba'a staff member

© Girls Not Brides: The Global Partnership to End Child Marriage

² For example: UNHCR, UNICEF and WFP, 2018, Vulnerability assessment of Syrian refugees in Lebanon, 2018; DeJong J., et al., 2017, "Young Lives Disrupted: Gender and Well-being among Adolescent Syrian Refugees in Lebanon," Conflict and Health, Vol. 11:1.



Yoris, a Youth4EiE member from Indonesia advocates for action against the impact of climate change on education. © Plan International UK

2. The UK's Mandate to Act

The UK has positioned EiE as an integral part of its efforts to achieve SDG4

Historically, the UK has been a leader in EiE, by leveraging funding and improving the coordination and quality of education to reach the most marginalised children. The Independent Commission for Aid Impact (ICAI) acknowledged that “DFID/FCDO has helped to promote a recent shift among donors towards focusing more on education in emergencies”³⁴

The UK's (2018) education policy paper, *Get Children Learning* commits to delivering multi-year investments in quality education in conflict and crises, responsive joined-up delivery to protect education systems, and support schools as safe spaces.³⁵ The Girls Education Action Plan (2021) and International Development Strategy (2022) and International Women and Girls Strategy (2023) outlines commitments to reach the most marginalised women and girls, including those impacted by conflict, displacement and natural disasters. Additionally, the FCDO's Disability

Inclusion and Rights Strategy seeks to prioritise MHPSS for people with disabilities, particularly within the EiE context, recognising that exposure to crisis acutely impacts their mental wellbeing and access to support services.³⁶

The UK has also made important global commitments on EiE

The UK has committed to ensuring the education and safety of children in emergencies, including through its endorsement of the Safe Schools Declaration and membership of the Board of the Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children. The G7 Girls Education Declaration offers two global milestones: to get 40 million more girls in school, and 20 million more reading by age 10 in low and lower-middle-income countries by 2026.³⁷ Building on the Charlevoix Declaration (2018) on quality education for girls, adolescent girls and women in developing countries, the new Declaration commits to prioritising the most marginalised and vulnerable girls, most at risk of being left behind – whether

on account of poverty, disability or the effects of conflict, displacement, and natural disasters..

Most of the world's out-of-school girls live in crisis-affected countries and in many crisis contexts girls' learning lags that of boys.³⁸ The UK and its G7 partners will not be able to deliver on its targets without prioritising girls in crisis contexts. Reaching the most marginalised girls provides an effective entry point for improving education outcomes for all children. However, Send My Friend to School is alarmed by the lack of leadership, low- and middle-income country buy-in, and accountability so far demonstrated on how the G7 will deliver on the two targets by 2026. The targets will not be met without greater leadership from the UK, supported by a clear action plan that is backed with the necessary resources.

As acknowledged in FCDO's position paper on the intersection of climate change and girls' education³⁹, girls and marginalised groups are disproportionately affected by climate and environmental change due to gender and other inequalities. The launch of the paper marks a positive effort to better understand the relationship between climate change and education, and identify integrated solutions. However, as highlighted in our concerns regarding the implementation of previous flagship UK commitments, without a clear action plan, concerted leadership, and adequate financing, the FCDO will be unable to deliver the transformation it aspires to achieve.

ODA cuts have undermined the UK's ability to provide education in emergencies

Despite its strong commitments on EiE the UK has consistently fallen short of international targets to allocate at least 4-10 % of humanitarian spending on education⁷, and 25 % of humanitarian funding to local and national organisations as committed to in the Grand Bargain.⁴⁰ While the UK has

increased its proportion of humanitarian funding for the education sector in recent years, from just 0.1 % of total humanitarian spending in 2016 to 3 % in 2021⁴⁰, its overall levels of spending remain woefully inadequate. There is also a significant gap in investment in child protection in humanitarian contexts by the UK and other donors. A review of global ODA showed that less than 1 % was allocated to ending violence against children in 2018, with the UK only allocating 1.8 % of total ODA.⁴¹

Effective EiE responses require a joint approach by humanitarian and development actors which includes long term and predictable investments in systems strengthening. Yet, such efforts have been severely hampered by unprecedented cuts to UK education ODA, following the government's reversal of its manifesto and legally-enshrined commitment to spend 0.7 % of Gross National Income (GNI) on ODA. This has led to an unfathomable scenario where the government is spending more of the ODA budget in the UK than on humanitarian assistance, education, health and water and sanitation combined.⁴²

The poorest have been disproportionately affected by cuts

Analysis by Save the Children identified that ODA spending on education fell by 68 % between 2019 to 2022, from £762 million to £244 million. This is above the average of all aid spending which fell by 54 % in the same period, with further cuts to education expected this year.³ This illustrates in the starkest terms the growing chasm between the government's rhetoric and reality on global education. Care International further estimates that 700,000 fewer girls were supported by UK Aid for education between 2019-2022 compared to 2015-2018 as a result of cuts.⁴³ Analysis of the Girls Education Challenge Index shows that only 6 % of UK ODA reaches the most marginalised children in countries with the greatest need.⁴

3 Based on analysis of DFID's former portfolio aid spending, 2019 to 2022. Source: FCDO's reporting to the international aid transparency initiative, accessed December 8th 2022. Notes: DFID's former portfolio in this area does not include cross departmental funds like CSSF or EU budget attribution.

4 Malala Fund's 2019 GEI is a composite index which used data on access, completion, learning outcomes and gender disparities in education, in addition to wider contextual risks

The Centre for Global Development also found that the UK did not protect the poorest countries when it implemented aid cuts in 2021.⁴⁴ Bilateral aid to the group of least developed and low-income countries dropped by 40 % in 2021.⁴⁵ This is indicative of an alarming shift in spending away from crisis-affected countries most at-risk of education disruption.

Given the multiple and growing threats to education, education systems have never been more vulnerable. The UK must now take decisive action to support vulnerable crisis-affected

countries to build and invest in inclusive, resilient and gender-responsive education systems that can withstand all hazards and protect the learning of all children during emergencies.

Adopting this integrated approach is crucial to achieving the aspiration in the UK's International Development Strategy to 'build effective education systems with skilled staff and break down the barriers to girls staying and thriving in school, including poverty, disability, unintended pregnancies, early marriage, conflict and crises'.⁴⁶

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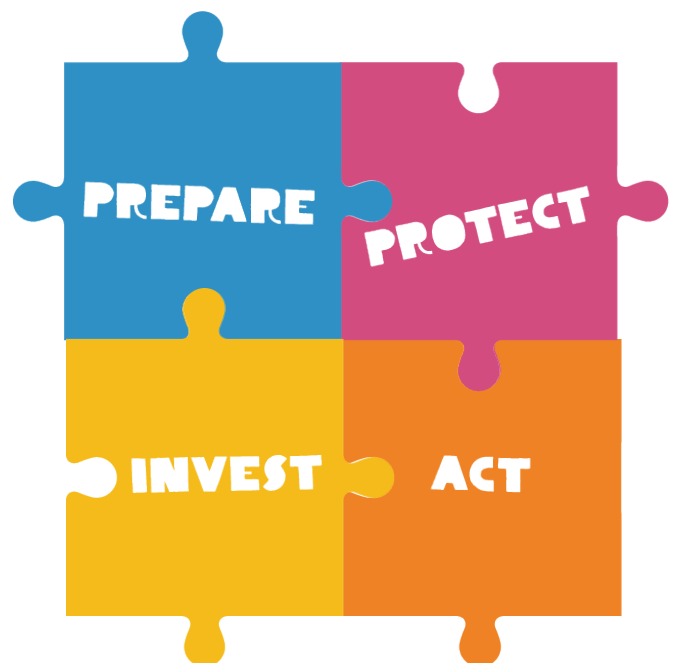
The Send My Friend to School Coalition is calling on the UK Government to take the following measures to **PREPARE**, **PROTECT**, **INVEST**, and **ACT** to secure children's learning in emergencies:

PREPARE: Strengthen preparedness and anticipatory action in education systems.

PROTECT: Ensure children are safe, protected and learning during an emergency.

INVEST: Scale up financing for EiE and systems strengthening

ACT: Provide global leadership to protect children's right to education in emergencies.





Evidence, 14, leads the Disaster Risk Reduction programme at his school in Zimbabwe. © Sacha Myers / Save the Children

3. PREPARE: Strengthen preparedness and anticipatory action in education systems

High vulnerability and exposure to hazards does not always mean high risk. Many shocks driving humanitarian needs are somewhat predictable, meaning risks can somewhat be planned for in advance. Therefore, even if a country has high-risk exposure, with good preparation the overall net risk of emergencies disrupting children's education is reduced.⁴⁷ Yet, ODI analysis indicates that more than half of humanitarian funding is used for responding to crises that are predictable – whilst only 1 % is used for preparedness and anticipatory action.⁴⁸

Prioritise education in preparedness and anticipatory action

Anticipatory actions, like Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR), Conflict Mitigation, and Climate Change Adaptation and Resilience Building, entail acting ahead of a predicted hazard to prevent or reduce the impacts on communities before they fully unfold. These actions leverage a window of opportunity when an early warning or forecast is available to implement pre-positioned resources and plans to take protective action.⁴⁹ This requires preparedness to be prioritised to ensure that

the education sector can take action before a crisis occurs and respond more effectively and efficiently during a crisis. Thus preventing or reducing the impact of an emergency on children's learning and enhancing the education system response.

Investment in preparedness and anticipatory action, including in DRR, early warning systems and crisis-sensitive planning, is a cost-effective method for strengthening the resilience of education systems. For example, by lowering the cost of rebuilding or repairing school infrastructure.

The UK should prioritise education as an integral and core component of all humanitarian preparedness, anticipation and (early) response to protect children's right to education from day one of a crisis. Responses should provide appropriate, inclusive and contextually relevant in-person and distance learning modalities to ensure quality learning and wellbeing. This should include foundational literacy, numeracy, and SEL, with approaches and learning outcomes appropriately measured.

Disaster risk reduction (DRR) in action in Zimbabwe



The Disaster Risk Reduction team at a school in Zimbabwe discuss their emergency plans. © Sacha Myers / Save the Children

Evidence, 14, and Siwela, 12*, attend school together in southern Zimbabwe. The region where they live is prone to natural hazards such as droughts and floods.

Evidence and Siwela, together with their teacher Diowd, lead the Save the Children supported DRR project at their school. The project aims to educate children about natural hazards and how they can protect themselves, and save lives during storms, floods, fires and animal attacks. Evidence and Siwela often lead drills at their school to ensure students know where to go and what to do if there is an emergency.

Through the DRR project, Save the Children is supporting 60 schools in two districts in Zimbabwe to create DRR plans. The plans

include identifying hazards and mapping escape routes and safe places. Save the Children has also supplied schools with first aid kits and evacuation route signage.

In addition to supporting schools, Save the Children also identified vulnerable families in the two districts and registered their details for use in case of future hazards. The disaster response was activated when families were hit by the recent drought and food crisis. These families were subsequently supported through Save the Children's cash transfer project and receive money each month to buy food and other essential items.

© Save the Children



Malika*, 9, attends Save the Children's community-based education (CBE) class for girls in Kabul, Afghanistan. © Charlotte Rose/Save the Children.

Promote and implement crisis-sensitive education planning

Crisis-sensitive education planning is a critical component of effective preparedness. It identifies and analyses the risks posed to education systems to develop measures to ensure that they can better prevent, prepare for, respond to, and recover from crises, and ultimately ensure educational continuity.⁵⁰ Every country, but particularly those most vulnerable to existing hazards and future crises, should have an integrated preparedness plan to protect children's learning and wellbeing. These plans should be fully inclusive for children with disabilities given the additional support needs that will be required, as well as centre gender equality to address gender disparities and their underlying factors. This includes promoting gender-transformative education approaches to change harmful gender norms and practices that are often perpetuated in education, particularly in crisis contexts.

The UK should support crisis-affected countries to co-develop and implement integrated preparedness and early actions plans. This should be in consultation with children and youth, parents, education authorities, teachers and local organisations,

including organisations of persons with disabilities (OPDs). Plans should be inclusive and accessible to all children and address the full breadth of school services. This includes WASH facilities, child protection reporting, referral and monitoring systems, provision of reasonable accommodations, enhanced accessible infrastructure, school meals, MHPSS, sexual and reproductive health rights (SRHR) programming, comprehensive sexuality education (CSE), and SGBV training.^{51 47} Given FCDO's significant expertise in DRR, the UK is well-placed to enhance the institutional capacities of ministries of education and partners to deliver crisis-sensitive planning.

Improve the collection, quality and dissemination of disaggregated EiE data

Crisis-sensitive education planning requires identifying and overcoming patterns of inequity and exclusion in education. This is important because inequalities are exacerbated during a crisis, especially for girls, children with disabilities and children who have been forcibly displaced, who are most likely to be excluded from education planning and responses. Yet, during a crisis, there is often no comprehensive education data collection system in place, and even when such

systems are in place, marginalised groups are often excluded. For example, humanitarian actors often don't know how many persons with disabilities are affected in a given situation and therefore are not equipped to identify and address the needs of persons with disabilities, or design and implement inclusive projects.⁵²

The lack of disaggregated, reliable, and up-to-date data in crisis-affected contexts severely undermines the ability of countries to identify discrepancies in children's access to education and their learning outcomes, and develop sound education sector plans and preparedness measures that address the specific needs of learners.⁵³ It also hinders the ability of countries to identify existing and potential hazards to children's learning, which could be used to inform forecasting and early warning information systems.⁴⁷ **To address inequalities and enhance outcomes and responses in emergencies, the UK should invest in and support the increased availability, quality and comparability of EiE data, and build capacity to disaggregate data by sex, disability, age and other intersecting dimensions.**

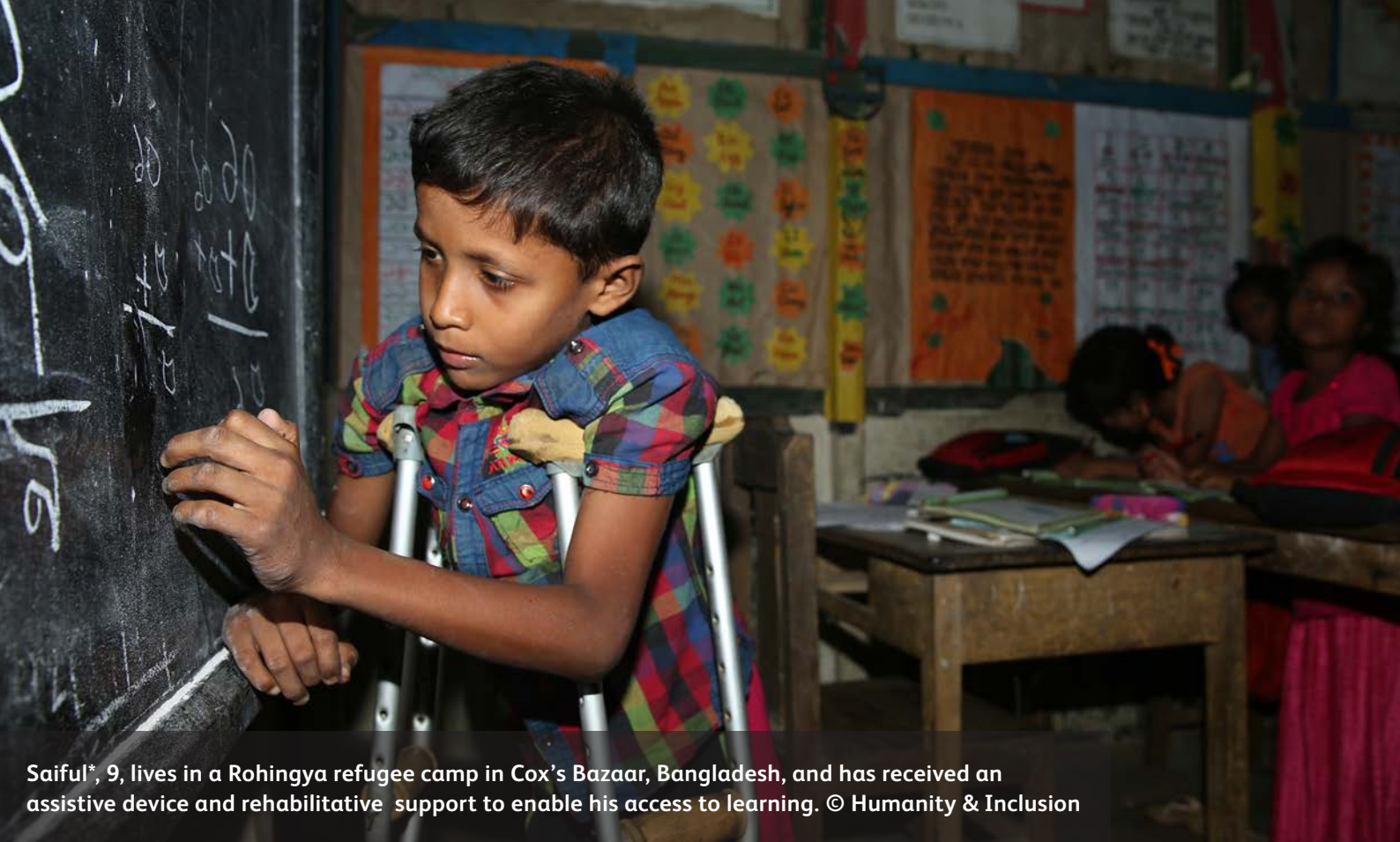
By prioritising investment and capacity strengthening in this area, the UK can make a significant contribution in strengthening the EiE evidence base. FCDO has established a strong reputation for expanding global research on "what works" in education, spending an estimated £60 million through its Research Department on education between 2015 and 2021. The £15.8 million Education Research in Conflict and Protracted Crisis (ERICC) Research Programme Consortium is a positive example of the work FCDO is already doing in this field.⁵⁴ While the EiE evidence base is growing, significant evidence gaps remain, particularly in

relation to improving learning outcomes in EiE and for children with disabilities. There is also a need to build research on the implementation of MHPSS and SEL approaches and their contextual implications in emergencies. Addressing these outstanding knowledge gaps will produce global evidence of "what works" to improve the quality and outcomes of education in emergencies and build on the UK's technical expertise.

Endorse and implement the revised Comprehensive School Safety Framework

Effective preparedness requires considering a whole range of hazards and risks facing an education system. Compelled by the rising threats to children and education, the Global Alliance for Disaster Risk Reduction and Resilience in the Education Sector (GADRES) revised its Comprehensive School Safety Framework (CSSF). The CSSF 2022-2030⁵⁵ is an all-hazards, all-risks approach to protecting children and education. It provides governments with a practical framework to make urgent progress across a multitude of children's rights and the sustainable development agenda.

The alignment of FCDO's position paper on climate change and girls' education with the CSSF is welcome. The CSSF plays a critical role in strengthening education systems so children's learning is protected from all hazards including the impact of climate change. **As part of an inclusive, all-hazards approach to keeping children safe in and around schools, the UK should now endorse, implement and champion the revised CSSF.** As the UK strengthens its credentials as a champion of education and climate change, socialisation and adoption of the CSSF should be prioritised, including in multilateral forums like COP 28, and across FCDO policies and frameworks.



Saiful*, 9, lives in a Rohingya refugee camp in Cox's Bazaar, Bangladesh, and has received an assistive device and rehabilitative support to enable his access to learning. © Humanity & Inclusion

4. PROTECT: Ensure children are safe, protected and learning during an emergency

Children's right to education, protection and safety does not end in times of emergencies. A prompt return to education is one of the most critical interventions to promote children's recovery during and after a crisis. EiE and child protection are intrinsically linked and mutually reinforcing. In particular, child protection efforts, including those that respond to school related gender-based violence, help ensure children can go to school safely by preventing and responding to abuse, neglect, exploitation, and violence against them in and around school.

Increase the provision and quality of protection, wellbeing and learning in emergencies

Integrating child protection and providing MHPSS and SEL in EiE responses is vital for children's safety and wellbeing as part of efforts to prevent and respond to all forms of violence in and around school. Evidence also shows that increased protection and well-being leads to better learning outcomes.⁵⁶

Despite the disproportionate effect of emergencies on the mental health of crisis-affected children, and the role that MPHSS and SEL can play in helping children affected by conflict to make a full recovery, these vital interventions are often overlooked.⁵⁷ MHPSS aims to support and promote children and youth's mental health and psychosocial wellbeing, and prevent or care for mental health problems.⁵⁸

Under this umbrella, SEL helps children and youth develop the social and emotional skills to understand and manage emotions, set and achieve goals, show empathy, maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions.⁵⁸ Additionally, access to lifesaving SRHR, including CSE, which is often an afterthought when resources are scarce, is critical and should be accessible in crisis contexts to help young people gain knowledge about their bodies, explore values and build coping mechanisms.

The UK should integrate and promote the mainstreaming of evidence-based whole-of-school approaches to child protection, MHPSS, SEL and CSE in emergencies and strengthen the capacity of local actors to use inclusive methods and tools to promote children's wellbeing. Child protection interventions should be gender responsive, support the most vulnerable populations, and consider the diversity of their experiences and needs. This should be reflected across preparedness and response plans and in bilateral and multilateral investments.

Prioritise foundational learning by ensuring full adoption of the RAPID framework

It is essential that children continue to access quality foundational learning during an emergency. As suggested by RESULTS UK's report, Foundations First, the UK can and must transform its impact in addressing the global learning crisis. We cannot achieve this transformation without consideration for children living in emergencies.

There are several evidence-based steps which can rapidly improve foundational learning for children in low-resource settings, including those in emergencies or protracted crises. The UK Government has played a leading role in establishing the Commitment to Action on Foundational Learning⁵⁹ which highlights the RAPID framework for Learning Recovery and Acceleration as being integral to improving foundational learning rates in these contexts:

Reach every child and keep them in school;

Assess learning levels regularly;

Prioritise teaching the fundamentals, as the building blocks of lifelong learning;

Increase the efficiency of instruction including through catch-up learning;

Develop psychosocial health and wellbeing so every child is ready to learn

The UK's challenge from here is to ensure that its endorsement of the CTA on Foundational Learning leads to full integration of the RAPID framework in both its bilateral and multilateral investments in basic education, including those impacting children in emergencies and protracted crises.

Moreover, the majority of UK ODA bilateral investments in education are achieving little or no tangible impact on improving literacy and numeracy learning levels at any significant scale. According to an ICAI review, between 2015 and 2021 there were 117 UK-funded bilateral basic education programmes that each spent over £1 million, of which only 11 programmes collected sufficient data for impact on learning, and only six had achieved their targets for improvement.³⁴

As ICAI concluded, 'data limitations mean it is not able to judge impact on learning for many of the FCDO's programmes.' This is likely to be having a detrimental impact for the foundational learning of children impacted by UK ODA education programmes in emergencies and must be urgently addressed. Additionally, accurate and reliable data collection is a global challenge, and UK leadership in this area would be a significant step towards the adoption of internationally agreed metrics for measuring children's learning.

The UK must prioritise foundational learning in emergencies by ensuring full adoption of the RAPID framework across its bilateral and multilateral EiE investments, with particular focus on improvements in measurement of foundational learning outcomes (using commonly agreed metrics).

Catch Up Clubs: A pioneering approach to getting children safely back to school and learning ⁶⁰⁶¹



Children engage in Catchup club activities at a Primary School in Kyangwali Refugee Settlement, Uganda. © Esther Ruth Mbabazi / Save The Children

To address learning losses that had been exacerbated by COVID-19, Save the Children launched Catch up Clubs: an innovative approach to helping children catch up on their education and reduce their likelihood of dropping out. An intensive thirteen-week remedial/accelerated education program CuCs enable children aged 8–13 years old to catch-up on their foundational learning (literacy, numeracy and SEL).

The Clubs adopt 'Teaching at the Right Level' using a simple learning assessment to organise children into levelled learning groups (based on their learning level rather than age) and follow targeted activities to help them progress.

Catch-Up Clubs bring together elements of proven programmes that achieve results for children and demonstrate disproportionately positive outcomes for the most marginalised children. CuCs have already reached over 16,000 children to date with active pilots in seven countries (Uganda, Colombia, Myanmar, Malawi, Bangladesh, Egypt, Afghanistan).

Learning assessments from baseline and end-line have been conducted in all these countries. In addition, evaluations are being conducted in five countries comparing learning progress of participating children with comparison of groups of children not yet enrolled in clubs.

Preliminary results from an evaluation of Catch-Up Clubs in refugee settlements in Uganda showed that of the children in the intervention group, 85.9% improved their reading by one level in contrast to 25.7% of children in the comparison group. Repeat literacy assessments of children in clubs in several countries also showed strong progress in learning. In Myanmar, by the end of the Catch-Up Club cycle, more than 80% of children achieved Story level or Story with Comprehension, and results from the first Sponsorship supported cycle in Bangladesh in 2022 showed that 89% of children improved their reading by at least one reading level.

© Save the Children



Address chronic teacher shortages in crisis-affected countries

In emergency settings, a dearth of well-trained and well-supported educators is one of the greatest barriers to quality education and learning outcomes.⁶² Refugee teachers are a lifeline for their communities. However, they often fail to receive the support that they require. Too often, refugee teachers must operate in contexts where their inclusion in either formal education systems or non-formal provision is either seriously challenging or prohibited. Participation in national systems, support for teacher accreditation, training, adequate resources and fair remuneration are among the most significant barriers.⁶³

Significantly, policy restrictions on refugee employment mean that many refugee teachers are prevented from working.⁶⁴ This not only denies refugee teachers access to work, negatively impacting their wellbeing and inclusion, but also injudiciously erects an artificial barrier to children's learning.

Acute teacher shortages are commonplace in crisis-affected countries, and in displacement contexts, where shortages are most acute, the average teacher to student ratio is estimated to be above 1:70.⁶⁵ We therefore need to see the implementation of bold commitments that provide the legal and practical conditions that enable refugee teachers to deliver quality education for their pupils. Teachers' unions can be key facilitators of this, and national governments should meaningfully include refugee teachers and their unions, as crucial stakeholders in social dialogue, in the design and implementation of policies.

As outlined in Send My Friend's policy report 'All My Friends Need Teachers' there is an urgent need for a new, clear FCDO strategy on global teacher policy that addresses this crisis. **The UK can and must improve the recruitment, retention and professional development of teachers and educational staff in crisis-affected countries.** Support should be provided to teachers from the very onset of an emergency, through to recovery and development, with teachers placed at the heart of education resilience planning.

Kamila's story from experiencing displacement & unemployment, to re-establishing herself as a teacher

Kamila is a 25-year-old teacher who lives in a remote village in Afghanistan with her husband and children. They have been displaced numerous times due to conflict. Kamila's displacement meant that she was unemployed for three years even though she was a qualified teacher.

When the Taliban took control in August 2021, she lost all hope of finding a job. Her family struggled financially, and she relied on her brothers for additional financial support. In the village where her family eventually settled there had been no education facilities for more than a decade. As a result, most children were illiterate.

In response, Street Child and its local partners established a community-based learning centre. Knowing that Kamila was a successful and experienced teacher, she was employed to run a class. Kamila's own children now attend the classes alongside 30 other girls and boys. She earns a monthly salary, meaning she can support her family, and is now the sole breadwinner. Young girls in Kamila's village look up to her as a female role model. They are excited about studying and do not see their gender as a barrier to being educated. Kamila is proud to share the power of education with the young girls in her village.

© Street Child

Protect education from attack

In conflict settings, teachers often put themselves at great risk to continue teaching, either delivering lessons from unsafe buildings or areas, or taking risks in order to continue doing their job. Schools are often also targets for violence, with teachers increasingly the targets of attacks on education.

The Safe Schools Declaration is designed to protect students, teachers, schools and universities from the worst effects of armed conflict. Send My Friend to School commended the UK when it became the 74th country to endorse the Safe Schools Declaration in 2018.⁶⁶ More recently, in October 2021 the UN Security Council unanimously adopted Resolution 2601 on the protection of schools in armed conflict. The first-of-its-kind resolution calls on Member States to develop measures to prevent and address attacks on schools and educational facilities.

As we approach the five-year anniversary of the UK's endorsement of the Safe Schools Declaration, to date 116 states around the world have joined this international political agreement.⁶⁷ Despite this significant progress, attacks on education and military use of educational facilities remain high. As a Permanent Member of the United Nations Security Council, the UK has a special responsibility to mobilise states to protect children and youth from all forms of violence and attacks in and around education.

The UK should now ensure it fully implements United Nations Security Council Resolution 2601 as well as use its influence in the United Nations, Commonwealth and elsewhere to encourage all countries to endorse and implement the Safe Schools Declaration and the Guidelines for Protecting Schools and Universities from Military Use during Armed Conflict.



Children who are internally displaced are often hardest hit by the impact of droughts in Somalia. Primary school children in an IDP in Kaharey continue to get their education despite the conditions. © World Vision

5. INVEST: Scale up financing for EiE and systems strengthening

The analysis outlined in this report has shown that EiE remains one of the least funded humanitarian and development areas. This is reflected in the low proportion of humanitarian spending the UK allocates to education at just 3 % in 2021. This underscores the importance of strengthening coherence between humanitarian spending and development cooperation. As crises become more protracted, the need to invest in education systems strengthening, including through preparedness and anticipatory action, becomes even more pressing.

Increase ODA spending on education and prioritise Fragile & Conflict Affected States (FCAS)

The UK's commitments to financing humanitarian-development coherence in the education sector are in jeopardy following the cut in UK ODA to 0.5 % of GNI, which has disproportionately fallen on education. At the same time there has been an alarming shift in UK ODA away from crisis-affected countries most at-risk of education disruption. Action for Humanity identified that total

UK bilateral ODA to FCAS fell by 40 % in 2021 from 2020 - a cut of £740 million.⁶⁸

The UK should immediately restore ODA to 0.7% of GNI and increase education's share of the ODA budget to 15% with at least 10% from its humanitarian budget dedicated to education in emergencies. This would follow the example of other donors, notably the European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO), which made a commitment from 2019 to allocate 10 % of its humanitarian funding to the education sector.

To maximise the reach of its ODA expenditure, the UK should also reinstate its commitment that 50 % of funding goes to FCAS and ensure that at least 25 % of humanitarian funding is allocated to national and local actors in-line with targets set in the Grand Bargain. Specifically, the UK should align and scale up bilateral and multilateral investments to strengthen preparedness capabilities in education systems, through pre-arranged and flexible multi-year financing and capacity building to countries most vulnerable to hazards.

Improve the tracking and monitoring of EiE financing

Financing data for spending on EiE is scarce, as is disaggregated data by gender, age and disability (by type). For example, it is extremely difficult to assess and identify whether children with disabilities are being reached by the UK's spending on EiE. This underscores a wider issue in the reporting of ODA expenditure by the UK and the need for more timely, transparent, harmonised, and high-quality EiE financing data that is disaggregated by gender, age and disability (by type).

Furthermore, globally, there is no comprehensive or unified tracking mechanism of EiE funding. While several different systems exist, each linked to a specific funding mechanism, all lack proper reporting, which means it is impossible to obtain a comprehensive overview of EiE funding. ECW's commitment to invest in efforts to generate, share, and use EiE financing data more effectively through a new Financing Observatory⁶⁹ is welcome and should be supported by the UK.

Moreover, the UK should support the improved collection, analysis and monitoring of disaggregated EiE financing data, including through greater transparency around its own reporting mechanisms and ensuring reporting against equity indicators. This should include tracking against the OECD-DAC's policy markers on both gender and disability to effectively monitor targeted and equitable spending on marginalised groups. Specifically, on EiE financing, the UK should allocate at least 10% of its education in emergencies project budgets towards the inclusion of children with disabilities in accessing education. This should adopt a twin-track approach to inclusive education, that

mainstreams inclusion whilst providing targeted support to marginalised learners in crisis-sensitive education planning and responses.

Maximise the impact of UK ODA on EiE through effective multilateral investments

In light of the current constraints facing the UK aid budget, it is more important than ever for the UK to prioritise bilateral and multilateral investments which offer the best value for money and reach the most marginalised children and communities in crises.

ICAI observed that the "FCDO's aid to education has reached children affected by conflict and humanitarian disasters effectively" and that "central to this performance is the ECW fund". Given the effective performance of ECW and the strong alignment between ECW's new Strategic Plan and UK global education policy, the UK should align its in-country investments in support of ECW's Multi-Year Resilience Programmes and increase the amount it invests in ECW over its four-year strategic period in-line with the £170 million called for by Send My Friend to School.

This renewed investment in ECW would encourage other donor governments to also increase their contributions and give the UK greater influence to incentivise operational and strategic reforms. There is an opportunity for the FCDO to improve ECW's capacity for data collection on learning metrics. The UK should harness its role as a leading donor and Executive Committee (ExCom) Chair to accelerate action to improve foundational learning outcomes and impact measurement and accountability (using commonly agreed metrics). Equally, the UK can play a key role in ensuring ECW's investments effectively

reach children with disabilities in line with its commitment that at least 10 % of children with disabilities are reached across its investments.

The UK is well positioned to strengthen humanitarian-development-coherence between ECW and GPE to harmonise approaches, increase collaboration and share lessons. This will help avoid duplication, enhance value for money and ensure programmes are effectively implemented and monitored at the local and national level. In crisis-contexts there is strong alignment between ECW's focus on EiE and GPE's focus on building stronger and more inclusive education systems. GPE's approach to supporting countries strengthen and rebuild their education systems during and after a crisis is central to the transformations this report calls for. As this underlines, multilateral investments are crucial to maximising the impact of UK ODA on EiE beyond its means.

The UK should ensure that GPE and ECW are fully-funded, and support efforts to strengthen humanitarian-development coherence between both funds. As co-host of the 2021 Global Education Summit, and founding member government of ECW, the UK should use its diplomatic influence and own financial resources to ensure their delivery.

Leverage new and additional sources of sustainable international climate financing for education

There is also a huge opportunity for the UK to leverage greater climate finance for education to support the climate-proofing of educational infrastructure and to build adaptive capacity and resilience to a changing climate. In 2018, only 0.003 % of all climate finance was spent on education.⁷⁰ The recent commitment by the UK to advocate for an increase in international climate finance to be spent on education is therefore welcome. An early priority should be securing a commitment from the Green Climate Fund and other major climate funds to allocate increased funding to education. The UK will only be a credible voice however if it similarly scales up its own climate financing for education. It is currently unclear however what proportion, if any, of the UK's financing on adaptation is spent on education.

The UK should maintain its commitment to spend 50% of climate finance on adaptation⁷¹, with increased allocations to education, and leverage new and additional sources of sustainable international climate financing to invest in the climate resilience of education systems and education's role in mitigation and adaptation. The UK can further demonstrate its commitments by setting out an action plan specifying targets for the UK's climate finance spending to be dedicated to education.

Humanitarian-development coherence in action: ECW and GPE in South Sudan

South Sudan's years of violent conflict, severe hunger, and poverty have had a heavy toll on the education system and led to the displacement of millions of people internally and towards neighboring countries, with devastating impact on the provision of basic services, including education. Further, recurrent climate-induced disasters exacerbate education needs; unprecedented floods in 2022 significantly displaced communities and damaged essential infrastructure, including many schools.

In South Sudan, ECW and GPE work together in lockstep to ensure international education financing targets those worst affected by emergencies and protracted crises. When one-third of the country was flooded in 2022, GPE made US\$10 million available at the country's request to mitigate flood impact on education.

In partnership with the Ministry of General Education and Instruction, the Education Cluster, Coordinating Agencies UK and USA, and other key global and national partners – GPE allocated this US\$10 million towards the ECW-facilitated Multi-Year Resilience Programme 2 (MYRP-2), as additional

financing to the US\$40 million seed funding from ECW, meaning the GPE funding was fully integrated into the MYRP-2 scope of work, targeting of beneficiaries and grantee selection process. Country partners felt this made for a more efficient process.

The MYRP-2 is grounded in the reality of South Sudan, with a focus on girls and children with disabilities, the return of refugees and IDPs, and the transition from emergency to development. The programme supports a holistic package of interventions, including school fees, radio education, re-enrolment campaigns, teacher training – especially for female teachers - child protection and safe and protective learning. The MYRP is aligned with the country's education sector plan, which the bulk of GPE resources is supporting in areas of improving access, quality, and system management.

ECW and GPE's support to South Sudan is humanitarian-development coherence in action. The ECW MYRP-2's focus on humanitarian response and early recovery provided a framework for GPE to fund and help build resilience by mitigating flood impacts on education.



6. ACT: Provide global leadership to protect children's right to education in emergencies

The UK must demonstrate leadership on the global stage to promote children's right to EiE and strengthen global education resilience. By using its presence at multilateral forums, the UK can secure renewed consensus, support and investment to tackle the challenges this report has spotlighted.

While new and action-oriented commitments arising from the 2022 Transforming Education Summit were limited, the focus on EiE as a major theme of the summit was noticeable and offered momentum for the international community to build on. For example, the Education in Crisis: Commitment to Action, highlights the need to build the resilience of education systems in response to crises.⁷² Additionally, the civil society led Disability Inclusive Education: Call to Action⁷³ offers the UK the opportunity to advance the achievement of SDG4 and build truly inclusive and equitable education systems for all learners.

Reach the most marginalised children first to get SDG4 back on track

Over the next two years, the UN's 'Our Common Agenda' seeks to mobilise united action on

sustainable development to and beyond 2030. The SDGs Summit in 2023 and the Summit of the Future in 2024 are critical opportunities to turn the tide on abandoning communities in need and recommit fundamental principles of our human rights with a clear actionable plan to 2030. Unlike the TES, both Summits are member-led processes (rather than led by UN agencies). The UK can therefore play an active role in influencing and shaping the Summits by working with key partners, including the TES champion countries, to ensure EiE is high on the agenda.

2023 marks the halfway point of implementing the 2030 Agenda. However, globally we are significantly off-track to reaching most of the goals, including those on education. A recent analysis of SDG progress indicates the stark and worrying trajectory we are heading towards, stating that 'the world is facing a confluence of crises...threatening the very survival of humanity'.⁷⁴ This report has highlighted in the starkest terms that intersecting crises including COVID-19, conflict and climate change are increasing but the SDGs, and SDG4 especially provide a roadmap to tackle these head-on.

Education is the basis for the achievement of all SDGs, yet SDG4 is among the furthest behind of the Global Goals with progress slowest for the poorest and most marginalised children, including crisis-affected children. Building inclusive and resilient education systems is the most effective way to achieve SDG4 for all children. The UK must demonstrate effective leadership in upholding this agenda to ensure education is protected even in the most difficult times.

Champion the rights of children and youth in decision-making processes

The UK should also create opportunities to harness children and youth's experiences and recommendations through meaningfully involving them in the decisions that affect them in a safe, diverse and inclusive manner. Young people from diverse backgrounds, particularly the children most impacted by emergencies, must have equal opportunities to participate in decision-making processes. One example of this is, including child and youth delegates as part of its official delegations. Furthermore, by meaningfully consulting children and youth in the design and implementation of policies and programmes that affect them, they will be more

reflective of and effective in addressing the realities they face.

A 2021 report by Plan International which surveyed over 1,800 adolescents and youth from 37 countries, found that adolescents and youth want to participate in climate policy processes, but they face barriers. Of those interviewed, 91 % said that it was difficult for them to participate in climate change policy decision making processes, and eight out of ten felt that governments did not do enough to involve young people in climate policy processes.⁷⁵

Recognising that children and youth are effective and important agents of change, and have the right to be heard, the UK should champion and promote the rights of children in decision-making and monitoring processes as enshrined in Article 12 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). This should include meaningful consultation on the design, delivery and evaluation of FCDO programmes and policies, and the facilitation of inclusive opportunities for children and youth to participate meaningfully in global forums.

Raising awareness of EiE

Working together with the Ministry of Education, UNICEF and a range of INGOs, the Youth for Education in Emergencies representatives in Indonesia developed a National Youth Advocacy Strategy for EiE, and a policy brief on Gender Responsive Education in Emergencies, and EiE training for youth from around Indonesia.

To further raise awareness of EiE, the representatives ran a series of 'Instagram Live' sessions and online webinars, sharing their experience and upcoming advocacy plans, and reaching over 1,500 views. They have represented the youth of Indonesia at national and international events and are preparing to launch a new digital campaign.

"The best thing about being a member of the Global Youth Panel is the opportunity to meet with stakeholders to be able to influence education-related policies during an emergency", reported the Y4EiE representative in Indonesia.

Adding, "I want to invite the governments, NGOs and related stakeholders and also the children and youth from around the world to work together to put education in emergencies on the agenda of world leaders to strive for a just world that advances children and youth rights in education in emergencies".

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Secure new commitments and financing at COP 28

For the first time, COP 28 will include a day dedicated to education, while the second edition of the RewiredEd Summit will run in conjunction with the global climate summit. This presents a unique opportunity to secure increased commitments and investment to strengthen education's role in the global climate response. COP 28 is also a major opportunity for investments in education that advance climate justice, gender-equality, youth leadership, green skills, and engagement in the green economy.

Quality and inclusive learning that is age-, language, gender- and ability appropriate equips children and youth with the capabilities to build resilience and adaptive capacity to respond to respond to climate hazards.⁷⁶ This includes problem-solving, critical thinking, adaptation and leadership skills which are all vital for children and youth's ability to adapt to the effects of climate change. It also empowers children and youth to create a more sustainable future.⁷⁷

As climate change and girls' education remain two of the UK's primary international development priorities, the UK must also leverage COP28 as an opportunity to progress actions from its recent position paper. As the UK acknowledges, there is an urgent need to leverage new and additional sources of sustainable international climate financing for education and that this is more accessible to education partners. Addressing this need should be central to the UK's COP agenda.

In the lead up to and at COP 28, the UK should enact and secure new commitments and financing to progress the implementation of its climate change and education position paper and ensure that children and youth have the opportunity to contribute their experiences and recommendations. For example, by implementing recommendations from the COP Fit for Children brief which sets out

how to ensure the climate summit is inclusive of all children.⁷⁸

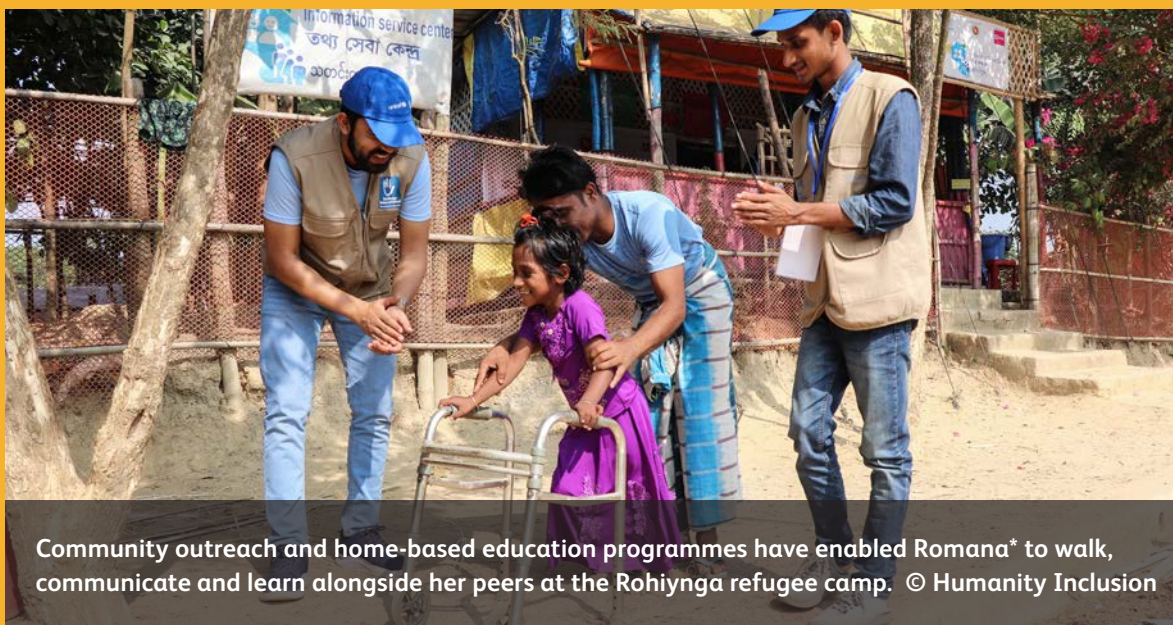
Protect refugee's right to education at the Global Refugee Forum

At the first Global Refugee Forum (GRF) in 2019, 228 pledges were made on education, with 31 % of these coming from member states.⁷⁹ However, the UK did not make any pledge on education. Analysis has also shown that implementation of many pledges made at the first GRF has been impacted by the pandemic with refugees among those most excluded from COVID-19 education responses.⁸⁰ The GRF 2023 is an opportunity to renew focus, commitments and resources to address the impact that multiple and intersecting crises, including climate change, are having on refugee and forcibly displaced children's access to education.

The UK must not lose sight of its commitment to delivering the Global Compact on Refugees. Specifically to ensure children are in school and learning within three months of their displacement, and the responsibility it shares to enact this promise with refugee hosting countries. **The UK should identify opportunities to make joint pledges at the GRF with countries hosting large numbers of refugees and children who have been internally displaced in-line with burden and responsibility sharing as set out in the Global Compact for Refugees.** Pledges should support the inclusion of children who are refugees in national education systems, ensure refugee and host community children are learning, and close the funding gap for refugee education.

As with children in all crisis settings, supporting all children who are refugees to gain access to education means supporting children with disabilities too. Their needs may be more complex and may require support from other agencies and sectors such as rehabilitation and health, but this shouldn't be an excuse to leave them without education.

Disability inclusive education in refugee settings



Community outreach and home-based education programmes have enabled Romana* to walk, communicate and learn alongside her peers at the Rohingya refugee camp. © Humanity Inclusion

The Rohingya are a marginalised group of people from Myanmar who have experienced decades of violence, discrimination and persecution. In August 2017, one of the largest mass exodus of people took place, after a massive wave of violence broke out in Myanmar's Rakhine State. More than 700,000 people - half of them children – sought refuge in Bangladesh.

Caught up in this refugee crisis was Romana, a 7-year-old girl who lives with her parents and a younger sister. At the age of 2, the family fled Myanmar and settled in one of the Rohingya refugee camps in Cox's Bazaar, Bangladesh.

Romana has cerebral palsy, which affects her muscle control, balance and posture. Humanity & Inclusion (HI) supports communities within the camp through outreach programmes and were able to encourage Romana's mother to enrol her in a home-based education programme. This included referrals for speech and language therapy, occupational therapy

and physiotherapy. Romana is now able to walk, communicate and participate in social activities, and concentrate much more on early learning such as basic letters and numbers. She now has an individual learning support plan which is updated regularly.

"I never lose hope in her. Even though my daughter lives with a disability, she possesses full rights to get an education." - Rafika, Romana's mother

Multi-sectoral support and the home-based educational approach in the camps has been crucial to prepare Romana to succeed in mainstream education settings in the future. HI also work with the mainstream learning centres in the camps to train teachers to use inclusive education methodology, to change attitudes around education for children with disabilities, and to provide support and materials to teachers to ensure the learning centres are inclusive and accessible for all.

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7. Recommendations

Conflict, climate change, food crises, forced displacement and the impacts of COVID-19 are obstructing children's right to education on an unprecedented scale. Globally, education systems and children and youths' future learning have never been at greater risk. Business as usual approaches will no longer suffice.

The Send My Friend to School coalition is calling on the UK Government to support crisis-affected countries to build and invest in inclusive, resilient and gender-responsive education systems that can withstand all hazards to protect the learning of all children during emergencies.

We are calling on the UK Government to take the following measures:

1. PREPARE: Strengthen preparedness and anticipatory action in education systems

- Prioritise education as an integral and core component of all humanitarian preparedness, anticipation and (early) response to ensure educational continuity. Responses should provide appropriate and inclusive, in-person and contextually relevant modalities to ensure quality learning and wellbeing.
- Support crisis-affected countries to co-develop and implement integrated preparedness and early action plans, in consultation with children, parents, education authorities, teachers and local organisations. Plans should be inclusive of all children and address the full breadth of school services.
- Invest in and support the increased availability, quality and comparability of EiE data, and build capacity to disaggregate data by sex, disability, age and other intersecting dimensions to address inequalities and enhance outcomes and responses.
- Take an inclusive, all-hazards approach to keeping children safe in and around schools through endorsing, implementing and championing the revised Comprehensive School Safety Framework (CSSF).

2. PROTECT: Ensure children are safe, protected and learn during an emergency

- Prioritise foundational learning in emergencies by ensuring full adoption of the RAPID framework across bilateral and multilateral EiE investments, with particular focus on improvements in measurement of foundational learning outcomes (using commonly agreed metrics).
- Prevent and respond to all forms of violence in and around school by integrating whole-of-school approaches to child protection, MHPSS, SEL, CSE in emergencies and strengthening the capacity of local actors to use inclusive methods to promote children's wellbeing.
- Improve the recruitment, professional development, and wellbeing of qualified education staff in crisis-affected countries as part of the development of a new FCDO strategy on global teacher policy.
- Implement United Nations Security Council Resolution 2601 on the protection of schools in armed conflict and promote endorsement and implementation of the Safe Schools Declaration.

3. INVEST: Scale up financing for education in emergencies and systems strengthening

- Immediately restore UK ODA to 0.7 % of GNI and increase education's share of the ODA budget to 15 % with at least 10 % from its humanitarian budget dedicated to education. The UK should also commit 50 % of ODA to FCAS, whilst ensuring at least 25 % of humanitarian funding is allocated to national and local actors.
- Support the improved collection, reporting and monitoring of disaggregated EiE financing data, including through improving transparency around its own reporting mechanisms and tracking all donor investments in education at all levels using the OECD-DAC's policy marker on the inclusion and empowerment of persons with disabilities.
- Allocate at least 10 % of its EiE project budgets towards addressing the rights and meeting the requirements of children with disabilities, through a twin-track approach that promotes system wide reforms and disability specific measures, particularly to learners at highest risk of exclusion.
- Maximise the impact of UK ODA on EiE through effective multilateral investments, including by fully funding ECW and GPE, and strengthening humanitarian-development coherence between both funds.
- Maintain the commitment to spend 50 % of climate finance on adaptation, with increased allocations to education, and leverage new and additional sources of sustainable international climate financing to invest in the climate resilience of education systems and education's role in mitigation and adaptation.

4. ACT: Provide global leadership to protect children's right to education in emergencies

- Champion and promote the rights of children in decision-making and monitoring processes as enshrined in Article 12 of the UNCRC. This should include meaningful consultation on the design, delivery and evaluation of FCDO programmes and policies, and the facilitation of inclusive opportunities for children and youth, especially those from marginalised backgrounds.
- Enact and secure new commitments and financing at COP28 to progress the implementation of its climate change and education position paper, ensuring that children and youth can contribute their experiences and recommendations.
- Make joint pledges at the Global Refugee Forum with countries hosting large numbers of refugees and internally displaced children in-line with burden and responsibility sharing. Pledges should support the inclusion of refugees in national education systems, ensure refugee and host community children are learning, and close the funding gap for refugee education.

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Send My Friend to School is the UK civil society coalition of international development NGOs, teachers unions and charities. The campaign undertakes a range of activities designed to increase community awareness of the state of education internationally and generate the political will necessary to ensure the UK plays an active and effective part in efforts to secure education for all. Send My Friend to School is the UK coalition of the Global Campaign for Education movement which is present in over 80 countries around the world, and aligns its work with the organisation's mission and aims.

The Campaign's UK members are:

Action For Humanity	National Education Union (NEU)
Cafod	NASUWT
Christian Aid	RESULTS UK
Deaf Child Worldwide	Save the Children
Educate a Child International	Sense International
The Education Institute of Scotland	Sightsavers
Humanity and Inclusion	The Steve Sinnott Foundation
Girls Not Brides	STiR Education
International Parliamentary Network for Education	StreetChild
Oxfam	University and College Union
Plan International UK	UNICEF
	World Vision

Acknowledgements

This report was written by Oliver Mawhinney and Takiwa Danso with contributions by members of the Send My Friend to School Policy and Parliamentary Working Group.

Front cover photo: Rahma* (14) lives in the Togdheer region in Somaliland. She studies at the local primary school. She lives with her younger sister at her aunt's place (to help her unmarried aunt). The rest of the family is in the capital city of Somaliland, Hargeisa. They were pastoralists but the severe drought diminished their livestock and made them IDP's. Rahma* benefitted from the school feeding programme and is still happy to get education.

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* All children's names have been changed to protect their identity