

A young boy with a bright smile is the central focus, sitting at a wooden desk in a classroom. He is wearing a red and orange plaid shirt and is writing in a notebook with a blue pen. In the background, other children are visible, some also writing, creating a busy classroom atmosphere. The lighting is warm and natural, highlighting the boy's face and the texture of the wooden desk.

**The fierce urgency of now:
delivering children's right to
education during crises**

GLOBAL CAMPAIGN FOR
EDUCATION UK

Education cannot wait

Education interrupted

In every emergency, whether caused by conflict or natural disaster children tell us that what they want most – alongside medicine, food and shelter – is the opportunity to learn.

However, for the vast majority of children caught up in emergencies their education is at best interrupted and at worst never realised.

In 2015 alone the education of 80 million children was disrupted by humanitarian crisis.¹ Despite this vast need, education is consistently among the most underfunded and under-prioritised sectors in humanitarian responses, receiving on average less than 2% of humanitarian aid.² This lack of funding and prioritisation has left at least 37 million school aged children living in conflict-affected countries without an education.³ Those children who are able to access school often face significant barriers to their learning and well-being in overcrowded under resourced classrooms, and many more face the risk of violence with attacks on education occurring in over 70 countries.⁴ This has a profound effect on children's learning, which has significant ramifications for the development and stability of the countries in which these children live.

The failure to provide education to the growing number of children affected by crises must be addressed as a matter of the utmost urgency.

The time is now

In January, 2015 at the World Economic Forum in Davos, the UN Special Envoy for Education the Right Honourable Gordon Brown, brought global attention to the plight of children affected by humanitarian crises.

The Special Envoy pointed to the absence of adequate information, capacity and will directed at solving the challenge of education in humanitarian crises, including principally the lack of available funding. The Special Envoy called for a new fund for education in emergencies.

That call sparked a conversation among developing and donor countries, UN agencies and non-government organisations about how best to solve the persistent funding, information and capacity gaps that pose a significant challenge for education in humanitarian crises.

A new platform for solving the education in crisis challenge

Over the last year those stakeholders have developed a proposal to create a global Education Crisis Platform that will unite global and national actors to generate the shared political, operational and financial commitment needed to meet the educational needs of millions of children and young people affected by crises around the world.

The UK has played a crucial role in supporting the progress achieved thus far: co-chairing the Technical Strategy Group that oversaw the development of the proposal and playing a leadership role in championing the importance of education in emergencies, including at the Supporting Syria Conference earlier in the year.

The expectation is that the Education Crisis Platform will be launched at the World Humanitarian Summit in May. This is the opportunity for the UK government to build on its leadership to date and become a founding donor of the Platform.

'The fierce urgency of now' sets out what the UK should do to play that role, both alone and in collaboration with others to help secure the right to education for the millions of children, who because of humanitarian crisis, are currently denied it.

"We are now faced with the fact that tomorrow is today...with the fierce urgency of now. This is no time for apathy or complacency. This is a time for vigorous and positive action." **Martin Luther King Jr**

¹Overseas Development Institute, 2016. *Education Crisis Platform proposal*. See <http://bit.ly/20HSvfj> ²Global Education Cluster, 2014. *Education Cannot Wait: Financing Education in Emergencies – Challenges and Opportunities*. See <http://bit.ly/1W3BIYx>

³Overseas Development Institute, 2015. *Education in Emergencies and Protracted Crises: Towards a strengthened response*.

See <http://bit.ly/23KW85V> ⁴Global Coalition to Protect Education From Attack, 2014. *Education Under Attack*. See <http://bit.ly/1T9I5GE>

Cover image: Mohamed, 13, take part in an alternative basic education (ABE) programme for Somali refugees in Dollo Ado, Ethiopia. © Johnathan Hyams I Save the Children.

Inside cover image: Twisenge, 10, attends an education programme at a primary school in Masisi, for children displaced by conflict in Masisi North Kivu, DRC. © Johnathan Hyams I Save the Children.

Children around the world tell us that education is the key to their futures and that it cannot be delayed.



The case for education

The case for closing the education gap around the world is both urgent and compelling. Ensuring that every child has the opportunity to enjoy a good quality education is a basic human right but it is also an economic and social imperative.

Education reduces poverty, boosts economic growth and increases income. It increases a person's chances of having a healthy life, reduces maternal deaths, and combats diseases such as HIV and AIDS. Education can promote gender equality and reduces child marriage.

Education is one of the most important investments a country can make in its people and its future. When crises hit the case for education is amplified. Continuing to provide educational services to children during crises can help mitigate the impacts of the emergency, provide a platform to secure other benefits for children and their communities and help accelerate the return to normal.

A priority for children and their communities

Children around the world tell us that education is the key to their futures, their protection, their happiness and their health, and that it cannot be delayed – whatever their circumstances. And it is not just children who are saying this – families and communities caught up in crisis regularly prioritize education to the same degree. If our mission is to make future humanitarian action

truly accountable to the people most affected by crisis, then we need to ensure education is at its centre.⁵

Education saves and protects

Education helps to support children's development and well-being at a time when they are at their most vulnerable. Quality education provision saves and protects lives during humanitarian crises by providing a safe space that can protect children from the increased risks of violence, abuse and exploitation that often increase during emergencies.⁶

Gender sensitive schools and safe education spaces can offer increased protection from exploitation and harm, especially for girls who are often at greater risk from gender based violence including rape, sexual exploitation or abuse, prostitution and transactional sex, and trafficking.⁷

Children can also receive lifesaving information about how to stay safe during crisis while they are in school – whether that be how to recognise landmines or avoid infectious diseases – and access key services such as healthcare.

Schools can provide a sense of stability and normalcy that gives children a sense of hope for and control over their future and at the same time can mitigate the effects of toxic stress, caused by crisis, which can affect children's social, emotional and cognitive processes and ability to learn and succeed in later years.

Education can prevent children from being abducted or recruited into armed and extremist groups during conflict and can also prevent youth from joining such groups by providing them with an alternative vision for how they can contribute to their own and their families' future.

Laying the foundation for economic growth and social stability

Education also plays a vital role in enabling economic recovery and social stability and peace in the most fragile of contexts. Education is crucial for conflict-affected children so they do not miss out on opportunities to develop the critical academic, social-emotional and life skills that can allow them to secure better futures for them, their families and their communities.

Each additional year of education can bring with it a 10% increase in income and, if all children left school reading, we would see a 12% reduction in world poverty.⁸

Preventing conflict

Higher levels of education in a country lead to more peace and lower chances of conflict, and that in some cases where education inequality doubled, so too did the chance of conflict.⁹ Education that is equitable and inclusive helps prevent people from engaging in conflict.

⁵Save the Children and the Norwegian Refugee Council, 2014. *Hear it From the Children: Why Education in Emergencies is Critical*. See <http://bit.ly/1RYJqMM> ⁶UNESCO, 2011. *The Hidden Crisis: Armed Conflict and Education*. See <http://bit.ly/1SjGwUW> ⁷INEE, 2010. *Gender Equality in and through Education: INEE Pocket Guide to Gender*. See <http://bit.ly/1qYY6If> ⁸UNESCO, 2014. *Teaching and Learning: Improving Quality for All*. See <http://bit.ly/22zwbUv> ⁹Østby, G. and Urdal, H, 2010. See <http://bit.ly/1VpR7xU>

Crises disrupt education, causing exclusion which is then exacerbated by chronic underfunding and capacity gaps.

The challenge of education during humanitarian crises

As we enter a new development era, ushered in by the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals, the world faces great opportunities and challenges.

Recent decades have witnessed huge progress in human development, with major strides made toward ending extreme poverty, the radical reduction of child and maternal mortality, and the enrolment of hundreds of millions of children in school. The gains in education have been impressive: the number of children and adolescents out of school has fallen by almost half since 2000, and an estimated 34 million more children have attended school as a result of accelerated progress over the past 15 years.¹⁰

Children are excluded from education by emergencies and protracted crises

However, too many of the world's young people – particularly those affected by emergencies and protracted crises – are being left behind, denied their rights and excluded from the benefits that education delivers. Humanitarian emergencies and protracted crises disrupted the education of more than 80 million children aged 3-18 in 35 countries in 2015.¹¹

Children in conflict-affected countries are now more than twice as likely to be out of school compared with children living in countries not affected by conflict. If they are in school, they are a third less likely to complete primary school, and 50% less likely to complete lower secondary education.¹² As the number of conflicts and crises increase globally and are lasting longer, these figures will only grow, leading to multiple generations being denied their right to education and the reduction in economic growth and increased stability this is likely to cause.

A chronic lack of funding

The inadequate funding of education in development aid and humanitarian appeals starkly contrasts with the priority that communities and children place on education during emergencies. On average, education receives less than 2% of total humanitarian aid committed through appeals and the education sector routinely receives less than half of the funding it asks for to meet children's education needs.¹³ Not only is education in crisis settings chronically underfunded, but the amount of humanitarian aid it receives as a proportion of humanitarian funding is also declining. In 2010, 2.3% of humanitarian aid went to education – this figure was only 1.65% in 2014.¹⁴

Inadequate capacity

Whilst governments are responsible for fulfilling the right to education, in crisis contexts they rarely have the capacity or will to fulfil this right for every child, particularly if there have been massive movements of internally displaced people or influxes of refugees. In addition, the international system that is meant to provide support tends to operate in a humanitarian paradigm, where education has not traditionally been prioritised, or via longer-term development efforts, where the risks of operating in fragile or unstable environments limit the range of actors able and willing to respond.

This is exacerbated by the fact that there aren't enough humanitarian and development actors working on education and crises, and information systems are weak, very often because funds are not in place or are too short-term to build significant capacity.¹⁵

Poor co-ordination

With different actors largely working independently, significant gaps can also appear across and between existing coordination mechanisms. There is a clear need to bring actors and resources together to support these groups to deliver a more ambitious, joined-up response in line with national policy and plans in emergency contexts and beyond.

¹⁰UNESCO, 2015. *Education for all 2000-2015: achievements and challenges*. EFA Global Monitoring Report. Paris: UNESCO. See <http://bit.ly/1SPOFuH> ¹¹Overseas Development Institute, 2016. *Education Crisis Platform proposal*. See <http://bit.ly/20HSvfj> ¹²UNESCO, 2015. *EFA Global Monitoring Report Policy Paper 21 - Humanitarian Aid for Education: Why It Matters and Why More is Needed*. See <http://bit.ly/1Sf6ki3> ¹³Global Education Cluster, 2014. *Education Cannot Wait: Financing Education in Emergencies – Challenges and Opportunities*. See <http://bit.ly/1Sf6ki3> ¹⁴Save the Children, 2015. *More and Better: Global Action to Improve Funding, Support and Collaboration for Education in Emergencies*. See <http://bit.ly/1NsHKFV> ¹⁵Recent analysis shows that education in emergencies and protracted crises is 'covered briefly in 5 donors' overarching foreign assistance strategies, somewhat more specifically in 5 donors' humanitarian strategies/policies, and more specifically in 6 donors' education sector strategies/policies' with a further 3 donors having detailed white papers or working papers outlining their approach (Wilson, et al., 2015).

A catalytic shift in global approaches and ambition

In the face of the chronic patterns of disruption and exclusion, coupled with the persistent underfunding of education in humanitarian contexts and the gaps in capacity and architecture that have been set out earlier in this report, reaching the children who are educationally left behind because of emergencies and protracted crises will require a catalytic shift in global approaches and ambition.

This aim echoes broader calls which have emerged in advance of the World Humanitarian Summit. The UN Secretary General's report for the Summit calls for the international community to unite to resolve differences, accept individual and collective responsibilities, and confront the challenges of our time. The High Level Panel on Humanitarian Financing, in a major input to the summit, highlights the need for shared responsibility to address root causes, a deeper and broader resource base for humanitarian action, and improvements in timeliness and efficiency of delivery.

The proposal for a new Education Crisis Platform demonstrates how these changes – essential for the humanitarian system as a whole – could transform the global education sector, and that a more agile, connected and faster response serving children in crises is possible, with the right support.

Reach

It is proposed that the Education Crisis Platform will scale up to reach 80 million children and young people affected by crises in 2030, making a significant contribution to fulfilling Sustainable Development Goal 4 on education.

Core Functions

During the design stage five core functions emerged each of which directly addresses obstacles which were identified as playing a significant role in preventing or limiting education responses in humanitarian crises. The proposed functions include:

i. Inspire political commitment

Expanding and extending political commitment among those willing and able to draw attention to and mobilise resources education crises.

ii. Expand and coordinate planning and response

Promote crisis-specific assessments and plans with potential to link immediate and system strengthening interventions, direct service delivery and government support, improving incentives and linking with existing actors.

iii. Generate and disburse new funding

Mobilise and disburse additional funding and new investments, contributing to and leveraging additional resources for a linked set of country- or crisis-specific multi-donor funds, aiming to drive a step-change in the scale and quality of education response in crisis situations.

iv. Build national and global capacity

Invest in capacity strengthening for response and recovery, working with partners to identify and fill capacity gaps in specific crises and supporting broader global efforts to increase capacity across the education sector.

v. Strengthen accountability and evidence

Strengthen accountability and knowledge of 'what works' in these environments, improving data and enhancing accountability, demonstrating results to all stakeholders and producing real time information on the funding provided and how it is being used.

The Education Crisis Platform envisions a world where all children affected by crises have a chance to reach their potential.

Financing the Education Crisis Platform

Funding

It is proposed that the Education Crisis Platform will scale up resource mobilisation over the first five years, commencing with an aim to raise approximately \$150 million in Year 1 and with an ambition to bring in funding at a level of \$1.5 billion in Year 5. This involves an overall 5 year fundraising ambition of \$3.85 billion.

The Platform’s resource mobilisation efforts will aim to transform the potential for delivering education in crises by bringing in new, untapped resources, rather than through the reallocation of existing funds. Donors like the UK have an important role to play in working to ensure that funding for the Platform is genuinely additional.

The Education Crisis Platform offers a ground-breaking approach to catalyse an all-inclusive range of sources and mechanisms to financing global education efforts. There is also an opportunity for the Platform to both contribute to and draw from findings of the International Commission on Financing Global Education Opportunities to take on new ideas and proposals on raising financing from new sources.

Projected growth in funding to meet ambition	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Total for first 5 years
Total children and young people targeted	1,360,000	3,400,000	6,120,000	9,520,000	13,600,000	34,000,000
Total funding required (\$)	\$154 million	\$385 million	\$694 million	\$1.08 billion	\$1.54 billion	\$3.85 billion

¹⁶Costing assumptions are based on updates to ODI calculations drawn from analysis prepared for the Oslo Summit. Key assumptions to this calculation include (i) recognition that cost per child is based on a standard set of education inputs commonly used in emergencies, but would vary considerably by country and context; (ii) total education cost across affected countries averaging at \$157 per child, with domestic resources on average contributing at least \$44 per child (28% of total average cost of \$157/per child), and a resulting financing gap of \$113 per child; (iii) a ‘crisis premium’ that builds in between 20-40% additional costs to take into account crisis-specific logistics, security or protection costs, among others; and (iv) the fact that the Education Crisis Platform should support, as an early priority, review of these and other global costings as well as development of country-specific cost models that would roll up to contribute to global estimates.

Sustaining the UK’s leadership on education in humanitarian crises

The UK is a leading donor to education globally and is increasingly playing a leadership role in education in humanitarian contexts. This includes co-chairing the technical process that oversaw the design of the Education Crisis Platform and via the Secretary of State’s membership of the political champion’s group.

In the Middle East the UK has consistently acknowledged the importance of education for Syrian refugees and helped increase international interest in education as co-host of the 2016 Syria donor conference.

In its 2015 discussion paper ‘Delivering quality education in protracted crises’¹⁷ the Department for International Development stated that, based on a review of evidence and experience, the international community needed a new approach to supporting the education of girls and boys whose lives are affected by conflict and displacement.

The Education Crisis Platform is central to that new approach and provides the UK with an opportunity to realise its ambition to catalyse change for children affected by crisis.

Recommendations

We call on the UK Government to:

- Make a commitment at the World Humanitarian Summit to be a founding funder of the Education Crisis Platform and contribute not less than \$50 million to the Platform in the first year.

- Make a multi-year funding commitment that represents an increase in real terms funding from the UK for education in humanitarian situations and is consistent with a UK commitment to lead the international community in transforming education in emergencies.

As a founding funder of the Education Crisis Platform the UK also has an important role to play in using its influence to build an effective, high performing Platform. We call on the UK Government to:

- Play an active part in mobilising support from other government donors for the Education Crisis Platform and for education in emergencies and protracted crises more generally.
- Help ensure that funding for the Education Crisis Platform is always additional and does not lead to reduction in spendings in other areas and especially in support for education more generally.
- Support efforts both by the Education Crisis Platform and others to monitor funding for education in emergencies and crises, including the funding provided by the UK. The UK should champion greater transparency in respect of humanitarian funding in general and for education in particular, as part of the push for improved accountability envisaged in the Education Crisis Platform proposal.

- Ensure and support the platform to focus on the most marginalised children, including girls and children with disabilities.
- Bring the UK’s strong focus on results to the Education Crisis Platform with a particular emphasis on ensuring genuine learning outcomes along with support for children’s well-being, in line with the INEE Minimum Standards for Education.
- Support the creation of an effective governance structure for the Education Crisis Platform which includes civil society representation.
- Help to ensure that the Education Crisis Platform builds strong collaborative relationships with key actors and supports improvements to existing organisations and structures rather than creating new ones.

Building on ‘Delivering quality education in protracted crises: A discussion paper’ the UK should develop and publish a comprehensive policy on education in emergencies and protracted crises which sets out what the UK will do both alone, and with others, including through the Education Crisis Platform to deliver a world where all children and young people affected by crises have a chance to grow and reach their potential, where all lives are equally valued, and where all can learn freely, in safety and without fear.

¹⁷Department for International Development, 2015. Delivering quality education in protracted crises: A discussion paper. See: <http://bit.ly/1Mxwjw>

The Global Campaign for Education (GCE) is an international coalition of nongovernment, development and children’s rights organisations and education unions. In the UK 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. For more information about the campaign in the UK visit www.sendmyfriend.org

The Campaign’s UK members are:

Action Aid	National Union of Teachers (NUT)
Action on Disability and Development (ADD)	Oxfam GB
Association of Teachers and Lecturers (ATL)	Plan UK
CAFOD	RESULTS UK
Christian Aid	Save The Children
Comic Relief	Steve Sinnott Foundation
Deaf Child Worldwide	Sense International
Handicap International	Sightsavers International
International Rescue Committee	War Child
Leonard Cheshire Disability	University and College Union (UCU)
National Association of Schoolmasters Union of Women Teachers (NASUWT)	



Acknowledgements

‘The fierce urgency of now: delivering children’s right to education during crises’ was written by Joseph Nhan-O’Reilly and Charlotte Bergin with contributions from members of the GCE UK education in emergencies working group: Ben Excell, Anita Reilly, Matt Ruuska, Heather Saunders, Emma Wagner.

For more information contact Charlotte Bergin, c.bergin@savethechildren.org.uk

Design: www.creative.coop