

PROTECT EDUCATION IN EMERGENCIES NOW!

#PROTECTEINOW

INCLUSIVE PLANNING, SUSTAINABLE FUNDING, REALIZED RIGHTS

POLITICAL STATEMENT

In early 2020, COVID-19 pandemic shook the world as we knew it. All of the sudden, everything was disrupted, including the ways people learn and how education is delivered. The most vulnerable and marginalized people - girls and young women, low-income families, children and youth living without a family, in rural areas or without access to health care, internally displaced people and refugees, people with disabilities – have been hit the hardest.

COVID-19 has added to a series of increasingly complex, intertwined and multi-faceted emergency situations, fueled by climate change, conflict, poverty, violence and repression. Many of them end up being protracted and cyclical crises. These emergencies have a devastating impact on the right to education of millions of people, particularly of those who were already being left behind. Even prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, almost half of the global out of school population were children and youth living in crisis-affected countries (127 million); now, more than 24 million children are projected to drop out of school due to COVID-19.¹

In emergencies, education is also the target of deliberate attacks: between 2015 and 2019, there were more than 11,000 reported attacks on educational facilities and/or students and education personnel, harming more than 22,000 students and educators in at least 93 countries.²

This must change. If States are to honor their international human rights obligations and commitments and to meet the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030, urgent action must be taken to **Protect Education in Emergencies Now!**

Protect Education in Emergencies Now! is the name of the campaign launched by the Global Campaign for Education on 1st March 2022. The central purpose of this campaign is to put education in emergencies at the center of the global education agenda and to contribute to raising the voices of the people whose fundamental right to education is being violated in emergency contexts. All actors involved, particularly States, must take concrete and effective measures to ensure transformative, inclusive and quality education and lifelong learning for all in emergency situations. **Protect Education in Emergencies Now!** makes ten very specific recommendations that States should take forward to guarantee the right to education for all in emergency contexts. One of them is investment. Despite the dire situation millions of people are facing, education continues to be one of the most underfunded areas of humanitarian aid, receiving just 2,4 % of global humanitarian funding. Education in emergencies desperately needs sufficient, sustainable and predictable funding; this involves, for donor countries,

¹ UNICEF Executive Director Henrietta Fore's remarks at a press conference on new updated guidance on school-related public health measures in the context of COVID-19, UNICEF press release, 15 September 2020, <https://www.unicef.org/press-releases/unicef-executive-director-henrietta-fores-remarks-press-conference-new-updated>

² Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack, Education under Attack 2020, <https://eua2020.protectingeducation.org/>

allocating at least 10% of humanitarian funding to education, including by meaningfully supporting the Education Cannot Wait (ECW) replenishment process.

It is not all about money . First of all, education needs to be protected from attacks, and States must adhere to and comply with the Safe Schools Declaration adopted in 2015. Secondly, safe and accessible learning environments must be made available for all learners, without any discrimination. Also, States must develop and implement crisis-sensitive national education plans and budgets, and promote the equitable and sustainable inclusion of refugees, asylum seekers, returnees, stateless and internally displaced persons in national education systems. Equal opportunities must be provided for girls, women and people with disabilities to fulfill their right to education in emergency contexts. Teachers must be protected, and adequately trained and remunerated, and States should promote an education that is truly transformative and a foundation for peace.

Last but not least, the voices of the people affected by emergencies must be heard. Local actors – civil society organizations, communities, families, teachers – are the first responders in emergency situations. Their experiences, perspectives and stories count, and they must receive full consideration in education plans and policies.

Together we can make the difference. We are counting on you. Join us to **Protect Education in Emergencies Now!**