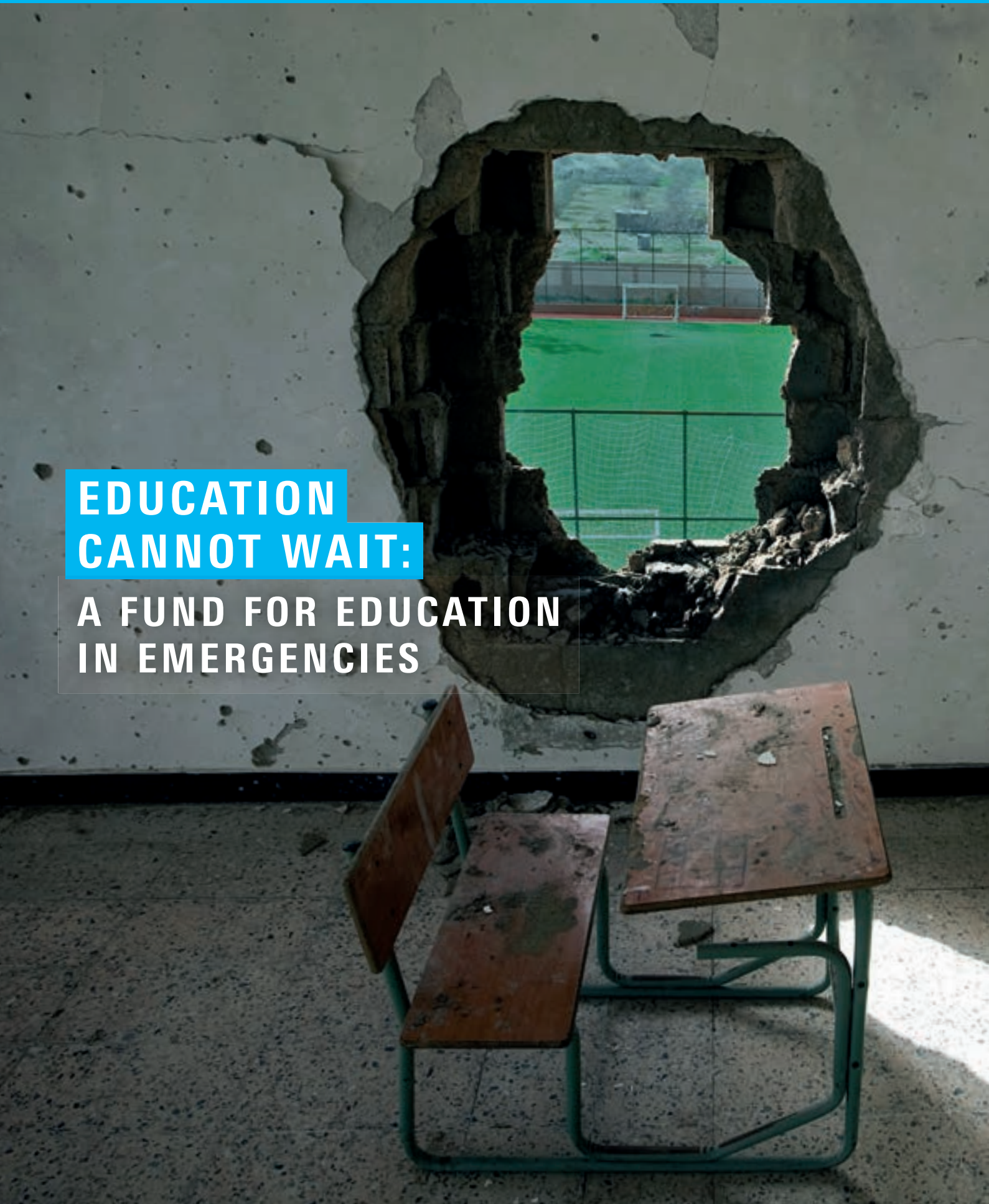


**EDUCATION  
CANNOT WAIT:**

**A FUND FOR EDUCATION  
IN EMERGENCIES**



## INTRODUCTION

**One in four of the world’s school-aged children – 462 million – now live in countries affected by crisis. Of these children, 75 million are in the most desperate need of support: they are either in danger of or already missing out on their right to education. During crises, children are particularly at risk of missing out on their education, yet schools provide a safe space and a vital routine for children during times of major upheaval. Education gives children the building blocks to rebuild their lives and, eventually, their country.<sup>1</sup>**

Yet despite the scale and gravity of this challenge now is a moment of opportunity – with increased high-level political commitment to enable access to quality education for all children and young people, leaving no one behind. In 2015 governments around the world adopted the Sustainable Development Goals, including Goal 4: to ensure that by 2030 all girls and boys have access to complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education.<sup>2</sup> Without vital action to reach and teach those affected by emergencies and protracted crises, the world will fall far short of that goal.

In the lead-up to the first ever World Humanitarian Summit, repeated calls have been made for education and learning to be central to humanitarian action, and for guarantees that no child’s right to education be disrupted or interrupted by conflict or disaster. *Education Cannot Wait: a Fund for education in emergencies* – explained in this paper – heeds these calls and was developed to better meet the educational needs of millions of children and young people affected by crises around the world.<sup>3</sup>

In his report for the World Humanitarian Summit, the UN Secretary-General calls for governments to commit to ensure safe, quality and inclusive access to primary and secondary education and vocational opportunities during and after crises. Critical to achieving this is the transcending of humanitarian-development divides.<sup>4</sup> Interest in radical new approaches that join up humanitarian and development efforts on education is building in the lead-up to the World Humanitarian Summit. And there is growing interest from new and established donors alike to explore joint and innovative mechanisms to finance education in crisis. This momentum, together with the urgent needs of children worldwide, should compel all parties to act – committing political will and additional funding in support of new solutions.

“Let us become the first generation to decide to be the last that sees empty classrooms, lost childhoods, and wasted potentials.”

Malala Yousafzai,  
Nobel Peace Prize Laureate  
and education activist

## WHY DOES EDUCATION IN EMERGENCIES MATTER?

When humanitarian crises turn children's worlds upside down, lack of access to education adds to the risks to their protection and wellbeing. When crises hit, children often are forced to move repeatedly, interrupting their access to schooling. There is usually limited or no planning for what will happen to their education if a crisis occurs, especially if armed conflict erupts. Often children affected by humanitarian crises lose access to education for long periods of time. In the poorest communities, a child who hasn't gone to school for more than a year is likely to never return to the classroom again. This disruption has long-term impacts on children, their teachers, and their communities, making it harder to rebuild education systems, and damaging communities' longer term development prospects.

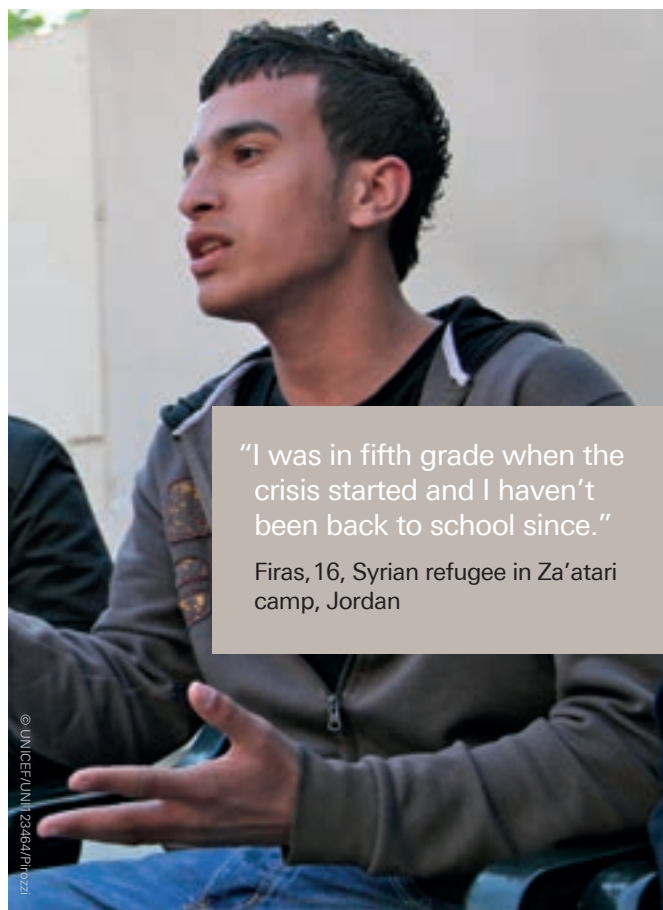
In 2015, 75 million children and young people aged 3 to 18 were caught up in humanitarian emergencies and in the greatest need of access to education. Of these, over 16 million were school-age refugees, internally displaced, or other populations affected by crises. Refugee children are five times more likely to be out of school. Some live in refugee camps while others are in host communities. Many are out of school, and girls are particularly disadvantaged: during conflicts, girls are 2.5 times more likely to drop out of school than boys. Many of these crises, such as the conflicts in the east of the Democratic Republic of the Congo or in Syria are longstanding, keeping a generation of children out of school for the entirety of their education cycle. Conflict is not the only challenge. Nepal is struggling to rebuild an education infrastructure ravaged by the 2015 earthquakes; the Ebola crisis stalled economic progress for a number of West African economies and brought education to a standstill for a long period in several areas; and 2.5 million people are affected by El Niño-related droughts in Central America that are impacting all aspects of life, including education. When poor countries and vulnerable people are hit by emergencies and protracted crises, declines in education invariably follow – a child denied the chance to attend school cannot recover the opportunities eroded by a lost education.<sup>5</sup>

The right to education is most at risk during emergencies, yet education is critical during emergencies and times of crisis. School can provide the stability, structure and routine that children need to cope with loss, fear, stress and violence. Being in school can keep children safe and protected from risks such as gender-based violence, recruitment

into armed forces and groups, trafficking, child labour and early marriage.

The gains in education globally over the past 15 years 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 and young people have attended school. But these same gains have not been made in education in crisis settings. In 2015, humanitarian response plans identified nearly 40 million children and adolescents in need of education. Education appeals targeted just 45% of them, but lack of funding meant that **only 12% of those in need were reached**, leaving 35 million children and adolescents without education.<sup>6</sup> If this continues to be ignored, then we risk jeopardising any sustained progress towards development. The longer-term costs of lack of investment in education in emergencies are huge. Education can be a driver of stability, reconciliation and peacebuilding, and a buffer against future social and economic shocks.

If education is not used as a lever to break the cycle, then crises will continue to be repeated. Committing to real progress in education in emergencies is an investment in the future.



"I was in fifth grade when the crisis started and I haven't been back to school since."

Firas, 16, Syrian refugee in Za'atari camp, Jordan

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# WHAT ARE THE MAIN CURRENT PROBLEMS WITH EDUCATION IN EMERGENCIES?

## Lack of prioritisation

Despite the fact that education tends to be among the highest priorities cited by parents and children in communities affected by crises<sup>7</sup>, humanitarian relief operations have tended to neglect education, not seeing it as an immediate lifesaving priority. Yet children have the right to thrive as well as survive, and the role of education in protecting children is often overlooked during crises.

## Poor coordination between different types of actors

There tends to be a lack of coordination, planning and financing models between emergency humanitarian education agencies and longer term development education agencies.

## Insufficient funding

In 2014, less than 2% of humanitarian appeals were directed to education. Further, while the displacement associated with armed conflict tends to be long-term, most funding is provided through short-term humanitarian appeals. It is not possible to build an education system equipped to cope with a protracted crisis on the basis of short-term – and unpredictable – emergency appeals.

## Inadequate capacity

Efforts in preparedness, especially building the capacity of education systems and personnel, have not kept pace with needs, undermining the predictability and timeliness of crisis response. Much more needs to be done to build local capacity to prevent, respond and build back better after crises.

## Lack of real-time data

Limited analysis and ineffective use of data makes it difficult to communicate priorities and needs. This also makes it problematic to establish contingency plans for how to continue educational activities in the event of armed conflict.

## THE FUNDING GAP



\*Likely contribution from governments

## ONKOD STRUGGLES TO FINISH HER EDUCATION



*"I felt sad, missed school and friends to play with. In the refugee camp, I had no friends and I was scared to go out,"* says Onkod, age 12.

Onkod Omar Shire missed two years of education after soldiers took over her school in Somalia. Now she is back and determined to make up for lost time. Onkod was just five and had started Grade One when her school was taken over by soldiers in 2009. The staff were told to leave and the school was closed so that the troops could

move in. Onkod and her family, along with 200 other families, fled because of fears of fighting and moved to nearby towns or across the Ethiopia border. Onkod and her family travelled to a refugee camp in Ethiopia. Finally, the soldiers left the school in February 2012. Onkod and some other students returned, determined to continue their studies. She began all over again from Grade One and now hopes to move into Grade Five in September. *"In the future I want to be a teacher in my school,"* says Onkod.

## EDUCATION CAN NOT WAIT FUND

The Education Cannot Wait Fund unites global and national organizations to better meet the educational needs of millions of children and young people affected by crises around the world. It will support access to education for children affected by emergencies and protracted crises: children living in conflict zones, children facing natural disasters, and children living through disease outbreaks.

The Fund will give particular consideration to refugee children and children forcibly displaced inside their countries, as well as children in the communities that are hosting them. This may include assisting refugee children in middle income countries where there is limited financing available for their education.

The Education Cannot Wait Fund aims to reach the most vulnerable crisis-affected children and youth. It aims to increase access to education in emergencies by 18% of crisis-affected children by 2020 and to 100% of crisis-affected children by 2030.

### ACCESS TO EDUCATION TARGETS



# HOW WILL THE EDUCATION CANNOT WAIT FUND WORK?

There are five strategies:

1. Increase high-level attention on education in emergencies from governments and other donors (including new donors), with an aim towards greater equity of response, with an emphasis on reaching the most vulnerable and the most neglected crises
2. Raise significant additional money and use this funding for interventions that improve access to education, quality of education and child protection.
3. Unite humanitarian and development efforts in support of national response
4. Strengthen individual and institutional capacity of those leading education efforts in crises and improve delivery systems
5. Develop and share knowledge, with a focus on increasing awareness of need and evidence for effective interventions



## BREAKTHROUGH FUND

### FOR SUPPORT TO EDUCATION IN EMERGENCIES AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL (95% OF OVERALL INVESTMENT)

The Breakthrough Fund will offer both immediate and medium-term finance to those responsible for providing, maintaining and restoring education systems through rapid and predictable investment. The Fund will be designed to leverage additional monies rather than reallocating existing funds, and to support linked humanitarian and development interventions. It will also be designed to integrate easily with support already flowing to crisis countries. As far as is possible, and depending on the country context, funds will be channelled through existing financing mechanisms.

The Breakthrough Fund will have three distinct parts:

#### *i. Rapid response mechanism*

This will provide immediate and quick support in a crisis, channelled through existing agencies. It would typically finance start-up costs, such as temporary access, essential supplies or contingency stocks, psychosocial support, information management or back-to-school campaigns.

#### *ii. Multi-year support window*

This will allow funds to flow for up to five years against a rapidly agreed and costed country plan that bridges and consolidates the whole range of existing education plans. The plan would be informed by a joint comprehensive needs assessment exercise, providing country level recommendations for how best to use funds to support education in emergencies. Bringing key actors together behind a single plan will further improve coordination and has the potential to reduce transaction costs and provide much-needed predictability of funding to governments and other implementing partners.

#### *iii. Pop-up funds*

This involves the capability to establish a 'pop-up' window that would allow funding to be directed during a crisis, either to a specific country or region or to a limited number of earmarked areas of the country plan. It would provide a quick route to channel support from non-traditional donors, philanthropists and the private sector. It might also be used to channel funding towards the purchase of contingency supplies.

## WORKING HARD TO CATCH UP: ACCELERATED LEARNING IN IRAQ

*"We went to hundreds of places to find a school and nobody helped us, so many of them have lost out on nearly two years of their education. They're very motivated to continue,"* says maths teacher Moksini Soliman

Moksini volunteers his time to help Yazidi children in Seje, a mountain village in the Kurdistan region of northern Iraq. Yazidis fled to Seje when armed groups seized their homes and land in Sinjar. Yazidi children had been out of school for a while, before UNICEF was able to put up two tent classrooms to get them back into class. Three caravans have been added recently and the courtyard paved. *"We want them to pass their exams. Losing all this time has affected them badly. They're working hard to catch up,"* says school principal, Shamor Yusef.



A boy prepares for exams after nearly two years out of school.

## ACCELERATION FACILITY

### FOR GLOBAL & REGIONAL-LEVEL SUPPORT TO EDUCATION IN EMERGENCIES (5% OF OVERALL INVESTMENT)

The Acceleration Facility will expand and extend collective work to deliver high-quality education services in crises. It will also support the development of resources to advance good practice and strengthen central collection of data and evidence. It will provide "Catalytic Support Grants" to enable actors with expertise in certain functions to work together and strengthen activities. Grants will support work along the following lines:

- high-level technical support and surge capacity to national government leadership on education response and developing country plans
- investment in building better practices and creation of publications and guidelines based on actionable research
- core funding for existing education in emergencies providers to expand efforts and improve the quality of their work
- provision of a working-level platform that brings all agencies responsible for provision of education together to facilitate efficient ways of working together across humanitarian and development actors.

*"I have seen children trying to write on the ground because they want to learn so much."*

Jameela, head teacher at a school in Sa'ada, northern Yemen



## MOBILISING FINANCE

The Education Cannot Wait Fund will expand resource mobilisation over the first five years, aiming 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.<sup>8</sup> This involves an overall five-year fundraising ambition of \$3.85 billion.

The Fund's resource mobilisation efforts will transform the potential for delivering education in crises by bringing in new, untapped additional resources, rather than through the reallocation of existing funds.

To achieve this, the Education Cannot Wait Fund will coordinate and deliver finance from existing aid donors and draw in new donors, including:

- new donors from countries that historically have not contributed directly to multilateral aid
- finance from the business and commercial sector
- finance from foundations
- philanthropy of public spirited individuals, including diaspora remittances
- high net worth individuals in regions interested in contributing to various crises<sup>9</sup>
- INGO, including faith-based group, contributions
- innovative financing.

	YEAR 1	YEAR 2	YEAR 3	YEAR 4	YEAR 5
TOTAL CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE REACHED	1,360,000	3,400,000	6,120,000	9,520,000	13,600,000
TOTAL FUNDING REQUIRED	\$153 MILLION	\$383 MILLION	\$689 MILLION	\$1 BILLION	\$1.5 BILLION

## SCHOOL BRINGS HOPE TO CHILD REFUGEES IN CHAD

Aisha was married when she was 13 years old. She is now divorced and the mother of a child. For the first time in her life, Aisha has access to education. In January 2015, Aisha and her family, frightened by the sound of gunfire, fled their village. "We wandered in a canoe, hungry, with no water to drink," By June 2015 about 19,000 Nigerians like Aisha had fled the crisis in their country and sought refuge in Chad. More than 4,900 refugees, including Aisha and her family, took shelter in the Daresalam camp. Most of the children are going to school for the first time. "Now, it's a great chance for me to study. My young son, Aboukar, stays with my mother when I am in class."

"I never had the chance to go to school. Now I am very happy to learn new things every day. I love mathematics." Aisha, 15



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## CAPACITY STRENGTHENING

The Fund will prioritise capacity strengthening at the national level by supporting existing entities and making use of existing tools and frameworks. It will support national workforce development, as well as increasing overall quantity and quality of professionals engaged in education in crises both at a national level and globally.

The Fund will support the development of emergency response data collection tools, as well as joined-up data collation and analysis across government, humanitarian and development efforts.

It will support a valuable learning and innovation workstream that focuses on building an actionable evidence base to strengthen existing research and address current research gaps.

The Fund will also play an important role in encouraging contingency planning for emergency preparedness by governments, humanitarian agencies and other service providers. This should include planning for how educational activities can continue in the event of armed conflict, and protecting educational facilities from military use.



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## SCHOOLS LEAD THE WAY IN PREPARING FOR FUTURE DISASTERS

Local schools in Metro Manila in the Philippines have won awards for their disaster preparedness programmes. An example is the earthquake evacuation drill at the Commonwealth Elementary School. When the signal alarm goes off, the students remain in their classrooms sheltering themselves under their desks and chairs. As soon as the signal goes silent, one by one the children line up to make their way to the designated evacuation areas, covering their heads with improvised protection made from rugs and thick cloths, to help protect them from shattered glasses and debris. The school has also developed an evacuation map, posted in front of every classroom, and made special emergency bags for children that include water, biscuits and a flashlight.



## CONCLUSION

This is a moment of real opportunity for protecting the rights of all children to education. For children surviving emergencies, education is vital: it can protect them from exploitative labour, early marriage, and child recruitment, and it is one of the only things they can guarantee taking with them into their future lives, whatever terrible losses they may suffer during the crisis. Investing in education is investing in children's future and in societies' development and social stability. The Education Cannot Wait Fund offers a realistic and practical way forward to ensure that, by 2030, all children, even the most vulnerable and hard-to-reach, have access to education.

### What does it mean to commit to the Education Cannot Wait Fund?

- ***Political commitment***

Draw attention to and mobilize support for education crises across all stakeholders, and work at all political levels to support national governments on education response and to facilitate efficient ways of working across the humanitarian and development architecture.

- ***New and additional funding***

Mobilize additional funding and new investments, offering up-front and medium-term help to those responsible for providing, maintaining or reconstructing education.

- ***Contribute to innovative solutions***

Promote new solutions and incentivise existing systems to improve data and evidence, build capacity and strengthen accountability, with an emphasis on sustainable initiatives.



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## REFERENCES

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- 1 This 75 million figure builds on earlier calculations of 65 million children aged 3-15 whose education has been affected in 35 crisis-affected developing countries, and now includes those who are 16-18 years of age. This analysis was originally prepared for the Oslo Summit, and is drawn from UNICEF figures included in their Humanitarian Action for Children appeal, plus Nepal, for 2015.
- 2 Sustainable Development Goal 4, available at: [sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdg4](http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdg4)
- 3 This paper is based on the Overseas Development Institute (ODI) March 2016 paper *Education Cannot Wait – proposing a fund for education in emergencies*, which was commissioned by UNICEF on behalf of a broad group, including the UN Special Envoy for Education, the Global Partnership for Education (GPE), governments, key donors and other stakeholders, which was financed by the UK's Department for International Development (DFID), the Government of Norway and the US Agency for International Development (USAID). The ODI paper was the result of a three-month process of research, consultation and design work involving hundreds of contributors, and is available at: [odi.org/education-cannot-wait](http://odi.org/education-cannot-wait)
- 4 Report of the UN Secretary-General for the World Humanitarian Summit: One Humanity: Shared Responsibility, 2 February 2016, available at: <http://bit.ly/21f0j8v>
- 5 ODI, 2016
- 6 A World at School, 2016. *Scorecard on Education in Crises*, 2016, available at <http://bit.ly/1SVUpHC>
- 7 European Commission, Norwegian Refugee Council, Save the Children, *Hear it from the children: why education in emergencies is critical*, 2014, available at: <http://bit.ly/26Q6BPT>
- 8 ODI, 2016
- 9 Ensuring a single place for new funding to flow to can build a simple and compelling case for channelling these resources via the platform for maximum efficiency.



Cover image

A hole torn in the wall of a classroom at a primary school in Sirte, badly damaged after weeks of violent conflict.

One in four of the world's school-aged children now live in countries affected by crisis. Of these children, 75 million are in the most desperate need of support: they are either in danger of or already missing out on their right to education.

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