



# EDUCATION IN EMERGENCIES

ECHO FACTSHEET

## Facts & Figures

- **250 million children** live in conflict-affected areas (Source: UNICEF, 2016)
- **37 million children affected by conflict are out of school** (Source: UNICEF, 2015)

## EU action

- The EU has allocated over **€75 million** for education in emergencies projects to date.
- Over **3 800 000 children** around the world will have benefited from EU-funded education projects by the end of 2016.



Guinea, 2015. © EU/ECHO/Jonathan Hyams

## Key messages

- **Education is lifesaving.** Education is crucial for both the protection and development of girls and boys affected by crises. It can restore a sense of normalcy and safety and provide them with important life skills. It is also **one of the best tools to invest in their long-term future** and in the peace, stability and economic growth of their countries.
- The Commission currently dedicates **4% of the EU's overall humanitarian budget to education in emergencies**, one of the most underfunded sectors of humanitarian aid.
- By the end of 2016, more than **3 800 000 girls and boys will have benefited in 46 countries** around the world.

## Humanitarian situation and needs

Children are highly vulnerable during and in the immediate aftermath of crises. The risk of being forcibly displaced or separated from their families is particularly high in situations of emergency. Under these circumstances, girls and boys are easy targets of armed groups or criminal gangs, who recruit them as combatants or intelligence sources or used them for sexual exploitation and forced labour. Children can be injured and even killed during attacks, and are also frequently victims of landmines and other unexploded ordnances. According to the United Nations, around **250 million children live in countries affected by conflict, 9.9 million children are currently refugees\*** and an estimated **19 million children have been displaced within their own country** due to conflict.

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\* All the latest ECHO Factsheets: [bit.ly/echo-fs](http://bit.ly/echo-fs)

In emergency settings, schools are often destroyed and education in such circumstances is frequently of poor quality, with schools lacking qualified teachers. Education is often disrupted and **37 million children living in emergency situations do not have access to any form of education**, according to UNICEF. **Girls living in conflict-affected countries are 2'5 times more likely to be out of school than boys.** During conflict, they also face greater risk of experiencing gender based violence, early marriage and pregnancy.

**Education can be lifesaving.** In schools, children are not only safer but they are also in the best place to learn the necessary skills to rebuild a brighter future for themselves and their communities. **Education is crucial for the development and well-being of any child.** It helps girls and boys to get back to normal life, play with their schoolmates and overcome the trauma.

While children benefit from most of the humanitarian assistance delivered, education in emergencies is strongly underfunded. At present, **less than 2 % of the global humanitarian funding is allocated to education** and there is a wide funding gap for this area of €4.3 billion. This is largely due to the fact that other life-saving emergency actions often take priority over education during a crisis, despite the positive benefits of education for children caught up in a crisis and the important role that it plays in ensuring peace and stability in the long-term.

## The European Union's Humanitarian Response

The European Commission currently dedicates **4% of the EU's overall humanitarian budget to education in emergencies.** The aid is delivered through non-governmental organisations (NGOs), United Nations agencies and international organisations carrying out humanitarian projects to enable safe access to quality education for children affected by emergency situations, such as conflicts, natural disasters, criminal violence or epidemics.

EU-funded **educational activities are tailored to take into account the different needs of children based on their age, gender and other specific circumstances.** The nature of these activities range from the improvement of access to education to the provision of school materials and uniforms, the transportation to educational centres, the rehabilitation of damaged schools and the construction of new learning spaces and centres. The Commission also funds projects facilitating access to non-formal education (accelerated learning programmes), life-skills and vocational training, psychosocial assistance and recreational activities. Humanitarian projects aiming at strengthening the quality aspects of the education provided, including the recruitment of qualified teachers and training to teaching staff are also supported, as well as actions aiming at raising awareness among parents, caregivers and community leaders about their children's education.

When the EU received the 2012 Nobel Peace Prize, it dedicated the monetary award (€930 000) - and doubled it to €2 million - to create the EU Children of Peace initiative with the aim of supporting safe access to quality education and psychosocial support in situations of emergency. Since then, the EU has scaled up its funding for educational projects in emergency areas every year. From the initial contribution of €2 million in 2012, the EU doubled the funding to €4 million in 2013. In 2014, the funding reached over €6.7 million, including the contributions of €500 000 from Luxembourg and €250 000 from Austria. Last year, €11 million were allocated to educational projects. With the €52 released in 2016, **the total amount allocated to Education in Emergencies has reached over €75 million.**

By the end of 2016, more than **3 800 000 children will have been helped in 46 countries** around the world: Afghanistan, Armenia, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Colombia, Democratic Republic of Congo, Djibouti, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Georgia, Guatemala, Guinea, Honduras, India, Iran, Iraq, Kenya, Lebanon, Libya, Madagascar, Mali, Mauritania, Mexico, Myanmar, Niger, Nigeria, Pakistan, Palestinian Territory Occupied, Philippines, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Sudan Republic, Sudan, Syrian Arab Republic, Tanzania, Turkey, Uganda, Ukraine, Venezuela and Yemen.

