

The Geneva Declaration on Education in Emergencies and Protracted Crises



We, parliamentarians from all around the world, reaffirm that everyone shall enjoy the right to education.

We note with grave concern:

- The COVID-19 pandemic led to the greatest disruption to education in history, affecting 1.6 billion children and youth, compounding existing inequalities and exacerbating the global learning crisis.
- The global learning crisis is being made worse by growing threats to education posed by conflict, climate change, the global food and nutrition crisis, and disease.
- [The number of crisis-affected school-age children that require educational support has grown to 222 million](#) - much higher than the last available estimate of 75 million, from 2016.
- Close to 120 million children in crisis affected contexts are in school but not achieving minimum proficiency in literacy and numeracy.
- For children and young people caught up in crises - among the most marginalised in the world - their right to a safe, quality education is in peril.
- When a child is born into an emergency context, they face compounding risks that threaten their long-term development and well-being, and not enough attention and resources are being directed towards early childhood care and education.
- The situation is especially dire for girls, vulnerable minorities, children living with disabilities, and displaced children and young people, all of whom face additional barriers to realising their right to education.
- Having fled their countries in search of protection, only [68% of refugee children have access to primary education, compared to 90% globally - that drops to 37% for secondary education, against 66% globally, and 6% for tertiary education against 40% globally, as of the end of 2021.](#)
- [Attacks on education carried out for political, military, ideological, sectarian, ethnic, or religious reasons against students, educators, and education institutions are at an all time high.](#)

Meanwhile:

- [Education in emergencies and in conflict affected and fragile states remains chronically underfunded](#), especially against the backdrop of rapidly increasing needs.
- If we are to have any chance of achieving Sustainable Development Goal 4 we must meet the educational needs of displaced children and young people, and those living in crisis affected contexts.

We recognize that:

- The exclusion of displaced and crisis-affected children and young people from learning stands in stark contrast to the priority that they and their communities place on education.
- Education in emergencies is a life-saving intervention, and safe and continuous access to quality and inclusive education can provide a platform for child protection, health, mental health and psychosocial support, gender and disability inclusion, and improved nutrition.

- Education systems are often a country's most robust national social service – with the potential to not only address the immediate education needs of children and youth, but also ensure their protection, and support their health and wellbeing.
- Education can be a powerful tool in promoting gender equality, social justice and more peaceful, harmonious and sustainable societies.

We therefore commit to use the tools and influence at our disposal to encourage governments – our own and others – to address this challenge, using our role as policy makers, legislators, advocates and providers of scrutiny to:

- Improve safe, equitable and inclusive educational access and learning outcomes for displaced children and youth, girls, vulnerable minorities, children living with disabilities, and those affected by crises.
- Protect and improve financing, ensuring financing is equitable, and aligns with national priorities and international commitments, across humanitarian and development instruments.
- Build crisis-resilient education systems, which must ensure the protection of children and young people's right to education and other fundamental rights, and address learning needs in a holistic way, including health, wellbeing, nutrition, water, sanitation, and protection from violence, sexual exploitation and abuse.
- Scale and mainstream high-impact and evidence-based interventions into policy, practice, law and funding.

We further commit to:

- Amplify the voices, needs, and experiences of displaced and crisis-affected communities, learners and teachers in our parliaments and other forums.
- Align national priorities and international commitments to protect and promote the right to education in emergencies and protracted crises, including those set out in the [United Nations General Assembly Resolution on the Right to Education in Emergency Situations](#), the [Incheon Declaration](#), the [Busan Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation](#), the [Heads of State Declaration on Education Financing](#), the [Global Compact on Refugees](#), the [Global Compact on Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration](#), the [Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children](#), the [Safe Schools Declaration](#) and the [Comprehensive School Safety Framework](#).

Together we will learn, share ideas, and agree on joint and individual actions that accelerate educational progress. We will collaborate with fellow parliamentarians from around the world, reaching across geographical and political divides to create shared understanding and collective action.

We commit to build on the work of our peers, noting in particular the [resolution on Education in Situations of Crisis adopted by the Francophone Parliamentary Assembly in 2021](#).

Acknowledging the scale of this challenge and the gravity of its impact on individuals, communities, nations and the world, we commit to act with urgency and determination to protect the right to education of displaced children and young people, and those affected by crises.

We formally adopt this declaration on February 16, 2023 in Geneva, Switzerland during the Education Cannot Wait High-Level Financing Conference.

The Geneva Declaration was initiated by the International Parliamentary Network for Education in collaboration with the Geneva Global Hub for Education in Emergencies.



More information on the Geneva Declaration can be found at www.ipned.org/geneva-declaration