Multistakeholder Pledge on Education in Emergency Contexts:
Short-term action for long-term educational benefit: Promoting rapid access to learning opportunities for recently-displaced refugee children and youth

PLEDGE BRIEF

2023 Global Refugee Forum
Pledge description

Scope

This pledge focuses on the first phase after displacement, i.e. the period immediately following displacement until such time as refugee children and youth are able to attend recognised formal or accredited non-formal education services on a regular basis. This period is critical as it requires concentrated efforts to swiftly reintegrate refugee children and youth into learning, facilitate their entry into the national education system and address the high demand for supportive services. Moreover, the success of the initial response has implications for the success of all other subsequent education interventions.

Background

The Global Compact on Refugees (GCR) urges States and other stakeholders to work together to minimise the time that newly displaced children and youth spend out of school to less than three months and promotes inclusion in national education systems.

Today, global displacement figures continue to break records. Over half of all refugee children (58%) are out of school and miss an average of three to four years of schooling due to displacement. Refugee girls lag behind boys in terms of enrolment and retention due to many gendered considerations such as early and forced marriage, early childbearing, gender-based violence, domestic work and lack of available menstrual hygiene management. Studies have demonstrated that once a child drops out of school for a prolonged period the likelihood of returning and completing education is severely minimised.

Education is a human right and can be lifesaving and life-sustaining in emergencies. Displaced children, youth, and their parents urgently request to prioritise quality education during crises. It provides safe spaces for children and youth where they can access a range of lifesaving services for their protection and wellbeing.

Context and issues

Policies supporting the swift inclusion of newly displaced children and youth in national systems often do not exist, or are inadequate or poorly implemented. In addition, education is often underfunded, under prioritised and left out of crisis responses, preparedness plans and anticipatory action.

In many places, the limited capacity of host countries' education systems does not allow them to meet a higher demand for education, especially when infrastructure, equipment, financial means and human resources (including teachers) are already stretched or insufficient.
Other barriers - related to curriculum, language, culture, legal status, displaced families’ economic situations, protection risks, gender-based discrimination - can also hinder refugee children and youth’s access and swift return to learning.

Rationale for having a multistakeholder pledge on education in emergency contexts

Having a specific pledge on education in emergency contexts helps to:

- **Amplify awareness on Education in Emergencies (EiE):** ensure **prominent visibility for EiE at the Global Refugee Forum (GRF),** leading to tangible actions benefitting children and youth from both refugee and host communities.

- **Bring about policy, operational and grant-making changes** in endorsing entities’ work in support of the implementation of the GCR, in particular responsibility sharing with refugee-hosting States in the immediate phase after displacement.
The Pledge

Short-term action for long-term educational benefit: Promoting rapid access to learning opportunities for recently-displaced refugee children and youth

The endorsing entities pledge to work to ensure that the time that recently-displaced refugee children and youth spend out of school is minimised and that they are able to have access to learning opportunities within the first three months after displacement. These learning opportunities should be safe, gender-responsive, inclusive, of quality and respect learners’ diverse needs, abilities and capacities. The stakeholders endorsing this pledge also commit to working in support of the inclusion of recently-displaced children and youth in national education systems through one or more of the following actions:

- Working alongside refugee-hosting States and relevant civil society actors to develop responses that are sustainable and aim at integrating refugee children and youth in all their diversity into national education systems as soon as possible, creating non-formal pathways and ensuring the provision of support services (such as psycho-social support, assistance to learn the language of instruction, bridging curricular and cultural differences and addressing harmful gender and social norms and economic barriers to education) as needed.
- Mobilising and advocating for increased financial contributions for education in emergency contexts with predictable, multi-year and flexible funding to respond to education needs from the onset of a displacement crisis and ensure equitable responsibility sharing with refugee-hosting States.
- Working alongside refugee-hosting States and relevant civil society actors to integrate education in preparedness plans, anticipatory action and inter-sectoral initial rapid responses to crises to ensure the continuity of learning after displacement and the resilience of education systems.
- Strengthening the coordination of education in emergencies to ensure more predictable, systematic responses in support of rapid access to quality, gender-responsive, inclusive and protective education for refugees and refugee-hosting communities.
- Investing in more and better gender and age-disaggregated evidence - on how refugee children and youth learn in emergency contexts and assessing the efficiency of emergency responses – to inform policy and practice.

The endorsing entities recognise that education is a human right and can be lifesaving and life-sustaining in emergencies, and acknowledge that the success of the initial response has implications for the success of all other subsequent education interventions.
Desired outcome

Refugee-hosting States and communities are supported by donors, humanitarian actors and other stakeholders in their efforts to meet refugee children and youth’s educational needs, ensuring access to learning opportunities within the first three months after displacement and the inclusion into national systems and the provision of support services in the first phase after displacement.

Linking individual pledges and the thematic pledge on education in emergency contexts

Some of the concrete ways in which organisations pledging at the GRF could further the realisation of the thematic pledge on education in emergency contexts would be to make reference to some of the following in their individual pledges:

- Collaborate towards identifying and removing legal, policy and/or administrative barriers hindering refugee children and youth’s — equally girls and boys and most vulnerable groups — swift return to learning and inclusion in national education systems after displacement.
- Support and promote policies and guidelines enabling national education systems to respond in a flexible manner, adapt quickly and meet the specific needs of refugee children and youth.
- Develop responses that are sustainable and aim at integrating refugee children and youth into national education systems as soon as possible, creating nonformal pathways and ensuring the provision of support services (such as psycho-social support, assistance to learn the language of instruction, bridging curricular and cultural differences and addressing economic barriers to education) as needed.
- Increase financial contributions for education in emergencies with predictable, multi-year and flexible funding to respond to education needs from the onset of a displacement crisis and ensure equitable responsibility sharing with refugee-hosting States.
- Integrate education in preparedness plans, anticipatory action and intersectoral initial rapid responses to crises to ensure the continuity of learning after displacement and the resilience of education systems.
- Invest in more and better evidence — on how refugee children and youth learn in emergency contexts and assessing the efficiency of emergency responses — to inform policy and practice.
- Work in an inclusive way, ensuring the active and non-discriminatory participation of refugee children and youth and their families, teachers, local actors, refugee-hosting States and communities in decision-making processes.
- Work alongside refugee-hosting States and relevant civil society actors to expand access to protective, inclusive, quality education for both refugee children and youth and host communities.

\(^1\) See INEE definition of quality education: [inee.org/eie-glossary/quality-education](inee.org/eie-glossary/quality-education)
- Support teachers at both technical and administrative levels and with regular and appropriate salaries.
- **Any other actions** that support swift return of refugee children and youth to learning and inclusion into national systems in the initial phase after displacement.

**Endorsing entities and reporting**

*This pledge can be endorsed (signed) by any entity working to minimise the time refugee children and youth spend out of learning and promote inclusion into national systems in the first phase after displacement.*

*Endorsing entities contribute to the achievement of this pledge through the actions set out in their individual pledges.*

*The pledge will be submitted by Education Cannot Wait (ECW) which will be responsible for reporting – on behalf of the endorsing entities – on the progress made in the implementation of the pledge.*
Contact

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For more information about how individual entities can submit a pledge:

- How to submit a pledge via the online form
- Step-by-step guide

The GRF Education Alliance is a network of over 160 stakeholders that have a passionate interest in ensuring that refugees of all ages have access to education opportunities.

The GRF Education Alliance Task Team on Emergency contexts is a working group composed of a wide range of stakeholders - including States, UN agencies, INGOs, networks and refugees - that focuses on educational challenges and opportunities in the immediate phase after displacement.

https://globalcompactrefugees.org/compact-action/initiatives/grf-education-alliance