

Transforming Education to Protect Children's Rights in Emergencies and Crises



An appeal for global action





Background and Acknowledgements

This advocacy brief has been developed to support and expand on the G7 Call for International Cooperation to Protect Children's Right to Education in Emergencies and Crises developed by the G7 2022 Education Advocacy Working Group co-chaired by World Vision International and Oxfam, supporting the advocacy efforts of Global Campaign for Education national education coalitions and advocates in G7 countries, and endorsed by a total of 65 individual organisations in addition to those represented by national education coalitions (see Annex). It further aims to build visibility, momentum, and stakeholder support to these issues in the lead-up to the United Nations Transforming Education Summit.

This advocacy brief was developed by World Vision International with thanks to Oxfam as G7 2022 Education Advocacy Working Group co-chair and contributions by the Global Campaign for Education (specifically GCE Germany, GCE-US, Send My Friend to School (UK), GCE Italy, and the GCE Secretariat), the All-Africa Students Union (AASU), Humanity & Inclusion, Save the Children, Sesame Workshop, Sightsavers, Education Cannot Wait (ECW), the Global Partnership for Education (GPE), the United Nations Girls' Education Initiative (UNGEI), and the World Food Programme (WFP). This brief has been made possible by support from the ECW Acceleration Facility.

Cover photograph:

Djamila, a 13-year-old grade five student and one of over 11,000 adolescent girls supported by the World Vision's Niger Integrated Resilience Project in partnership with the World Food Programme that provides nutritional supplements leading to reduction in anaemia and improved school performance.

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May 2022



Introduction

COVID-19, climate-induced disasters, the Afghanistan crisis, the Ukraine conflict, and other forgotten crises such as in the Sahel, Horn of Africa, and Yemen – threats against global stability and security are at extraordinary highs and projected to worsen. Communities, families, and children are suffering at unprecedented levels, with basic securities and rights being stripped from them, often in the blink of an eye. Essential services like education, health, and child protection are deteriorating, or sometimes abruptly disappearing, only further exacerbating related refugee crises and challenging recovery efforts.

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, 258 million children around the world were already failing to access basic education.¹ Hundreds of millions more – over 50 percent of those children in school in low and middle-income countries – were accessing education but nevertheless unable to read and understand a basic text by the end of primary school.² With COVID-19 school closures affecting nearly 1.6 billion learners – over 90 percent of the world’s school-going population – an additional 11 million children are at risk of not returning to school, and child illiteracy is expected to rise sharply from 50 to 70 percent.³ During the pandemic, about 40 percent of low- and lower-middle-income countries have not supported learners at risk of exclusion, such as those living in remote areas, the poor, linguistic minorities, and learners with disabilities.⁴ The UN Secretary-General has called the effects of the pandemic on learning a global generational catastrophe.⁵

Adding to this, children will bear the brunt of the impact of climate change, as extreme weather events and slow-onset changes intensify in magnitude. Floods and tropical storms that damage or destroy schools leave children with no place to learn, particularly exposing girls to increased risks of violence and exploitation.

Changing weather patterns and droughts affecting agricultural livelihoods add financial stress to vulnerable families, who may turn to child labour, child marriage, or other negative coping strategies instead of their children’s education.⁶ Adding further to this, armed conflict and political instability is driving refugee crises and attacks on education itself. Prior to the most recent developments in Afghanistan, Ukraine, and other crises, over 11,000 attacks on education facilities or military use of them were reported between 2015 and 2019.⁷

Conflict and instability exacerbate existing gender inequalities and harmful gender norms, and as a result, girls’ education and schools are particularly at risk. In total, Education Cannot Wait (ECW) – the global fund for education in emergencies – estimates that 75 million vulnerable, school-aged children and youth are already missing out on education due to armed conflicts, forced displacement, natural and climate-change-induced disasters, and other protracted crises.⁸

Safe, quality, transformative education is a foundation for peace, tolerance, human rights, sustainable development, and better futures. Sustainable Development Goal 4 – ambitious at its onset – is quickly becoming but a pipedream for many children around the world. It is paramount to urgently increase international cooperation to protect the right to education of children and learners from being disrupted by emergencies and crises like COVID-19, climate change, and conflict.

Central to this urgent need is three interrelated pillars of
(1) Building resilient education systems,
(2) Increasing gender equality and reducing marginalisation,
and
(3) Upholding accountability and financing.

Building resilient education systems

Anticipatory and adaptive education planning and response

Action must be immediately taken to transform and strengthen education systems to be resilient against emergencies and crises like COVID-19, climate change, and conflict. Low and lower-middle income countries must be supported to build transformative, resilient, safe, inclusive, gender-responsive, quality education and lifelong learning systems.

This requires:

- (1) Education sector and emergency response planning and implementation to be mutually-reinforcing and harmonised to be anticipatory and adaptive,
- (2) Children to be safe and protected during times of crisis, and
- (3) Special measures to continue, recover, and accelerate learning.

● Resilient education sector planning that bridges the humanitarian-development-peace nexus:

Disaster risk reduction and emergency preparedness measures for both rapid and slow-onset crises should be integrated into all education sector planning, with a whole-child life-cycle perspective beginning with early childhood development. Humanitarian response planning and implementation should be harmonised with long-term national education planning where possible to bridge the humanitarian-development-peace divide and ensure successful transition towards recovery and stabilisation.

● Education-inclusive emergency response plans:

Education must be prioritised and included in all emergency planning and responses. Safe, gender-responsive, inclusive, quality education must be integrated into disaster risk reduction measures and national adaptation plans if education is to be resilient against emergencies and crises and contribute to peace, justice, and sustainability. This should be done in collaboration with children, youth, and communities to ensure that such education responses will meet their needs and will be feasible in varying contexts.

● Localisation and community partnership:

Community members are often the first responders in emergency situations and closest to crisis-affected children and youth. Partnerships with local actors – including parents, teachers, faith leaders, youth and peer-led organisations, women’s rights organisations, organisations of persons with disabilities, and other community leaders – should be strengthened not only downstream in measures taken during crisis responses but also upstream in emergency preparedness strategising and planning that precedes them.

● Systems-strengthening focus:

Planning and response must increase resiliency of education systems as a whole, including the critical role that communities and non-formal education play (see below) while also ensuring a focus on public education that is critical to sustainability. While emergencies and crises may interrupt public services and require stop-gap measures provided by non-state actors, these measures must be taken with a long-term view of recovering and strengthening public education systems and done in coordination with non-profit education providers that meet education standards and regulations.⁹ Effective practices and learnings from community and non-formal education interventions should be carried into formal education as applicable to better support the strengthening of entire education systems.

● Climate change learning and adaptation:

Climate change mitigation measures in particular should be incorporated into education and emergency response planning. Climate change learning and sustainable development should be integrated into educational curricula and broader climate learning strategies like public awareness and information activities, with a focus on youth leadership and public participation. Girls’ access to education and gender-transformative learning should also be a focus as a critical tool to driving climate justice and mitigating the impacts of climate change.¹⁰



Building resilient education systems

Anticipatory and adaptive education planning and response

Coordinated humanitarian-development responses in Afghanistan to protect education in crisis

Afghanistan has made significant progress on building and expanding its education system over the last 20 years. Total student enrolment has increased tenfold, from less than one million in 2000 to 9.9 million in 2019. Girls account for an increasing number of new students, with having been less than 10 percent of enrolled students in 2000 and growing to 39 percent in 2019. ¹¹

External aid represents a large proportion of Afghanistan's education expenditure, standing at around 49 percent of the national education budget in 2020. ¹² When the Taliban took control in August 2021, most development assistance on which the education system relied was suspended, interrupting education service delivery. When schools were reopened in September following COVID-19-related closures, education assistance was further challenged when the Taliban ordered boys to return to secondary school but not girls.

In response to the fluid and complex crisis, ECW provided \$4 million in First Emergency Response funding to support

around 10 percent of the country's 400,000 internally displaced school-aged children with community-based education and psychosocial support, but much more would be needed.

To prevent the collapse of the education system and the loss of important gains made, humanitarian and development actors came together through the Education Cluster and Development Partners Group to facilitate a rapid but consultative process to develop an Afghanistan Education Sector Transitional Framework essential for resuming support to education. The two-year Transitional Framework

aligns with Afghanistan's Humanitarian Response Plan and more broadly coordinates and aligns programmatic approaches, strategies, and investments in the education sector across stakeholders. ¹³

While calls continue for girls to be allowed into secondary school, ¹⁴ the Transitional Framework and the humanitarian-development platforms facilitating it provide a channel to resume critical education support, including through ECW's \$36 million Afghanistan Multi-Year Resilience Programme, GPE's \$300 million funding available to Afghanistan, and bilateral arrangements with implementing partners. ¹⁵



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This case study was developed with ECW and GPE



Building resilient education systems

Protecting child safety and wellbeing

● Early childhood development and education:

As nutrition and fundamental learning of the youngest and most vulnerable children are essential determining factors of onward success in life, continued provision of early childhood development and education programmes must be prioritised in emergency and crisis contexts. These programmes also provide critical support needed by adolescent mothers to continue their own education, as unintended and early pregnancies increase during times of crisis.¹⁶ Governments must ensure the provision of at least one year of free, quality pre-primary education.¹⁷

● Mental health and psychosocial support, social and emotional learning, play-based learning, and peacebuilding:

A whole-child approach to education is effective in any context. When emergencies and crises then introduce new risks to children, youth, and teachers alike, trigger mental health and psychosocial issues, and introduce trauma from conflict, displacement, migration, and related impacts like sexual and gender-based violence, mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) and social and emotional learning (SEL) are even more essential to restoring the conditions for learning while also increasing abilities to cope with future shocks. Play-based learning should be more greatly utilised, and peace, tolerance, gender equality, and civics should be promoted through education as both preventative and restorative measures to crisis and conflict.

● Uninterrupted school meal programmes:

School meal programmes are the most extensive social protection programme in the world, reaching half of all school-aged children (388 million) in 161 countries. When COVID-19 forced schools to close around the world, more than 370 million children lost access to school meals and what was for many the only reliable source of daily nutrition.¹⁸ The continued provision of school meals should be included in any education sector and emergency planning and response.

Watch, Play, Learn: Educational Media for Anticipatory and Adaptive Education

Sesame Workshop, the non-profit organisation behind *Sesame Street*, is harnessing the power of educational media and Muppets to deliver playful learning and nurturing care to children affected by crisis. As part of this work, Sesame is launching a ground-breaking library of globally tested educational content called **Watch, Play, Learn: Early Learning Videos**. This ready-made global learning resource is designed not only to increase access to early education in crisis contexts by reaching children through myriad channels – whether broadcast, digital distribution, or integration with local service delivery partners – but also to enable more rapid response in future crises.

Created as part of the Play to Learn project funded by the LEGO Foundation, Watch, Play, Learn is a library of 140 five-minute animated videos designed for children ages 3-8. These videos feature Sesame's beloved Muppet characters engaging in learning through play to promote foundational skills in math, science; social-emotional learning; and child protection, health, and safety. The content was developed in consultation with expert advisors from eight countries and tested with children and caregivers from both displaced and host communities in nine countries to ensure relevance and appeal in local contexts.

Sesame Workshop is preparing to integrate *Watch, Play, Learn* into pilots with direct implementing partners that will reach children affected by crisis in Bangladesh, Colombia, and Kenya, as well as broadcast in the Middle East and Sub-Saharan Africa. These pilots are intended to test and learn about how child-focused media content can improve the quality and resilience of early childhood development (ECD) programmes. By designing the content to address some of the most common needs in early learning, *Watch, Play, Learn* can be pre-positioned to fill anticipated gaps in educational materials needed in crises.¹⁹



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Building resilient education systems

Protecting child safety and wellbeing

● Violence prevention, reporting, and referral mechanisms:

Sexual and gender-based violence, early pregnancy, and harmful practices against girls, particularly child marriage and FGM, must be mitigated, especially in areas at risk of conflict or insecurity. Prevention, reporting, and referral mechanisms should be strengthened. Sexual and reproductive health services and education should be increased in school and online settings. Protection measures should be enhanced in high-risk areas to prevent abductions, forced marriages, and sexual violence against female learners and teachers in particular.

● Safe schools:

Education – including students, teachers, schools, and other educational facilities – must be protected from violence and attack, and all learners and educators must be allowed to learn and teach in safety in any circumstance. Measures to assess risk for schools in sensitive areas, particularly girls' schools, should be increased, and attacks on schools and other education institutions must be closely monitored with rapid response, investigation, and fair prosecution of those responsible for any attack or forced occupation.

Breaking Barriers to Girls' Education in Chad and Niger through School Health, Nutrition, and Meals

School feeding programmes are a proven intervention to bring children back to school – increasing enrolment rates by an average of 9 percent. In 32 sub-Saharan countries, on-site meals combined with take-home rations increased the enrolment of girls by 12 percent more than the change in boys' enrolment.²⁰ These programmes can also help them stay longer in school – many studies have found school meals to significantly improve retention rates in emergency and non-emergency contexts.²¹

Higher enrolment and retention rates translate to more years of schooling. For girls this means a drastic decrease in early marriages.²² Once children are in the classroom, school meals can enhance children's cognitive abilities and thereby contribute to their learning.²³ In Northern Uganda, school meals and take-home rations were found to decrease anaemia, which is particularly prevalent in teenage girls, by up to 20 percent.²⁴ Sick children don't go to school and hungry children can't learn.

Many countries recognise this and have therefore joined the School Meals Coalition, a government-led coalition with the aim to provide every child with a healthy meal in school by 2030.²⁵ The Coalition counts more than 65 countries so far (as of March 2022), two of these countries being Niger and Chad. Both countries face high levels of poverty and vulnerability, through political instability, armed conflicts, displacement, and natural catastrophes. Poverty and food insecurity are reported as greatest barriers to girls' access to education.

With funding from Global Affairs Canada, the Governments of Chad and Niger together with the World Food Programme, UNICEF, and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) are responding to these issues through a gender-transformative project "Breaking Barriers to Girls' Education". Based on the evidence around school meals' effects on gender parity in education, the project aims to increase access to education and to create a healthier learning environment



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for schoolchildren, and specifically for girls, by providing school meals together with a package of gender-transformative interventions, including menstrual hygiene management and WASH, access to sexual and reproductive health services, gender-based violence prevention, and nutrition supplements.

During the last year, 127,444 school children benefited from this package, with 56 percent of the beneficiaries being women and girls. The programme furthermore encourages community engagement: In Chad, UNFPA and its implementing partner, Technidev Academy, trained 15 members of women's groups on the production of sanitary pads.

These women trained more group members and so far, 9,300 kits of sanitary pads have been locally produced and distributed in schools. Five thousand more group members are expected to be trained by the end of the project in 2022.

This case study was provided by the World Food Programme

Building resilient education systems

Continuing, recovering and accelerated learning

● Centrality of teachers:

With over 100 million teachers and school personnel impacted by COVID-19 school closures and separating students from their teachers, the role of teachers in the lives, education, and wellbeing of children and youth has never been more acutely felt by many communities around the world. When emergencies cause displacement and migration, the social cohesion role of teachers becomes even more critical.

Teachers themselves must be protected during times of crisis with preservation of safe and healthy working conditions, including mental health and psychosocial support for their wellbeing. The recruitment, retention, and uninterrupted remuneration of adequately trained teachers, especially female teachers, must be prioritised in emergency and crisis contexts, with in-person learning continued if at possible. Teachers should be sensitised on and responsive to gendered barriers and needs particularly of adolescent mothers in order to promote their continued education.

● Digital and remote learning solution:

Access to internet and ICT should be expanded to close the digital divide and put online learning within reach of all children and young people to be prepared for emergencies and crises that may make in-person learning temporarily unavailable. This includes girls, displaced learners, learners with disabilities, and the poorest and most marginalised who are currently left behind by the technological landscape. Teachers need to be trained as well in the use of these technologies and learn how to use them to effectively address the needs of all learners under their responsibility.

As technology and digital solutions in education increase, so must online safety measures to protect children from sexual exploitation, cyberbullying, and privacy risks. Low and no-tech remote learning solutions that are accessible, inclusive, and gender-responsive should continue to be deployed during ICT expansion to ensure that all children and youth are being reached with learning content that is feasible for their varying contexts.

● Non-formal and community-based education:

Where education systems fail to reach or are temporarily inoperable, support should be provided to non-formal and community-based education programmes that may more readily reach children and youth amidst varying contexts and challenges. Such programmes should seek to support married or pregnant adolescent girls or young mothers, children with disabilities, refugee or displaced children, and other marginalised children and youth.

Non-formal and community-based education programmes should adhere to standards and regulations to ensure child safety and quality learning environments while also having curricula and accreditation aligned with the formal education system to best allow students to transition back to school and onward education and employment opportunities.



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Building resilient education systems

Continuing, recovering and accelerated learning

- **Accelerated learning and catch-up programmes:** For children and youth who may have temporarily lost access to education due to emergencies and crises, accelerated learning programmes and catch-up classes should be provided to ensure that they regain the same level of education as their peers and do not fall behind. Girls – particularly pregnant girls and adolescent mothers – children with disabilities, those from poorer backgrounds, displaced children and youth, and others at greatest risk of losing access to education should be prioritised by accelerated learning and catch-up programmes.
- **Foundational literacy and numeracy:** With crisis and conflict leading to more and more children not acquiring basic skills needed to later succeed in life, foundational learning skills and aptitudes such as literacy and numeracy should be kept in focus during emergency responses. Commitments to address the learning crisis and transform education systems through improving foundational literacy and numeracy must continue through crisis response and recovery.

Preventing education of children with disabilities from disruption in Sierra Leone

Sixteen-year-old Marie from northern Sierra Leone was born blind and comes from a large family with six sisters and seven brothers whose parents work as farmers. In 2008, Marie moved in with her aunt, who supported her to attend a specialist school for blind children, then later enrolling Marie into a mainstream school alongside children with and without disabilities.

When the COVID-19 pandemic closed schools in Sierra Leone, Marie's education was disrupted. Sightsavers' 'Education for All' inclusive education project, which supports over 350 children with disabilities in schools across Sierra Leone, adapted to the crisis by providing hygiene essentials such as handwashing buckets and soap to Marie, as well as a radio set and batteries to enable her to continue learning at home. Teachers were also given protective equipment, such as hand sanitiser and face masks to protect them as they taught. Marie's teacher travelled to her home to help her take notes from lessons delivered through the national radio education programme. ²⁶

Marie aspires to become a lawyer to advocate and fight for an equal world where everyone is considered. She says, "Going to school is something I like doing because I strongly believe that education is the key to success. I have accepted the challenge to be educated; since I am blind, without education, my future would be more difficult."



Marie typing on a typewriter wearing a mask. Sierra Leone. © Eric Musa/Sightsavers (Oct 2020)

This case study was provided by Sightsavers

Building resilient education systems

Continuing, recovering and accelerated learning

Improving learning outcomes for the most vulnerable through caregiver and community engagement



Transformational reading camps restore hope in the midst of COVID-19. © World Vision

Whether in contexts of crisis or stability, caregiver and community engagement can play a powerful role in children's development and learning, particularly for the most vulnerable households.

For example, when communities can choose the criteria by which they judge school performance, research in Uganda has shown that community monitoring improves test scores and pupil and teacher attendance at low cost.²⁷ Recent studies with Syrian refugees in Jordan show that parents of children with disabilities are twice as likely to send these children to school when the parents participate in support groups with other parents whose children have disabilities.²⁸

Parents and caregivers, particularly those with low levels of formal education and household resources, can learn strategies to provide a safe and stimulating learning environment in the home. World Vision's Go Baby Go model is a parenting programme that aims to strengthen caregiver competence and confidence to provide nurturing care in her/his first 1,000 days.

When integrated with Maternal and New-born Child Health (MNCH) interventions, Go Baby Go has shown to significantly improve children's developmental outcomes, especially those from the most vulnerable communities, compared to control groups that only received MNCH.²⁹

Recognising the role that communities can play in continuing education despite disruption, World Vision's award-winning early grade reading programme Unlock Literacy helps communities to set up reading clubs and trains community volunteers to facilitate playful, fun literacy activities.³⁰

Throughout COVID-19-related school closures, these reading clubs acted as platforms through which to distribute at-home learning materials and encourage participation in distance learning programmes provided by the Ministry of Education. In Fanteakwa, Ghana, World Vision set up 33 reading clubs in 21 communities allowing children to borrow books to read.

During school closures, the project distributed over 16,000 storybooks, 140 different titles, which were borrowed by over 1,200 children every week.³¹ These lessons are now informing the design of accelerated learning programmes to support community provision of catch-up courses to assist children's transition back to school.

This case study was provided by World Vision



Increasing gender equality and reducing marginalisation

Meaningful collaboration with children and youth

Gender equality and a focus on the most marginalised groups – particularly girls, children with disabilities, refugees, and internally displaced children and youth – is essential to establishing crisis-resilient education systems with and for all children. Quality, safe, gender transformative education is a critical tool to building more just, equal, and peaceful societies.

Achieving this requires:

- (1) close collaboration with children, youth, and communities to ensure that education planning, systems, and responses reflect and meet contextualised needs,
- (2) prioritising attention to marginalised groups who are at greatest risk of exclusion from education, and
- (3) gender-transformative learning that breaks down harmful gender norms and inequalities to more fully unlock the global power of education.

● Recognition as essential partners:

The widespread lack of child and youth involvement in local, national, and global education policy and planning spaces is incongruous with social sciences that have long shown children and youth as competent social actors capable of contributing to decisions and taking action on issues that affect their lives.³²

The result is an immediate disconnect from the education sector's primary beneficiary and loss of essential perspectives that can improve education planning and resiliency. Children, youth, teacher organisations, organisations of persons with disabilities, parents, communities, and other organisations that can bring perspectives of children and youth into education and emergency response planning must be consulted to ensure that design and implementation accurately meets their needs.

● Empowerment and sustainability through intergenerational approaches:

While adult allies are often needed to create opportunities for children and youth to make choices and include their voices in decision-making, care is required to avoid tokenism and co-option of child and youth views and perspectives.

Intergenerational approaches of young people and adults working together to address issues as united rather than separated peers, whether at community, national, or global level, is a powerful means of building interdependent relationships based on mutual trust and reciprocity that is essential for sustainable impact, including in education systems and their resiliency.³³

● Impact by shifting the narrative:

By strengthening meaningful collaboration with children and youth in education decision-making spaces, democratic and respectful environments provide opportunities for those who are often denied a chance to speak, particularly girls and children with disabilities. Children shift from being perceived as objects to protect to agents of change who are champions for children's rights. Children and youth must be recognised as essential partners in education programmes and policies as they are experts about their own lives, needs, and experiences, and their input can lead to real change, such as decreases in child marriages and gender-based violence alongside increasing education rates for girls in fragile and emergency contexts.³⁴

Increasing gender equality and reducing marginalisation

Meaningful collaboration with children and youth

Student-led campaigns to ensure #LearningNeverStops during and after COVID-19

School closures due to COVID-19 upended learning in unimaginable ways across the Global South, taking a toll on the mental health of students, threatening incalculable losses of learning, and exacerbating other societal challenges. Through situation room meetings with national student unions across Africa, the All-Africa Students Union (AASU) assessed the ravaging impacts and joined numerous efforts by governments and inter-governmental organisations to ensure #LearningNeverStops.

AASU rallied its members to make numerous and diverse contributions to ensure the resiliency of education. Some distributed food to those who could not afford it, tended to the sick, and others advocated to governments and private companies to show a human face in these difficult times, resulting in some telecommunications companies providing a zero-rating to online platforms to overcome the high cost of data to access learning. A critical lesson learned from the pandemic is that a multi-stakeholder approach to addressing issues offers the best chance of winning the fight against COVID-19 and its untold impacts. Multilateralism has never been so indispensable to global efforts to democratise education and leave no one behind.

In the course of the pandemic, AASU and the 100 Million Campaign joined forces to support UNESCO's #LearningNeverStops initiative to make sure girls went back to school when schools re-opened after lengthy closures. Student and youth activists from 29 countries signed up to lead the "Girls Back to School" campaign, understanding that community level action would be needed to prevent millions of girls from dropping out of school. The campaign enjoyed major successes in Kenya, Burundi, Uganda, Cameroon, and Ghana.

This campaign together with many other interventions made by student unions, both globally and on the African continent, uncovered untold horrors of child labour, child marriage, and other exploitations of young girls and children who, prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, depended on social services to survive.

To save the next generation, AASU is committed to joining forces with global partners to demand the protection of education for all children and learners during emergencies. We ask that governments commit to creating emergency funding for education and the needed interventions to ensure learning never stops.



AASU Girls Back to School Campaign Team in Kenya © AASU

*This case study was developed by the
All-Africa Students Union*



Increasing gender equality and reducing marginalisation

Focus on marginalised groups

● **Community engagement:**

Resilient education systems that protect the right to education for all children – including marginalised children and youth such as girls, children and youth with disabilities, pregnant girls and young mothers, refugees and forcibly displaced children and youth, and indigenous groups – require community engagement to identify the behavioural determinants that may be barriers or enablers to marginalised children’s access to education. Harmful social norms and beliefs may devalue some children and youth, the importance of their education, and their inclusion in society more widely and must be addressed at the community level.

Community inclusion initiatives such as support networks for parents of marginalised children and youth are essential to overcoming stigmatisation, increasing inclusive access to education, and creating a supportive learning environment in the home when school-based learning may be temporarily interrupted in times of emergency and crisis. ³⁵

● **Inclusive policies and practices:**

Achieving SDG4 will not happen without ending exclusionary legal and administrative barriers that prevent certain children and youth from receiving an education. Documentation requirements, such as producing a birth certificate, national ID card, or refugee card, in order to enrol in school should be waived for displaced children and youth, and education qualifications should be portable and transferable for children and youth who may need to relocate. ³⁶

Policies and practices that expel pregnant girls, place re-entry conditions on adolescent mothers, or prohibit child-married girls from returning to school

should be eliminated and replaced with continuation policies to ensure that any girl or young woman can receive an education. ³⁷

Governments must adopt legislation and implement policies that guarantee the right to inclusive education for all children, including children with disabilities.

● **Inclusive planning and monitoring:**

Targeted interventions and approaches to support marginalised children and youth – including girls, children and youth with disabilities, pregnant girls and young mothers, indigenous groups, ethnic and religious minorities, and refugees and forcibly displaced children and youth – should be incorporated into all education sector and response planning, with a view of further linking to health and child protection systems and services.

National education management information systems (EMIS) and results monitoring frameworks of global institutions and donor agencies must be strengthened and disaggregated to adequately monitor the inclusion of marginalised children and youth.



Increasing gender equality and reducing marginalisation

Focus on marginalised groups

Inclusion of girls with disabilities in education planning, programmes, and monitoring

The Sahel region of Africa – including Senegal, Mauritania, Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger, Nigeria, Chad, Sudan, Cameroon, and Eritrea – is often considered to be one of the world's most neglected and conflict-ridden regions.

This is due to heavy armed conflicts and dramatic climate change, all of which have presented unique challenges for accessing education, especially for girls and children with disabilities. Humanity and Inclusion (HI), with support from the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (Norad) and the French Development Agency (AFD), recently conducted research to better understand the educational situation

of girls with disabilities specifically in Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger.³⁸ In these areas, attacks – increasing six-fold in two years from 512 in 2017 to 3,005 in 2019 – and threats of violence led to closures of more than 900 schools, significantly impacting students with disabilities.

The study provided evidence that girls with disabilities were even further discriminated against in education, in both their access and retention. This report seeks to raise awareness of the importance of developing gender-sensitive interventions for inclusive education by using an intersectionality lens, combining multiple discrimination factors facing girls with disabilities.

A major finding from the research was the need for further investment in data, emphasising that the current lack of statistical data on gender and disability limits the development of effective strategies that aim to promote the rights of children with disabilities. Current data is either unreliable or non-existent, leading to “invisibility” of girls with disabilities in figures, studies, and education policies in the region.

The report also provides suggestions for policymakers, donors, and NGOs, encouraging them to accelerate progress, develop systems for collecting disaggregated data (in particular by age, disability, and gender), identify the barriers, needs, and experiences specifically of girls with disabilities, and implement effective response strategies.



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Yah, 15 years old, Year 8 in Bamako.

‘I consider myself as a person who can do everything that others can do. I don't envy anyone; I have the same rights as other children who do not have disabilities. I decided to fight and always be at the top of my class. I am determined to complete my education and become an accountant. My advice to my brothers and sisters with disabilities is to study in order to have a better future one day!’

This case study was provided by Humanity & Inclusion



Increasing gender equality and reducing marginalisation

Gender-transformative learning and civic education

- **Gender-responsive education sector planning:** Gender equality must be hardwired into the heart of education sector plans, budgets, and policies, beginning with gender-responsive education sector planning (GRESP) built on data and evidence to identify gender barriers within education systems and ensure that plans, strategies, and policies are in place to address them.

Education budgets should be allocated to benefit the most marginalised children, prioritising areas in the country with the largest gender gaps from pre-primary to secondary, low numbers of female teachers, and high prevalence of gender-based violence.³⁹

Gender-responsive education sector planning in West and Central Africa

Launched in 2019, the Gender at the Centre Initiative (GCI) was established by the G7 Ministers of Education and Development in collaboration with multilateral organisations and civil society.⁴³

Rooted in gender-responsive education sector planning, GCI champions the leadership of ministries of education and other national actors to develop and implement plans, policies, and interventions for the purpose of advancing gender equality in education. The Initiative is led by the GCI Alliance in eight countries in sub-Saharan Africa – Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, Mozambique, Niger,

Nigeria, and Sierra Leone. GCI is jointly coordinated by United Nations Girls' Education Initiative (UNGEI) and UNESCO International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP-UNESCO).

From 27 to 30 September 2021, UNGEI, IIEP-UNESCO, the Africa Network on Campaign on Education For All (ANCEFA), Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE), Global Partnership for Education (GPE), UNICEF, and Gender at Work joined forces in Dakar, Senegal to organise the very first in-person GRESP workshop since the COVID-19 outbreak.

As a part of GCI and facilitated by ANCEFA and FAWE, the workshop brought together civil society representatives from FAWE, ANCEFA, and Plan International, as well as young feminist activists from 11 francophone countries in West and Central Africa.

The workshop aimed at strengthening civil society's capacity to support governments in building truly gender-responsive education systems. The active participation of young feminists in the workshop shows the organisers' commitment to meaningful intergenerational partnership and dialogue.

Young feminist activist Alima Dramé, Permanent Secretary of AFRIYAN (African Youth and Adolescent Network) takes the floor during the GCI GRESP workshop in Dakar.

"We can develop all the strategies and policies in the world to promote girls' education, but if we do not listen to the real stories of young girls, we will not understand anything."

Prescillia Essongue, FAWE alumni and young feminist activist, Gabon



This case study was provided by the UN Girls' Education Initiative.

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Increasing gender equality and reducing marginalisation

Gender-transformative learning and civic education

● **Gender-transformative learning environments:** Education systems must provide environments conducive to girls' education. This includes efforts like public awareness campaigns, building schools closer to communities, providing resources for menstrual hygiene management, and removing harmful stereotypes from learning materials.⁴⁰

It also includes the recruitment of more female teachers and gender-transformative teacher training for men and women alike in order to encourage girls' enrolment and retention in school and provide role models that challenge deep-rooted gender stereotypes.⁴¹

It also requires safe schools and learning environments, including gender-based violence referral and response mechanisms and online safety in digital distance learning as described above.

● **Civic education:** Harmful gender norms and inequalities that undermine the rights and education of women and girls in particular must be addressed. In addition to gender-transformative learning, civic or global citizenship education should be further prioritised within education systems as a means of empowering learners of all ages to understand the increasingly interconnectedness of the world, human rights violations, and inequality and poverty that threaten peace and sustainability.

Global citizenship education instils in learners the values, attitudes, and behaviours that support more peaceful, tolerant, inclusive, secure, and sustainable societies – critical to achieving the humanitarian-development-peace triple nexus.⁴²

Human Rights Education in Europe and the Mediterranean Basin

Human Rights Education (HRE) Load is a training course for youth workers and educators that the Global Campaign for Education (GCE) Italy, CIFA, Amnesty International Italy, and the Human Rights Educators Youth Network (HREYN) of the Council of Europe (CoE) organised in June 2019 to strengthen the importance of Human Rights Education at a national level in the context of shrinking spaces for freedom of expression in Europe.

The event was held to celebrate the launch of the Italian second edition of CoE's Compass Manual for Human Rights Education with Young People, co-funded by GCE Italy. The training course was the starting point for GCE Italy's strategy to empower school teachers on global citizenship education, while CIFA, HREYN, and Amnesty International Italy's Joint Human Rights Education Programme (JHREP) aimed at creating an Euro-Med Centre to teach Human Rights Education to educators, teachers, professionals and activists.

When COVID-19 hit, GCE Italy focused its attention to filling the technological gap suffered by teachers during the pandemic, while JHREP moved forward a joint effort with the Municipality of Torino to grant the city a CoE Quality Label for Human Rights Education.

Both strategies aim at guaranteeing quality education and teachers' empowerment in Italy notwithstanding COVID-19 while also creating a place where educators, activists, and teachers from all over

Europe and the Mediterranean Basin can share best practices and lessons learned.

In April 2022, the International Labour Organization (ILO) Training Centre in Torino will host a European forum on the future of Human Rights Education in Europe, organised by Amnesty International Italy and CoE with the local support of CIFA, while GCE Italy organises a nationwide project to support teachers and communities over the threat of online hate speech anticipated for September 2022.

This case study was provided by GCE Italy.



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Upholding accountability and financing

Honouring education commitments

Public and private investments must urgently be mobilised to increase predictable yet flexible multi-year funding for education, with an aim to strengthen the humanitarian-development-peace nexus and harmonise acute emergency response with longer-term education system resilience.

This will require:

- (1) honouring internationally agreed commitments and targets,
- (2) sufficient national investments in education and protecting them during emergencies and crisis, and
- (3) increasing humanitarian and development assistance to education and global multilateral partnerships.

● 40 million more girls in school and 20 million more girls reading by 2026:

G7 commitments such as the 2018 Charlevoix Declaration on Quality Education for Girls, Adolescent Girls and Women in Developing Countries and 2021 Declaration on Girls' Education must be upheld. This includes supporting 40 million more girls in school and 20 million more girls reading by age 10 or the end of primary school in low and lower-middle-income countries by 2026, with a particular focus on reaching the most marginalised in each context.

The G7 Gender Equality Monitoring and Accountability Mechanism and other G7 initiatives should be supported to comprehensively track and review the state of implementation of key G7 obligations related to girls' education.⁴⁵

● 1.8 million new teachers by 2026:

Meeting the G7 target of 40 million more girls enrolled in primary and lower-secondary school in low and lower-middle income countries by 2026 will require the recruitment of an additional 1.8 million teachers, particularly female teachers. As lead of the 2021 G7 Declaration on Girls' Education implementing a related five-year Girls' Education Action Plan, the UK Government should immediately begin driving international cooperation around the development of a new global teacher strategy to meet these teacher recruitment needs.⁴⁶

Teacher's experiences amid crisis in Lebanon

Lodi Chahin, teacher with Save the Children in Lebanon:

This has been the most challenging time for education in Lebanon that I've witnessed. The economic crisis and COVID-19 pandemic have combined to create an incredibly difficult situation for both children and teachers.

Because of the lack of electricity and fuel, our classrooms are dark and cold. Online is no better – even assuming there are no power cuts that day, many children and teachers don't have access to electronic devices. The economic crisis has also led to a lack of books and stationery in schools, and of course most families can't afford to buy these themselves.

I'm noticing more issues with parents, perhaps because of the difficult financial situation they are in. Many of them weren't able to go to school, and so can't help their children with homework, or even with devices to get online. More worryingly, many of my students work to support their parents, which leads to absences and dropouts. I think we need better training for parents, on the importance and value of education.

All of this has made it particularly difficult for us to make sure education is inclusive for all. I believe strongly in this, but there are many obstacles in Lebanon at the moment, especially a lack of inclusive spaces and access, and technology. Teachers need more support amidst this deteriorating situation, including a comfortable and appropriate work environment, a better work-life balance, the right technology, and updated training and curricula.

Education is so crucial, especially in a humanitarian crisis, as it helps to spread knowledge and information. I'm proud of being a teacher and of supporting my community, despite the challenges.



© Save the Children, Lebanon



Upholding accountability and financing

Honouring education commitments

● Prosecution of attacks on schools:

Attacks on schools and education facilities – in particular girls’ education – and use of them, including occupation, by armed forces or armed groups must be unilaterally denounced.

Schools must not be targeted, and governments should endorse and implement the Safe Schools Declaration to protect education from violence and attack and adhere to its recommendations to ensure that all learners and educators, particularly girls and female teachers, can learn and teach in safety.⁴⁷

Mechanisms must be put into place to monitor and swiftly respond to attacks on schools and education institutions to ensure that perpetrators are held accountable.⁴⁸

● Transition to net zero emissions and carbon-neutral economies:

Measures agreed by the COP26 Glasgow Climate Pact and 10-year Work Programme on Action for Climate Empowerment must also be implemented, including increasing climate change mitigation measures by supporting public and private sectors to transition to net zero emissions and carbon-neutral economies.⁴⁹

As above, these measures should be further supported by incorporating climate change and sustainability into public awareness and information activities, through intergenerational approaches in particular.

● Aid harmonisation and alignment:

Concerted and coherent international cooperation is essential to meeting global commitments that are key to building resilient education systems and achieving the SDGs.

Coordination between humanitarian and development assistance must be improved to harmonise sudden onset crisis response with long-term education systems-strengthening, working with global education multi-stakeholder funds and partnerships like ECW and GPE to coordinate planning and support, with a focus on accelerating progress in the most climate-exposed countries and where girls’ education is lagging.



AASU Campaign Team in Uganda © AASU



Upholding accountability and financing

Protecting education budgets

- **20 percent of national budgets and 4-6 percent of GDP to education:**

In alignment with the Incheon Declaration, related internationally agreed benchmarks, and calls to action by heads of state themselves, low- and lower-middle income countries should commit 20 percent of national budgets and 4-6 percent of GDP towards education.⁵⁰

This should be done in conjunction with expansion of tax revenue bases to increase domestic resources available for education.⁵¹

- **Education budget cut protection during crisis:**

While global spending on education has increased continuously in absolute terms over the last ten years, available data shows that education budgets declined in two-thirds of low- and lower-middle-income countries after the onset of COVID-19 while only a third of high- and upper-middle-income countries reduced their education budgets.

The deterioration in government finances suggests that without concerted efforts to prioritise education, the outlook for mobilising the required resources for education will worsen.⁵²

Education and lifelong learning systems must be prioritised and protected from budget cuts during times of crisis and emergency.



Budgets are essential for school equipment © World Vision

- **Equitable, efficient and effective spending:**

Public spending on education can be highly unequal, with wealthier groups often capturing a greater share of available resources. In low-income countries, 40 percent of total public education funding benefits the wealthiest quintile, with only 10 percent reaching the poorest.

Many education systems also suffer from spending inefficiencies resulting from poor spending decisions, limited accountability, and diversion of education funds for other uses.

Increased per-capita spending does not always result in improved education outcomes, with available data showing that only about three-quarters of countries that increased spending per capita demonstrated improvements in learning outcomes.⁵³

While protecting and increasing budgets for education, efforts must continue to ensure resources are allocated equitably, effectively, and efficiently.



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Upholding accountability and financing

Increasing ODA to education

- **0.7 percent of GNI and 15 percent to education, protected during crisis:**

Official Development Assistance (ODA) has been unjustly flat since the 1970s, remaining at roughly 0.3 percent of donor country gross national income (GNI), despite the long-standing internationally agreed target 0.7 percent of GNI.⁵⁴ In 2020, only seven countries met or exceeded the 0.7 percent target.⁵⁵

Aid to education in particular is anticipated to contract as a result of COVID-19, as donor countries shift budgets away from foreign assistance to domestic priorities while also shifting aid priorities to health and other emergencies. Unless urgent action is taken, aid to education may fall by \$2 billion in 2022, and it may be six years until 2018 levels are reached again.⁵⁶

Governments of high-income countries must immediately increase annual development assistance to at least 0.7 percent of GNI while committing a minimum of 15 percent of it to education. Education ODA should particularly be directed towards resilience strengthening and girls' education in the most climate-exposed nations. During times of crisis and emergency, it must be ensured that education foreign assistance reaches communities abroad, is protected from diversion to domestic assistance, and is increased proportionally alongside defence spending.

- **10 percent of humanitarian funding to education:**

In 2021, only 2.5 percent of global humanitarian funding was allocated to education, despite the modest 2012 UN target of 4 percent. The donor community must do more to provide the sufficient, sustainable, predictable, multi-year funding needed

to build gender-transformative, inclusive, resilient education systems. The European Union's commitment to direct 10 percent of its humanitarian aid to education should be matched by other donor governments.

- **\$1.5 billion to Education Cannot Wait:**

Since its inception in 2016, 95 percent of ECW-supported programmes have shown improvements in equal access for girls and boys to education in crisis-affected communities. In 2020, ECW reached 51 percent of girls through its COVID-19 interventions despite the heightened risks of girls dropping out.⁵⁷

This global fund for education in emergencies now endeavours to develop its 2023-2026 strategic plan, bringing with it the prospects of achieving the course corrections immediately needed to better bridge the humanitarian-development-peace nexus and transform education systems to be resilient, gender-transformative, and inclusive.

The plan will require a minimum of \$1.5 billion that donors should meet and exceed while also ensuring close coordination of ECW planning and support with development actors like GPE in order to bridge the divide between acute emergency response and longer-term education system resilience.

- **\$1.2 billion to the Global Partnership for Education:**

Primary enrolment for girls has increased by 65 percent in partner countries since GPE's establishment in 2002, and over three quarters (76 percent) of GPE funding is now supporting children's education in countries affected by fragility and conflict.⁵⁸

Continued.../



Upholding accountability and financing

Increasing ODA to education

Nevertheless, following the 2021 Global Education Summit, GPE – the largest global fund and multi-stakeholder partnership solely dedicated to transforming education in lower-income countries – still needs an additional \$1.2 billion to fully fund its \$5 billion 2021-2025 strategic plan.

Donors must immediately fill this remaining unmet resource need while ensuring alignment of ODA financing with GPE’s country-led partnership compact processes that contribute to national education planning and programming priorities. GPE’s Girls’ Education Accelerator should be further supported as a targeted means of advancing ambitious action for gender equality.

- **\$1 billion to the End Violence Fund:**

To ensure that children and youth are safe and protected so that they may continue their education despite crisis and emergencies, public and private actors should commit \$1 billion to the new End Violence Fund housed at the Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children, the only global entity focused solely on the Sustainable Development Goal to end all forms of violence against children by 2030.

The fund supports programmes that address violence online with a particular focus on child sexual exploitation and abuse, violence in and through schools, and violence against children affected by conflicts and crises⁵⁹ – protections that are critical to resilient education systems and ensuring the continued education of all children and youth.



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G7 Call for International Cooperation to Protect Children's Right to Education in Emergencies and Crises



COVID-19, climate-induced disasters, the Afghanistan crisis, the Ukraine conflict, and other forgotten crises – threats against global stability and security are at extraordinary highs and projected to worsen.

Communities, families, and children are suffering at unprecedented levels, with basic securities being stripped from them, often in the blink of an eye. Essential services like education, health, and child protection are deteriorating, or sometimes abruptly disappearing, only further exacerbating related refugee crises and challenging recovery efforts.

G7 members must urgently invest in better futures and SDG 4 by increasing international cooperation to protect the right to education of all children and learners from being disrupted by crisis and establish safe, inclusive, gender-responsive, quality education and lifelong learning systems that are resilient to emergencies and crises like COVID-19, climate change, and conflict.

Resilient education systems

G7 members must support the strengthening and transformation of quality education systems to be resilient against emergencies and crises like COVID-19, climate change, and conflict.

- **Anticipatory and adaptive education:** Integrate disaster risk reduction and emergency preparedness measures into education sector planning, including climate change learning and adaptation, and prioritise education in emergency planning and response in consultation with children, youth, and communities to build resilient education systems.
- **Child safety and wellbeing:** Increase support to early childhood education and development programmes, mental health and psychosocial support, social and emotional learning and uninterrupted school meal programmes, and strengthen prevention, reporting, and referral mechanisms to mitigate sexual and gender-based violence, early pregnancy, and harmful practices against girls, particularly child marriage and FGM, especially in areas at risk of conflict or insecurity.
- **Learning recovery and acceleration:** Prioritise the retention and remuneration of teachers and their safe and healthy working conditions, and increase equitable access to high, low-, and no-tech remote learning solutions, non-formal and community-based education, and accelerated learning and catch-up programmes, particularly for foundational literacy and numeracy.

Gender equality and marginalised groups

G7 members must support the establishment of gender-responsive, crisis-resilient education systems with and for all children – with a focus on the most marginalised groups, particularly girls and children with disabilities.

- **Child participation:** Consult children, youth, teacher organisations, organisations of persons with disabilities, parents, communities, and other organisations that can bring children’s perspectives into education and emergency response planning to ensure that design and implementation meet the needs of all children.
- **Marginalised groups:** Strengthen data systems and approaches to more successfully identify and ensure the targeted inclusion of marginalised children and youth – including girls, children and youth with disabilities, pregnant girls and young mothers, refugees and forcibly displaced children and youth, and indigenous groups – in education, health, and child protection systems and services, particularly during times of crisis and conflict and in response plans and interventions.
- **Girls’ education:** Fulfill G7 commitments to support 40 million girls in school by 2006 in low and lower-middle-income countries and 20 million more girls reading by age 10 or the end of primary school in low and lower-middle-income countries by 2026, including by recruiting and training an additional 1.8 million teachers.



Accountability and financing

G7 members must mobilise public and private investments to increase predictable yet flexible multi-year funding for education with an aim to strengthen the humanitarian-development nexus and harmonise acute emergency response with longer-term education system resilience.

- **Continuity of G7 education commitments:** Ensure continued progress, financing, and accountability to the G7 2018 Charlevoix Declaration on Quality Education for Girls, G7 2021 Declaration on Girls' Education, and the COP26 Glasgow Climate Pact.
- **Protection of education budgets:** Protect education and lifelong learning systems from budget cuts during times of crisis and emergency, and ensure resources are allocated equitably, effectively, and efficiently.
- **ODA to education:** Increase G7 ODA to education and allocate a minimum of 10 percent of humanitarian funding to education in order to fulfill G7 education commitments, including by committing a minimum of \$1.5 billion to Education Cannot Wait's new strategic plan and filling the unmet \$1.2 billion resource needs of the Global Partnership for Education. Ensure education foreign assistance reaches communities abroad, is protected from diversion to domestic assistance, and increases proportionally alongside defence spending.

Endorsed by:

1. 100 Million Campaign
2. ActionAid International
3. Action for Development
4. Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA)
5. All-Africa Students Union (AASU)
6. Amal Alliance
7. Amnesty International
8. Association d'Aide à l'Éducation de l'Enfant Handicapé (AAEEH)
9. AVSI Foundation
10. BRAC
11. Canadian International Education Policy Working Group (CIEPWG)
12. Canadian Lutheran World Relief
13. Campagna Globale per la Educazione (Italy)
14. Christoffel-Blindenmission /Christian Blind Mission (CBM)
15. Coalition Éducation (France)
16. Code (Canada)
17. Education Cannot Wait
18. Education for All Coalition
19. Education for All Somalia Coalition (EFASOM)
20. Education International (EI)
21. FHI360
22. Finn Church Aid
23. Fondation Paul Gérin-Lajoie
24. Frontline AIDS
25. Gewerkschaft Erziehung und Wissenschaft (GEW)
26. Globale Bildungskampagne (Germany)
27. Global Campaign for Education
28. Global Campaign for Education – The Netherlands
29. Global Campaign for Education – United States (US)
30. Global Citizen
31. Global Partnership for Education (GPE)
32. Global Student Forum (GSF)
33. Helpcode Switzerland
34. Humanitarian Development Partnerships
35. Inter-agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE)
36. International Parliamentary Network for Education (IPNEd)
37. International Rescue Committee (IRC)
38. Japan NGO Network for Education (JNNE)
39. Kindernothilfe
40. LEGO Foundation
41. Light for the World
42. Malala Fund
43. Oxfam
44. Plan International
45. RESULTSUK
46. Right to Education Initiative
47. Right to Play International
48. Save the Children
49. Send My Friend to School (UK)
50. Sesame Workshop
51. She's the First
52. Sightsavers
53. Street Child
54. Theirworld
55. UNESCO
56. UNESCO Global Education Monitoring Report
57. UNICEF
58. United Nations Girls' Education Initiative (UNGEI)
59. University of Virginia Humanitarian Collaborative
60. VSO International
61. War Child
62. Wellspring Foundation (Canada)
63. WeWorld (Italy)
64. World Food Programme (WFP)
65. World Vision
66. ZOA

G7 2022 Education Advocacy Working Group

