

## GCE political statement Global Action Week for Education (GAW) 2022

### A Call to Protect Education in Emergencies Now!

The **Global Action Week for Education (GAW)**, annually led by the **Global Campaign for Education (GCE)** movement, is a key moment for education activists all over the world. More than 100 countries, hundreds of local, national, regional and global civil society organizations and millions of people all over the world join together to defend and advocate for the right to inclusive and equitable quality education and lifelong learning opportunities for all, and contributing to achieve the SDG4.

In the light of the major emergencies happening all over the world and their devastating impact on the right to education of millions of people, particularly the most vulnerable, this GAW 2022 might be more important than ever: it's an urgent and strong call to States, world leaders and the international community to **Protect Education in Emergencies Now!**

In 2022, maybe more than ever, the GCE movement is compelled to and will mobilize widely. Even prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the world was already facing formidable challenges in fulfilling the human right to education, particularly for marginalized groups. Then, in early 2020, COVID-19 pandemic shook the world as we knew it, adding to the increase and worsening of existing challenges: conflicts, climate-change impacts, poverty, political violence and repression. All of these elements have fueled increasingly complex, intertwined and multi-faceted emergency situations all over the world, many of which have become protracted and cyclical crisis. In this type of contexts, the right to education is enormously endangered.

We can see devastating examples of how **the right to education of millions of people**, particularly the most excluded and vulnerable, is being **violated in crises and emergency contexts in every corner of the world**. The most recent one is the deliberate attacks on education facilities in **Ukraine**, but there are many more that have been going on for years.

Violence, conflict and worsening humanitarian crisis in **the Sahel region** is making the access to quality education increasingly difficult, particularly in countries like Niger, Mali and Burkina Faso. 40 % of the region's primary school-age children are out of school, and enrollment in lower secondary school is below 56%.<sup>1</sup>

In the **Middle East**, **Yemen** is still impacted by almost 8 years of war and it remains the worst humanitarian crisis in the world. The brutal armed conflict - coupled with the impacts of COVID-19 and climate change - are putting children and adolescents at severe risks; all of these factors have left approximately 8.1 million school-aged girls and boys in need of education in

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.worldbank.org/en/region/afr/publication/sahel-education-white-paper-the-state-of-education-in-the-sahel>

emergencies support, while education infrastructure is totally destroyed and two-thirds of teachers haven't been regularly paid for more than four years.<sup>2</sup> **Jordan and Lebanon** are hosting a huge percentage of Syrian refugees – 1,3 million and 1,5 million respectively – which puts a huge pressure on their educational systems, which need to be urgently strengthened in order to meet the needs of refugee children and youth.<sup>3</sup>

In the **East Asia and Pacific region**, the impacts of climate change are one of the main drivers of crises and emergencies, particularly considering that countries in this region are among the most disaster-prone in the world. This takes a huge toll on the children's right to education in the most affected countries, like Indonesia and the Philippines, amongst others.

In the **Latin America and Caribbean** region, it's impossible not to mention the case of **Haiti**, a country where nearly half of the population is under the age of 18, but 50 % of children cannot attend primary school - and the 60% of children who do attend, drop out before 6th grade. Natural disasters, like the devastating earthquake in 2021, conflicts and many other daily risks of daily violence, abuse and exploitation have fueled a protracted crisis in the country which deprives millions of Haitians to fulfil their right to quality education.<sup>4</sup>

**Globally**, conflict and climate and environmental disasters, among other factors, have triggered a **massive and quickly growing displacement crisis**, which is **worsening by the minute**: by 2050, 216 million people could move within their countries as a result of climate change,<sup>5</sup> and 140 million people across South Asia, sub-Saharan Africa, and Latin America will be newly displaced due to climate change.<sup>6</sup> In terms of the right to education, we are glaringly failing to reach displaced persons: for example, despite refugees' right to education being protected under international law, **48% of all school age refugee children have no access to education.**<sup>7</sup> Additionally, **education** is also the **target of deliberate attacks** in some emergency contexts: between 2015 and 2019, there were more than 11,000 reported attacks on educational facilities and/or students and education personnel, harming more than 22,000 students and educators in at least 93 countries.<sup>8</sup>

It is worth noting that **girls** are particularly affected by emergency contexts, especially when gender intersects with other vulnerability factors, which also has an impact on their right to education: in this type of contexts, girls are more likely than boys to be out of school in emergency contexts, as we have clearly seen in the extreme case of **Afghanistan.**<sup>9</sup> In crisis

<sup>2</sup> <https://reliefweb.int/report/yemen/education-cannot-wait-announces-us17-million-grant-first-emergency-response-yemen>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/future-development/2022/01/27/syrian-refugees-in-jordan-a-decade-and-counting/#:~:text=Most%20of%20the%20refugees%20are,while%20Lebanon%20claims%201.5%20million.>

<sup>4</sup> <https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Advocacy%20Brief%20-%20HER%202021%20-%206%20Months%20On.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2021/09/13/climate-change-could-force-216-million-people-to-migrate-within-their-own-countries-by-2050>

<sup>6</sup> Inter-agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE). (2020). 20 Years of INEE: Achievements and Challenges in Education in Emergencies. New York, NY. <https://inee.org/resources/20-years-of-inee>

<sup>7</sup> <https://reliefweb.int/report/world/education-cannot-wait-refugee-children-crisis-says-yasmine-sherif>

<sup>8</sup> Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack, Education under Attack 2020, <https://eua2020.protectingeducation.org/>

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.hrw.org/news/2022/03/23/taliban-close-girls-secondary-schools-afghanistan-again>

contexts, **learners with disabilities** are also among the most vulnerable, facing multiple forms of exclusion in education and are less likely to attend and complete school than their non-disabled peers.

This dire situation compels us to act immediately and demand States to ***Protect Education in Emergencies Now!***, including by:

- Protecting education from attacks, and adhering to and complying with the Safe Schools Declaration, adopted in 2015.
- Providing safe and accessible learning environments for all learners in emergency contexts, without any discrimination based on gender, disability, race, ethnic origin or any other factor.
- Developing and implementing crisis-sensitive national education plans and budgets, and promoting the equitable and sustainable inclusion of refugees, asylum seekers, returnees, stateless and internally displaced persons in national education systems.
- Guaranteeing that teachers are protected, and adequately trained and remunerated
- Promoting an education that is truly transformative and a foundation for peace.
- Listening to the voices of the people affected by emergencies – civil society organizations, communities, families, teachers – who are the first responders in these situations. Their experiences, perspectives and stories count, and they must receive full consideration in education plans and policies.

And, last but not least, **investment in education in emergencies** and crisis contexts is absolutely key. Despite the alarming numbers and stories, education remains one of the most underfunded areas of humanitarian aid, receiving just 2,4 % of global humanitarian funding. Education in emergencies desperately needs sufficient, sustainable and predictable funding; this involves, for donor countries, allocating at least 10% of humanitarian funding to education, including by meaningfully supporting the Education Cannot Wait (ECW) replenishment process.

The **Global Campaign for Education** (GCE) movement is fully committed to the fight for guaranteeing the right to education of the millions of people living in emergency and (protracted) crisis contexts, as well as to put pressure on the States so that they take the urgent measures that are needed to achieve this goal – as well as the SDG4.

Please **join us and mobilize during the 2022 Global Action Week for Education (GAWE)** and demand urgent measures to **[Protect Education in Emergencies Now!](#)** (for more information about our policy demands, you can check the Protect Education in Emergencies Now! Call to action – [short](#) & [long](#)).