



Education Saves Lives: Protect Education in Emergencies!

During the Global Action Week for Education 2025 (April 28–May 5), the Global Campaign for Education

(GCE) reaffirms its unwavering commitment to upholding the right to education, even in the most challenging circumstances.

In a world increasingly shaken by conflict, violence, displacement, and the intensifying impacts of the climate crisis, millions of children, youth, and adults are being denied their fundamental rights—including the right to education. GCE has long raised the alarm about the persistent exclusion of people living in emergency contexts from national education systems, or their relegation to parallel, under-resourced alternatives. Education in Emergencies (EiE) is not just a lifeline—it is a vital right that enables individuals and communities to recover, rebuild, and live a life in dignity. Yet, it remains severely underfunded, underprioritised, and inadequately protected.

Crises in which EiE is essential include armed conflict, forced displacement, disasters, and public health

emergencies. Today, 222 million vulnerable girls and boys are affected by conflict, displacement, and

climate-induced disasters (Education Cannot Wait, 2023). According to UNICEF’s Children’s Climate Risk

Index, approximately 1 billion children—nearly half the world’s children—live in countries considered at

extremely high risk from the climate crisis. Displacement—whether caused by war, environmental

disasters, or persecution—continues to be a major barrier to education across all regions.



The Education Under Attack 2024 report (GCPEA) documented a disturbing rise in attacks on education

over the past two years. The highest numbers were recorded in Palestine, Ukraine, the Democratic

Republic of the Congo, and Myanmar. In Gaza, nearly 90% of school buildings have been damaged or

destroyed, leaving approximately 625,000 students without access to formal education.

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Nations has expressed deep concern over this "scholasticide," highlighting the systematic destruction of

Gaza's education system.

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based violence including sexual violence, increased care burdens, early and forced marriage, and the

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denial of education and empowerment opportunities. Displaced adults are often excluded from crisis

responses that neglect Adult Learning and Education (ALE), missing vital opportunities to rebuild their

lives. Persons with disabilities face heightened risks of dropping out of school, exploitation, and

psychological harm.

The right to education must be protected and guaranteed by states, even during emergencies, based on

international human rights law. Instruments such as the Convention on the Rights of the Child (Article 38)

outline clear obligations. Global commitments such as the Safe Schools Declaration (signed by 120 states

since 2015), the Transforming Education Summit Commitment to Action (2022), as well as the



Comprehensive School Safety Framework 2022–2030, bring together governments, donors, youth, and civil society to protect education in emergencies.

Despite these frameworks, education continues to be sidelined in humanitarian responses, which often prioritise shelter, food, and sanitation. But education is not a secondary need—it is immediate, lifesaving, and life-sustaining. It offers a sense of normalcy, safety, and hope. Resilient and inclusive education systems are the foundation for peace, social cohesion, and long-term recovery. The Global Campaign for Education (GCE) urgently calls on governments, international institutions, and the donor community to act boldly and without delay. Ahead of the Global Action Week for Education 2025, we issue the following core recommendations:

1. Protect and Guarantee the Right to Education in Crisis Contexts

- **Ensure the safety and protection of schools, educators, and school communities.**
- **Strengthen public education systems with local preparedness and emergency planning.**
- **Provide inclusive, gender-transformative, and accessible formal and non-formal learning pathways for all learners at all levels in emergency contexts —ECCE, primary, secondary, TVET, and ALE.**
- **Promote psychosocial support, social and emotional learning, and transformative education approaches. Implement social welfare and health programs to support both learners and teachers during emergencies.**
- **Safeguard students’ rights to education, academic freedom, freedom of expression, and peaceful assembly. Establish student protection schemes and temporary relocation programs for students**



and activists facing political persecution, ensuring continuity of education and safe return after

crises.

2. Institutionalise Education in Emergencies and Centre Local Voices

- **Work with affected communities—especially youth, students, girls, persons with disabilities, migrant and refugee populations, as well as indigenous groups—to co-design and monitor EiE strategies.**

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- **Promote equitable and sustainable inclusion in national education systems for refugees, asylum seekers, returnees, and stateless and internally displaced persons.**
- **Embed civil society and community participation in EiE policy development, implementation, and evaluation.**

3. Align National Priorities with Global Commitments

- **Uphold international humanitarian law and protect students, educators, and institutions from attacks, violence and gender-based harm.**
- **Endorse and implement key frameworks including the Safe Schools Declaration.**
- **Implement the Transforming Education Summit and SDG 4 commitments towards building resilient and sustainable public education systems able to prepare, respond and reconstruct education in times of crises.**

4. Support and Invest in Teachers

- **Guarantee fair pay, training, and protection for teachers working in crisis-affected areas.**
- **Establish a Global Fund for Teachers' Salaries to ensure timely and adequate remuneration.**
- **Equip teachers to educate learners about disaster risks, climate change, human rights, conflict**



resolution, and peaceful coexistence. Support teacher and learner wellbeing before, during, and

after crises.

5. Ensure Sustainable and Equitable Financing for EiE

- **Integrate EiE financing into national education budgets and plans. Governments should mobilise domestic resources to finance quality public education systems, reimagining education in**

emergencies beyond short-term aid and considering a sustainable long-term perspective.

- **The international community and development partners should also honour their commitments**

to close the gap in EiE financing by increasing ODA to education and supporting multilateral

mechanisms such as Education Cannot Wait (ECW) and the Global Partnership for Education

(GPE). In addition, at least 4% of humanitarian aid should be allocated to education in emergencies.

- **Apply gender-responsive, inclusive, and transparent budgeting and monitoring practices.**

Education in emergencies must no longer be treated as optional or secondary—it is a moral and legal

obligation. States must uphold the right to education under all circumstances, and the international

community must respond with urgency, resources, and political will. No learner should be left behind—

not in conflict, not in climate disasters and not in displacement. Education must be protected and

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The right to education must be protected and guaranteed by states, even during emergencies, based on international human rights law. Instruments such as the Convention on the Rights of the Child (Article 38) outline clear obligations. Global commitments such as the Safe Schools Declaration (signed by 120 states since 2015), the Transforming Education Summit Commitment to Action (2022), as well as the Comprehensive School Safety Framework 2022–2030, bring together governments, donors, youth, and civil society to protect education in emergencies.



Despite these frameworks, education continues to be sidelined in humanitarian responses, which often prioritise shelter, food, and sanitation. But education is not a secondary need—it is immediate, lifesaving, and life-sustaining. It offers a sense of normalcy, safety, and hope. Resilient and inclusive education systems are the foundation for peace, social cohesion, and long-term recovery. The Global Campaign for Education (GCE) urgently calls on governments, international institutions, and the donor community to act boldly and without delay. Ahead of the Global Action Week for Education 2025, we issue the following core recommendations:

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- **Safeguard students’ rights to education, academic freedom, freedom of expression, and peaceful assembly. Establish student protection schemes and temporary relocation programs for students and activists facing political persecution, ensuring continuity of education and safe return after crises.**



2. Institutionalise Education in Emergencies and Centre Local Voices

- **Work with affected communities—especially youth, students, girls, persons with disabilities, migrant and refugee populations, as well as indigenous groups—to co-design and monitor EiE strategies.**

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- **Promote equitable and sustainable inclusion in national education systems for refugees, asylum seekers, returnees, and stateless and internally displaced persons.**
- **Embed civil society and community participation in EiE policy development, implementation, and evaluation.**

3. Align National Priorities with Global Commitments

- **Uphold international humanitarian law and protect students, educators, and institutions from attacks, violence and gender-based harm.**
- **Endorse and implement key frameworks including the Safe Schools Declaration.**
- **Implement the Transforming Education Summit and SDG 4 commitments towards building resilient and sustainable public education systems able to prepare, respond and reconstruct education in times of crises.**

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5. Ensure Sustainable and Equitable Financing for EiE

- **Integrate EiE financing into national education budgets and plans. Governments should mobilise domestic resources to finance quality public education systems, reimagining education in emergencies beyond short-term aid and considering a sustainable long-term perspective.**

- **The international community and development partners should also honour their commitments to close the gap in EiE financing by increasing ODA to education and supporting multilateral mechanisms such as Education Cannot Wait (ECW) and the Global Partnership for Education (GPE). In addition, at least 4% of humanitarian aid should be allocated to education in emergencies.**

- **Apply gender-responsive, inclusive, and transparent budgeting and monitoring practices.**

Education in emergencies must no longer be treated as optional or secondary—it is a moral and legal obligation. States must uphold the right to education under all circumstances, and the international community must respond with urgency, resources, and political will. No learner should be left behind—not in conflict, not in climate disasters and not in displacement. Education must be protected and guaranteed—always and everywhere.

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Join us in this vital campaign as we work together to safeguard education for those most affected by crises.

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