



Turning the tide on the global education emergency

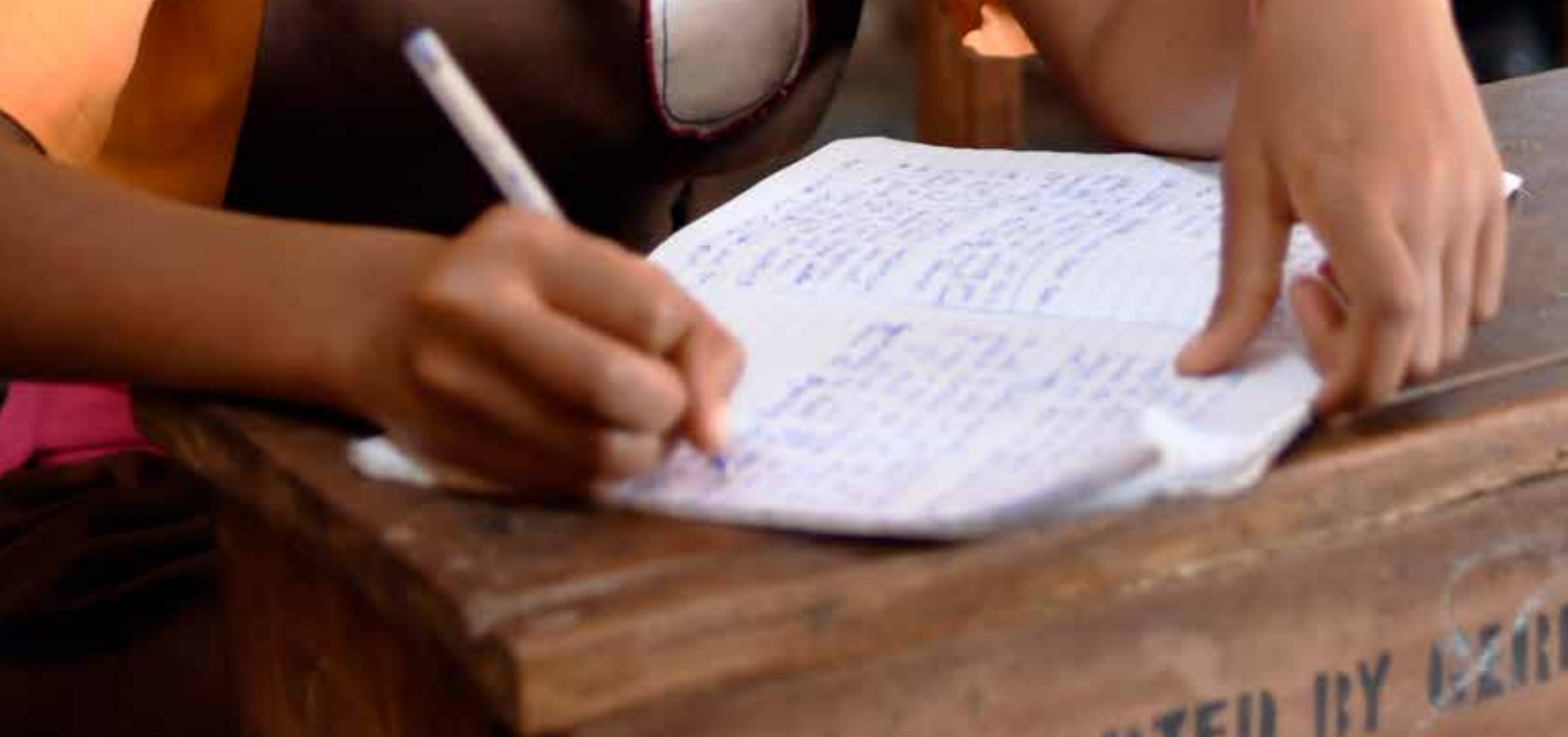




Photo: Rosine was displaced by the conflict in Burkina Faso
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Introduction: the fierce urgency of now

More and better financing is urgently needed to deliver Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG4).

A \$148bn annual financing gap must be plugged in low- and lower-middle-income countries if SDG4 is to be achieved by 2030, according to UNESCO.¹

The COVID-19 pandemic, compounding an existing education crisis, has disrupted the learning of 1.6 billion learners and exacerbated the severe financial strain on education systems in the world's poorest countries.² With one in five children – or one quarter of a billion – not in education before the pandemic even arrived, urgent investment is needed to get children in school and learning and to mitigate the costs incurred by the COVID-19 pandemic, otherwise the total annual financing gap could rise even further by up to one-third.³

The financing gap is a primary driver of children's inability to access education and closing it will be central to determining if and how education systems recover from the Coronavirus pandemic.

This is because school closures enforced by COVID-19 have exacerbated the learning crisis for all children, particularly the most marginalised. 80% of children reported learning little or nothing while out of school, with girls, displaced children and those from low-income households most likely to report learning nothing at all, according to a global survey by Save the Children.⁴

Research from Save the Children also shows parents and caregivers of children with disabilities to be less likely to expect their child to return to school following the pandemic, with the same group of children also facing increased violence and distress while out of school.⁵ Meanwhile, Malala Fund estimates that 20 million girls will not return to school following the pandemic, adding to the 130 million girls who are already out of school.⁶

Decades of progress on building quality education systems are at risk.

Without urgent global action to deliver more and better quality financing, millions more children will be denied their right to quality teaching and learning. This will exacerbate learning poverty for the 53% of children in low and low-middle-income countries who cannot read or understand a simple story by the end of primary school.⁷ This will undermine and destabilise the entire sustainable development platform; the World Bank has predicted a long-term economic loss for today's primary- and secondary-aged children of up to \$10 trillion.⁸

Despite this alarming prospect and the \$148bn annual gap, education remains far too low on the list of donor priorities. Global aid to education has remained stagnant over recent years: between 2003 and 2010, education's share of allocable aid fell from 14.8% to 11.7% and to just 9.7% by 2013. It has now recovered slightly to 10.8%, but it is still below 2010 levels.⁹ This decline is contrasted by the relatively stable share of aid received by other sectors over the same time period. In particular, funding for education in emergencies remains drastically low: education received just 2.4% of total humanitarian aid in 2020.¹⁰

In the fallout from the Coronavirus pandemic, economic recessions and fewer domestic resources threaten to create downward pressure on education financing. Aid to education, including where and how it is directed, will therefore be more important than ever in ensuring that children's access to quality education does not bear the brunt.

In the UK, the Government's intention to cut its aid budget from 0.7% to 0.5% of GNI runs contrary to the ambition and long-term thinking that is required to meet this moment.

Combined with lower GNI, it is estimated that the proposed move to 0.5% will reduce UK aid by £4.5bn - or 30% - compared to 2019.¹¹

Despite the Government's welcome manifesto commitment to girls' education, education's share of the ODA budget continues to shrink, declining year on year since 2016, currently standing at just 5.6% compared to the average of 9.1% allocated to education between 2011 and 2015.¹²

Estimates indicate that the cut from 0.7% to 0.5% will mean 4.5 million fewer children gaining a quality education, a figure that is irreconcilable with both the Government's ambitions and the needs of millions of children around the world.¹³ In order for the Government to deliver on its ambition and children's needs, it should direct 15% of aid to education, in line with civil society's recommended benchmark.

Education is key to unlocking the entire sustainable development platform and building back better from COVID-19, but this past year has highlighted that education systems are simply not prepared to cope with urgent interruptions such as climate, conflict, pandemics, and other humanitarian crises. Governments must therefore double down now to lessen the costs of the pandemic, future-proof education systems, and make the accelerated progress on SDG4 that is required in this decade of delivery.

In this year of the UK's G7 Presidency, alongside co-hosting the GPE replenishment, and hosting COP26, this is the best chance that the UK will have to lead others to turn the tide on the global education emergency. The UK Government must meet this moment by making urgent progress on fulfilling its own pledges, driving up the ambition of G7 and DAC peers, and implementing the recommendations of the Send My Friend to School coalition.

2. The UK and the global education financing architecture

The Global Picture

COVID-19 has created an unprecedented education emergency, which has placed the futures of the world's most marginalised children in jeopardy. Despite the global commitment to guaranteeing a quality education for every child, millions of children now stand to never return to school by the time the pandemic has passed, including up to 20 million girls.¹⁴ This figure is in addition to the 258 million children already out of education before the pandemic.¹⁵

School closures and the resulting interruptions to learning are only exacerbating the already dire progress towards Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG4). With just nine years to go to meet SDG4, UNESCO predicts that next to zero progress will be made on reducing the number of out-of-school children.¹⁶

Even before COVID-19, one in five children and young people were entirely locked out of education: almost a quarter of a billion children, including 130 million girls.¹⁷ Between one quarter and one half of children with disabilities are estimated to be out of school, representing up to one third of out of school children.¹⁸

As government revenue and aid budgets shrink, and debt obligations accumulate, education budgets face unprecedented constraints. These cuts are most likely to affect the children who are already most marginalised, impacting support for refugees and the internally displaced, support to children with disabilities, and specialist programmes to keep girls in school.

Compounding this financing gap is that aid to education is often poorly spent, not reaching the most marginalised children in countries that need it the most. For example, less than 7% of ODA globally is marked as inclusive of people with disabilities using the OECD DAC disability marker, and less than 0.5% specifically targets people with disabilities.¹⁹

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a dramatic impact on millions of people already reeling from conflict, record levels of displacement and climate change shocks. According to the United Nations, 235 million people worldwide will need humanitarian assistance and protection in 2021 alone – an increase of 40 per cent in a year.²⁰

Among those most in need of assistance are the 75 million children and youth whose education was disrupted by humanitarian crises before the pandemic struck. For these children, COVID-19 is a crisis upon a crisis. Most have been out of education for so long they now lack the most basic competencies in reading, writing and numeracy. Many, forced to flee their homes at a young age, have never stepped foot in a classroom. Yet, humanitarian funding appeals for education remain significantly underfunded, only receiving 2.4% of available funding in 2020.²¹

The UK's Global Leadership in Education

The UK Government has committed to delivering 12 years of quality education for all girls in the 2019 Conservative manifesto. That commitment is a personal priority of the Prime Minister and of the Secretary of State for Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office, who recommitted to this promise in his speech following the spending review.

The Government has done much to progress its global leadership on girls' education. Later this year, it will publish its Girls Education Action Plan: the roadmap to deliver its manifesto commitment. Through the Action Plan the Government has already committed to drive progress globally through two ambitious targets: to ensure 40 million more primary and secondary school girls in LICs and LMICs are in school and learning and 20 million more girls achieving foundational literacy. These targets must be disaggregated to ensure that progress is made for the most marginalised girls. The Government

has also committed to using its hosting of the G7 to garner global support around these targets and has made girls' education a top priority through its leaders' track.

Furthermore, the Government's world leading programmes such as the Girls Education Challenge (GEC) and Get Children Learning (GCL) continue to deliver for girls globally and spearheaded innovative adaptations to keep girls learning whilst schools were closed in 2020.

UK Leadership in the Global Education Architecture

The UK is well positioned as a leader in the global education architecture as one of the leading donors of Education Cannot Wait (ECW) and the Global Partnership for Education (GPE). The UK Government should use this leadership to harmonise efforts across the funds and reduce fragmentation, both internationally and nationally.

The Global Partnership for Education (GPE)

The UK has historically been a leading donor to GPE. In its 2021 replenishment, GPE is seeking to raise at least \$5bn to support the delivery of quality, equitable learning for the world's most marginalised children²². As co-hosts, UK leadership is essential to achieving this target. The Send My Friend to School Coalition is calling on the UK Government to contribute £600m for its 2021-25 financing period, as set out in SMF's January 2021 paper, 'The UK's Investment in the Global Partnership for Education'.²³ This pledge would make a powerful statement about Global Britain's values and place the Government on a strong footing to deliver on its commitment to 12 years of quality education for girls, including at least one year of pre-primary education. The potential of a UK contribution of £600m, to transform lives and drive-up ambition in other markets, cannot be overstated. These funds would directly contribute to ensuring trained teachers serve marginalised communities, that inclusive schools are built where they are most needed and that children are armed with materials for 21st century learning.²⁴

CASE STUDY

UK Investment in the Girls Education Challenge (GEC) Ghana

The Girls' Education Challenge (GEC) is working to ensure that 6,032 girls (including both existing primary and junior high school girls and out-of-school girls) are supported to successfully complete primary school in Ghana. Running in 72 schools, the project draws on solar-powered, satellite-enabled distance learning to deliver interactive learning sessions to students, teachers, communities, and government officials across the country.

Following the closure of schools and education institutions in Ghana, the Government of Ghana tasked the Education and Communication ministries to roll out a distance learning programme.

Funded by the UK Government, Plan International offered to the Ghanaian Education Service the immediate use of its five studios and technical team for the production of content to transmit on a dedicated GBC (Ghanaian Broadcasting Cooperation) channel.

Plan International also made available the experienced studio technicians (recording and post production) and the master teacher trainers who worked with the curriculum specialists from the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment to develop adapted content for televised lessons.

Education Cannot Wait (ECW)

The UK Government is a strong leader in Education Cannot Wait (ECW): the only global fund dedicated to education in emergencies and protracted crises. ECW needs at least \$400m for the remainder of its current funding cycle to provide education to an additional 4.5 million children and young people – including 2.7 million girls – affected by conflict, climate change and COVID-19. The UK must use its influence this year to encourage other governments to step up financing for ECW so that the fund can deliver lifesaving education. It should also continue to provide top-up support to ECW as new crises emerge, as it did after Cyclone Kenneth in Mozambique and last summer in response to COVID-19.

The UK's ODA Commitment to Education

The UK Government clearly and rightly has an ambitious agenda that, if implemented, should help to meet the mountainous challenge ahead. However, the current level of UK aid spent on education does not reflect this ambition. UK aid to education now risks being dwarfed by other sectors, with a similar level of UK aid being spent on banking and financial services as on education.²⁵ Furthermore, recent Malala Fund research reveals that UK ODA that is spent on girls' education is rarely allocated to countries with the greatest need: only about 10% of

total education ODA goes to the places where girls are facing the biggest barriers.²⁶ Using data from 2018, The Girls' Education Challenge Index shows that around 6% of UK education bilateral ODA went to those countries that have the greatest girls' education needs. Less than 40% of this aid is gender responsive, meaning it is not tackling the unique barriers that girls face in accessing their education, including gender based violence, teenage pregnancy, early marriage, access to menstrual hygiene products and lack of a strong female workforce.²⁷

The Government must urgently raise the proportion of ODA allocated to education, particularly girls' education, and ensure its aid is focussed on policy, programmes and education systems that will keep all children in school and learning. This includes programmes focussed on inclusion, quality and dismantling the structural barriers that keep children, including girls, out of school.

The G7 is an opportunity to raise global ambition on education financing. The UK Government has made girls' education a top priority at the G7 in 2021. Making a firm promise to progressively raise the proportion of ODA to education to 15% would send a strong signal to the global community that the UK is serious about its commitment to 12 years of quality education for all girls, support accelerated progress on SDG4, and drive up ambition in other countries.

3. Principles of education financing and development

To meet its manifesto commitments and accelerate progress on realising every child's right to a quality education, the FCDO should demonstrate best practice by following the principles of education financing and development set out below by the Send My Friend to School coalition. Recognising the broad composition of education systems, and the need for resilience building as demonstrated by the pandemic, the FCDO should take a holistic, systems strengthening approach. Policy, programming and financing must be disability inclusive and gender responsive, climate resilient, and recognise the needs of children experiencing education in emergencies (EiE).

1. SYSTEMS APPROACH

Education financing and development must support holistic systems strengthening. Aligning the different components of the education system, such as curriculum, teaching, and assessment, an effective systems approach encompasses children, teachers and their unions, families, civil society, government and other interrelated sectors, such as health and protection. Systems strengthening places the learner at the centre and analyses the combination of inputs required across the system to achieve quality learning outcomes for all children.

For systems strengthening to work, education financing needs to be sustainable, predictable, and equitable. Domestic resource mobilisation (DRM) is the best way of achieving this type of financing, and will come from such sources.²⁸ This means that for ODA to be efficient and effective it must leverage and support DRM. Countries furthest behind on achieving quality education for all must therefore be supported in meeting international benchmarks by allocating at least 4-6% of GDP and/or at least 15-20% of total public expenditure to education.²⁹

Equity must be at the heart of a systems approach. This means prioritising the most marginalised. Evidence

indicates that financing with an equity lens improves the entire system, benefitting all children, and is key to achieving universal basic education.³⁰ Targeted and equitable allocation of education funding prioritises investment to children marginalised by intersecting inequalities. Teachers, as the most powerful force for improving equity, quality, and access, must receive quality training and development opportunities, and both they and their unions should be engaged as a core component of a systems approach.³¹

It is critical that education systems provide access to high quality inclusive early childhood development and education. Having a pre-primary education has a significant impact on a child's future prospects in education and in adult life, it is particularly important for the most marginalised children³².

PRINCIPLE 1: SYSTEMS APPROACH

Education development financing must support holistic systems strengthening, with investment in teachers, domestic resource mobilisation, the building of quality public education, comprehensive programming to address intersecting inequalities, and thorough future proofing.

2. LEARNING FOCUSED

The world's poorest and most marginalised children are experiencing learning poverty. 258 million children are out of school, and even when children are in school, millions are not learning. World Bank analysis indicates that at least 53% of all children in low- and middle-income countries are not able to read proficiently by age 10.³³ This is what the World Bank refers to as a learning poverty crisis, the incidence of which is much higher than extreme income poverty.

While one out of two children in the developing world are not able to read properly by the end of primary school, this rate is much higher in certain regions. For example, in sub-Saharan Africa, learning poverty is close to 87%, and in low-income countries the rate is 90%.³⁴ For children with disabilities, the rate of progression is much lower, UNESCO found that children with disabilities from ten low- and middle-income countries were 19% less likely to achieve minimum proficiency in reading compared to their peers without disabilities.³⁵ A lack of inclusive teaching practices, materials and assessment mean that children with disabilities are particularly affected.

SDG4 mandated a shift from an almost exclusive focus on access to education to a focus on both access and quality. However, improvements to learning outcomes continue to be in short supply; the median annual reduction in learning poverty is less than 1% per year.³⁶ This is a crisis that is being compounded by COVID-19 and the ensuing disruptions to teaching and learning. Research by Save the Children found that 80% of children reported learning little or nothing while out of school, with girls, displaced children and the poorest most likely to report learning nothing at all.³⁷

Education financing therefore needs a renewed focus on improving learning outcomes. In 2018, at best just 47% of aid to education was directed to basic or secondary education in low- and lower-middle-income countries.³⁸ This means the two sub-sectors and groups of countries that are most in need are receiving less than 50% of ODA to education, the rest is spent in upper-middle or even high-income countries and on post-secondary education.³⁹ Education financing and development therefore needs a renewed focus on a systems approach that prioritises the learning outcomes of children in the sectors and countries that need it most.

PRINCIPLE 2: LEARNING FOCUSED

Education financing must prioritise improving learning outcomes for all children, including children with different learning needs, and recognise the additional impact COVID -19 has had on learning and child development.

3. REACHING CHILDREN IN POVERTY

In order to achieve SDG4, addressing the learning needs of the world's poorest children must be a priority. Poverty is a significant cause of educational inequality, often intersecting with, and exacerbating, other forms of marginalisation. Unless financing targets the poorest children in the poorest countries, 1.5 billion adults in 2030 will have no education beyond primary school. To reach SDG4 by 2030, the poorest 20% will need to see progress more than triple.⁴⁰

In 2016, the Education Commission projected just one out of ten children of school age in low-income countries as being on track to achieve minimum secondary-school level skills by 2030.⁴¹ This trend is damning if not surprising; the out-of-school rates are systematically higher in low-income countries than in lower-middle-, upper-middle-, and high-income countries.⁴²

In low-income countries, the poorest children are five times more likely to have never been to school than the richest and two and a half times less likely to have completed primary school.⁴³ Further, children from the poorest 20% of families are eight times as likely to be out of school as children from the richest 20% in lower-middle-income countries.⁴⁴ Meanwhile, direct and indirect costs, such as school fees or learning materials, continue to be a major barrier to education for poor families,⁴⁵ but

even when the poorest children and youth manage to complete a phase of education, they often do not obtain the expected skills because the quality of provision is so low.⁴⁶ Within families, poverty can often mean difficult decisions have to be made about which children go to school – this often leads to girls and children with disabilities being deprioritised.

Estimates indicate that extreme poverty could be halved if universal primary and secondary education is achieved.⁴⁷ Reaching children in poverty is therefore vital to the entire sustainable development platform.

**PRINCIPLE 3:
REACHING CHILDREN IN POVERTY**

Children living in poverty, including those most marginalised and disadvantaged, and children who are refugees, must be a stated central target of education development programming, policy, and financing, improving allocation to focus on those most in need.

4. DISABILITY INCLUSIVE

Even before the COVID-19 pandemic hit, children with disabilities were falling behind their peers, being more likely to be out of school and amongst the hardest to reach.⁴⁸ Without targeted interventions, there is a risk that when schools re-open children with disabilities will continue to be left out of school. Estimates before the pandemic suggested that in low- and lower-middle income countries, approximately 40% of children with disabilities were out of school at primary level and 55% at lower secondary.⁴⁹ This is expected to rise, with research from Save the Children suggesting that parents and caregivers of children with disabilities were less likely to expect their child to return to school after the pandemic compared to those without disabilities.⁵⁰

Children with disabilities experience a double blow in realising their right to a quality education, facing attitudinal, physical, communication and social barriers that impact their access to quality education and equity in learning. Children with disabilities also experience

CASE STUDY

Inclusive Education Initiative

The Inclusive Education Initiative (IEI) is a multi-donor trust fund overseen by the World Bank. Launched in 2019 following the UK's world-leading commitment at the Global Disability Summit, this £5million initiative invests in technical expertise to support priority countries to address education outcomes for the most marginalised children, particularly those with disabilities. Implemented in Ethiopia, Nepal and Rwanda, the UK government has supported stakeholders to finance and develop programmes to improve the access and quality of education for children with disabilities. The IEI has identified critical gaps in capacity, systems and policies that have disadvantaged the participation and learning for children with disabilities.

To date, the UK government has invested £3million towards the development of global

tools and resources such as sector financing guidelines for inclusive education through the initiative; streamlining recruitment processes for inclusive education specialists in-country; facilitating knowledge sharing of practitioners and strengthening EMIS for disability inclusion.

Inclusive education is a core component of the DFID's Disability Inclusion strategy (which the FCDO has committed to updating), and this initiative forms a fundamental element of the department's commitment to achieving SDG4, Inclusive and equitable quality education for all, by 2030. It is critical that the UK continues to use its experience and leadership to influence other development actors to prioritise opportunities that advance educational outcomes for all children, whilst also continuing to scale up its own financing for inclusive education.

stigma and multiple layers of discrimination due to their ethnicity, gender and other factors which intersect and present further challenges to realising their right to education. Because of inequitable policy and financing, children with disabilities are less likely to attend school, complete school and possess basic literacy skills.⁵¹ Further barriers include a paucity of quality data collection on the inclusion or exclusion of children with disabilities, limiting the understanding of policymakers and teachers on how to best target interventions.⁵²

Addressing the learning crisis for children with disabilities will require a systemic, pro-equity approach from a policy and resourcing level.⁵³ Disability inclusive education requires both the mobilisation of more funds and the equitable spending of funds that are available i.e. through a twin-track approach that employs targeted action to meet the needs of children with disabilities as well as embed inclusion into mainstream education systems.⁵⁴ Progress should be tracked and monitored by using the OECD DAC disability marker and through disability disaggregated data collection and analysis. More targeted and equitable allocation of funds will support the improvement of accessible infrastructure, increase access to assistive devices and technology, encourage disability inclusive education sector plans and provide investment in well-trained and qualified teachers to deliver inclusive teaching practices.⁵⁵

The UK has made important steps towards mainstreaming disability across its work and has encouraged and influenced partners to do more. It is critical that the UK continues to invest in its own work and influence other education actors to become more inclusive. Through its financing to the World Bank, GPE and other global actors, the UK can amplify its impact and ensure that ODA spent on education is increasingly inclusive of children with disabilities.

PRINCIPAL 4: DISABILITY INCLUSIVE

Policy and resourcing takes an inclusive and pro-equity approach that promotes inclusive education systems and effectively includes all learners in a way that supports the full potential of every child, including children with disabilities.

5. GENDER TRANSFORMATIVE

The evidence supporting the benefits of girls' education is clear. Not only is it a girl's right, but educating girls decreases child marriage, reduces conflict, and improves health, economic growth, earning power, and promotes generational change in gender attitudes.⁵⁶

Despite the vast benefits that education brings to girls, economies, and societies, around the world 132 million girls are not in school.⁵⁷ Even when girls are in school, education quality can often be poor: 290 million girls are not achieving minimum learning targets.⁵⁸

Delivering 12 years of quality education for girls must mean taking a gender transformative approach to policies and financing, recognising the unique barriers girls face due to their age, gender and other social characteristics. Girls are more likely to be kept out of school at an early age to take on extra burdens of care, forced into early marriage or domestic servitude to shoulder the economic burden and are more likely to suffer from gender-based violence.⁵⁹ Although these barriers are not new, they have been exacerbated by the pandemic.

Delivering on the Government's commitment is not just about ensuring girls can access school, it must also enable them to benefit equally from the opportunities

provided and drive progress towards a more gender equal world. The Prime Minister has promised that we will build back better from the pandemic, which means ensuring gender equality within schools to keep all girls safe and learning.

The Government must lead the global community in prioritising ending school related gender-based violence, removing gender bias and stigma from learning materials, ensuring access to sexual reproductive health and rights so they have autonomy over their bodies, and recruiting and training a strong female workforce.

PRINCIPLE 5: GENDER TRANSFORMATIVE

Education financing and development recognises the unique needs and challenges faced by girls and takes a gender transformative approach that empowers all learners.

6. CLIMATE RESILIENT

The right to education is threatened by climate change. Climate change is already impacting children's right to learn, and this is particularly acute for the most marginalised.⁶⁰ Every year, 40 million children have their education disrupted by natural disasters and extreme weather events, a number that will continue to grow without urgent action.⁶¹

The COVID-19 pandemic has laid bare that education systems around the world are ill prepared for, and not resilient enough to, large-scale disruption. Education systems need to be built to withstand the interruptions that we know are coming. However, the international community has failed to adequately strengthen education systems in the face of a changing climate and education financing continues to lack a climate lens.

CASE STUDY

I-GATE Girls Education Challenge Programme, Zimbabwe

The IGATE project improves girl's education, through transforming gender attitudes and protection, improving teaching quality, inclusive education, and supporting girls on a continued learning pathway. The project aims to ensure that 57,797 marginalised girls are well equipped to transition into life through fluency in literacy, numeracy, financial and life skills. The second phase of the program began in late 2017 in which World Vision is working with partners across 318 rural primary and secondary schools, through teachers' professional development, community engagement and girls' leadership clubs. In addition, community-based learning programmes for out-of-school girls provide a second chance to learn foundational literacy, numeracy, financial intelligence and vocational skills.



Education is also neglected as part of the global climate response. In climate strategies around the world, including in Nationally Determined Contributions, governments are systematically failing to meaningfully recognise the role of education in facing and fighting a changing climate.⁶² Education is lifesaving during times of crisis, boosting adaptive capacity and, working in tandem, strong education and child protection systems protect children from risks of violence and exploitation.⁶³

Improving access to quality education increases self-efficacy, autonomy, and the ability to migrate and diversify income, empowering communities to better navigate the challenges posed by climate change.

Investments in girls' education are particularly cost-effective in reducing vulnerability to climate change; the Brookings Institution estimates that every additional year of girls' schooling delivers significant improvements to a country's climate resilience.⁶⁴

PRINCIPLE 6: CLIMATE RESILIENT

Education systems are built and funded with climate change and its impacts – including disaster, displacement, and long-term environmental change – as a core consideration, using past lessons and multisectoral approaches to ensure the system and skills developed within it are relevant and sustainable for the future.

7. CENTRAL TO HUMANITARIAN ACTION

Conflict, environmental disasters, health emergencies, and forced displacement are all significant barriers to access to and completion of a quality education. Approximately 127 million children living in crisis-affected contexts are out of school – around half the global total.⁶⁵ This includes approximately 67 million girls, with girls living in these contexts comprising more than 25 % of out of school children globally.⁶⁶

Funding for EiE is on the rise, but access to education in times of emergency remains challenging and chronically underfunded. A wide gap exists between the amount of funding requested and what is provided: between 2000 and 2019 over \$1bn in humanitarian aid was requested for education but just \$454m was provided.⁶⁷ This is less than half what the sector has requested, and this gap is widening not closing. Further, just two to four percent of annual humanitarian funding goes to the education sector, well short of the benchmark of 10 % set by the European Union.⁶⁸

To realise SDG4, education must be central to humanitarian action. This means stepping up funding to dramatically improve both access to and quality of provision. However, this also means better targeting available resources. For example, EiE funding in sub-Saharan Africa continues to decline despite being home to 75 % of the children who are out of school as a result of crisis⁶⁹ – overlooking protracted crises means abandoning the hopes of millions of children who still desperately need support.

PRINCIPLE 7: CENTRAL TO HUMANITARIAN ACTION

Quality educational provision is made available quickly, comprehensively, and in a sustainable way to not only address immediate lost learning but also ensure long-term comprehensive recovery that supports all learners during education in emergencies.

4. Recommendations

The Send My Friend to School Coalition is calling on the UK Government to use its G7 Presidency, alongside co-hosting the GPE replenishment, and COP26, to lead others to turn the tide on the global education emergency.

PROVIDE WORLD LEADING INVESTMENT TO EDUCATION AND EDUCATION IN EMERGENCIES

- To deliver its manifesto commitment, demonstrate global leadership and address the global financing gap, the UK must urgently increase the proportion of ODA allocated to education to 15%.
- The UK should pledge £600m to the Global Partnership for Education
- The UK should use its pledge to the Global Partnership for Education to ensure the GPE continues to make progress on disability inclusion and gender equality
- The UK should encourage other donors to step up and provide new funding for ECW's global fund and multi-year programmes
- The UK should use its leadership in ECW and GPE to harmonise efforts across the education architecture, both internationally and in country
- The UK should maintain its commitment to set its ODA budget at 0.7% of GNI, as enshrined in law

FOLLOW THE PRINCIPLES OF EDUCATION FINANCING AND DEVELOPMENT SET OUT ABOVE BY THE SEND MY FRIEND COALITION. THE UK GOVERNMENT AND FCDO SHOULD:

- Take a holistic, systems strengthening approach to delivering education ODA
- Support the provision of fee-free and public education, including pre-primary for all children
- Make children living in poverty, including those most marginalised and disadvantaged, a stated central target of education programming, policy, and financing, improving allocation to focus on those most in need.
- Ensure that all policy, programming and financing is disability inclusive
- Ensure that all policy, programming and financing is gender responsive, taking into account the unique barriers girls face in accessing, and staying in, a quality education
- Invest in and support the training, development, and rights of teachers, recognising them as key drivers of equity, quality, and access, as set out by SDG4 and (the former) DFID's Get Children Learning policy
- Use its COP Presidency to highlight and address the links between the climate crisis and education, and ensure ODA to education is climate resilient, recognising the needs of children experiencing education in emergencies (EiE)
- Commit to and adequately resource the meaningful participation of girl led groups and girl activists in key global decision-making processes through collaborative partnership models, ensuring accessible information and providing funding to support participation

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Send My Friend to School is a UK civil society coalition of international development NGOs, teachers unions and charities. The campaign undertakes a range of activities designed to increase community awareness of the state of education internationally and generate the political will necessary to ensure the UK plays an active and effective part in efforts to secure education for all. Send My Friend to School is the UK coalition of the Global Campaign for Education movement which is present in over 80 countries around the world, and aligns its work with the organisation's mission and aims.

The Campaign's UK members are:

| | |
|-------------------------|--|
| CAFOD | RESULTS UK |
| Christian Aid | Save the Children UK |
| Deaf Child Worldwide | Sense International |
| Humanity & Inclusion UK | Sightsavers |
| Leonard Cheshire | The Educational Institute of Scotland |
| NASUWT | The Steve Sinnott Foundation |
| NEU | UNICEF UK |
| ONE | UCU |
| Oxfam GB | World Vision UK |
| Plan International UK | |

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Front cover photo:

Students wear face masks to return to the classroom in Ghana © Plan International

* All children's names have been changed to protect their identity