

## Emily and Elise's speech, Let My Friends Learn policy report launch April 2023

Good afternoon, we are Elise and Emily, two of Send My Friend to School's campaign champions. This year's campaign is on education in emergencies, and how important it is that we let all our friends around the world learn.

Send my friend to school has been battling education injustice for nearly 20 years; involving the work of thousands of children, and the collaboration of 24 charities. Campaign champions past and present prove the care projected from the UK youth, further demonstrated by the 7000 schools involved. Not only do we need to aid financially, but we can also ignite followership. By doing this, we are unlocking potential to improve tomorrow's world.

We are here today to emphasise our belief in the transformative powers of education. We are incredibly lucky to receive an education that provides us with the skills and support we need as well as teachers who care. Schooling does not purely teach children to read and write, it equips them with the tools needed to overcome challenges they may face. Education really is the key to unlocking potential pathways and opportunities in life.

Sadly, 222 million children across the world are being prevented from receiving a quality education due to emergencies and crises, this is nearly 16 times the total number of children in the UK! However, it is crucial to remember that behind every piece of data there are human stories that deserve to be acknowledged and recognised. We need to support these children so that they do not lose out on the education that they deserve. It is their right.



Our government has been failing to provide what we have promised since 1970 – a 0.7% official development assistance budget. The ODA budget has been slashed yet again and the target to return to spending what we used to on aid now seems like a distant memory. In the UK we spend around £120 billion annually on British children’s education, but we spend just 0.02% of that on educating children living in poverty or crisis around the world. We know that the ODA budget funds critical causes, but currently only a fractional amount of that depleted pot is going to support education in emergencies.

Sustainable Development Goal 4 committed all countries, including the UK, to achieving quality and inclusive education for all. It is fundamental that the aid budget returns to 0.7% as we aid education, we are building a fairer future. We are asking the UK government to prepare, protect, invest, and act and help us send our friends to school.

In conclusion, we hope you too can see the immense importance of education. We must ensure that education is inclusive and reaches every child, regardless of their gender, ethnicity, or ability. We must work to break down the barriers that prevent marginalised children from accessing education, such as poverty, discrimination, and conflict. The send my friend to school policy report provides us with a roadmap for achieving this goal. Let us not rest until every child has had the opportunity to realise their full potential and contribute to a brighter future for all. Can we really afford to keep denying an education to those who have potential to change the world? Thank you.

We would like to share with you a signed letter. (Show letter) We greatly appreciate the support demonstrated by our local community. We know there are problems, but there are also solutions! (Show completed puzzle pieces) So, we are asking you to ‘let our friends learn’. (Show let my friends learn puzzle pieces)

