

Protecting education in emergencies:

Parliamentarian briefing on COP28 and the 2023 Global Refugee Forum

Globally 224 million school-aged children and youth are estimated to be affected by emergencies and protracted crises and require immediate educational assistance. This represents an almost 200% increase from 2016. Often exacerbating one another the **climate crisis** and **rising levels of forced displacement** are two of the main drivers behind this unprecedented increase.

Education in emergencies (EiE) is life-saving and life-protecting, providing children with the skills to escape crises, build their resilience and most importantly sustain their hope for a brighter future.

In December world leaders will convene for COP28 and the 2023 Global Refugee Forum (GRF), presenting landmark opportunities to address these challenges, strengthen global resilience, and ultimately protect children's right to education.

The Send My Friend to School Coalition is calling on the UK Government to take decisive action to ensure that COP28 and the 2023 GRF deliver strong commitments on education. We are calling on the UK Government to make its own ambitious commitments on education and work with the international community to:

- 1. Ensure that education is systematically integrated in the global climate agenda**
- 2. Mobilise the funding needed to support low- and middle-income hosting countries to provide quality education for refugee and host community children**

COP28: a critical crossroads for education in the climate agenda

Globally, climate change is driving an unprecedented level of crises, causing widespread disruptions to the education of over 37 million children each year.

The impact disproportionately affects communities who have contributed least to the climate crisis including the poorest and most marginalised children (girls, children with disabilities, and migrant and refugee children) who are at risk of being left behind from learning. Despite this, education is often left out of the climate agenda.

This year world leaders will convene at COP28 to accelerate global action to tackle the climate crisis. We will not be able to stay within 1.5°C without international cooperation and increased climate finance.

Children and young people are calling for education to be prioritised in the climate agenda: they have been a driving force behind climate action, and their experiences and recommendations are critical for climate justice to be realised.

The education thematic day at COP28 offers a unique opportunity to advance commitments that recognise the intersections between education and climate action. However, this must be integrated across the COP28 agenda. The UK Government has a crucial opportunity to ensure that climate change does not undermine a child's right to education.

As the UK Government engages in COP28 negotiations, we are calling for decisive action to ensure that education is systematically integrated in the global climate agenda including through:

- **Just transitions:** ensuring equitable access to the benefits of green transitions for the most marginalised groups of children (i.e. accessing green skills development, employment and fairer education outcomes).
- **Global Goal on Adaptation:** advocating for education to be integrated in the goal, including in its targets and indicators.
- **Finance:** delivering increased climate finance, that is new and additional to ODA, with clear mechanisms to reach the most affected communities.
- **Loss and Damage Fund:** championing the need for significant finance for loss and damage to be directed to education, and the rights and voices of children in operationalising financing.
- **Adopting an inclusive, justice-centred approach to climate action:** prioritising initiatives that build resilience for the most marginalised, and meaningfully engaging them in climate decision-making processes.

For more information read our full COP28 briefing at <https://sendmyfriend.org/>

Securing education for the world's refugees at the 2023 Global Refugee Forum (GRF)

Having already lost their homes, many refugees are now losing their education. **Refugees experience some of the lowest access rates to education in the world and more than half of the world's refugee children are out of school.** Rates are even worse for refugee children already facing additional barriers to education, including girls and children with disabilities.

Supporting countries that host refugees is key to addressing this crisis. Three-quarters of refugees live in low- and middle-income countries. **Yet many host countries receive limited international assistance for education from the UK and other donors, leaving them to absorb the overwhelming costs of integrating refugees into their national education system alone.**

Taking place every four years the GRF brings together states and other actors to commit to financial or technical support or policy changes to help meet the objectives of the Global Compact on Refugees.

The 2023 GRF, taking place in December, is a critical opportunity to unlock the funding required to educate the world's refugee children and ensure their future prosperity.

We are calling on the UK Government to work with the international community to mobilise the funding needed to support low- and middle-income hosting countries to provide inclusive, equitable and quality education for refugee and host community children.

We urge the UK to play a leading role in ensuring that the 2023 GRF delivers strong commitments on education, including by making its own ambitious pledges that include:

- **More and better financing for refugee education:** the UK should commit to providing predictable, multi-year financing of education for refugees and host communities, and support ECW, GPE and the World Bank to renew their joint pledge to improve finance coordination.
- **Alignment with the needs of host countries:** pledges should support and resource the commitments made by host governments, particularly the poorest host countries, and prioritise educational access for the most marginalised refugee children.
- **Meaningful participation of refugee children, communities and refugee-led organisations:** the UK should consult with refugee children, youth and communities in the design, implementation and review of its pledges.
- **Effective monitoring, tracking and reporting mechanisms:** pledges should include timelines for completion and measurable targets and indicators.

For more information read our full GRF briefing at <https://sendmyfriend.org/>

What can MPs do?

We are calling on the UK Government to take decisive action to ensure that COP28 and the 2023 GRF deliver strong commitments on education. As a Parliamentarian you can help support Send My Friend to School's campaign by:

1. Writing to Andrew Mitchell, Minister of State (Development and Africa) to call on the UK to make ambitious commitments on education at COP28 and the 2023 GRF.
2. Asking the UK Government what steps they are taking to ensure that COP28 and the 2023 GRF deliver strong commitments on education:
 - To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs what steps the UK government is taking to ensure education is systematically integrated in the global climate agenda at COP 28.
 - To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs what steps the UK government is taking to mobilise funding to support refugee education in low- and middle-income host countries.
 - To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs if the UK Government will announce new education commitments at (a) COP28 (b) the 2023 Global Refugee Forum.
3. Meeting with Send My Friend to School Campaign Champions at a participating school in your constituency. Find out more by contacting, Rebekah Lucking (Campaign Manager, Send My Friend to School) at rebekah.lucking@sendmyfriend.org

About Send My Friend to School

Send My Friend to School is the UK civil society coalition of international development NGOs, teachers unions and charities. It brings together young people, politicians, teachers, civil society and the media in joint campaigning to demand quality education for all children across the globe.

Find out more about our “Let My Friends Learn” campaign on education in emergencies in our policy report.

#LetMyFriendsLearn @sendmyfriend

Photo: Yoris, a Youth4EiE member from Indonesia advocates for action against the impact of climate change on education. © Plan International UK