



The right to education is most at risk during emergencies. Humanitarian crises - including wars, earthquakes, tsunamis, floods, protracted conflict - are disrupting education, delaying initial access, and contributing to higher drop-out and lower completion rates. Thus, despite the substantial progress made during the last decade in terms of expanding access to education, a substantial number of children still do not have access to school or do not complete basic education in these countries. To protect gains made towards the education related Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and ensure continued progress, children, especially girls, must have consistent access to safe, quality education.

Education in conflict-affected and fragile contexts is an acute challenge. The challenge is not only to facilitate the entry of these children, girls and boys, into enabling school environments, but also to ensure that they are able to learn. Half of the 57 million children of primary-school age who do not go to school in the world - a total of 28.5 million children - live in conflict-affected countries, 55% girls. And of the 69 million adolescents of lower secondary school age not in

school in 2011, 20 million lived in conflict-affected countries<sup>1</sup>.

It is increasingly recognized that education must be a principal part of any humanitarian response. Conflict and disaster-affected communities themselves prioritize the provision of education for their children, often even before more immediate material needs. Schools can provide safe spaces, stability, structure and routine that children need to cope with loss, fear, stress and violence. Being in school can keep children safe and protected from risks, including gender-based violence, recruitment into armed groups, child labour, early marriage and trafficking. Education restores routine and gives people hope for the future; it can also serve as a channel both for meeting other basic humanitarian needs and communicating vital messages that promote safety and well-being<sup>2</sup>.

But education in emergencies is often not prioritized and poorly funded in global humanitarian assistance. Global community has called for 4% humanitarian aid to be allocated to education - yet, in 2012, education accounted for only 1.4% of humanitarian aid, down from 2.2% in 2009 (EU estimates).

And yet, we know that education can be that crucial link between humanitarian and longer-term development. Building the capacity of countries to provide education is a long-term priority that we must continue to address with governments and education stakeholders.

In its new programming, the EU is supporting Education in 40 partner countries, at least half of which in fragility contexts. At global level the EU is also supporting the Global Partnership for Education (GPE). One of the key priorities of the partnership is on education in fragile and conflict-affected states, by contributing to building capacity and to capitalizing on the potential role of education in reducing conflict and building stability. In 2012 the Commission launched a dedicated funding line for humanitarian projects aimed to help children affected by conflict through education in emergencies, the so-called EU Children of Peace Initiative. This initiative is a lasting legacy of the honour of the Nobel Peace Prize awarded to the EU. So far more than 270 000 children have benefitted from this initiative and the total of € 12 712 500<sup>3</sup> have been allocated. There will be a continuation of this funding line in 2015 of € 10 M.

In response to the Syrian crisis, the support of the European Commission has proved instrumental in maintaining education, healthcare, relief and social services to the most vulnerable Palestine refugees in Syria.

The EU funds are used to procure textbooks across all nine grades taught by UNRWA, benefitting up to 47000 students<sup>4</sup>. DEVCO has supported, through UNICEF, the continuation of children's education in Syria providing school bags and stationery supplies, teaching and learning materials, Early Childhood Development kits and the establishment of school clubs<sup>5</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> UNESCO, 'Children still battling to go to school', 2013

<sup>2</sup> UNESCO, Global Monitoring Report, 2011

<sup>3</sup> Including generous contributions from the Government of Luxembourg and Austria

<sup>4</sup> UNRWA, EU's EuropeAid to UNRWA for Palestine refugees in Syria, 2014

<sup>5</sup> UNICEF website, 2014

### Did you know that...

- Armed conflict is robbing 28 million children of an education by exposing them to widespread sexual violence, targeted attacks on schools and other abuses (UNESCO estimates)
- Education accounts for just 2% of humanitarian aid (UNESCO estimates)
- 7 million children are refugees (EU estimates)
- 11,2 to 13,7 million children around the globe have been displaced in their country (EU estimates)
- 6 days of military spending by aid donors would close the US\$16 billion Education for All external financing gap (UNESCO estimates)

### EU Assistance to Education in Syria

- More than € 30 M of EU development (non-humanitarian) programmes have been allocated to education in Syria. This is complemented by additional funds and programmes addressed to Syrian refugees in neighbouring countries. Total of €288 million in the region on Education-child protection projects.
- EU assistance addresses issues such as real attendance, quality of education and psychological support to traumatised children, for example by coupling aids on education with feeding programmes in schools, by providing training for teachers and social workers, and by including psycho-social support components in its programmes for children and youth.
- The EU funded programme managed by UNICEF will help 2 million children to access basic education, will reach one million children with "Back-to-school" campaigns, will rehabilitate 200 damaged schools, and will organise vocational training and alternative learning for 30,000 adolescents.

*"We want all children to enjoy the constant protection of their rights. Each and every girl and boy in the world should have the opportunity to develop their talents. Promoting education is also giving peace a chance to be a lasting peace. We want 'children of war' to become 'children of peace'."*

**José Manuel Barroso, former President of the European Commission**

### Resources on the EU Approach in situations of conflict and fragility



[EU Staff Handbook Operating in situations of conflict and fragility 2014](#)



[European Report on Development 2009: Overcoming Fragility in Africa](#) (Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies, European University Institute, Brussels, 2009)



[International Network for Education in Emergencies \(INEE\): http://www.ineesite.org](http://www.ineesite.org)



[EU-UNICEF webportal: http://www.unicef.org/eu/](http://www.unicef.org/eu/)



[European Commission Development and Cooperation \(DG DEVCO\): http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid](http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid)



[European Commission European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations \(DG NEAR\): https://ec.europa.eu/enlargement](https://ec.europa.eu/enlargement)



[European Commission Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection \(DG ECHO\): http://ec.europa.eu/echo/fr/what/humanitarian-aid/children-of-peace](http://ec.europa.eu/echo/fr/what/humanitarian-aid/children-of-peace)



[European External Action Service \(EEAS\): http://www.eeas.europa.eu/](http://www.eeas.europa.eu/)

