

The logo for 'SEND MY FRIEND TO SCHOOL' is located in the top right corner. It features the words 'SEND MY' in blue, 'FRIEND' in yellow, and 'TO SCHOOL' in pink, all in a bold, sans-serif font. The text is contained within a dark blue speech bubble shape that points downwards.

**SEND MY
FRIEND
TO SCHOOL**



**Education in Emergencies:
Let My Friends Learn**

Young persons policy report



© Action For Humanity

This is a youth-friendly policy report⁴ to support and deepen your learning of the Send My Friend to School 2023 **Education in Emergencies: Let My Friends Learn** campaign. The reason for a policy report is to provide a clear summary of an issue that also sets out the actions that we think should be taken by the UK government to make sure that all children can access education during times of emergencies.

Introduction:

Every child deserves to go to school, especially those who are living through emergencies like climate-related disasters or war. Education in emergencies (also known as EiE) can save lives and give children across the world a brighter future. Through education, children can learn how to stay safe in emergencies and improve their mental health.

When children in countries affected by emergencies are asked what is important to them, education is at the top of the list. You may be able to think of lots of other reasons you think education is important- like making new friends, playing sports, or having school dinners.

Sadly, a growing number of emergencies in the world are stopping children from learning. These include conflict, climate-change, hunger and COVID-19. These emergencies mainly affect the children who need help the most, including girls, children with disabilities, and children who are refugees.

Despite the record level of need, EiE does not receive enough money from governments and organisations around the world.

The UK Government has made some positive commitments to provide education to children living in emergencies. This is part of the Official Development Assistance (ODA) or 'aid' budget. This is money that the UK government spends that goes towards the humanitarian needs of countries that are in the Global South. This money is spent on things like health and education. This is also the budget that money to go towards education in emergencies comes from.

In the last couple of years, there have been very large cuts to this ODA budget. This can threaten the education of children living in emergencies. These cuts, as well as a growing number of global emergencies, mean that more money than ever is needed.

Send My Friend to School is calling on the UK Government to help more children in emergencies access the education they deserve, and protect the learning of all children during crises.

No matter where they live or what they are experiencing, children want one thing: the opportunity to go to school and learn. The UK Government must act now to protect children's learning during emergencies.

What is an emergency?



According to the United Nations, emergencies are situations caused by human activity or climate-related disasters that destroy normal life. This includes the disruption of school and a child's access to a quality education. Emergencies can happen quickly, like floods, hurricanes or acts of violence, or slowly, like drought. In many cases, emergencies will happen on top of other emergencies, creating something called a complex emergency.

Examples of emergencies include:

Conflict, violence, and attacks on education:

Violent conflicts are increasingly impacting children's education, with a record 452 million children living in violent conflict zones.² Even when children are able to access education, school is not always a safe place, as they may be targeted for attack during conflict.

Forced Displacement, (or children who are forced to leave their homes)

As the number of children who are displaced, and forced to leave their homes increases, the impact on their education worsens: children who are refugees are five times more likely to be out of school than other children.³

Climate change:

Extreme climate-related emergencies can lead to widespread hunger, displacement, violence, damage to schools, and injury to students or teachers. All of this can result in children missing education for months or even years.

Hunger and malnutrition:

Many families who can't afford to feed themselves also struggle to afford an education for their children. Children who go to school hungry have more trouble learning, as they are more likely to have problems concentrating in class and remembering what they've learned.

Epidemics and pandemics:

When the COVID-19 pandemic was at its worst, over 190 countries closed schools affecting 1.6 billion children and young people globally.⁴ We need to prepare for future pandemics to ensure that such disruption to children's education does not happen again.



“We know that everyone has the right to education, but it is also lifesaving during emergencies, especially for girls and young women, because we learn to protect ourselves and others against gender-based violence [which is violence that affects people who are of a particular gender more than others] which also gives us better opportunities for the future.”

Nataly, 21, Youth 4 Education in Emergencies Panel Member, Ecuador

Even if children are in school, they may not have access to a quality education. This could be because of big class sizes, not enough teachers, or a curriculum that is not able to meet every child's needs.

We must do everything we can to keep all children in school and accessing a quality education. Children who are able to read and write are more likely to stay in school, which gives them more opportunities for their futures.⁵ We know that education is important, but there are many other benefits of going to school.

The place where you learn is also often the place where you can have a hot meal, play sports, and make friends.

Education can also teach specific skills that help children in emergencies, such as lessons on hand-washing and disaster preparedness, which are skills and knowledge children may need to know if a climate-disaster happens. A safe school can reduce the poor mental health impact of emergencies by giving children a sense of normality, stability, and hope for the future.

Asks for the UK Government

The Send My Friend to School Coalition is calling for action from the UK Government across four areas:

PREPARE: Strengthen and prepare plans to keep more children in school

PROTECT: Ensure children are safe and continue learning during an emergency

INVEST: Increase money for EiE

ACT: Be global leaders in protecting children's right to education in emergencies



Strengthen and prepare plans to keep more children in school

Good preparation and planning can reduce the risk of emergencies causing disruption to education. Every country should have a plan to protect children's learning in times of crisis. These plans include identifying the risks to schools and planning in advance to avoid learning disruptions.⁶ For example, in Southern Zimbabwe, children have been learning that if there is a whirlwind, which is a small tornado, you must stand in a clearing, or if there is a hailstorm, you must not play outside, but hide underneath a table to protect your head.⁷ The UK Government should help other governments and partners around the world with plans like these ones, so that children can be prepared if emergencies hit.



PROTECT



Ensure children are safe and continue learning during an emergency

Children living in emergencies are more likely to be out-of-school and at a bigger risk of violence and abuse. A quick return to education is one of the most important actions to protect children during and after an emergency. It is also important to include mental health support as part of a child's access to education during an emergency. This can help them manage their emotions and create good relationships. For example, in the Rohingya refugee camp in Bangladesh, some children with additional learning needs are receiving home based education support, and 'individual support plans' which can include both educational and support, and other emotional care, to prepare them for returning to school. The UK Government should make sure that education and mental health support is a priority in emergency settings.

Increase funding for EiE

Over the last couple of years, the UK Government has reduced the amount of money in its budget to support countries around the world experiencing poverty. This is the budget (called Official Development Assistance (ODA) or 'aid') that EiE funding comes from, which means there is also less money for EiE. We urge the UK to reverse these cuts and increase funding for global education in times of emergency. Imagine during covid-19 school closures in the UK if there wasn't enough money to pay for your teachers, or if there wasn't enough money to put your classes online. This was the reality for thousands of children across the world, and meant that they missed out on years of learning, and in many cases, never returned to school.

INVEST



ACT



Be global leaders in protecting children's right to education in emergencies:

The UK must be leaders for other countries to promote children's right to education in emergencies. The UK should use its current connections and experience with EiE to help build more funding and support to ensure all children have access to an education in times of emergency.

The UK must also create opportunities to include children and young people in decisions that affect them. For example, every year, the United Nations brings world leaders together to discuss issues around climate change at an event called **COP**⁹. This year's event is in November, and is a great opportunity for the UK Government to commit to investing in more EiE in front of other governments so they may be encouraged to do the same

Disability inclusive education in refugee settings

Romana, 7, Bangladesh



Community outreach and home-based education programmes have enabled Romana* to walk, communicate and learn alongside her peers at the Rohingga refugee camp. © Humanity Inclusion

Bangladesh is a country in South Asia with a population of 169 million. Its capital city is Dhaka. The Rohingya are a group of people from Myanmar, a neighbouring country which shares a border with Bangladesh. The Rohingya have experienced many years of violence and poor treatment in Myanmar.

In 2017, after huge violence in Myanmar, more than 700,000 Rohingya people, over half of whom were children, sought safety in Bangladesh. For six years now, many of the Rohingya children who fled to Bangladesh have had no school to go to.

Romana is a 7-year-old girl who lives with her parents and her younger sister. When she was 2, she left Myanmar with her family and settled in the Rohingya refugee camp. Romana has a serious condition called cerebral palsy, which affects how she can move and balance.

When Romana first arrived at the camp, every day activities were very difficult for her, and her family were concerned about the extra support she would need, socially, physically and educationally, on top of their worries about adapting to their new surroundings.

However, with the support of an "inclusive learning" team in the camp, Romana was able to enrol in a home-based education programme,

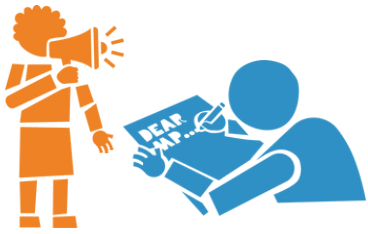
where she received physiotherapy, speech and language therapy, and other wellbeing support to help her continue her education. For example, Romana has been provided with a walking frame, and receives regular sessions to help with her speech and language skills.

The support Romana is receiving at home, will mean that soon she will be able to enrol in a camp-based learning centre, and join other children who are learning. Romana's individual support plan has already supported her to learn how to read and write in just a few weeks.

Romana's mother Rafika has always been very keen about her daughter's education, and supports her with her therapy and home-based education. She says *"I never lose hope. Even though my daughter lives with a disability she has full rights to get an education"*

The approach taken to Romana's education, which combines home-based learning with additional support has been the preparation that Romana needs to succeed in a "mainstream" school in the future.

Also, in these schools, teachers are being trained in "inclusive education" to change attitudes around education for children with disabilities, and provide support for learning centres to be inclusive, and accessible to all children.



Get involved: Speak up for children in emergencies around the world



© Send My Friend to School

“Every child deserves access to school, and that’s not up for debate. This does not change in times of emergencies. Send My Friend To School has empowered us with the knowledge that anyone can make a difference in the world, and has provided us with the tools to do so. We want to see our government protecting children’s right to education in times of emergencies”

Send My Friend to School Campaign Champions 2022

Your voice matters! Decision-makers and politicians want to hear from you. Listening to the views of people is an important part of their job. The Send My Friend campaign has put together guides to help you engage your member of Parliament, whether that’s by writing them a letter, designing a creative campaign action, or inviting them to speak to your classroom. Here are some handy links to support your campaigning!

1. [Youth Leadership Guide](#)
2. [Meeting your MP Guide](#)
3. [Send My Friend to School Campaign Pack](#)



Campaign champions creating their campaign actions © Send My Friend to School

End Notes

1. *Send My Friend to School Policy report (full length)* <https://sendmyfriend.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/Let-My-Friends-Learn-policy-report-5.pdf>
2. *UNICEF report "25 years of Children and Armed conflict"* UNICEF (2022) 25 Years Of Children And Armed Conflict: Taking Action To Protect Children In War https://www.unicef.org/media/123021/file/25_Years_Children_in_Armed_Conflict.pdf
3. *UNICEF report "Migrant and displaced children"* UNICEF, Migrant and displaced children <https://www.unicef.org/migrant-refugee-internally-displaced-children>
4. UN (2020) Policy Brief: Education during COVID-19 and beyond <https://unsdg.un.org/resources/policy-brief-education-during-covid-19-and-beyond>
5. *RISE (2020) Aligning Levels of Instruction with Goals and the Needs of Students (ALIGNS): Varied Approaches, Common Principles* <https://riseprogramme.org/publications/aligning-levels-instruction-goals-and-needs-students-aligns-varied-approaches-common>
6. *Geneva Global Hub for EiE* https://eihub.org/education-in-emergencies-and-crisis-sensitive-planning#_edn2
7. You can see more information about Save the Children's Disaster Risk Reduction programme in our case studies that you may have used in class <https://sendmyfriend.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/Case-Studies-EiE-2.pdf>
8. You can see more information about Humanity and Inclusion's community teaching programme in our case studies that you may have used in class <https://sendmyfriend.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/Case-Studies-EiE-2.pdf>
9. *What is COP?* <https://ukcop26.org/uk-presidency/what-is-a-cop/>



Campaign champions at residential training weekend © Send My Friend to School

Send My Friend to School is the 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:

- | | |
|---------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Action For Humanity | National Education Union (NEU) |
| Cafod | NASUWT |
| Christian Aid | RESULTS UK |
| Deaf Child Worldwide | Save the Children |
| Educate a Child International | Sense International |
| The Education Institute of Scotland | Sightsavers |
| Humanity & Inclusion | The Steve Sinnott Foundation |
| Girls Not Brides | STiR Education |
| International Parliamentary Network for Education | Street Child |
| Oxfam | University and College Union |
| Plan International UK | UNICEF |
| | World Vision |

Acknowledgements:

This report was written by Shaylyn McMahon and Rebekah Lucking, based on an original report by Oliver Mawhinney and Takyiwa Danso with contributions by members of the Send My Friend to School Policy and Parliamentary Working Group. You can read the original report here. Special thanks to 2023 Campaign Champions Jess and Emily (Croxley Danes School) and Mariya (Merstham Park) for their contributions.

Front cover photo: Rahma* (14) lives in the Togdheer region in Somaliland. She studies at the local primary school. She lives with her younger sister at her aunt’s place (to help her unmarried aunt). The rest of the family is in the capital city of Somaliland, Hargeisa. They were farmers but the severe drought meant their livestock couldn't eat. They weren't able to farm or make a living and became displaced. After having to move from her home, Rahma* benefitted from the school feeding programme and is still happy to get education.



© Marieke van der Velden / Save the Children

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