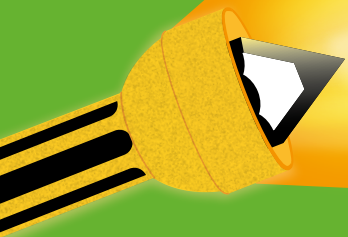


EDUCATION IN EMERGENCIES POSITION STATEMENT



**GAVE 2025:
EDUCATION SAVES LIVES!**

Campaña Mundial por la
EDUCACIÓN
Coalición española www.cme-espana.org

Education is a fundamental human right that must always be guaranteed to everyone. However, when a crisis occurs, **this right is the first to be suspended and the last to be reinstated**. The stories of children in Gaza, Sudan, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Ukraine and Haiti are stark examples.

In 2024, **242 million students – from pre-primary to upper secondary education–** in 85 countries **have experienced school disruptions due to climate events**. Most of them are low-income countries. This figure is set to rise steadily as, according to UNICEF's Child Climate Risk Index (CCRI), around one billion children worldwide – almost half of the world's children – live in countries considered to be at 'extreme risk' from the effects of the climate crisis ([UNICEF, 2025](#)).

Armed conflict and violence, on the increase, have a devastating impact on the right to education. More than 52 million children and adolescents in these contexts are out of school ([UNICEF, 2024](#)). Given that such crises last an average of nine years, the compulsory education of an entire generation could be interrupted or even lost.

Schools are increasingly being targeted. Between 2022 and 2023, attacks on education increased by almost 20%, with hundreds of schools threatened, looted, burned or destroyed ([GCPEA, 2024](#)), depriving millions of students of a safe learning environment.

School closures and destruction exacerbate gender inequality. Girls are less likely to return to school and face heightened risks of violence, exploitation, forced pregnancy and harmful practices such as child marriage and female genital mutilation.

Cuts in cooperation and humanitarian aid limit the capacity to respond to these crises. The Geneva Global Centre for Education in Emergencies warns that **234 million school-aged children are affected by emergencies and urgently need quality education**. In terms of size, this figure would be equivalent to the population of the sixth largest country in the world.



THE IMPACT ON THE LIVES OF CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS

In Pakistan, 107 school days (54% of the school year) were lost to climate disasters during the 2023-2024 school year.

In Gaza, the war has prevented students from attending school for more than a year. With more than 90 per cent of schools partially or totally damaged, their academic future is uncertain.

In Niger, 42% of students are out of school due to conflict, disasters and displacement. The 2024 floods delayed the start of school for almost 4 million students.

In Sudan, 9.5 million children have no access to formal education due to the destruction of schools and lack of teachers. An estimated 17 million of the 19 million school-age children are not currently learning.

EDUCATION CANNOT WAIT! →

- **It guarantees safe, protective spaces and wellbeing.** Schools are safe spaces where children and adolescents feel protected from physical threats, and can learn, play and socialise in a positive treatment environment. They also promote mental health, strengthen resilience and develop key socio-emotional skills to manage emotions, prevent risks and cope with crises.
- **It is key for development.** It gives us knowledge, enriches culture and develops skills and values that boost personal and social progress.
- **It helps get back to a routine.** After a crisis, returning to school is key to re-establishing emotional stability, offering a stable routine that allows development and learning to continue.
- **It is key for gender equality.** Guaranteeing quality and transformative education contributes to eliminating discrimination against girls and women, redefining gender norms and building a more equitable society. It is a powerful antidote to child and forced marriages: if all girls finished their secondary education, child marriages would practically disappear, and premature pregnancies would be reduced by 75%.
- **It contributes to food security.** Feeding children at school protects their health, their nutrition and their ability to learn, as well as strengthening local food systems and increasing access to school and learning.
- **It prevents violence.** Education can counter the fundamental causes of violence, encouraging values such as inclusion, tolerance, human rights and conflict resolution. Strengthening social cohesion and contributing to long-term reconstruction.
- **It strengthens resilience.** A quality education reduces vulnerability to climate disasters by including training in risk management, prevention and mitigation. In addition, investing in adapted school infrastructure and teacher training is key to building more resilient societies.

- **It promotes the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).** Promoting education (SDG 4) is not only a priority in its own right, but also acts as a catalyst for other goals, helping to reduce poverty and inequality gaps, promote equality and foster more cohesive societies, especially in crisis contexts.

THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE FOR EDUCATION IN EMERGENCIES: INSUFFICIENT FUNDING. ➔

While the impact of quality education in crisis contexts is widely acknowledged, funding for education, a key factor for its full impact, is well below minimum standards.

- **Insufficient funding.** In 2024, only 29% of the identified needs for Education in Emergencies were met, with just US\$879 million disbursed in response to an appeal for US\$3 billion (OCHA, 2025). This gap has widened since 2018, leaving millions of children without access to quality education, with devastating consequences for their present and their future.
- **A sidelined agenda.** Education in Emergencies should receive 10% of humanitarian funding, according to the Global Campaign for Education. However, on average, only 3% has been covered, indicating that it remains a very low priority for donors.
- **The role of Spain and the autonomous communities.** Spain has emerged as a more active donor, ranking 30th globally and contributing an average of 0.5% of funds over the last three years. It is worth mentioning that most of these funds come from the state government (AECID), with a very limited contribution from the autonomous communities and local entities (Educo, 2024).
- **The countries with the highest educational deficits are also the least well-funded.** Some countries' education systems are more vulnerable to emergencies and should receive funding proportionate to their needs. However, they are the ones that receive the least funding: Nigeria, Burkina Faso, Haiti, Venezuela, Myanmar, among others.
- **Commitment from very few donors.** The European Union is the largest donor with 20 per cent of the budget, but the top five donors account for half of the funds and the top ten for 70 per cent. This means that the sustainability of the agenda is highly at risk, especially if a major donor decides to stop contributing, such as the United States, the third largest donor, whose contribution is currently frozen.

While funding for **Education in Emergencies barely covers 29% of global needs**, we are seeing a significant increase in spending on defence. The EU and Spain have announced their commitment to **raise the military budget to 2 per cent of GDP by 2029**, which could **divert funds from essential sectors such as education**, health and development cooperation.

Security is not limited to investing in defence. **International cooperation and education are fundamental tools for stability and peace, reducing inequalities and preventing conflicts.** Cooperation has proven its effectiveness for decades, which is why we need to strengthen it now more than ever.

The GCE urges governments to strengthen peace policies that **guarantee fundamental rights such as education, health, decent work, equality and peace.** They are the foundations of human security and real conflict prevention. It is imperative that governments ensure adequate funding for education, prioritising investment in wellbeing and human development.



DANA

Education in Emergencies does not only affect third countries that experience war or natural disasters on a regular basis. The DANA that hit the Mediterranean coast in October 2024 has shown that education can be at risk in many other contexts.

The floods disrupted the education of some 40,000 students due to the closure of schools in the affected areas, and the temporary relocation of 24,000 to other schools. Months later, challenges such as teacher workload, curricular mismatches and the emotional impact on students still persist, as well as the suspension of many extracurricular activities.

All of this prevents children from returning to their routines in a context where families are still coping with many of the effects the disaster had on their lives. Guaranteeing well-resourced, knowledgeable and responsive schools is key to their wellbeing, protection and development.

In 2025, the Spanish Coalition of the Global Campaign for Education (GCE) in the Global Action Week for Education (GAWE), wants to put the spotlight on the need for Education in Emergencies to ensure that this fundamental right is not lost when a crisis occurs.

Our demands to the Spanish Government, political representatives and public administration at state, regional and local level are:

1. Fund emergency education in a sustainable and equitable way.

- Guarantee that at least 10% of humanitarian aid is allocated to Education in Emergencies.
- Ensure that at least 15% of funds go to local organisations, who are the first responders and know the context best.
- Commit to multilateral education funds, such as Education Cannot Wait (ECW) and the Global Partnership for Education (GPE).
- Invest in resilient infrastructure, educational materials, psychosocial support and teacher training to ensure quality education in crisis situations.
- Review the international financial architecture to strengthen funding for Education in Emergencies, within the framework of the Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development.

2. Protect and guarantee the right to education in crisis contexts.

- Ensure that education in emergencies is a priority in Spain's foreign policy, aligning efforts at all levels of the administration.
- Provide safe and accessible learning environments for all learners, free from discrimination.

- Encourage the active participation of children and adolescents, who are often marginalised from decisions about their education.

3. Build inclusive, equitable and transformative education systems.

- Promote the inclusion of vulnerable populations, including refugees, asylum seekers, stateless persons and internally displaced persons in national education systems.
- Guarantee transformative Education in Emergencies for gender equality, aligned with SDGs 5 and 10.
- Ensure safe educational spaces for LGBTQIA+ students and students with disabilities.

4. Strengthen cooperation and strategic alliances.

- Foster partnerships with key actors in the education sector, such as the Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE), the Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack and the Global Campaign for Education (GCE).
- Improve coordination between the state, regional and local administrations, as well as their collaboration with NGOs and research centres, to facilitate more effective responses in emergencies.

5. Guarantee safe and caring environments in educational institutions.

- Strengthen investment in wellbeing and mental health programmes for children and adolescents affected by emergencies.
- Prioritise social and emotional learning approaches to strengthen children's resilience in crisis contexts.
- Improve teacher training and salaries, ensuring that they have the tools to emotionally support students in emergency situations.

EDUCATION IN EMERGENCIES

This term refers to opportunities for access to quality learning for all ages in crisis situations, including early childhood development, primary, secondary, non-formal, technical, vocational, higher and adult education.

Common situations where Education in Emergencies is essential include conflict, violence, forced displacement, natural disasters and public health emergencies. (INEE, 2018)



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