

GLOBAL ESTIMATES 2025 UPDATE:

234 MILLION

**Crisis-Affected Children and Adolescents
Require Urgent Support to Access Quality
Education: An increase of 35 million girls
and boys over the past three years**

Across the globe, compounding conflicts, coupled with more frequent and severe extreme weather and climate events, are jeopardizing the education of a rapidly growing number of girls and boys.

A new report¹ by [Education Cannot Wait](#) (ECW) reveals that the **number of school-aged children in crises worldwide requiring urgent support to access quality education has reached a staggering 234 million** – an estimated increase of 35 million over the past three years.

Of these, **85 million (37%) are out of school**. Refugees, internally displaced children, girls and children with disabilities remain among those most impacted by these intersecting crises.

This is a global silent emergency.

Children cannot wait for wars to end or for the climate crisis to be resolved to have the opportunity, and their right, to learn and thrive – by then, it will be too late.

Exposure to armed conflict, forced displacement, climate-induced disasters and other crises poses immediate and long-term threats to children's education, health and well-being.

In humanitarian crises, access to quality education is not only a fundamental right – it is also lifesaving and life-sustaining. Education provides a sense of normalcy, critical protection and services, and restores hope amid the most challenging circumstances.

Despite these growing needs, humanitarian education aid funding has stagnated, and the share of total Official Development Assistance allocated to education has even declined in recent years.

The world cannot afford to leave behind nearly a quarter of a billion crisis-affected children. Failing to act perpetuates cycles of hunger, violence, disasters, extreme poverty, gender inequality, exploitation and human rights violations.

We must act now to ensure girls and boys trapped in emergencies and protracted crises receive the quality education they deserve. Unlocking their potential to thrive and become positive changemakers is the most transformative investment we can make – for them, their families and communities, and our world.

EDUCATION IN PROTRACTED CRISES



50%

of the 85 million out-of-school crisis-affected children are concentrated in just five protracted crises.

ECW already has Multi-Year Resilience Programmes (MYRPs) in these five countries. However, reaching all of these children will require urgent, additional financing to scale-up results aligned with the MYRPs.

As the global fund for education in emergencies and protracted crises in the United Nations, ECW works with partners to deliver quality education to crisis-affected children, no matter who or where they are.

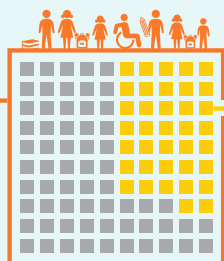
ECW urgently calls for US\$600 million in additional funding to reach at least 20 million crisis-affected girls and boys with the safety, opportunity and hope of a quality education by 2026, accelerating progress towards realising the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

GLOBALLY...

234

**MILLION
CHILDREN**

in crisis contexts
require support
to access quality
education



85

**MILLION
CHILDREN (37%)**

affected by crises are out of school

52% girls

20% children with disabilities

17% forcibly displaced:

13% internally displaced;

4% refugees and asylum-seekers

KEY FINDINGS

- Children with disabilities are some of the most marginalized and affected groups in crises. They make up over 20% of out-of-school crisis-affected children (over 17 million²).
- Access to secondary education is dire: 36% of children of lower-secondary and 47% of upper-secondary school-aged children are unable to access education.
- Even when they are in school, many children affected by crises are falling behind. Only 17% of crisis-affected primary school-aged children achieve minimum reading proficiency by the end of primary school.
- About half of the crisis-affected school-aged children globally live in sub-Saharan Africa, a subregion facing the most complex challenges in guaranteeing every child's right to education.

Together with our strategic partners, ECW has reached over 11.4 million crisis-affected children with the safety, opportunity and hope of a quality education. We are dedicated to upholding their right to education by delivering quality learning opportunities through a whole-of-child approach, helping them overcome the challenges they face and achieve holistic learning outcomes.

Beyond the data released in the new report are millions of vulnerable girls and boys who await our action. From inside damaged walls of classrooms, makeshift refugee settlements and communities torn apart by war and disaster, they are desperately holding on to the hope that education will help them to realize their dreams of becoming a teacher, a nurse, a pilot, an entrepreneur, a scientist, a doctor and more!

Every child has an inherent right to education. If we are to achieve Sustainable Development Goal 4 – ensuring inclusive and quality education for all by 2030 – we must act now. The dreams of these 234 million girls and boys depend on our collective actions today.



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A COMPREHENSIVE DATASET ON THE STATE OF EDUCATION FOR CRISIS-AFFECTED CHILDREN WORLDWIDE

ECW's Global Estimates study utilizes an innovative methodology to ensure that crisis-affected children and adolescents are accurately represented in global education data. This evolving approach establishes a rigorous and consistent process for synthesizing high-quality data from carefully vetted sources. By leveraging existing reliable data, the study captures the scale and spread of the global education crisis, provides trends over time, and supports evidence-based policymaking. The 2025 Global Estimates is the third iteration of this groundbreaking study, first published in 2022.



**EDUCATION
CANNOT
WAIT**

² As data limitations prevent estimating the number of forcibly displaced school-aged children with disabilities, the actual number of out-of-school crisis-affected children with disabilities is likely much higher.