



International
Parliamentary
Network for
Education



The United States and Education Cannot Wait A briefing for Members of Congress

Armed conflict and climate disasters are causing unprecedented levels of forced displacement. The COVID pandemic has put huge pressure on health and food systems and resulted in school closures which deprived millions of children up to two years of schooling.

As a result the right of children and young people to education is being disrupted, denied, and in some cases, entirely destroyed.

New analysis shows that 222 million school-aged children are affected by crises globally and in need of urgent educational support.

At the same time educational responses in emergencies remain severely underfunded, made worse by rapidly increasing needs.

In response, Education Cannot Wait - the UN global fund for education in emergencies - has launched its replenishment campaign which aims to raise \$1.5 billion USD to reach 20 million of the most vulnerable children affected by crises between 2023 - 2026

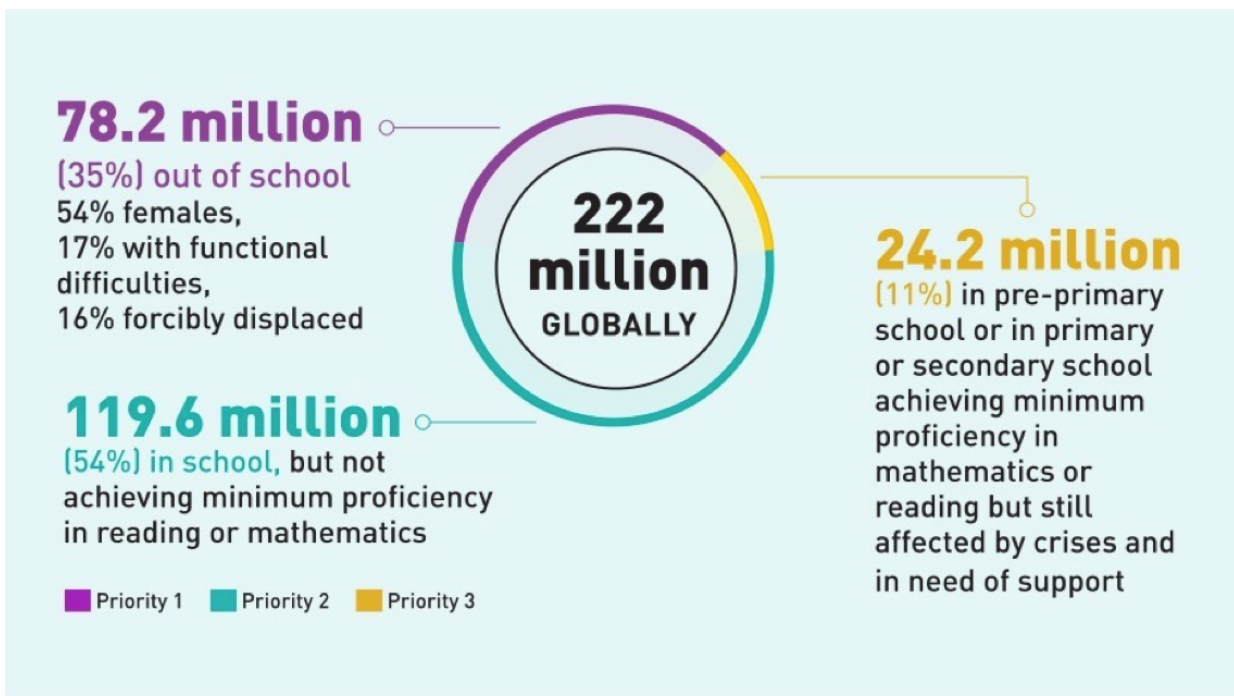
A world in crisis

Today, humanitarian needs [remain at historically high levels](#), with conflicts, climate disasters and displacements affecting more people than ever before. In 2021, an estimated 306.0 million people were assessed to be in need, 90.4 million more than in 2019 before the Covid-19 pandemic.

Education at risk

[According to a new Education Cannot Wait study](#), the number of crisis-affected children and adolescents who need education support is estimated at 222 million. This is much higher than a previous estimate of 75 million from 2016 and indicates an alarming trend.

Of the 222 million crisis-affected children and adolescents in need of urgent education support, the study indicates that as many as 78.2 million are out of school, and close to 120 million are in school, but not achieving minimum proficiency in math or reading.



The vast majority of these children are in countries supported by ECW's ground-breaking multi-year investments, including [Afghanistan](#), [Democratic Republic of the Congo](#), [Ethiopia](#), [Mali](#), [Nigeria](#), [Pakistan](#), [Somalia](#), [South Sudan](#), [Sudan](#) and [Yemen](#).

State of funding for education in emergencies

These alarming new figures combine with the fact that education in emergencies and protracted crises remains chronically underfunded, and that the funding gap has gotten worse since the COVID-19 pandemic.

In 2021, humanitarian funding for education in emergencies reached a record level of \$807 million. But, with funding needs growing even quicker due to conflict, climate change and the pandemic, this sum was insufficient to provide millions of children safe, inclusive, and quality education.

Across UN-led humanitarian appeals, the education sector was just 22% funded in 2021 – half of what it was in 2018.

This leaves millions of children without the support necessary to return to school and resume their learning.

Education Cannot Wait: the world's global fund for education in emergencies

[Education Cannot Wait \(ECW\)](#) works with partners to provide a unique combination of rapid education responses in emergencies and multi-year investments in complex protracted crises.

Since its establishment in 2016, ECW has reached almost 7 million children and youth in some of the toughest, complex crises across 40 countries. Yet millions of girls and boys are still left behind and need urgent support.

\$1.5 billion to reach 20 million children and young people

With funding of \$1.5 billion for its next strategic period 2023 - 2026, Education Cannot Wait will:

- Get 12 million children and adolescents back into school following a new emergency or the escalation of a crisis.
- Provide three years of holistic education support to 8 million children and adolescents in protracted crises.
- Support 12 million girls with quality education.

- Ensure 2 million children and adolescents with disabilities in crises receive a quality education.

Education Cannot Wait will also make a vital contribution to more effective financing and to strengthening the wider education in emergencies sector, indirectly reaching millions more children.

Education Cannot Wait's [High-Level Financing Conference](#) on the 16-17th February in Geneva – hosted by Switzerland, and sponsored by Germany, Niger, Norway, and South Sudan – will be the opportunity for governments to turn commitments into action, by making funding contributions of at least \$1.5 billion for the period 2023 - 2026.

The United States' support to ECW is more critical than ever

The U.S. Government has been central to ECW's impact since its inception in 2016. Its continued support is crucial in setting an example for new and existing donor governments to help ensure ECW meets its new funding target.

The U.S. is currently the third largest donor to ECW. In 2021, [the U.S. Agency for International Development \(USAID\) announced \\$37 million](#) in new contributions for ECW to increase access to education, improve learning outcomes and reach the most marginalized students. The U.S. Government has also announced [\\$7 million in funding to ECW](#) for the financial year 2022.

ECW's work is aligned with the U.S. government's strategy on quality basic education, which commits to [improving learning outcomes](#) and [expanding access to quality basic education for all](#), including for marginalized and vulnerable populations.

A coalition of U.S. civil society organizations is calling on the U.S. Government to make an early multi-year intended [pledge of \\$158m to ECW](#), in order to meet the overall replenishment target and leverage ambition from other donors.

- ECW supports and **prioritizes holistic learning outcomes** to ensure that crisis-affected children develop foundational literacy and numeracy skills, while improving their well-being.
- **95% of ECW programmes are improving gender parity**: helping to tackle gender inequality, child marriage and early marriage.

- ECW is taking steps to **mitigate the impact of climate change** in its investments and policy work.

Children can't be asked to wait to exercise their right to education

Children should not have to wait for wars to end or for the climate crisis to be resolved to have the opportunity to learn and thrive – it will be too late. We must act now to empower them with the education they need to achieve their dreams and become positive changemakers for themselves, their families, their communities and our world.

Show your support for children caught up in crises

Senators and Representatives have a vital role in advocating for and growing U.S. development assistance and humanitarian funding for education and encouraging the U.S. to contribute to the upcoming replenishment of Education Cannot Wait.

There are a number of ways you can show your support for the education of children affected by humanitarian crises and Education Cannot Wait.

1. Ask the Administration to make an early multi-year intended pledge to Education Cannot Wait of \$158 million to cover the period 2023-2026.
2. Urge other public and private sector donors to make ambitious pledges at the High- Level Financing Conference.
3. Maintain at least \$35 million in State & Foreign Operations Appropriations funding for Education Cannot Wait and consider an increase to \$50 million per year in Financial Year 2024 and beyond to meet the global need.
4. Encourage the U.S. to engage constructively with the ECW Secretariat by serving in leadership roles and providing expertise and oversight.
5. Co-sign the joint letter in support of Education Cannot Wait from members of Congress.

In addition to supporting ECW meet its funding target members of Congress are also urged to ensure the U.S. government:

6. Supports all levels of access to education in crisis and conflict settings including early childhood development, pre-primary, foundational learning, primary, secondary, and post-secondary education and for traditionally marginalized groups including girls, children and youth with disabilities, and minority groups.

7. Integrates education in all U.S. Government humanitarian response efforts – both bilateral and multilateral – and continue to promote coordination across all sectors and branches of the U.S. Government.

More information

You can access Education Cannot Wait's Case for Investment at www.educationcannotwait.org/Case4Investment

For more information or any questions about IPNEd, including our work on education in emergencies and education financing, contact [Lorena Chiran](#).

To become part of IPNEd's global network of parliamentary champions for education please email the address above or visit www.ipned.org/join-the-network.