



# TIME TO ACT



Save the Children

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A costed plan to deliver quality education to every last refugee child

# THE STORY IN NUMBERS

**25.3 million people** have fled their country seeking protection from violence or persecution (20 million under UNHCR's mandate & 5.3 million under UNRWA's mandate).

**55%** of refugees worldwide come from three countries: South Sudan, Afghanistan & Syria.

**Turkey, Pakistan and Uganda** are the top three refugee hosting countries, hosting a total of **6.3 million** refugees.

**Over half** of the world's refugees are children.

**3.7** million refugee children are not receiving an education at all and refugee children are **5 times** more likely to be out of school.

Only **50%** of refugees in low-income countries have access to primary education, compared with a global level of more than 90%.

Just **22%** of refugee adolescents attend secondary school compared to a global level of 84%.

The total cost of 5 years of education for all 7.5 million school age refugees (3-18) in low and middle-income countries is **\$21.5 billion**, of which \$11.9 billion should be provided by the international community.

In comparison the world spends **\$4.8 billion** on the military per day.

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**Education transforms lives, paving the way to better work, health and livelihoods. And in times of crisis, education can play a life-saving and life-sustaining role. But most children caught up in crisis are denied an education. More than half of the world's school aged refugees – 3.7 million – do not go to school. Having already lost their homes, they are now losing their education.**

As a result of discrimination, exclusion and a lack of funding, refugee children are five times less likely to attend school than other children in the countries to which they have moved. Only 61 per cent attend primary school, 22 per cent have access to secondary school and just 1 per cent enrol at university. Refugee girls are out of school at higher rates than boys.

There are many incontestable reasons why the international community must act to right this wrong. There are more refugees now than at any time in history. A child's right to an education does not end in times of emergency. Refugees have a critical need for safe, good quality and inclusive education – a building block of recovery, resilience and long-term development. Refugee children and their families themselves consistently identify education as a high priority. And unless efforts are made to reach those furthest behind, including refugees, the world will not meet Sustainable Development Goal 4, the education goal.

At the centre of the refugee education crisis is the need to help the countries that host refugees. Of the world's refugees, 85 per cent live in low-income and middle-income countries whose education systems already struggle to meet the needs of the marginalised.

These countries need international support to scale up education services and provide alternative educational opportunities for refugees.

The global responsibility to meet refugees' needs was formally recognised in September 2016 when politicians, diplomats, officials and activists from around the world united behind the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants. In this landmark political declaration, the international community promised to improve the way it responds to large movements of refugees and migrants, and to protracted refugee crises.

The New York Declaration pledges to “ensure all children are receiving education within a few months of arrival” and to “prioritise budgetary provision to facilitate this, including support for host countries as required”. Governments promised to provide quality early childhood, primary and secondary education, as well as accelerated learning, tertiary and vocational education.

To fulfil the commitments of the Declaration, the international community has been developing the Global Compact on Refugees. The compact will include a Programme of Action that describes how host country and donor governments and other stakeholders will improve refugees' access to education by contributing resources and expertise to expand and enhance the quality of national education systems.

This report challenges governments and international agencies to deliver on the promises they have made with practical action to close the refugee education gap. It sets out a plan of action that could deliver quality universal pre-primary, primary and secondary education to the world's refugees at an average cost of \$4.3 billion a year for five years. This represents \$575 per child per year, of which \$320 should come from the international community. This is because we propose that low-income countries receive 95 per cent of the required amount, lower middle-income countries 80 per cent and upper middle-income countries 40 per cent.

Syrian girls attend classes at a Save the Children supported school for refugees in Tripoli, Lebanon. It is estimated that more than 5 million refugee children from Syria will require education assistance in 2018.



## A GLOBAL COSTED PLAN TO PROVIDE EDUCATION TO EVERY LAST REFUGEE CHILD

The move to comprehensive planning in response to refugee crises, with responsibility shared globally, is welcome and necessary. However, the ultimate test of these commitments will be whether policy changes improve the lives of refugees and host communities and enhance their educational access and learning outcomes.

We urge governments and international organisations to use the unique opportunity offered by the Global Compact to agree on a global plan designed to deliver quality education to every last refugee child. Such agreement would be the first, critical step in mobilising the necessary political will, financing and technical know-how.

We have identified three pillars on which the plan should be based:

- **Inclusion:** Support for including refugees in national education systems.
- **Improvement:** Increasing efforts to ensure children are learning.
- **Investment:** Mobilising the funding necessary to scale up access to quality learning opportunities for refugees.

We have also set out suggestions for an accountability framework that would monitor progress and help ensure collaboration in the delivery of the plan.

Crucially the global plan would provide an umbrella framework for the development and implementation of national plans. National plans would help host country governments to reach a widely shared understanding of the state of refugee education in their country and set out a policy and delivery framework for ensuring all refugee children are in school and learning. National plans should form part of Education Sector Plans or, where that isn't possible in the short term, adjuncts to them. The multi-year joint programmes that have emerged via Education Cannot Wait are good examples of this approach.

The global costing plan and the measures that must underpin it, along with national plans, are described in the body of this report. These measures are summarised on the following pages.

## INCLUSION: INCLUDE REFUGEES IN NATIONAL EDUCATION SYSTEMS

Inclusive policies and practices are vital so that refugee children can access and thrive in the formal education system where possible or in accredited non-formal education when not. This is the most practical and sustainable way to provide displaced children with accredited and certified learning opportunities that can be monitored for quality.

Host country governments must be supported to develop and implement policies to ensure that refugee children are included in the national education system. The international community must provide host country governments with financial and technical support to scale up local education services and provide alternative accredited educational opportunities. In addition, host country governments have a responsibility to ensure that inclusive national policies are implemented at the regional, local and school levels.

Sadly, there is often a simple lack of political will, or worse, a political decision to obstruct the education of certain groups. Of the 25 hosting countries regarded as highest priority by UNHCR, the UN refugee agency, only 16 (64%) allow refugees full access to their education systems at primary and secondary level. In Malaysia, refugee children are barred from the formal system. In Egypt, Syrian children can access formal schools but refugee children from other countries of origin are turned away.

Some governments are taking commendable steps forwards. At the 2016 Supporting Syria and the Region conference and at the 2016 Leader's Summit on Refugees, many host country governments committed to expanding their school systems to all refugee learners. In December 2017, the governments of Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan and Uganda adopted the Djibouti Declaration on Refugee Education in IGAD Member States. It included far-reaching commitments including the integration of all refugees in national education systems by 2020.

## IMPROVEMENT: ENSURE REFUGEE AND HOST COMMUNITY CHILDREN ARE LEARNING

All students need good quality education that ensures they learn, supports their wellbeing and is relevant to their lives. At present, however, the quality of education available to refugee children, whether in camp or non-camp settings, is generally poor. This is putting their development, learning and well-being at risk and leading to high dropout rates.

The education needs of refugee students are complex. They may have already missed years of schooling and may be unfamiliar with the local curriculum and the language of instruction. Many displaced children have experienced severe trauma and require socio-emotional learning (SEL) opportunities and psychosocial support (PSS). Access to education for children with special needs, including those with mental and physical disabilities, must be prioritised.

Globally, early care and development for young children in emergencies, alongside parent education, is recognised as providing critical life-saving and life-sustaining support. But pre-primary and early childhood care and education services are rarely available to refugee communities.

Girls are disproportionately affected by crises. Refugee girls – particularly adolescents – are two and a half times more likely to be out of school and face a heightened risk of trafficking, child and forced marriage, early pregnancy, and sexual and gender-based violence. Refugee girls face numerous barriers to education, including the opportunity costs of attending school (such as loss of earning possibilities), toxic stress from gender-based violence, a lack of sanitation facilities in school, including access to menstrual hygiene management supplies. These barriers to education are exacerbated by safety concerns and a lack of protection in transit to and from educational facilities, or in the educational facilities themselves.

Host country governments and their development partners also need to remedy the lack of data on refugee education, which is preventing effective planning, provision and decision-making. Data enables service providers to map population movements, demographic details and service provision, while allowing for more effective needs analysis, monitoring, evaluation and learning, and budget projection.

# INVESTMENT: MOBILISE THE FUNDING NECESSARY TO SCALE UP ACCESS TO QUALITY LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES FOR REFUGEES

Education systems around the world, especially in low- and middle-income countries, are underfunded and failing to meet the needs of children, especially the most marginalised. The Education Commission estimates that in low- and middle-income countries, spending on education needs to increase from \$1.2 trillion annually today to \$3 trillion by 2030.<sup>1</sup> Many of the education systems in the top ten refugee hosting countries are weak and receive little support from the international community. Education received more than 2 per cent of humanitarian financing in only two of these countries in 2016. This level mirrors the humanitarian sector in general where only 2.7 per cent is directed to education.

In the Incheon Framework for Action, UNESCO indicates that national governments should spend 4-6 per cent of GDP or 15-20 per cent of their budgets on education. Given the protracted nature of refugee crises, UNHCR should be spending similar proportions on education. In 2016, however, UNHCR missed all its 2016 education targets – because it only managed to raise \$4.4 billion out of its projected budget of \$7.5 billion. At primary level, UNHCR was aiming to enrol 1.4 million children, but enrolled only 980,000. At lower secondary level, the target was 149,000 and the agency enrolled only 66,000. Meeting UNHCR's funding targets should be a minimum achievement for the international community.

Where accurate needs analyses and refugee response plans do exist, there is frequently a lack of sufficient funding to implement them. In June 2017, Uganda held a Solidarity Summit. Its total costed plan for refugees requested \$2 billion annually, but the summit raised only \$350 million, less than 20 per cent of the required amount.

The financing available for education for refugees has been overwhelmingly oriented towards short-term projects that fail to recognise the protracted nature of refugee crises. Spending is often earmarked for projects that reflect donor priorities and do not always reflect needs on the ground. At the same time, refugee education receives little or nothing from already stretched national education budgets, unless a specific refugee education plan is put in place. Education for refugees suffers from both these funding gaps. This makes it difficult to construct school infrastructure, hire and train teachers, and provide educational materials.

The international response to educating refugees suffers not just from chronic underfunding, but also from highly fragmented planning. UN agencies and donors regularly fail to create an integrated planning and delivery framework for education, leading to a proliferation of projects lacking coherence and effective oversight.

Of the world's refugees, 28 per cent live in the poorest of countries, including Cameroon, Chad, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Kenya, Sudan and Uganda. While these countries must be recognised for performing the global public good of hosting large refugee populations, they struggle to meet the associated costs, putting a huge strain on already stretched services.

The quality of the education provided to the national population in many of these countries is often already very poor. A large influx of refugees – if refugees are permitted to enter the formal system – creates a huge additional burden. In Uganda, which is now home to at least half a million child refugees from South Sudan, less than half of Ugandan children complete a full primary cycle. In Uganda's Western Nile region, where the majority of refugees live in settlements alongside the host community neighbours, national schools already suffer from severe overcrowding, with an average of 86 pupils per classroom. School infrastructure is poor: only 27 per cent of classrooms meet basic adequacy standards.

Staff in government ministries, who are already stretched, also lack the capacity and support to scale up education and sustain it for large refugee populations. This is compounded with the task of adapting to and taking advantage of the international humanitarian system.

## CALCULATING THE INVESTMENT REQUIRED

We estimate that the total cost of five years of education for all 7.5 million refugees aged 3 to 18 in low and middle-income countries is \$21.5 billion, \$11.9 billion of which should be provided by the international community. This equates to \$575 per child, per year with \$320 to come from the international community. Detailed explanations of these calculations can be found in the Annex to this report.

Having a sense of the global funding required is a critical step in both securing it and agreeing how it can be used most effectively. Without a sense of the funding required, we run the risk of lurching from crisis to crisis, and consequently addressing the educational needs of smaller and smaller numbers of children.

## FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

The difficulties in funding refugee education are increasingly countered by encouraging opportunities. The European Union, for example, has demonstrated commendable political will to support investment in refugee education. Between 2012 and 2017 it has steadily scaled up its humanitarian funding for education in crises. In 2018, a significant 8 per cent of the annual EU humanitarian budget will be earmarked for education in emergencies and increasing to 10 per cent from 2019.

This example of the growing global commitment to investing in refugee education is accompanied by some promising opportunities that could help secure the funding necessary to realise the plan outlined in this report. These include the Global Partnership for Education (GPE), Education Cannot Wait (ECW), the World Bank's International Development Association (IDA) Regional Sub-Window for Refugees, and the recently proposed International Financing Facility for Education (IFFEd).

Bilateral development assistance also has a vital role to play in closing the funding gaps that are preventing host governments from scaling up education for refugees and host communities.

This report's section on investment details how all of these mechanisms can deliver more and better funding.

## ACCOUNTABILITY: IMPROVE MONITORING, COLLABORATION AND DELIVERY

The move to comprehensive planning in response to refugee crises, with responsibility shared globally, is welcome and necessary. However, the ultimate test of these commitments will be whether policy changes improve the lives of refugees and host communities, including by enhancing educational access and learning outcomes. Securing these practical improvements will require annual reporting on time-bound, measurable outcome targets.

This report shows that it is well within our means to provide a quality education to every last refugee child. We can include refugees in national education systems. We can take concerted action to improve the quality of education for refugee and host community children. And we can deliver the necessary funding. The Global Compact on Refugees offers a unique opportunity to realise this vision. Let's seize that opportunity with commitment to meaningful practical action. The futures of millions of children – their happiness, health, safety and livelihoods – depend on our getting it right.



Young Rohingya children in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh with their education kits. Of the children who attended school in Myanmar, only 57 per cent have attended a learning centre since arriving in Cox's Bazar.

# RECOMMENDATIONS

## INCLUSION

### Action to support the inclusion of refugees in national education systems

- Host governments should develop national plans aimed at ensuring all refugee children have access to quality educational opportunities.
- Host countries should remove policy and practical barriers that exclude refugee children from the formal education system, for example by establishing an inclusive, flexible registration system that allows students to enrol in school even if they lack the usual documentation. This also includes removing gender-based barriers and limits on time spent out of education.
- Host governments should develop and implement inclusive policies which encourage refugee children to attend and stay in school.
- Host governments should enact policies that provide access to accredited, quality, innovative non-formal learning opportunities – with clear pathways into the formal system so that children can move when ready. Non-government and community-based organisations should be supported to provide these learning opportunities to fill the gaps in public provision.
- Regional bodies should develop policies and strategies to support inclusion in national systems and share their expertise and good practice.
- Host countries, with support from donors, international agencies and the private sector, should roll out Open Education Management Information Systems (OpenEMIS) to collect refugee education data. This data can be used to inform policy-making, budgeting and implementation of educational services, and to ensure accountability. At a minimum, data must be disaggregated by gender, age and disability.

## IMPROVEMENT

### Action to ensure refugee and host community children are learning

#### Learning

- Ministries of education in host countries, donor governments, multilateral institutions and NGOs should:
  - ensure that refugee and host community students learn what they need to learn, with a focus on foundational literacy and numeracy in the early grades, helping to lay the groundwork for future learning, prevent drop out and reduce grade repetition.
  - support holistic assessments – covering literacy, numeracy, social and emotional skills and wellbeing – to identify the needs of individual learners in key refugee contexts, provide an overview of current levels of learning and gauge equity gaps.
- Host countries should create Learning Task Teams composed of UNHCR staff, operational partner staff, Ministry of Education officials and other relevant stakeholders. As well as analysing and communicating learning achievement data, these teams should make recommendations for continuous improvement of education planning and delivery, both for refugee and host community learners. They should draw on the latest evidence-based approaches to learning improvement.
- Donors, academics, NGOs and the private sector should undertake rigorous research on how best to support learning in refugee contexts, particularly during the initial stages of displacement: what works, how, for whom, under what conditions and at what cost. Such research should seek to understand the relationship between learning and wellbeing, and the implications for programming.

### **Psychosocial support and social and emotional learning**

- A global multi-stakeholder initiative on psychosocial support and social and emotional learning (PSS/SEL) should be established in collaboration with INEE. The initiative would be responsible for assessing existing approaches to PSS/SEL in refugee contexts, developing replicable approaches, providing technical assistance to implementers, supporting ministries of education in host countries to develop and adopt PSS/SEL policies, training teachers, conducting research on the benefits of PSS/SEL and disseminating good practice.

### **Early care and education**

- Donors, host countries, multilateral institutions, academics, the private sector and NGOs should prioritise funding and technical support for early learning interventions in refugee contexts.
- WHO, UNICEF, The Partnership for Maternal, Newborn and Child Health (PMNCH) and the ECD Action Network and other relevant stakeholders should commit to adapting and implementing the Nurturing Care Framework in refugee contexts.

### **Gender**

- Ministries of education in host countries, donor governments, multilateral institutions and NGOs should:
  - strengthen PSS/SEL for girls who have experienced gender-based violence, to build their resilience and help them prepare to re-enter education. Special measures should be taken to reintegrate girls who have been excluded from school, such as married girls and child mothers.
  - ensure all learning services have adequate, gender-segregated sanitation facilities and access to menstrual hygiene products.
  - ensure girls' safety in transit to school and at school by mainstreaming protection measures into all policies and initiatives related to education.

### **Teachers**

- Governments should develop or strengthen regional frameworks to include refugee teachers in national education workforces and support their professional development and certification. This could include:
  - facilitating teacher accreditation and certification across borders, including methods to fast-track training and certification;
  - progressively aligning refugee teachers' pay and conditions of service with those of host community teachers, in line with experience and qualifications;
  - supporting pre-service and in-service professional development of refugee and host community teachers, recognising the additional knowledge and skills required to support refugee learners;
  - promoting gender parity in the teaching workforce and equalising career progression opportunities among teachers in refugee contexts;

### **Protecting education from attack**

- All countries should endorse the Safe Schools Declaration and take practical action to protect schools, students and staff from attack and military use, including by implementing the Safe Schools Guidelines.

# INVESTMENT

## Action to mobilise the funding necessary to scale up access to quality learning opportunities for refugees

- Donors, host countries and multilateral institutions, in consultation with the private sector and civil society, should agree on the global cost of a five-year plan to deliver universal pre-primary, primary and secondary education to the world's refugees.
- Donors should commit to fund the plan, providing predictable, long-term, multi-year funding. This should include support for bilateral and multilateral mechanisms in line with donor policies and priorities.
- A group of donors, host countries, multilateral institutions and civil society organisations should create an initiative to support resource mobilization in line with the costed plan, which would include the capacity to monitor pledges and disbursement dedicated to the plan's delivery.
- Donors should increase education's share of development aid to 15%, education's share of humanitarian funding to 4-6%, and ensure more of this funding is channelled through multilateral mechanisms in multi-year increments to ensure maximum impact.
- Donors should urgently increase funding for UNRWA, closing the funding gap caused by recent cuts. They should also support the development and financing of a multi-year plan for education for Palestine refugees.

### The World Bank should:

- commit to stimulating demand for education funding, especially from countries that are eligible for the IDA18 Regional Sub-Window for Refugees and Host Communities;
- commit to supporting the development and financing of multi-year refugee and host community education response plans, which have emerged as a principal mechanism of Education Cannot Wait.

### The Global Partnership for Education should:

- modify its grant guidelines to allow it to compensate partner countries that include refugee children in their national education sector plan, by providing top-up funding via the country's education sector programme implementation grant (ESPIG), in recognition of the shared responsibility that the host government has assumed;

- increase support to GPE partner countries experiencing new influxes of refugees, including by supporting countries to apply for the funding available from GPE's accelerated support in emergency and early recovery situations window;
- develop a regional approach to funding in emergency situations, including those involving refugees, including a mechanism that would allow GPE to provide cross-border support to host countries;
- support eligible host countries to access funding from the GPE multiplier, including by using it to leverage World Bank IDA credits and grants, regional development bank funding, additional bilateral grants and funding from ECW and UNHCR;
- ensure that its Knowledge and Innovation Exchange supports improved capacity and the development of global public goods and peer exchange related to refugee education;
- support, via its Advocacy and Social Accountability mechanism, one or more activities designed to improve mutual accountability – nationally, regionally or globally – for providing education to refugees.

### Education Cannot Wait should:

- provide and facilitate support from its partners to refugee hosting countries for the development of multi-year refugee and host community education response plans;
- provide its own funding for these plans and actively work to mobilise additional resources to implement them;
- ensure that its Acceleration Facility identifies refugee education as a priority for investment and development.

### The International Finance Facility for Education should:

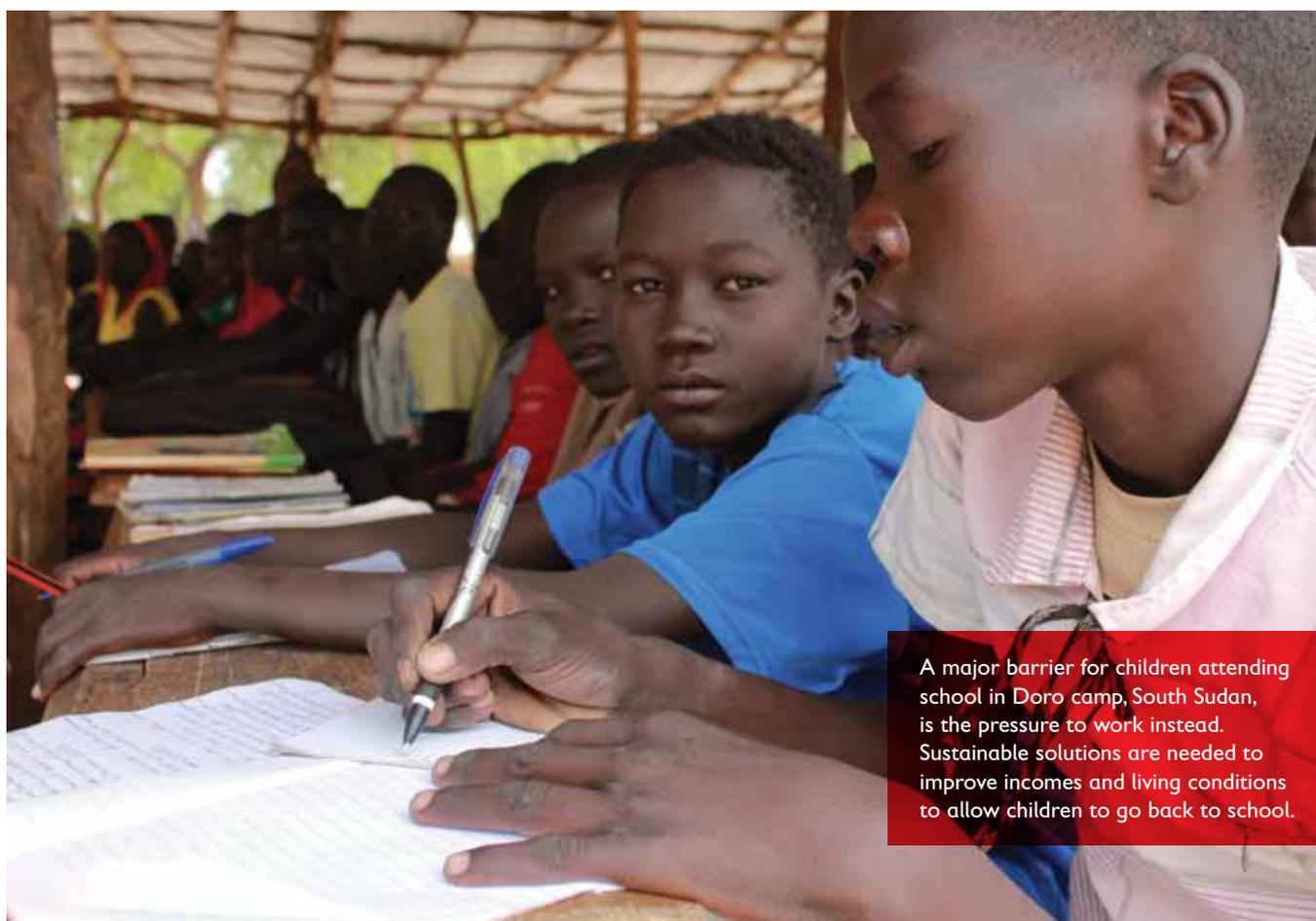
- pay particular attention to and carefully assess issues of debt sustainability and the appropriateness of loans in humanitarian contexts and fragile states;
- if deemed appropriate make the additional financing it creates available to eligible countries impacted by emergencies for long term rebuilding;
- ensure the degree of concessionality for loans for education of refugee populations to be such that the donors agree to pay off the principle into the future, so as to invest up front in education for refugees.

# ACCOUNTABILITY

## Action to improve monitoring, collaboration and delivery

- Donors, host countries and multilateral institutions, in consultation with the private sector and civil society, should establish a results and accountability framework for delivering the New York Declaration's commitments on education, including implementing all the measures outlined in the Global Compact on Refugees, with a particular focus on the Programme of Action and the costed plan that we recommend in this report.
- The education specific plan we argue for in this document could provide the basis for a sectoral focus at the initial Global Refugee Forum and prove a framework for monitoring progress at subsequent forums.
- Member states should monitor access to education by refugees, returnees and host communities as part of their road maps for reaching Sustainable Development Goal 4. This should form part of their reporting on education at the High Level Political Forums.
- UNESCO should convene a consultative process to develop guidance for member states so that reporting on SDG 4 in relation to refugees, returnees and host communities is of high quality and as standardised as possible.
- The United Nations Secretary General should ensure that the 2019 High Level Political Forum, which will focus on SDG 4, includes an assessment of progress in relation to refugees, returnees and host communities.

**Taken together, these actions would make the promises of the New York Declaration on Migrants and Refugees a reality for the millions of refugee children who currently have no hope of going to school.**



A major barrier for children attending school in Doro camp, South Sudan, is the pressure to work instead. Sustainable solutions are needed to improve incomes and living conditions to allow children to go back to school.

# TIME TO ACT

## **Providing refugee children, the education they were promised**

In times of crisis, education can play a life-saving and life-sustaining role. But most children caught up in crisis are denied an education. More than half of the world's school-age refugee children - 3.7 million - don't go to school. Having already lost their homes, they are now losing their education.

It doesn't have to be that way. This report shows that it is well within our means to provide a quality education to every last refugee child – by including refugees in national education systems and taking concerted action to improve the quality of education for refugee and host community children.

This year offers a once-in-a-generation opportunity to fulfil that vision as the international community will adopt a new Global Compact on Refugees. The compact promises to transform the way the world meets the needs of refugees and host communities, including improving their access to education.

The costings in this report show that modest additional financing could provide pre-primary, primary and secondary education to all of the world's refugees, while also improving the education of children in host communities. The report suggests where the necessary funding could come from.

In September 2016, at the height of the European refugee crisis, the international community adopted the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants. Hailed as the foundation of a new approach to large movements of refugees and migrants, it promised to ensure that all refugee children would be in school and learning within a few months of crossing an international border.

The Global Compact gives us a fresh chance to reach that goal. This report shows in detail how we can get there.

**[savethechildren.net/refugee-education](https://savethechildren.net/refugee-education)**

Cover photo: Rohingya refugee Nur Fatima, 11, attends classes. Rohingya girls face particular challenges to receiving an education, including cultural pressure to support their family and marry early.

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