

UNESCO: Half of all out-of-school children live in conflict-affected countries

A new paper by UNESCO's EFA Global Monitoring Report shows that half of the 57 million children out of school live in conflict-affected countries. Released in partnership with Save the Children to mark the 16th birthday on 12 July of Malala Yousafzai, the Pakistani schoolgirl shot by the Taliban on her way home from school in October 2012, the paper shows that urgent action is needed to bring education to the 28.5 million primary school age children out of school in the world's conflict zones.

Globally, the number of children out of school has fallen from 60 million in 2008 to 57 million in 2011. However, the benefits of this slow progress have not reached children in conflict-affected countries; they now make up 50% of children who are denied an education, up from 42% in 2008.

The paper, '[Children battling to go to school](#)', shows that 44% of the 28.5 million children affected live in sub-Saharan Africa, 19% in South and West Asia and 14% in the Arab States. The vast majority – 95% – live in low and lower-middle income countries. Girls, who make up 55% of the total, are the worst affected, as they are often victims of rape and other sexual violence that accompanies armed conflicts.

In addition to the boys and girls out of school, almost a third of the world's out-of-school adolescents (20 million) live in conflict affected countries. Some 54% of these are women.

“Education seldom figures in assessments of the damage inflicted by conflict”, said Irina Bokova, Director-General of UNESCO. “International attention and the media invariably focus on the most immediate images of humanitarian suffering, not on the hidden costs and lasting legacies of violence. Yet nowhere are these costs more evident than in education. Across many of the world's poorest countries, armed conflict continues to destroy not just school infrastructure, but also the hopes and ambitions of a whole generation of children.”

The EFA Global Monitoring Report's paper also shows that the share of humanitarian aid for education has declined from 2% in 2009 to just 1.4% in 2011. Not only does it receive a small share overall, but it also receives the smallest proportion of the amount requested from humanitarian aid of any sector: in 2010, of the modest amount requested for education in humanitarian crises, just over a quarter was actually received, leaving a funding gap of around \$220 million.

“The decline in humanitarian aid for education is especially bad news because funds are needed more than ever,” said Pauline Rose, Director of the EFA Global Monitoring Report. “There are more refugees now than there have been since 1994; children make up half of those who have been forcibly displaced. Nowhere is this more painfully visible than in Syria today. These girls and boys face a disruption of their learning process at a critical time – and the risk of a lifetime of disadvantage as a result.”

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The policy paper is available at the following link:

to be added