

**Hadja Lahbib**

**European Commissioner for Equality, Preparedness and Crisis Management**

**Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO)  
European Commission**

**Subject:** Continued Commitment to Education in Emergencies in ECHO's Budget Prioritisation

Dear Commissioner, Lahbib,

As leaders of INGOs responding to humanitarian crises worldwide, we are writing to express our appreciation for ECHO's and your personal unwavering commitment to Education in Emergencies (EiE). We thank ECHO for the commitment to allocate at least 10% of the humanitarian aid budget to Education in Emergencies - in the current environment, this support is even more critical and directly safeguards the protection, learning and wellbeing of millions of children living in crisis worldwide. However, we also wish to highlight our concern that any potential reduction in this funding would have devastating consequences for crisis-affected children, depriving them from safety, stability and opportunities to build a better future.

The European Commission has been a steadfast humanitarian donor and advocate for ensuring that children affected by crises have access to safe, protective and quality education, and this commitment has been instrumental in mitigating the devastating impact of conflicts and disasters on children's protection, learning and wellbeing. Globally an alarming 234 million school-aged children and adolescents are affected by crises of which approximately 85 million are out of school<sup>1</sup>. In fragile and crisis-affected countries, such as the Democratic Republic of Congo, the Occupied Palestinian Territories, and Sudan, essential services, including education, have been suspended or pushed to the brink of collapse.

As UN OCHA undertakes the humanitarian reset and reprioritises funding under the Humanitarian Needs Response Plan (HNRP), we acknowledge the challenges faced in addressing competing needs in an increasingly constrained financial environment. We appreciate ECHO's leadership and urge you to stand firm in prioritising education in the upcoming EU multiannual financial framework (MFF) budget discussions; and continue to support millions of vulnerable children's access to a fundamental right—education. Additionally, following global foreign aid cuts, particularly the dismantling of USAID and EU Member State reductions in ODA, the global humanitarian system faces severe disruption, impacting millions of vulnerable people, including children. At a time of increased effects of the climate crisis and conflict, alongside geopolitical instability, now is the time for the EU to continue to demonstrate its global leadership on development and humanitarian support, including for Education in Emergencies.

Education in Emergencies serves as a lifeline for millions of children worldwide who are affected by conflicts, natural hazards, and displacement. Evidence shows that education is prioritised by communities, parents and children; it reduces vulnerabilities to exploitation, violence, child labour, early marriage and recruitment into armed groups. Beyond its protective function, education is essential to overall humanitarian effectiveness and is a critical enabler for other humanitarian sectors including child protection, food security and health<sup>2</sup>. The EU's support to Education in Emergencies has been instrumental in providing children with immediate protection, stability, and hope for the future.

Education is a cost-effective investment: for every euro spent on children's education in crisis situations, the long-term benefits for economic growth, social cohesion, and peacebuilding far outweigh the initial expenditure. Without sustained support, the risks of a lost generation of children increase exponentially,

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<sup>1</sup> [Education Cannot Wait \(2025\). State of Education for Crisis-Affected Children and Adolescents: Access and Learning Outcomes – Global Estimates 2025 Update.](#)

<sup>2</sup> [Save the Children \(2019\) Education against the Odds: Meeting marginalised children's demands for a quality education](#)

threatening long-term recovery and resilience in crisis-affected communities. Your leadership in providing 10% of ECHO's humanitarian aid budget to education has become the standard with which we are holding bilateral donor governments to account for their contributions. This is not only a humanitarian imperative but also a strategic one that aligns with the European Union's broader commitment to global stability, social cohesion, and sustainable development. We thank you for your attention and for your leadership and commitment to supporting the world's most vulnerable children. We would welcome the opportunity to discuss how we can work together on joint advocacy efforts to strengthen education for children in crisis settings.

Signed:

**Reena Ghelani,**  
Plan International CEO



**Inger Ashing,**  
Save the Children International CEO



**Jan Egeland,**  
Norwegian Refugee Council Secretary  
General



NORWEGIAN  
REFUGEE COUNCIL

**David Miliband,**  
International Rescue Committee CEO and  
President



**Andrew Morley,**  
World Vision International CEO

