NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND

EDUCATION IN CRISIS
IN THE ASIA–PACIFIC REGION

Save the Children
Australia

INTRODUCTION

States Parties recognize the right of the child to education, and with a view to achieving this right progressively and on the basis of equal opportunity, they shall, in particular:

(a) Make primary education compulsory and available free to all.

CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD, ARTICLE 28[i]

RECENT HUMANITARIAN CRISES HAVE PUSHED MORE THAN 8.7 MILLION CHILDREN OUT OF SCHOOL.[ii]

TYPHOON HAIYAN
PHILIPPINES NOVEMBER 2013
More then 1 million children out of school

EBOLA CRISIS
DECEMBER 2013 TO PRESENT
Estimated 3.5 million children out of school in Sierra Leone and Liberia

THE SYRIA CRISIS
MARCH 2011 TO PRESENT
At least 2.8 million children out of school

THE GAZA-ISRAEL CRISIS
JULY-AUGUST 2014
At least 500,000 children out of school

IRAQ CRISIS
JUNE 2014 TO PRESENT
At least 500,000 children out of school

SOUTH SUDAN CRISIS
DECEMBER 2013 TO PRESENT
At least 400,000 children out of school

All children have the right to primary school education. But in the Asia–Pacific region, a staggering 18 million primary school-aged children are out of school.[1] This is due to a nexus of complex and reinforcing factors: economic inequality; gender; social exclusion; the large proportion of children living in rural areas and urban slums; lack of provision for children with disabilities; and the high incidence of child labour – to name just a few.

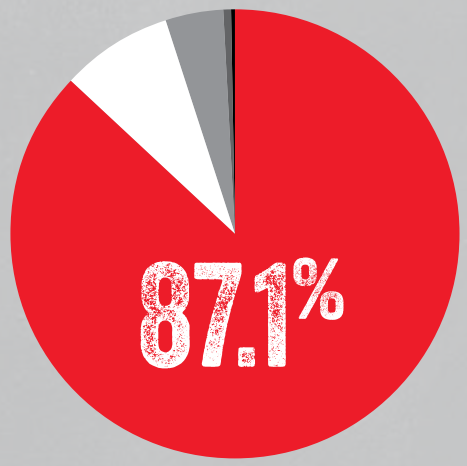
This report focuses on three barriers to education affecting millions of children in the Asia–Pacific region and around the world: conflict, disasters and displacement. The number of children affected by each of these barriers is growing. The number of people affected by disasters has more than tripled in three decades[2], there has been a long-term, global increase in the number of people affected by conflict[3]; and the number of people forcefully displaced is at its highest since World War II.[4] This has devastating impacts on children's education: recent humanitarian crises have pushed more than 8.7 million children out of school.[5]

These barriers affect a significant and growing number of children in the Asia Pacific. Asia accounts for 81 percent of people affected by disasters over the past decade[6] and a large number of people affected by conflict. Almost a fifth of the global total of people forcefully displaced are in the Asia–Pacific region.[7]

Conflict, disasters and displacement pose enormous challenges for children. In both conflict and disasters, children's education is disrupted when schools are damaged or destroyed, roads are blocked, teachers are absent, and schools are used as emergency accommodation for the displaced. Children in conflict zones are also prevented from accessing education because they are afraid to go to school, because students or teachers are attacked, or because their schools are used by military forces or armed groups. Children who are forcefully displaced from their homes face additional challenges. They may not speak the language taught at school; they may face challenges accessing education due to having lost all personal identity documents; and they may find themselves in immigration detention, with limited access to education.

The challenges are enormous; but with targeted support, ways can be found to ensure even children in situations of conflict, disaster and displacement receive an education. While acknowledging there are a range of interventions required, this reports suggests four priorities for action to address this complex crisis: ending attacks on education by endorsing the Draft Lucens Guidelines for Protecting Schools and Universities from Military Use during Armed Conflict; funding education in emergencies; promoting school safety; and ensuring that quality education is available to children in situations of displacement.

PEOPLE DISPLACED BY DISASTERS IN 2013 (BY REGION)[iii]

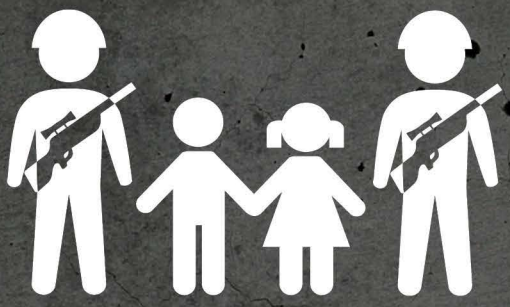


ASIA	87.1%	(19.1m)
AFRICA	8.1%	(1.8m)
AMERICAS	4.1%	(902 000)
EUROPE	0.7%	(140 000)
OCEANIA	0.1%	(15 000)

BARRIERS TO EDUCATION: CONFLICT

SCHOOLS USED FOR MILITARY PURPOSES IN 2013*

This list contains examples only and is not comprehensive.



IN THE WORLD'S CONFLICT ZONES,

28.5 MILLION

primary school-aged children are out of school.

WHAT CAN THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT DO TO HELP?

Support international guidelines for an end to the military use of schools.

Photo: Save the Children

In the world's conflict zones, 28.5 million primary school-aged children are out of school – almost half the number of primary school-aged children out of school globally.[8] A child living in a fragile or conflict-affected developing country is nearly three times as likely to be out of school as a child living in another developing country.[9]

Conflict affects children's access to education in myriad ways. Schools are often damaged or destroyed during fighting, either as collateral damage or as a result of a targeted attack, and are sometimes rendered unusable when they are occupied by people who have been forced to flee their homes. Many students and teachers are afraid of being caught in the fighting on their way to school and stay home in fear; others – particularly girls – fear being targeted by opponents of education. In some cases, families under unprecedented financial strain opt to pull their children out of school so that they can contribute to the family income; in other cases, schools are used by armed forces or armed groups for military purposes.

Attacks on education this year have shocked the world. In Gaza, in just two months of fighting in July and August, 148 schools were damaged or destroyed.[10] Three attacks on United Nations (UN)-run schools killed 45 people, including 17 children.[11] In Nigeria, the Islamist militant group Boko Haram provoked international outrage in April when it stormed a secondary school and kidnapped nearly 300 schoolgirls, more than 200 of whom are still missing. In Syria, with the conflict now in its fourth year, almost 20 percent of schools can no longer be used because they've been damaged or destroyed, or because they're being used as emergency accommodation for the displaced.[12]

These devastating examples have drawn the attention of the world's media; but the disruptive impact of conflict on education is nowhere more pronounced than in Asia. Half of all countries in Asia are affected by local or subnational conflict. With an average duration of 45 years, these conflicts are among the oldest in the world.[13] Millions of Asian children have never known peace – and this has had enormous and long-lasting impacts on their education. In 2014, the Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack identified six countries that were 'very heavily affected' by attacks on education and the military use of schools in the period 2009–2012. Two of the six, Afghanistan and Pakistan, were in South Asia.[14] These two countries account for more attacks on education annually than almost anywhere else in the world.

Attacks on education in South and Southeast Asia

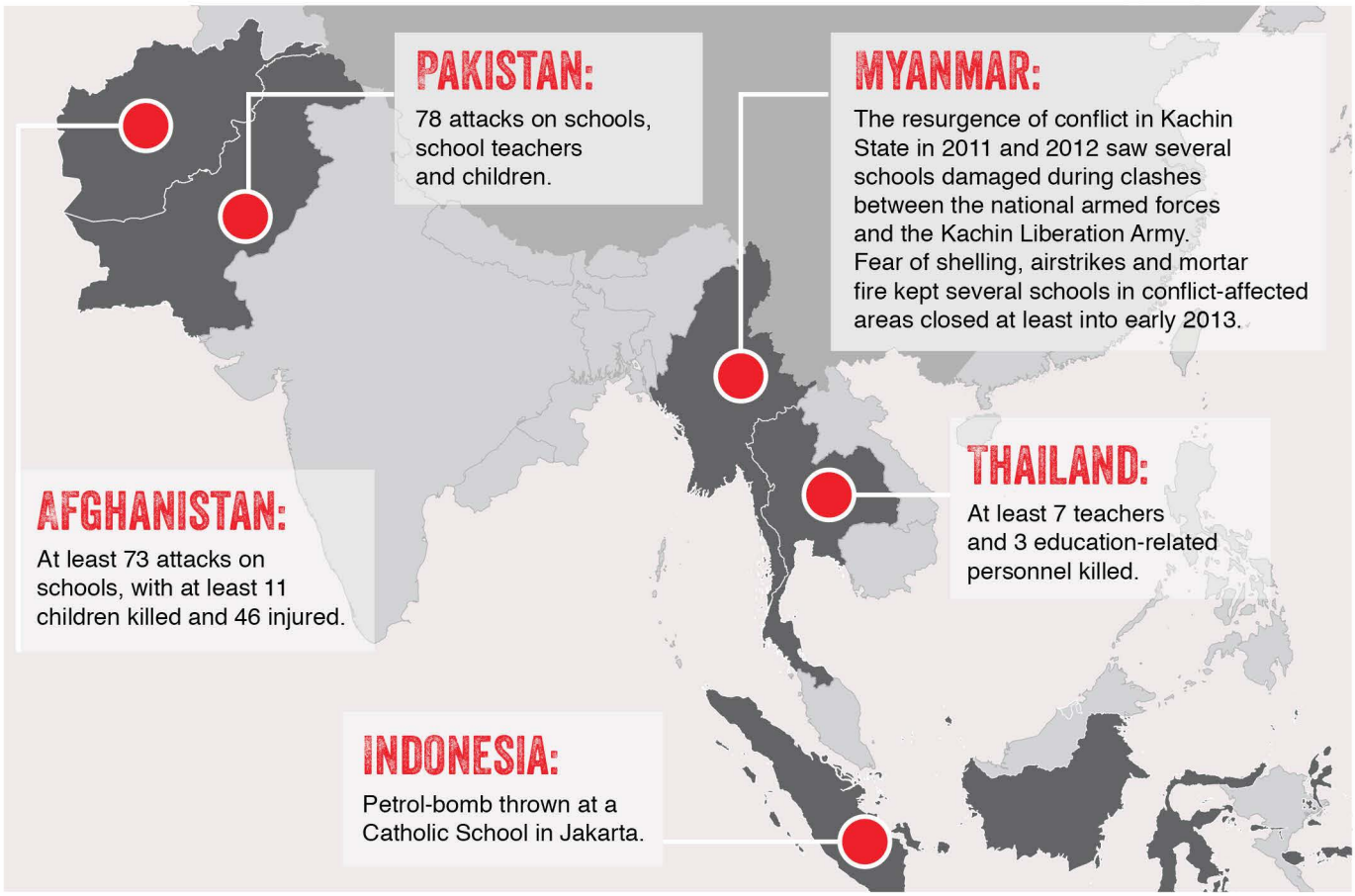
- Challenges faced by girls in Pakistan garnered international attention in 2012, when 16-year-old schoolgirl and now Nobel Prize winner Malala Yousafzai was shot along with two of her classmates on her way to school. In the period 2009–2012, throughout the country there were more than 800 attacks on schools, more than anywhere else in the world. Hundreds of schools were blown up and destroyed, and students, teachers, academics and proponents of female education were targeted and killed. Between 2009 and 2012, at least 30 children were killed in attacks on schools and school transport, at least 138 students and staff were kidnapped and at least 15 school teachers were killed.[15] In 2013, there were 78 attacks on schools, school teachers and children, including one incident in which five

MALALA YOUSAFZAI

Seventeen-year-old education activist, Malala Yousafzai, won the Nobel Peace Prize this year for her pioneering work in bringing girls' education into the international spotlight. In 2012, Malala was shot on her school bus, along with two of her classmates, as they rode home in the mountains of Pakistan. The Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan claimed responsibility, alleging that Malala had been promoting anti-Taliban values by advocating for a girl's right to education and called her "the symbol of the infidels and obscenity". Malala was an active blogger and education activist before the attack. She survived the gunshot wound and has since become a strong voice for girls' education and child rights around the world.

Photo: United Nations Information Centres via Photopin

ATTACKS ON EDUCATION IN 2013*



**This list contains examples only and is not comprehensive.*

female teachers were shot by militants on their way home from a community project, and another incident in which a female teacher was executed in the presence of her son on her way to school.[16]

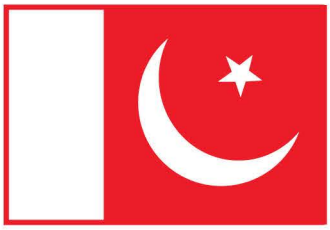
- In Afghanistan, progress made in the education sector since the international military intervention in 2001 is often hailed as a phenomenal achievement, with the number of children in school jumping from just one million to more than ten million. But the incidence of attacks on schools is also one of the highest in the world, and more than three million children remain out of school. In 2013, there were at least 73 attacks on schools, resulting in at least 11 children killed and 46 injured.[17] At least 13 teachers were killed or injured, and eight teachers were abducted by armed opposition groups.[18] Altogether, more than 500 schools were temporarily or permanently closed due to insecurity in 2013, interrupting schooling for an estimated 115,000 children.[19]

- In the far south of Thailand in the period 2009–2012, more than 120 Buddhist and Muslim students, teachers and education staff were killed or wounded by insurgents. Schools were attacked, set on fire, and damaged or destroyed by improvised explosive devices.[20] In 2013, at least seven teachers and three education-related personnel were killed, including the execution of a teacher by gunmen in a school cafeteria in front of dozens of children.[21]

- In the Philippines between 2010–2012, there were at least 43 incidents involving damage, destruction or occupation of education facilities, placement of landmines and unexploded ordinances near schools, and violence or threats of violence against students and teachers. Schools were attacked by the Armed Forces of the Philippines and its associated auxiliary force, by the Mindanao Islamic Liberation Front, by the New People's Army, and by the Abu Sayyaf Group. At least 14 teachers were killed, and three students were abducted.[22]

- In Indonesia, at least a dozen attacks on schools attended by minority Muslim sects and on Christian schools were reported in the period 2009–2012.[23] In August 2013, a petrol-bomb was thrown at a Catholic school in Jakarta.[24]

- In Myanmar, the resurgence of conflict in Kachin State in 2011 and 2012 saw several schools damaged during clashes between the national armed forces and the Kachin Liberation Army. Fear of shelling, airstrikes and mortar fire kept several schools in conflict-affected areas closed at least into early 2013.[25]



IN PAKISTAN BETWEEN 2009-2012, THERE WERE:

800 ATTACKS ON SCHOOLS (more than anywhere else in the world)

30+ CHILDREN KILLED IN ATTACKS on schools and school transport

138+ STUDENTS & STAFF KIDNAPPED

15+ SCHOOL TEACHERS KILLED

In all of these conflicts – and indeed in the majority of conflicts around the world – the vulnerability of schools to targeted attack has been exacerbated when they've been used by military forces and armed groups – and sometimes multinational forces and even peacekeepers – for military purposes.[26]

Schools used for military purposes

- In Afghanistan in 2013, there were at least 15 documented incidents in which children were put at risk, and their education disrupted, as a result of the military use of schools.[27]
- In Pakistan between 2009 and 2012, there were at least 40 cases of schools being used by the military, five incidents of militants based in schools and one case of police billeted right next to a school.[28] In 2013, the UN received reports that Pakistan security forces were using government school buildings in two provinces to launch operations against armed groups.[29]
- In the Philippines between 2010 and 2012, the UN recorded at least 56 incidents of schools being used by military forces. For periods of a week to more than a year, schools were used as temporary barracks and military bases, as weapons and ammunition storage and as accommodation for troops.[30] In 2013, a splinter group of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front used an elementary school as a defence posture, holding approximately 1500 adults and children hostage, and abducting nine teachers in the course of their retreat.[31]
- In Myanmar in 2013, the national armed forces surrounded a boarding school in Kachin State, forcing more than 300 schoolchildren to flee.[32]
- In Thailand in 2010, security forces occupied at least 79 schools, and continued to use schools as military bases and barracks for at least the next year.[33]

Under international law, when a school is used for a military purpose, it can lose its protected status and become a legitimate military objective. Schools that are used for military purposes – converted into barracks, military bases, detention facilities, centers for interrogation and torture, observation posts, military training facilities and weapons storage – are thus acutely vulnerable to attack. The use of schools by military forces also heightens the risk of children being illegally recruited into armed forces and armed groups, and results in large numbers of girls dropping out of school due to the real and perceived risk of abuse.

Impact on children's education

Armed conflict affects children's education in a multitude of ways. Most obviously, it impacts upon school attendance, but it also has profound impacts on the quality of teaching and learning, the recruitment, training and retention of teachers, and on student dropout rates. Research indicates that children entering primary school in countries affected by conflict are 20 percent more likely to leave primary school before completion than their peers in countries not affected by conflict.[34] Even when children are in school, their learning is often impeded by conflict-related trauma. Research in Afghanistan in 2009, for example, found that almost a quarter of all children interviewed experienced substantial psychological distress.[35] Save the Children's experience around the world affirms that distress and trauma of this nature pose enormous challenges for children's learning.[36]

Education suffers in times of conflict; but low levels of education are also a driver of conflict. Where children's education is disrupted due to schools being destroyed, occupied by the displaced or used by militaries or armed groups, this has a negative and reinforcing impact on the wellbeing of children, families and their communities, with flow-on effects for national stability. Efforts to minimise disruptions to education during conflict thus not only promote child wellbeing but, in the long-term, play a critical role in supporting transitions to sustainable peace.

BARRIERS TO EDUCATION: DISASTERS

175 MILLION CHILDREN

WILL BE AFFECTED BY DISASTERS EACH YEAR BETWEEN 2010–2020.

THRASHED BY WIND & WATER

TYPHOON HAIYAN 2013
PHILIPPINES

3000 schools damaged
Schools closed for 13 days

TYPHOON BOPHA 2012
PHILIPPINES

561 schools damaged
100,000 students affected

FLOODS 2011
THAILAND

2000 schools damaged or destroyed

TROPICAL STORM MAHASEN 2013
BANGLADESH

1000 schools damaged
171 schools destroyed
500,000 students affected

FLOODS 2010
PAKISTAN

11,000 schools damaged or used as temporary shelters

WHAT CAN THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT DO TO HELP?

Support countries in the Asia–Pacific region to ensure their schools, students and teachers are prepared for disasters.

Photo: Lynsey Addario/Save the Children

The last 30 years have seen a steady increase in the frequency and intensity of natural disasters, and a dramatic increase in the number of people affected.[37] In the three decades between 1980 and 2010, reported weather-related disasters more than tripled.[38] It is expected that 175 million children will be affected by disasters each year between 2010–2020, an increase of 40 percent from 1995–2005.[39] To varying degrees, all these children will face challenges in accessing education. Disasters threaten both children's right to safety and survival, and their right to access education.

The Asia-Pacific region is the most disaster-prone region in the world. In the period 2003–2012, it accounted for 43 percent of the world's disasters and 81 percent of the number of people affected.[40] It is also the world's most populous region, with high poverty levels, rising inequality, and large numbers of people living in high-risk zones (such as flood plains) who have limited capacity to reduce their vulnerability.[41] With an increase in the frequency and intensity of extreme weather events such as heatwaves and flashfloods, a 10–20 percent increase in the intensity of tropical cyclones, and greater sea level rises than anywhere else in the world,[42] the region is the world's most vulnerable to climate change.[43]

Australia is particularly prone to disasters, with recent years some of the worst on record: the Black Saturday bushfire in 2009, affecting 78 townships and displacing more than 7000 people; bushfires in NSW in October 2013 and Tasmania in January 2013; the Queensland floods of 2010–2011, affecting more than 200,000 people and resulting in three quarters of the state being declared a disaster zone; and flooding in northern NSW and Queensland in 2013, inundating more than 2000 homes and forcing the biggest evacuation in Queensland's history.[44] It is predicted that in the coming decades, events on this scale will become more common.

Disasters cause extensive disruption to children's education, wherever they occur. School buildings are damaged or destroyed, classroom supplies and equipment are lost, roads to schools are blocked, and the cost of transport can become prohibitive. Teachers can be killed or injured, leave the area, or stay at home to care for their families or repair their homes. Schools are often closed due to being used as evacuation centers in the short term, or in the longer term they can become extended accommodation for the displaced. Many families find themselves under enormous financial strain, and pull children out of school to work – heightening their vulnerability in the long term.

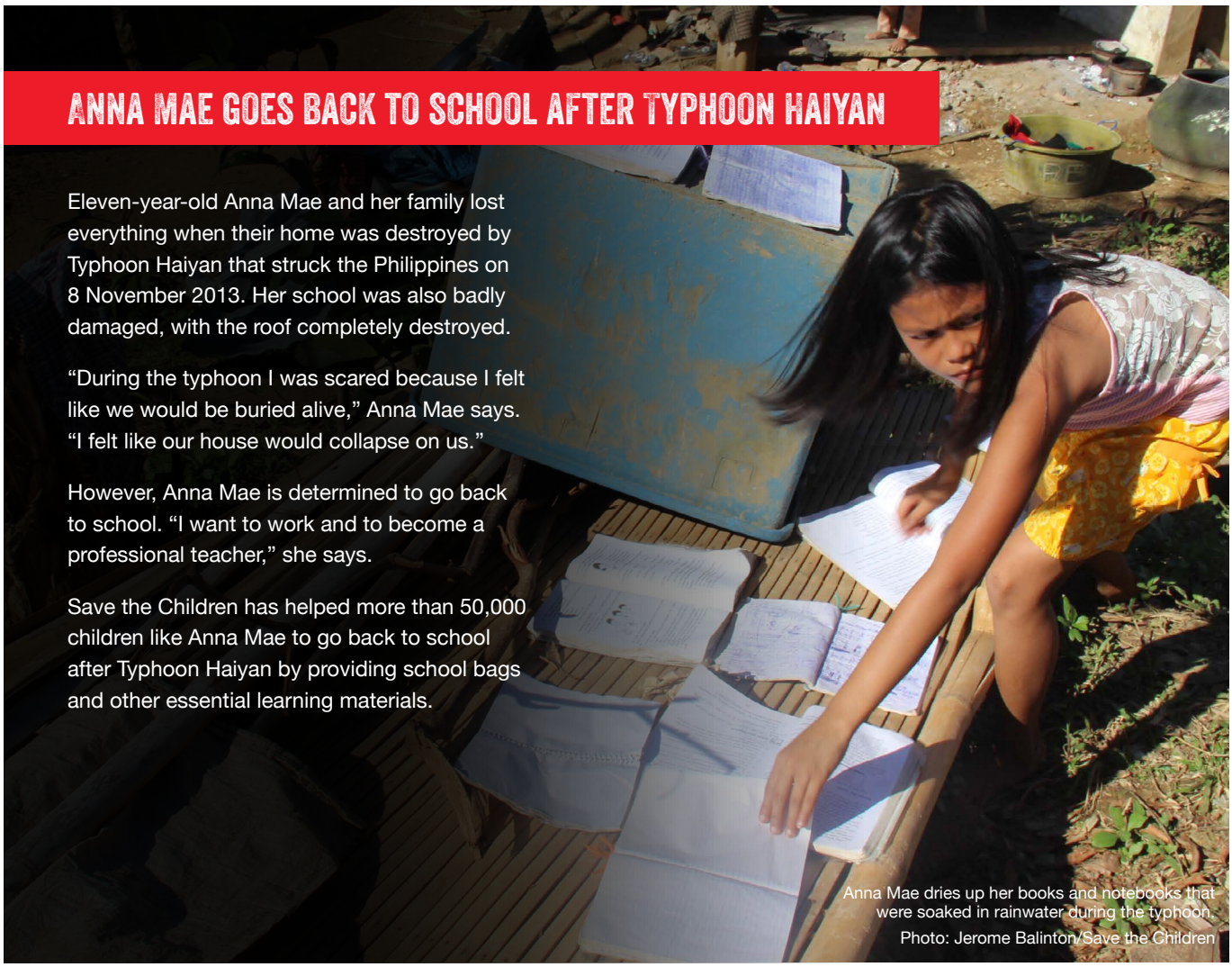
ANNA MAE GOES BACK TO SCHOOL AFTER TYPHOON HAIYAN

Eleven-year-old Anna Mae and her family lost everything when their home was destroyed by Typhoon Haiyan that struck the Philippines on 8 November 2013. Her school was also badly damaged, with the roof completely destroyed.

"During the typhoon I was scared because I felt like we would be buried alive," Anna Mae says. "I felt like our house would collapse on us."

However, Anna Mae is determined to go back to school. "I want to work and to become a professional teacher," she says.

Save the Children has helped more than 50,000 children like Anna Mae to go back to school after Typhoon Haiyan by providing school bags and other essential learning materials.



Anna Mae dries up her books and notebooks that were soaked in rainwater during the typhoon.
Photo: Jerome Balinton/Save the Children

Large-scale disasters

- Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines in 2013 damaged more than 3000 schools.[45] Throughout the affected areas, schools were closed for an average of 13 days.[46]
- Floods in Jakarta in 2013 affected more than 250 schools, five of which were completely destroyed. An estimated 70,000 students were affected.[47]
- In Bangladesh, Tropical Storm Mahasen in 2013 left more than 1000 schools damaged and 171 destroyed, impacting more than 300,000 students.[48]
- Typhoon Bopha in the Philippines in 2012 damaged 561 schools and destroyed 2438 classrooms, displacing more than 100,000 children from their regular learning spaces. While schools and classrooms were being repaired, many children went a month without attending school.[49]
- In the floods in Thailand in 2011, more than 2000 schools were damaged or destroyed. Anecdotal reports suggest that students missed an average of 25 days of schooling.[50]
- In the Pakistan floods in 2010, in the province of Sindh alone, more than 11,000 schools attended by more than a million children were either damaged or used as shelter for the displaced.[51] In some districts, enrolment dropped by almost 100 percent.[52]

Small-scale disasters

Large-scale disasters are devastating, but infrequent. The 2011 floods in Thailand were the worst in 50 years; the floods in Pakistan were the worst in 80 years; Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines was the largest recorded storm ever to make landfall. But countries in the Asia–Pacific region are struck by smaller disasters every year – sometimes for a few days, sometimes a few weeks – and their disruptions are part of everyday life. These disasters don't make international media, nor trigger an international response, but they cause significant and regular damage to education systems and disruption to children's schooling. Every year, millions of children miss out on days, weeks or months of school. This year in Bangladesh, for example, the month of August brought torrential rain and heavy flooding. Four-hundred schools were closed, and at the end of August, children had missed four weeks of school.[53] In the Philippines, a recent study found the number of days that students in metro Manila missed school – due to regular high tides or overflowing rivers – was equal to or greater than absences caused by large-scale flooding.[54]

Impact on children's education

The impact of disasters on children's education goes beyond damage to infrastructure and materials. Children often experience psychological distress following disasters, as they do in times of conflict, and this affects their ability to learn. Research conducted five years after the Black Saturday bushfires in Australia found that children in some affected areas were suffering developmental delays of between one and five years.[55] Schools in the affected areas received government support for three years after the fires; but when this finished, some chose to reallocate existing resources to enable affected students to continue accessing services such as speech pathology, psychiatry and social workers.[56] In the Philippines, six months after Typhoon Haiyan, almost a quarter of all schools reported that children's psychological distress presented a barrier to learning.[57]

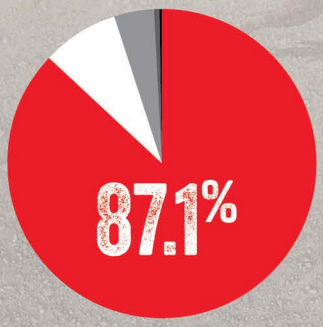
Disruptions to education – including reduced school attendance – are felt for months and sometimes years. Many children whose schools are damaged or destroyed during a crisis, or who are pulled out of school to support their families,

never return. An assessment conducted six months after Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines found that in the affected areas, there was on average a 13 percent decline in school attendance.[58] Also in the Philippines, in an assessment conducted one year after Typhoon Washi in 2011, 23 percent of families in one of the most severely-affected cities said their children had permanently dropped out of school. Following the floods in Pakistan in 2010, some children remained out of school for 700 days.[59] The longer children are out of school, the more difficulty they have catching up on their studies, and the less likely they are to return.[60]

Disasters exacerbate inequalities, including gender inequality, and girls bear the brunt of these disruptions to education. When roads are blocked, when schools are damaged or when families are under financial strain, girls are more likely than boys to be pulled out of school. Many do not return. There is a wealth of evidence affirming the link between girl's education and gender equality; thus, significant declines in girls' school attendance following disasters can be expected to contribute to heightened gender inequality in the long term – with significant flow-on effects for the achievement of all development indicators.

BARRIERS TO EDUCATION: DISPLACEMENT

PEOPLE DISPLACED BY DISASTERS IN 2013 (BY REGION) [iii]



ASIA	87.1%	(19.1m)
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EUROPE	0.7%	(140 000)
OCEANIA	0.1%	(15 000)

THE LARGEST DISPLACEMENT EVENTS IN 2013 [iv]

	Number of people displaced
Phillippines: Typhoon Haiyan	4,095,000
Phillippines: Typhoon Trami	1,744,000
China: Floods	1,577,000
Bangladesh: Cyclone Mahasen	1,100,000
India: Floods	1,042,000
India: Cyclone Phailin	1,000,000
China: Typhoon Fitow	826,000
Vietnam: Typhoon Haiyan	800,000
China: Typhoon Usagi	587,000
China: Typhoon Utor	513,000
China: Typhoon Soulik	500,000
China: Typhoon Nari	406,000
China: Floods	354,000
Phillippines: Bohol earthquake	349,000
Sudan: Floods	320,000
Japan: Typhoon Man-yi	250,000
China: Gansu earthquake	227,000
Phillippines: Tropical depression Shanshan	223,000
Niger: Floods	201,000
China: Lushan earthquake	193,000

"FORCED DISPLACEMENT IS A DIRECT THREAT TO EDUCATION."

– UNESCO[61]

WHAT CAN THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT DO TO HELP?

End immigration detention for children, and to ensure those who are detained are provided with a quality education outside of the detention centre

Photo: Save the Children

There are more people displaced today – as refugees, asylum seekers, internally displaced persons or stateless persons – than any time in history. This is due to a range of factors including the increasing number of people affected by conflict and disasters, as well as persecution, poverty, urbanisation, trafficking and population growth. The number of people newly displaced in 2013 was the highest on record; and 2013 also saw a record number of asylum applications from unaccompanied children.[62] The number of people forcefully displaced around the world now exceeds 50 million – for the first time since World War II.[63] Half of these are children.[64]

The Asia–Pacific region is home to more than 3.5 million refugees, more than any other region,[65] and 3.2 million people are displaced within their own countries.[66] Between 2008 and 2013, disasters in Asia forced a staggering 133.3 million people from their homes – more than 80 percent of the total number of people displaced by disasters around the world. It is the only region in the world whose share of people displaced by disasters exceeds its share of the world's population.[67]

Displaced children are exposed to a multitude of risks: separation from family; loss of home and personal belongings; and vulnerability to exploitation because of lost household income. But displacement also poses enormous challenges for children's education. Displaced children frequently find themselves in situations where they do not speak the local language, where they may be prevented from accessing education due to a lack of personal identity documents or uncertain legal status, where the cost of education is prohibitive, or where their movement may be restricted. In Save the Children's experience, loss of education is often cited by children and families as their number one concern following displacement.

Barriers to education for displaced children

Children not in camps

Efforts to establish temporary education for displaced children often focus on those in camps. But in many parts of the world, and particularly in Asia, the vast majority of displaced children reside with friends and extended family members. In Pakistan's northern region, for example, where conflict combined with major disasters has led to mass, protracted displacement, up to 90 percent of internally displaced children stay in host communities. Most of these children lack access to education services, which are largely provided in camps set up for the displaced. Children who do live in host communities are seen as being there temporarily, and as such there has not been a significant effort to admit them into local schools.[68]

50 MILLION
people around the world have been forced from their homes.[63]

33 MILLION
people around the world have been forced from their homes within their own country.[vi]

25 MILLION
children around the world have been forced from their homes.[64]

Cost

Families who have been forced to flee their homes are often under incredible financial strain, and opt to keep children at home either so they can contribute to the family income, or because the cost of school fees or transport to school is prohibitive. In the refugee camps on the Thai–Burma border, for example, there are 35,000 refugee children enrolled in schools, but almost a third do not attend.[69] In a study conducted by Save the Children in 2013, parents identified the prohibitive cost of accessing education as one of their most pressing concerns.[70]

Documentation

Many children forced from their homes have lost all personal identity documents, and thus face difficulties when these documents are required as part of the school registration process. Where displaced children are able to attend school, the lack of school records showing their educational level and validating their previous results can also mean children miss out on learning or are forced to repeat a year. In Sri Lanka, for example, the combination of protracted conflict and the 2004 tsunami caused large-scale and prolonged displacement, forcing hundreds of thousands of children from their homes. In 2012, students and teachers alike were still reported to be facing problems replacing lost or destroyed identity documents.[71] Many children have been unable to sit exams; others have missed out on an entire school year.[72]

Access to education for children held in immigration detention

In some countries, children who seek asylum are detained while their claims for refugee status are processed. The UN Rules for the Protection of Juveniles Deprived of their Liberty state that children in detention should be educated in schools outside of detention facilities[73] – but for many children in the Asia-Pacific region, this is not the case.

The Australian Government, for example, was holding 789 child asylum seekers in immigration detention centres as of September 2014.[74] In early 2014, the Australian Human Rights Commission reported that just 65 per cent of compulsory school-aged children in immigration detention in Australia attended an external school.[75] At the Christmas Island detention centre, also in early 2014, education was reportedly limited to just two weeks per child.[76] While children on Christmas Island are now receiving an education, the fact that for over a year the schooling provided was so grossly inadequate is likely to have significantly impacted their learning and development.

In Indonesia, an estimated 16 percent of unaccompanied child asylum seekers are held in immigration detention.[77] No formal education is provided inside immigration detention centres and these children are not allowed to leave the centres to attend schools in the wider community.[78]

Language

Displaced children often end up living in communities where they do not speak the local language – and thus face difficulties following classwork or understanding their teachers. This presents significant difficulties for children in refugee camps on the Thai–Burma border, for example, where many do not speak Karen (the language of instruction in schools) as their first language.[79] Students attending classes in a language other than their first language are more likely to fail exams, which can lead to them dropping out of school. Some parents opt to send their children to schools outside the camps so they receive instruction in their first language, placing these families under additional financial strain.[80]

Limited legal protections

In some countries, displaced children have no formal status under national laws, and thus have very limited legal protections. This significantly impacts on their ability to access basic rights, including education. Indonesia, for example, is not a party to the UN Refugee Convention, and has limited legal protections for refugees and asylum seekers. The government does not fund support services for the displaced – despite there being more than 10,000 as of January 2014.[81] Refugee and asylum seeker children in Indonesia thus face significant challenges accessing education. Of all displaced children registered with the UN High Commissioner for Refugees in 2014, only 44 school-age refugee children – less than 10 percent of the total – are enrolled in public schools.[82]

Statelessness

'Stateless' peoples have no nationality or citizenship anywhere, and are therefore without protection under any national law. While children born to parents of non-citizens can be at risk – babies born to asylum seeker parents while in detention in Australia, for example – some countries in the Asia–Pacific region have legal safeguards to protect children who may otherwise be stateless, thus helping to ensure their rights. Children born to stateless parents in Indonesia, Vietnam, Laos PDR and Malaysia, for example, are considered citizens.

Others are not so lucky. Muslim communities living in Rakhine State in Myanmar, for example, are not recognised as citizens of Myanmar, and their ability to access education is severely limited. Many children have been living in displacement camps since mid-2012, with restricted movement outside the camps, and have been unable to access state schools. These children have been attending temporary schools run by international non-government organisations (INGOs), but coverage is insufficient, and many have gone two years without education. The quality and coverage of education amongst these communities is among the lowest in Myanmar. In some rural Muslim areas of Rakhine State, less than 60 percent of primary school age children are in school.[83]

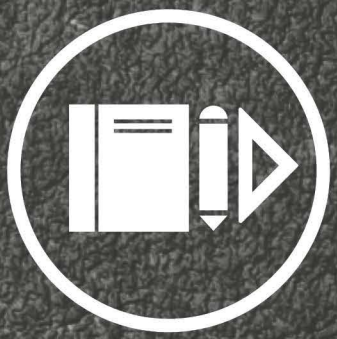
Photo: Save the Children

TACKLING THE EDUCATION CRISIS: PRIORITIES FOR ACTION

END THE MILITARY USE OF SCHOOLS

FUND EDUCATION IN EMERGENCIES

PROMOTE SCHOOL SAFETY



SUPPORT EDUCATION FOR DISPLACED CHILDREN

END THE MILITARY USE OF SCHOOLS

One of the issues underlying the prevalence of attacks on schools is that although international law requires parties to conflicts to refrain from attacking civilian objects, the use of schools by armed forces or armed groups (which renders them vulnerable to attack) is not expressly prohibited.

Issues affecting children in armed conflict have garnered increasing international attention in the last two decades. In 1996, a groundbreaking study on children in armed conflict – which found more than two million children had been killed in war in the preceding decade – was presented to the United Nations (UN) General Assembly.[84] In 2000, the UN Security Council addressed the issue of children in armed conflict for the first time, and since then the issues affecting children in armed conflict, and attacks on schools in particular, have been firmly on the Council's agenda. Multiple resolutions have been adopted by the Council calling for the protection of children in armed conflict, and the UN Secretary General reports annually to the Council on the implementation of these resolutions.

In 2012, the Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack initiated a consultative process to explore strategies for protecting schools and universities from military use. The process identified the need for guidance on the obligations of armed forces and armed groups to protect the right to education during times of conflict. It culminated in the development of the Draft Lucens Guidelines for Protecting Schools and Universities from Military Use during Armed Conflict, a set of guidelines aimed at assisting those involved in the planning and execution of military operations to make appropriate decisions regarding the use and targeting of schools and universities during conflict.[85]

The Lucens Guidelines are being promoted by states, non-government organisations (NGOs) and UN agencies, led primarily by the Government of Norway, with the hope of seeing them integrated into the policy and practice of militaries around the world. They are due to be finalised by the end of the year, and it is anticipated that a conference to facilitate their endorsement will then take place in 2015.

The Australian Government is nearing the end of its two-year term on the UN Security Council. Thus far, it has played an admirable leadership role on the Council, leading on the drafting of humanitarian resolutions and championing the protection needs of children. In June 2013, Australia's Ambassador Gary Quinlan told the Council that Australia was particularly concerned about the use of schools for military purposes.[86] In September 2014 he acknowledged that there was much more still to be done to protect children in armed conflict, including addressing the impact of military activities on schools. He expressed concern that 'attacks on schools and their military use are depriving children of their basic right to schooling and endangering the lives and safety of students and teachers,' and said 'we need to do more.'[87]

As Australia assumes the presidency of the Council in November this year, it has the opportunity to make a lasting difference for the educational prospects of children in conflict around the world. In the words of the UN Secretary General's Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict, the child victims around the world count on us.

The Draft Lucens Guidelines[v]

Guideline 1: Schools and universities shouldn't be used to fight in conflicts

Guideline 2: Abandoned schools and universities shouldn't be used to fight in conflicts

Guideline 3: Schools and universities shouldn't be destroyed in conflicts

Guideline 4: Schools and universities should be protected from attacks

Guideline 5: Schools and universities shouldn't be used for security purposes

Guideline 6: The Lucens Guidelines should be incorporated by parties to all conflicts

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to publicly declare its support for the Lucens Guidelines and integrate the Guidelines into military policies, trainings and practice, and to encourage other states to do so.

Photo: Save the Children

FUND EDUCATION IN EMERGENCIES

One of the reasons so many children remain out of school today is the chronic lack of funding for the education sector.

National governments have the most important role to play in funding education. However many fail to adequately prioritise education, particularly in times of conflict or disaster, and international aid is critical. At the World Education Forum in Dakar in 2000, 164 governments pledged to work together towards six goals to achieve 'Education for All' (EFA) by 2015. And they pledged that no country seriously committed to Education for All would be thwarted by a lack of resources.[88]

International aid to education rose steadily in the following decade, but still in 2010 it was estimated that an additional $16 billion per year in external financing would be required to achieve some of the EFA goals in low-income countries by 2015.[89] But rather than increasing, international aid to education has declined in recent years. It fell by just over six percent between 2010 and 2011, and a further three percent in 2012, and is now down to 2008 levels.[90]

The funding deficit is particularly pronounced in countries affected by conflict and disasters. In these countries, during the past decade, education has been among the least funded of the humanitarian sectors. In 2013, the education sector appealed for $400 million; by the end of the year, just 40 percent of this had been received. This compares to a total funding level of 65 percent for humanitarian appeals in 2013. Overall, just 1.5 percent of global humanitarian assistance in 2013 went to education.[91]

The UN Secretary General has called on governments to ensure education receives at least four percent of the total humanitarian aid budget.[92]

Education for All goals[88]

Goal 1 – Expand and improve comprehensive early childhood care and education.

Goal 2 – Ensure that by 2015 all children have access to, and complete, free and compulsory primary education of good quality.

Goal 3 – Ensure that the learning needs of all young people and adults are met through access to appropriate learning and life-skills programmes.

Goal 4 – Achieve a 50 percent improvement in levels of adult literacy by 2015 and equitable access to basic and continuing education for all adults.

Goal 5 – Eliminate gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005, and achieve gender equality in education by 2015.

Goal 6 – Improve the quality of education so that recognised and measurable learning outcomes are achieved by all.

According to the UN's Financial Tracking service, in the period 2004–2013, the Australian Government directed an average of just three percent of its humanitarian aid annually to the education sector. In 2013, just 1.6 percent of Australia's humanitarian aid went to education.[93]

Funding education is an investment, not an expense. In the immediate aftermath of emergencies, it provides protection, saves lives and assists children to recover from trauma by signaling a return to normality. In the long term, education has a catalytic effect on children's wellbeing, development and future prospects as well as on peace, stability and economic development.

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to increase the proportion of humanitarian aid it directs to education to four percent of its humanitarian aid budget, as recommended by the UN Secretary General. This should include funding for education in large-scale emergencies as well as the smaller but more frequent disasters that cumulatively have an enormous impact on children's education.

Photo: David Wardell/Save the Children

PROMOTE SCHOOL SAFETY

The disruptive impact of disasters on education can be mitigated by carefully assessing risks, taking targeting measures to reduce the impact of natural hazards, preparing for disaster response, and planning for educational continuity in the event of disasters. In Vanuatu in 2014, for example, in selected provinces primary school students were engaged in a series of activities over the course of several months on themes related to disaster preparedness. After several months of activities, one of the school principals told an audience at the Pentecost Island Children's Day celebrations that:

'All the children and even their teachers and parents now appreciate that the security of students is actually more important than any academic skills. … If an earthquake was to come, everyone really does know what to do; … if a tsunami was to come, they know the evacuation path; … all of the functions inside the Disaster Committee that we formed in the school, … everyone knows them well and students have responsibilities too. … For any disaster like earthquake or tsunami, we know how to respond. Starting now and into the future.'[94]

Children themselves prioritise the need for safer schools. In the Children's Charter on Disaster Risk Reduction in 2011, more than 600 children from 21 countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America listed their first priority as: 'Schools must be safe and education must not be interrupted'.[95]

In 2012, in an effort to bring together efforts by various actors to promote school safety, the Global Alliance for Disaster Risk Reduction and Resilience in the Education Sector launched the Comprehensive School Safety Framework.[96] The framework provides a set of policies and practices to be adopted and implemented by education authorities, school communities and disaster management authorities to reduce the risks posed by natural hazards to the education sector. It suggests policies and practices in three areas critical to school safety: safe learning facilities; school disaster management; and risk reduction and resilience education.

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to safeguard its investment in the education sector in the Asia–Pacific region, Save the Children calls on the Australian Government to support national governments to adopt a comprehensive approach to school safety. Particular attention should be paid to:

- **Ensuring that every new school is a safe school.**
- **Assessing, replacing and retrofitting unsafe schools.**
- **Establishing a national, education-sector disaster management office to integrate disaster risk reduction and management into education sector management, and risk reduction focal points at each level, including individual schools.**
- **Monitoring the impacts of hazards on education, and planning for educational continuity in the event of disasters.**
- **Incorporating risk reduction and resilience into formal and non-formal education, especially through action-oriented key messages for risk reduction and participatory school disaster management.**

Save the Children also calls on the Australian Government to champion the Worldwide Initiative for School Safety, to be launched at the Third World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction in 2015.

Photo: Save the Children

SUPPORT EDUCATION FOR DISPLACED CHILDREN

Today's drivers of displacement are often lasting issues: protracted conflicts, instability, grinding poverty and long-lasting devastation from disasters take years and – in some cases decades – to be resolved. Thus, many of the factors that lead children to be forced from their homes do not have quick solutions. But while long-term, regional solutions for displacement are found, ensuring that children have access to a quality education while displaced – whether in camps, host communities or immigration detention – is an investment that in itself can play a key role in building resilient communities and promoting stability in the long term.

The Australian Government has a critical role to play in promoting and protecting access to quality education for displaced children in the Asia-Pacific region, including in Australia.

SAVE THE CHILDREN CALLS ON THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT TO

- **Enact legislation to ensure children and their families are not held in immigration detention centres in Australia. If children and their families are detained, it should only be where strictly necessary, for the shortest possible time and as a last resort, and during such time they should have access to quality education, wherever possible outside of detention facilities.**
- **Work with neighbouring countries to develop a regional protection framework to address issues of displacement in the Asia–Pacific region, with a focus on funding for, and non-discrimination in the provision of, education for displaced children.**

Photo: Save the Children

CONCLUSION

Ensuring access to education for children affected by conflict, disasters and displacement has a profound and enduring impact on their wellbeing and development. In emergency situations, education provides a protective environment for children, promotes a sense of normality, and assists children to recover from trauma. It assists them to grow, to flourish and to participate in their communities, even in the most challenging environments. It has an equally profound and enduring impact on their communities, resulting in higher levels of employment and earnings, and better health and social cohesion.

The challenges described above are enormous but not insurmountable. November 2014 marks the 25th anniversary of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. It is an opportune time for the Australian Government to reflect on the achievements of the past 25 years and commit to ensuring that, in its efforts to address the education crisis over the next 25 years, no child is left behind.

This report was written by Rebecca Barber with significant contributions from Annie Bodmer-Roy, Amy Barry-Macaulay, Nicole Carter, May Maloney and Olivia Zinzan.

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About Save the Children Australia

Save the Children is one of Australia's leading aid and development agencies dedicated to helping children. We work in Australia and overseas to protect children from harm and help them access quality education and health services. Save the Children Australia belongs to the 30-member organisation that forms Save the Children International, which has operational programs in more than 120 countries. We fight for children's rights and deliver immediate and lasting improvements to children's lives worldwide.

Photo: Hedinn Halldorsson/Save the Children
Cover Photo: Hedinn Halldorsson/Save the Children

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