Education's Sacrifice:
Bearing the Human and Financial Toll of Conflict

التعلـــيم فــوق الجمـــيع
Education Above All

Foreword

This position paper from the Education Above All Foundation (EAA) has two key messages:
· It is essential that education be protected from the various forms of attack. Without this, we face a deepening of the education and human capacity crisis at a global level.
· It is equally as important that access to education, in as many forms as necessary, be available to all, regardless of status, during conflict. Without this, we are all contributors to the denial of a fundamental human right.

EAA releases this paper at the fifth observation of the International Day to Protect Education from Attack. It is essential to bring attention to the grave violations against education in times of insecurity and conflict. EAA has been a proud initiator of many actions in support of the protection of education from attack as we summarise in this paper. We must never give up our struggle for peace.

Our position goes far beyond that, however. Even, and perhaps especially, during times of crisis it is incumbent on all of us to enable everyone to access a quality education. We are clear about what can, and needs to be done.

This paper addresses the devastating effects that conflict imposes on education systems—costing them resources, burdening them with non-educational tasks, and even robbing them of their raison d'etre. These costs are not short term, but rest with Ministries and their professionals for many years into the future.

The ultimate educational toll resulting from conflict and war, however, is borne by the learners, and in fact, those who were already the most disadvantaged prior to any fighting. This is unacceptable and, while we advocate for the cessation of war, EAA also engages in a wide range of projects across the globe to mitigate the impact on the most marginalised of a range of aggressive acts. The publication summarises how EAA's programmes, together, across the globe, support and facilitate education from the primary level through higher education for those enduring the highest human toll of conflict. There are many avenues to lessen the educational burdens of war and we extoll others to join us in this important mission.

I wish to take this opportunity to thank all the EAA programmes for their important work and for condensing so much of it into such a brief paper. My special thanks go to Mary Joy Pigozzi, of the Educate A Child (EAC) programme for conceptualising and writing this paper, to Jade McCulloch of EAC for much of the background research, and to Danya Al-Thani of our External Relations Department for coordinating the effort across EAA.

Fahad Al-Sulaiti, CEO

Introduction

The Education Above All Foundation (EAA) is mandated to support the provision of education to the most marginalised. In a little over a decade, it has enabled the education of over 19 million children and adults through its programmatic and advocacy efforts in collaboration with a wide range of partners across the globe. While these are results to respect, the stark reality is that conflict in all its forms remains a major constraint to enabling the right to education sustainably—a right that has profound positive effects in relation to every other sector and to furthering a prosperous sustainable world.

In recognition of the fifth observation of the International Day to Protect Education from Attack (9 September 2024), EAA is reviewing selected aspects of the costs of war, who pays the price, and in what ways. We conclude that the education of the most marginalised is jeopardised in particular and that the short- and long-term impacts of war on education are a global cost that none of us can afford if we wish to live in a sustainable world.

The Cost of War

Recent history is not encouraging.   Conflict is becoming more widespread, both within and outside of country borders; ninety-two countries were involved in an external conflict in 2022 according to the Institute for Economics and Peace[1]. This is the most since the inception of the organisation's Global Peace Index (GPI) in 2008. The same source indicates that conflicts are on the rise along with increases in military expenditures and presence. In 2022 world military expenditure reached USD 2.21 trillion[2]. These investments notwithstanding, the average level of country peacefulness deteriorated by 0.56 per cent as recorded in the 2024 GPI. This is the fifth consecutive year that global peacefulness has deteriorated. Additionally, the GPI indicates that global expenditure on peacebuilding and peacekeeping was US$ 49.6 Bn in 2024, approximately 0.6% of total military spending[3]. The World Economic Forum notes that war and violence cost everyone on the planet US$ 5 a day[4].

At the global level, the impact of rises in conflict has a negative impact on Gross Domestic Product (GDP)--equivalent to 13.5% of global GDP in 2023[5]--and, as noted in The Effects of Military Spending on Economic Growth
· Increased military spending leads to slower economic growth.
· Over a 20-year period, a 1% increase in military spending will decrease a country's economic growth by 9%.
· Increased military spending is especially detrimental to the economic growth of wealthier countries.

The data presented so far is just a fraction of what is available, but it is sufficient to demonstrate that vast sums of money are invested in conflict and warfare in their various forms. The data also indicate that these massive investments are not preventing, or even mitigating, conflict. In fact, conflict is expanding. Moreover, funds used to address conflict are not available for human development regardless of whether it is for education, health, infrastructure, political engagement, or mitigating climate change, for example. **Opportunity costs are, in fact, opportunity lost!**

Furthermore, the data also indicate that lack of investment in these sectors can be a contributor to conflict[6]— insufficient or inequitable spending on social services can lead to internal discord, which may spiral into violent civil conflicts that can escalate into full-scale warfare.

The data are indisputable--investments in education have significant benefits in both the short- and long-term at individual, family, state, and global levels. Unfortunately, investments in the sector at the global level are grossly inadequate. This inadequacy is magnified by conflicts that impose an important and heavy additional cost to education systems. This is of deep concern to EAA.
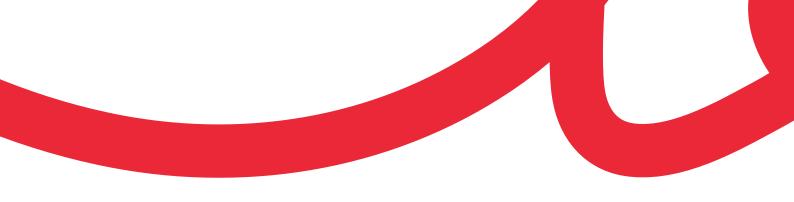
01.   https://www.economicsandpeace.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/GPI-2024-web.pdf
02.   Military expenditure (current USD) | Data (worldbank.org)
03.   GPI-2024-briefing-web.pdf (economicsandpeace.org)
04.   War and violence cost everyone $5 a day | World Economic Forum (weforum.org) | Feb 18, 2021
05.   chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://www.economicsandpeace.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/GPI-2024-web.pdf
06.   https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1122271/

Education's Burden

The importance of human security and the responsibility of the state to provide this cannot be denied. While there is no question that there should be mechanisms in place to support human security, the data suggest that there may be reasons to reconsider the methods that have been chosen—particularly in relation to costs vs. outcomes.

War and conflict have direct negative effects on education systems, including:

- **The destruction or (mis)use of education facilities.** According to The Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack (GCPEA). "Attacks on education were frequent and widespread in 2022 and 2023. GCPEA identified around 6,000 reported attacks on students, educators, schools, and universities, as well as cases of parties to conflict using educational facilities for military purposes. Attacks on education and military use increased by nearly 20 per cent in 2022 and 2023 compared to the two previous years"[7]. Damaging education facilities or using them for other purposes has several expensive results, all of which need to be paid for by the education system if the right to education is to be preserved. These include rebuilding or refurbishing facilities and supplies, providing increased security for teachers and learners, and addressing the lack of access for students.

- **Pressure on education budgets.** Budgets are affected in at least two ways. First, when there is a conflict and funds are needed for military purposes, this frequently results in decreased budgets in other sectors. These decreases are not only applied during the conflict but are often long-term due to the need for significant national reconstruction after the conflict is resolved. Second, it is usually the sector itself that has taken on the majority effort of replacement, rebuilding, and refurbishing of the physical facilities and other additional expenses due to a conflict. This is financially costly and usually, annual budgets are grossly insufficient for the scale of the problem.

- **Increased load from displacement.** Conflict almost always results in large numbers of people being displaced, whether internally or across a national border. Rare are the situations where education institutions are able to immediately absorb additional learners. Those speaking a different language or having come from a different curricular system or suffering from personal loss place additional burdens on the system from the instructor, to the administrative system, to budget demands. No one of these challenges is easy, but in combination, they may be impossible to address for the displaced and also for the local communities who are also affected by the increased challenges placed on the education system by displacement and relocation.

07.   https://protectingeducation.org/wp-content/uploads/eua_2024_execsum_eng.pdf

Education's Burden

- **Education professionals not being paid.** When there is a conflict, systems break down--including payroll systems or the way to ensure that professionals receive their pay checks. Current examples include Sudan and Yemen where, even if there may be some funding the ability of the Ministry (or Government) to ensure pay packages reach those who are working is severely compromised. There are further complications. Teachers need money and in the absence of their pay check, they look for other sources. This may be in another sector and, once the conflict is over, the teacher may elect not to return to education posing both a short-term cost and a long-term loss (training of a replacement) for the ministry. Or, the teacher may elect to teach privately, taking payment from those who can afford it, which serves as a significant barrier to children from poorer families and which may also serve to result in families undervaluing education investments due to other priorities. This latter is detrimental to overall human capacity development in the long run.

- **Education facilities no longer perceived as safe places.** When education facilities are direct military targets, used for military purposes, or serve to harbour people who have lost their homes they are no longer safe learning spaces. Communities, families and learners will sensibly avoid them. Unfortunately, this has implications that last far beyond the conflict, and not only concerning the reconstruction or rehabilitation of facilities. Perceptions last longer than any conflict. If a space is deemed to be unsafe, it will take significant time and effort to overcome this negative perception. Often, it is an additional burden on those returning teachers to also address these fears in others and devise ways to enable them to be overcome.

- **Possible sources of misinformation about the conflict itself.** Conflicts have many phases. In some cases, curricula and pedagogy have contributed to the development or adverse impact of a conflict by providing bias or misinformation. The negative impacts of this are both short-term in relation to the actual conflict and long-term in relation to reinstalling trust in the education system as a fair and honest way to learn facts and how to analyse and synthesise them.

In combination, all of these negative influences severely impact the lives of current and future learners. Ultimately, individual learners bear the immediate and long-term brunt of conflict. They suffer from decreases in national investment in education and other key social services, from lack of access to education for a variety of reasons, and, ultimately, learning losses that disadvantage them for the rest of their lives.

Paying the Price

Conflict affects people in many different ways, and individuals react to conflict differently depending on a wide range of factors. Nevertheless, data and experience from the ground point to some of the key negative effects of instability and how these affect the educational prospects of individuals and groups of people.

Among the major ones are:

- **Lack of access.** Even without the complications of conflict, lack of access to quality education affects millions of learners at all levels across the globe. While not every conflict-affected learner is denied access, many are. The majority of crisis-affected children are not actually out of school[8]. At a minimum, however, learning is frequently interrupted or disrupted due to the resulting insecurity from any conflict. Teachers and administrators have to adapt to possibly fluid situations, often at very short notice and usually without background or training on how to manage such challenges. Those participating in education maybe too stressed to take full advantage of the opportunity. All this has negative repercussions in relation to learning and possible advancement to the next stage in a learning cycle.

  Access may also be limited due to other factors. Lack of safety and security have already been mentioned with regard to the likelihood of families and communities supporting educational attendance. There are additional barriers, however. Data from UNFPA indicate that there are increases in sexual violence during times of insecurity and conflict, with females being particularly at risk[9]. In some environments, children and youth are at high risk of being employed by armed forces either as workers, including as sex workers or as child soldiers as documented by UNICEF[10]. Possibly less psychologically destructive but preventing the continuation of education is the need of many poor families to take their children and youth out of education and into work to make ends meet during a crisis. Whatever the reason, **equitable access is impossible—the least fortunate bear the biggest burden.**

- **Personal loss.** Often, conflict is associated with loss in many forms. The loss of learning sites and opportunities has already been outlined. There are several other potential losses of at least equal significance. Homes may need to be abandoned or have been destroyed, usually leaving learners without a safe space to return to and devoid of the normal aspects of daily life such as a kitchen or access to clothes other than what they are wearing. At least as difficult to accept is the loss of loved ones—whether parents, siblings, other family members, and/or close friends—or living with not knowing if loved ones are alive and missing . . . or forever gone. Living with these forms of stress, even for a short period of time, is extremely difficult.

08.   Why Hasn't the Needle Moved? | Education Above All Foundation (2023)
09.   https://www.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/impact_conflict_women.pdf
10.   https://www.unicef.org/protection/children-recruited-by-armed-forces

Paying the Price

- **Other losses also provide challenges.** Among the most critical, where education and livelihood are concerned, is loss of documentation in many forms such as identity documents and certificates. The lack of a birth record is a major constraint to accessing many social and civil services. Refugees who cross borders without a passport or other identity documents are particularly disadvantaged. Without proof of education level or specific qualifications documents, further education and/or employment are often extremely challenging and may even be impossible.

- **Trauma.** Conflict affects different individuals differently. Many respond with enormous resilience or strength. Others harbour anger or suffer trauma. For the many who have not built resilience, due to being too young or other factors beyond their control, they experience trauma, which can be evidenced in a range of forms from silence, to extreme fear, to abnormal behavioural responses, among others. In many cases, the presence of trauma is not immediately obvious to either the individual or those around him/her. All of these different kinds of responses influence both the ability to learn and what is actually learned.

- **Learning loss.** All of the factors outlined above have an impact on the ability to learn and, unfortunately, learning loss across the board is a major outcome from conflict. For example, Education Cannot Wait (ECW) conducted a comparative analysis of crisis-affected countries in Sub-Saharan Africa in 2023[11]. The findings are sobering. In conflict-affected situations, the pace of learning could be as much as 6 times slower than that of children in other situations. Furthermore, the study confirms that, even if offered, the quality of education deteriorates and, often when children are fortunate enough to be in school, they are not learning to read or do basic maths due to other extenuating factors.

- **The ultimate price: Loss of life.** Over the decades, millions of children have lost their lives either directly due to conflict or from the consequences of war such as disease and starvation. Indeed, in less than a year about 17,000 children have been killed in Gaza alone[12]. And, we rarely hear of those killed in ongoing conflicts in places like Cameroon or Myanmar. In addition to the heavy toll that the loss of a child has on families, this is a loss of talent and creativity to our global community and for our shared future.

11.   https://www.educationcannotwait.org/news-stories/press-releases/
       number-crisis-impacted-children-in-need-education-support-rises (2023)
12.   https://reliefweb.int/report/occupied-palestinian-territory/bloodiest-face-its-genocide-israel-has-
       killed-2100-palestinian-infants-and-toddlers-gaza-enar#:~:text=Palestinian%20Territory%20%2D%20
       The%20Israeli%20army,genocide%20on%207%20October%202023. Originally published 14 August 2024

Mitigating the Cost for Those Who Pay the Price of War

Those who pay the greatest educational price for conflict are those who were the most marginalised prior to the conflict[13] and it is imperative to provide solutions for those who are immediately affected. It is the poorest of the poor who have to send their children to work rather than to school, it is poor families who cannot afford to send their youth to training or other forms of higher education. It is those with the least resources who have to flee, or cannot send their family members abroad for safety or education. . . the list goes on. **The bottom line is that the ultimate price of decreases in the availability of, or access to, quality education is paid by those who were already struggling to fulfil their right to quality education.**

Education is not only important for human and national development. It can play a key role in promoting social cohesion and reducing violence. According to the World Bank[14]

- Countries with higher overall school completion rates have fewer recorded conflicts. This result is especially true for rates of secondary completion.
- Countries with higher rates of female school completion, particularly at the primary level, tend to have fewer conflicts.
- Higher rates of both primary and lower secondary school completions show positive correlations with factors known to create and sustain peaceful societies.
- The number of years learning in school is the strongest correlation to reducing various forms of violence.

Call to Action

It is essential that education be protected from the various forms of attack. Without this, we face a deepening of the education and human capacity crisis at a global level.

It is equally as important that access to education, in as many forms as necessary, be available to all, regardless of status, during conflict. Without this, we are all contributors to the denial of a fundamental human right.

13.   https://concernusa.org/news/how-does-war-affect-education/ (2023)
14.   https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/256561468323725689/pdf/354060Promotin101OFFICIAL0USE0ONLY1.pdf

Example Solutions

>>>>>>>>>>

In recognition of the key role of education in sustainable development and peacebuilding, **EAA's programmatic work has included a focus on education for those affected by conflict.** In this regard, EAA's work has emphasised solutions that work within the local context and the conflict itself. These solutions address advocacy, accountability and action across the globe. A summary table to follow provides information on the scope of the foundation's efforts and selected projects are described in more detail.

Country	Mitigating Actions
Bangladesh **Partner** BRAC	· Educating Rohingya refugee children on peace, conflict resolution and human rights · Recreation, sports and arts activities · Semi-permanent learning centers and learning materials · Compressed curriculum · Capacity development for Forcibly Displaced Myanmar Nationals (FDMN) and host community · Training on inclusive education, gender, safeguarding, protection against sexual exploitation and abuse, psychosocial support for children, emergency preparedness and response plan, and child-centered disaster risk reduction
Colombia **Partner** Pies Descalzos/ Barefoot Foundation	· Sports and artistic extracurricular activities for psychosocial support
DRC **Partner** Caritas Congo ASBL	· Training and capacity building on psychosocial support for children in difficult situations, health, legal instruments to promote children's rights and protection · Recreation facilities for schools
Ethiopia **Partner** Save the Children	· Psychological First Aid (PFA)
Gaza Strip Palestine **Partner** UNFPA QRC	· Distributing meals daily · Psychosocial support · Volunteers trained to organise education classes in neighbourhoods and displacement areas · Teacher training on creating a safe and inclusive environment · Establish classrooms in areas affected by war · Provision of educational tools and materials · Scholarships to students to continue education after disruption · Strengthening community engagement
Ghana **Partner** Plan International	· Training on psychology and psychosocial Support, child rights and responsibilities · Establishment of Right of the Child Clubs to build self-esteem · Provision of safe spaces · Training on child protection for local community facilitators
Global	**Accountability:** · Supported the establishment of the Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack (GCPEA) in 2010 · Supported the establishment of the International Day to Protect Education from Attack in 2020 by the UN and is observed annually on 9 September · Supported the establishment of the The Safe Schools Declaration · Established the TRACE data portal in 2020

Country	Mitigating Actions
Global	**Advocacy:** · Publications addressing legal frameworks regarding the protection of education from attack · Ensuring that each observation of the International Day to Protect Education from Attack has a focused topic and includes key leaders from a range of states and organisations to demonstrate that the protection of education is in everyone's interest and a range of stakeholders bear responsibility · Development of a global network of youth advocates for the protection of education · Social Media campaigns
Haiti **Partner** CARE	· Psychosocial support and improved linkages to health services · Learning through play and sports · Enhanced municipal oversight on school safety standards · Construction and rehabiliation of public schools · Increased parent awareness on child rights
Kenya **Partner** Girl Child Network	· Training for children on child rights, life skills and protection against abuse and exploitation · Training Area Advisory Councils on child protection · Formation of Rights of the Child clubs
Kenya (Dadaab & Kakuma refugee camps) **Partner** Green Youth 360	· Train refugee youth, local public primary and secondary school pupils on key collaboration and other skills and engage them in climate action · Establish youth-led groups for waste management, recycling, and other cooperation-oriented initiatives · Foster civic responsibility among refugee youth for collective and individual action
Multi-country/Syria: Syria, Jordan, Iraq, Turkey, Lebanon **Partner** UNICEF USA	· Psychosocial Support and related recreational activities and kits · Remedial and alternative education programmes for children in safe and child-oriented community centers · Self-learning programme · Pre-fabricated classrooms, rehabilitation of classrooms, community mobilisation activities · Peace building programme as part of teacher training · Peace education activities · Educational protection centers to provide psychosocial support for children
Multi-country: Cameroon, Chad, Kenya (Dadaab and Kakuma), Malawi, Rwanda, South Sudan, Sudan, Uganda, Malaysia, Pakistan, Syria, Yemen, Iraq, Iran Mexico **Partner** UNHCR	· Psychosocial assistance · Sport for Protection (S4P) Initiative/sports for protection programme for social inclusion · Advocacy with local authorities to allow refugee children access to local schools, and for inclusion in national education data systems · Teacher training on code of conduct, child protection principles and positive discipline techniques, psychosocial support, mental health and life skills · Joint advocacy to exempt thousands of children from school fees and allow instalment payments to address family financial stress · Capacity of national and refugee teachers supported, Alternative Basic Education curriculum, and psychosocial support · Education counselling and case management

Country	Mitigating Actions
Multi-country: Kenya, Tanzania **Partner** We World	· Training of teachers and child protection service providers · Psychosocial support services and sensitisation processes for children showing psychosocial distress · Strengthening child protection mechanisms at the community and regional/municipality levels · Community awareness, engagement and direct counselling and support to vulnerable families
Multi-country: Syria, Lebanon, Jordan **Partner** UNRWA	· Training aid material on psychosocial support · Trauma counsellors recruited and trained · Trauma counsellors provided structured recreational activities in schools and individual support · Referral system established to ensure further specialised assistance for traumatised children · Children's survival capacity built through teaching life skills · Training to promote safety and resilience in School communities · School Risk Assessment and Emergency evacuation drills · Self-learning programme with package of self-study, online resources and TV materials · Alternative education programme for refugee children · Safe Learning Centers and Learning Resources Centers established · Self-study materials developed and distributed, covering core curriculum areas · Transportation to and from school provided to children · Education in Emergencies safety and security preparation, awareness and training (School Risk Assessment, Emergency evacuation drills, safety and resilience in School communities)
South Sudan **Partner** UNICEF	· Education in Emergency (EIE) interventions (conflict resolution and livelihood training geared toward mitigating conflict and strengthening resilience, access to formal and informal education programmes) · Life skills and psychosocial support integrated through the Back-to-Learning initiative · Recreation kits for schools · Education for peace integrated into whole-school-development approach · Temporary learning spaces · Schools and learning spaces promoted and oriented as Zones of Peace · Peacebuilding and conflict sensitive education integrated into the curriculum · Training on security
South Sudan **Partner** Whittaker Peace and Development Initiative	· Training on empowerment in mediation, conflict resolution and life skills · Community Learning Centres established as hubs for training and awareness-raising activities · Advocacy Campaigns on peace, human rights, and sustainable development · Community Dialogues fostered reconciliation and addressed local conflicts · Conflict Resolution Education programme empowered children and adolescents as Junior Peacemakers · Support for Local Peacemakers

Country	Mitigating Actions
Sudan **Partner** UNICEF	• Child Clubs and PTA engagement to provide psychosocial support • Peaceful co-existence of children in learning spaces promoted • School Child Clubs established in schools • Training on psychosocial support to enhance child protection and reduce violence in schools • Accelerated learning programme and development of aligned material and Alternative Learning Programme centres, activities included psychosocial well-being, cultural events and promotion of peaceful coexistence
Uganda **Partner** Plan International World Vision	• Monitoring and Psychosocial Support training • Promotion of safe, violence-free and gender-friendly schools • Annual consultation and advocacy with local Government for formulation and enforcement of by-laws on children's rights to education • Safe schools campaigns and peer groups for Safe school contracts and safety buddies/groups • Provision of safe and child friendly learning environments
Ukraine **Partner** Think Equal Positive Education Institute	• Refugee integration aimed at fostering empathy and intercultural understanding • Social Emotional Learning • Developed the Ukraine Emergency Response Package (UERP) to recover learning loss • Teacher and child resources to promote intercultural understanding and relationship-building • TV series episode to help children cope with trauma while promoting inclusion, empathy, and respect between refugee and host communities
Yemen **Partner** UNICEF	• Training in psychosocial support • Psychological Support and recreational activities • Violence prevention programmes implemented in areas affected by conflict • Provision of temporary classrooms, learning supplies and school kits for IDP and conflict-affected children

Accountability: Protect Education Against Attack

EAA's Protecting Education in Insecurity and Conflict (PEIC) programme, which has been active since 2009, has played a key role globally in strengthening legal and policy frameworks to hold perpetrators of attacks against education accountable and advocating for the rights of learners in conflict. Together with a range of state and non-state actors, PEIC has played, and continues to play a global leadership role in the following:

- The establishment of the Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack (GCPEA) in 2010, which is a coalition of several organisations representing fields such as education, human rights and international humanitarian law, which publishes the 'Education Under Attack' report every two years.

- UN Security Council Resolution 1261, adopted in 1999, establishing the six grave violations of international law against children in situations of armed conflict, that include education related violations, including attacks on schools and the recruitment of children into armed conflict.

- UN Security Council Resolution 2601, adopted in 2021, strongly condemning attacks against schools, children and teachers, and urging conflict parties to immediately safeguard the right to education.

- UN General Assembly Resolution establishing the International Day to Protect Education from Attack (A/RES/74/275), observed annually on 9 September as a reminder to all of the criticality of protecting education from attack, whether by state or non-state actors, across the globe.

- The Safe Schools Declaration, which builds a community of nations committed to respecting the civilian nature of schools and developing and sharing examples of good practices for protecting schools, universities and educational institutions during armed conflict. To date 120 countries have endorsed the declaration.

- The establishment of the TRACE data portal in 2020 to monitor attacks on education during insecurity and conflict.

Each one of the above efforts plays a key role in providing accurate data and analysis of attacks on education and their perpetrators, identification of the perpetrators and of responsibility for attacks, advocating for accountability, and strengthening the legal framework and global consensus on the need for legal accountability and justice for attacks on education and for committing violations of international law, international humanitarian law and human rights laws.

Advocacy: Protect Education Against Attack

Closely linked to accountability efforts are EAA's contributions to advocating for the protection of education from attack in recognition that often the impact of conflict on social sector systems are often not well understood. Among the key long-term advocacy efforts undertaken by EAA are:

- A series of key publications addressing the legal frameworks regarding the protection of education from attack. These can be accessed at www.eaa.org.qa
- Ensuring that each observation of the International Day to Protect Education from Attack has both a focused topic and includes key leaders from a range of states and organisations to demonstrate that the protection of education is in everyone's interest and that a range of stakeholders bears responsibility.
- The development of a global network of youth advocates for the protection of education. This network was reinforced through a partnership with OHCHR to facilitate engagement of more young people and greater global reach.
- Global reach has been further extended through an ongoing social media campaign entitled #UnitetoProtect, which has reached hundreds of thousands of youths and others across the globe.

Gaza Humanitarian Intervention
December 2023 – March 2025

Partners: EAA's Al Fakhoora Programme with UNFPA and QRC

The project addressed multiple needs on the Gaza strip in Palestine, including food security, education, hygiene, and psychosocial support, especially among vulnerable populations such as children, women, and displaced families. Challenges faced in this active war zone include, high rates of food insecurity and malnutrition; psychosocial stress and trauma among children, students and educators; lack of access to education; and hygiene needs of displaced women and adolescents.

Stakeholders include, international partners such as UNFPA and QRC, Youth volunteer networks and Local NGOs.

Specific Actions Taken to Mitigate the Human Cost:
- **Food Security:** Distributed daily hot meals and ready-to-eat meals over 30 days.
- **Ensuring Access to Education:** Supported the Launch of the National Programme for Popular Education During the War on Gaza, collaboration with partners to support and enhance education in Gaza during and after the war by leveraging volunteer efforts to organise educational classes in neighbourhoods and areas of displacement.
- **Psychosocial Support:** Provided for traumatised students and ensuring continuous learning despite the destruction of formal educational facilities.
- **Creating a Network of Young Volunteers, Teachers, and Educational Institutions:** Recruited and trained volunteers from diverse age groups and communities in teaching skills and being able to manage the challenges faced by severely stressed learners. Volunteers assigned across war-affected areas to teach students in makeshift classrooms.
- **Makeshift Classrooms:** Identified suitable locations such as partially destroyed homes, public squares, or tents and equipped them with educational tools and materials. Assigned students into small groups to facilitate effective learning.
- **Psychological Support:** Trained volunteers to provide psychological support programmes to students experiencing trauma due to the war, helping them to cope with their experiences.
- **Higher Education and Scholarships:** Provided scholarships at Qatari universities.

Applicable "Learnings" Include:
- **Holistic Approaches** addressing multiple needs are more effective in mitigating human costs in conflict zones.
- **Continuous Adaptation and Flexibility** are crucial in dynamic and volatile contexts like Gaza.
- **Building Local Community** capacities and fostering strategic planning and coordination can sustain educational initiatives through diverse funding sources.
- **Effective Collaboration** with local and international partners boosts a crisis response.
- **Effective Collaboration** with local and international partners highlights the importance of partnerships in crisis response.
- **Enhanced Hygiene and Dignity** for displaced women and adolescents.
- **Reduction in Food Insecurity** and malnutrition among targeted populations.

Increasing Access to Education for Out of School Children through Self Learning Programme
July 2017 – September 2021

Partners: EAA's Educate A Child (EAC) programme and UNICEF

The project scaled up the Self-Learning Programme (SLP), developed under an earlier EAC-UNICEF project by the Ministry of Education in Syria with support from UNICEF and UNRWA, to address the educational needs of children with limited or no access to education due to the ongoing conflict in Syria. Aligned with the national curriculum and enabling pupils to sit for government exams, the SLP allowed out of school children (OOSC) to continue their education at home or in Community Learning Centres (CLCs) run by NGOs. The CLCs also served as resource centres for home learners (adults without formal education training could facilitate the use of SLP materials). The programme delivered a comprehensive self-study course through psychosocial support, learning materials, teacher training, and classroom rehabilitation/construction, creating a safe learning environment within the conflict context. Stakeholders included the MoE, UNRWA, community members, and children affected by the Syrian crisis.

Specific Actions Taken to Mitigate the Human Cost:
- **Identifying OOSC:** Supported MoE survey on OOSC and mapping of Non-Formal Education (NFE) programmes and pathways to formal education to inform policy on NFE in Syria.
- **Data and Tracking:** Provided computers for child monitoring tracking and data collection.
- **Curriculum:** Developed policy framework, curriculum and aligned implementing partners and materials to launch the SLP, conducted new textbooks revisions to align with the new Syrian Government education curriculum.
- **Access to Safe Learning Spaces:** construction, rehabilitation and furnishing of learning spaces and community based public schools.
- **Expanding Access:** to formal, non-formal and remedial education, recreational activities and psychosocial support through school clubs.
- **Training and Incentivising:** of education staff and facilitators in SLP. Training teachers, MoE staff, partner staff members, and trainers.
- **Ensuring Continued Learning:** provided kerosene to IDP schools in camps and non-camp refugee schools as part of on-going winterisation support.

Applicable "Learnings" Include:
- **The Need to Continue Supporting Cross-sectoral Interventions** to reach the most vulnerable groups and provide learning opportunities to out of school adolescents.
- **Strengthening Cooperation with the MoE** through a more open and centralised approach allowed frequent dialogue, helping to ensure the project contributed to the broader strategic education goals in the country.
- **Children with Disabilities Require Additional Attention** if education is to reach them during conflict.
- **Additional Online Sessions and Distance Learning Modalities Often Need to be Included** to improve the reach and impact of education programmes.
- **More Investments are Needed** to deliver a blended approach that includes remote learning.
- **New Modalities are Critical** for increased teacher and parent engagement in distance learning and learning recovery; with mental health and psychosocial support needed to promote the well-being of children.
- **Digital and Remote Access** need to be strengthened in times of crises, including the need to improve tools and guidance on remote monitoring and follow-up with partners.

EAA's Ukraine Emergency Education Programme – Internet Free Education Resource Bank
August 2022 – January 2024

Partners: EAA's Innovation Development (ID) Directorate, Positive Education Institute (PEI) and Think Equal

The project in Ukraine and Poland worked to provide emergency education with a focus on social-emotional learning, refugee integration, and mitigating the learning loss for Ukrainian refugees. The partnership with Think Equal tackled mental health challenges and ensured productive engagement for children, youth and adults through a fun and educational series broadcast on TV and online. The partnership with PEI centred on promoting social-emotional learning, intercultural understanding between Ukrainian and Polish children, and academic skills. Stakeholders included Ukrainian refugee parents and children, Polish host community members, schools and adaptation centres, local authorities, civil society organisations, and government.

Specific Actions Taken to Mitigate the Human Cost:
- **Educational Resource Development for Refugee Support:** A rapid needs assessment was conducted with civil society education organisations, Ukrainian mothers and community members, and government. This helped shape the development of the Ukraine Emergency Response Package (UERP) for teachers, parents, and children aimed at fostering empathy and intercultural understanding.
- **Fostering Social Emotional Learning:** PEI implemented UERP resources to promote social-emotional learning, intercultural understanding, and academic skills in 5 adaptation centres and 100 government schools in Poland with host-community and Ukrainian refugee children. This included a collection of bedtime stories to help families address difficult emotions around loss, anxiety and separation.
- **Learning Loss Recovery:** The partners developed UERP for Polish and Ukrainian learners aged 6-15, incorporating project-based learning resources that promoted academic learning through a hands-on and inquiry-based approach aligned with the Polish curriculum. Provided training on project-based pedagogy to Ukrainian and Polish teachers.
- **Mental Health Support:** ID and Think Equal created three TV series to promote social and emotional learning and address war-related trauma. Aired in Ukraine and beyond to assist children, youth, and adults cope with trauma while promoting inclusion, empathy, and respect between refugees and host communities. The series were: 1. PTSD and Cognitive Behavioural Therapy support for adults and youth (developed by Yale Centre for Emotional Intelligence and The Children and War Foundation), 2. Trauma-informed social and emotional learning for 2 to 7-year-olds (developed by Think Equal), and 3. EAA's Ukraine Refugee Education Modules for 8 to 12-year-olds (developed by EAA).

Applicable "Learnings" Include:
- **Agile Programming is Key:** A quick and practical response supporting host communities is important in order to effectively address the educational and psychosocial needs of refugees.
- **Expanding Reach Through TV:** TV is an effective way to reach more children, helping them cope with trauma while promoting inclusion, empathy, and respect between refugees and host communities.
- **Promoting Intercultural Understanding:** Empathy and intercultural understanding between refugee and host communities contributed to improved relationships, increased interest in learning and academic growth.
- **Resource Adaptability is Important:** Flexible, adaptable and immediately usable curricula can be effective in various settings in addressing academic and socio-emotional needs.
- **Community Involvement:** Involving host communities and local partners contributes significantly to personalised and impactful learning experiences.

Mobilising the Power of Grassroots Youth as Advocates, Peacebuilders, and Active Citizens in Conflict-Affected Communities of Uganda and South Sudan
(July 2016 – July 2024)

Partners: EAA's PEIC and ROTA programmes and the Whittaker Peace and Development Initiative (WPDI)

The project addressed the urgent needs and aspirations of youth in in conflict-affected regions of South Sudan and Uganda. It did this by empowering youth to become advocates, peacebuilders, and active citizens. With over 63% of South Sudan's population under 24 and Uganda having the world's youngest population, the challenge was to prevent these young individuals from falling into cycles of despair and violence. The project worked to mitigate the human cost of ongoing conflicts, which resulted in massive displacement, loss of lives, and severe humanitarian crises.

Stakeholders included Lead and Local Peacemakers, community leaders, local authorities, and international partners like the UNHCR and Uganda's Office of the Prime Minister (OPM). Youth, local schools, communities, and vulnerable populations, including former child soldiers and refugees, were actively involved.

Specific Actions Taken to Mitigate the Human Cost:
- **Training and Empowerment:** Youth trained in mediation, conflict resolution and life skills. Community Learning Centres (CLCs) established as hubs for training and awareness-raising activities.
- **Advocacy Campaigns:** Numerous advocacy campaigns on peace, human rights, and sustainable development conducted. Community Dialogues fostered reconciliation and addressed local conflicts.
- **Conflict Resolution Education:** Conflict Resolution Education programme expanded to empower thousands of children and adolescents as Junior Peacemakers, responsible for applying peace education skills in their daily lives.
- **Support for Local Peacemakers:** Lead Peacemakers facilitated meetings with local populations to inform them about peace processes and support the implementation of the Revitalised Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan (R-ARCSS).

Applicable "Learnings" Include:
- **"Soft Power" Actions Contribute to Peace and Stability in Targeted Regions.** Incidents of violence decreased, and successful mediation processes were initiated, as exemplified by the peace agreement engineered by Peacemaker Magdalena Nandege.
- **Empowered Youth Trained as Peacemakers** with essential skills can become active agents of change. Their involvement encourages local ownership and sustainability of peacebuilding efforts.
- **Advocacy is Effective** through relevant actions undertaken in schools and children and adolescents empowered as Junior Peacemakers.
- **Indigenous Youth can be Mobilised as an Effective, Cost-efficient, and Sustainable strategy for Promoting Peace** in high-risk areas. The model's scalability is evidenced by its successful implementation across multiple regions with diverse challenges.

Green Youth 360
(June 2023 - June 2026)

Partners: EAA's ROTA programme and Girl Child Network (GCN)

The project focuses on skills that are essential for learning to live together harmoniously. Furthermore, as climate change is increasingly a contributor to conflict across the globe, instilling key peace-building abilities in young people serves as a protection against engagement in future conflicts.

The project aims to address the environmental degradation caused by refugee and host community youth in the Dadaab and Kakuma refugee camps in Kenya. The focus is on improving the environmental knowledge, skills, and capacities of vulnerable, hard-to-reach youth, including those with disabilities, aged 15-24 years. These youth, who primarily come from conflict-prone countries such as Somalia, Ethiopia, South Sudan, and the Democratic Republic of Congo, face significant barriers to education, employment, and training, which limits their ability to contribute to green societies and take climate action. The project seeks to mitigate the human cost of environmental degradation, poor waste management, and deforestation, which lead to unhealthy living conditions and further environmental harm.

While Green Youth 360 primarily engages refugee and host community youth, it also involves public primary schools and public secondary schools in these areas, utilising the relaunched Government of Kenya programme "Kuunganga Kufanya Kusaidia Kenya (4K Clubs)" to impart eco-friendly environmental management practices. Additionally, Green Skill Facilitators (GSFs) will be trained to deliver the programme's curriculum, and the project will establish youth-led groups to take action on climate-related issues.

Specific Actions Taken to Mitigate the Human Cost:
- **Train Youth** on green skills, including tree planting, renewable energy, organic farming, and eco-friendly waste management.
- **Establish youth-led groups** to take action in the identified climate action areas.
- **Implement** tree planting initiatives to plant trees over two years.
- **Promote** organic farming practices, including apiculture farming and the production of organic manure.
- **Develop** renewable energy solutions such as biodigesters, energy-saving stoves, and artificial charcoal from waste products.
- **Engage** youth in waste management and recycling activities, aiming to recycle waste and produce eco-friendly products like chairs from the invasive Mathenge plant.
- **Foster a sense of civic duty and responsibility** among youth to take collective and individual actions in response to climate change.

About EAA
& its Programmes

The **Education Above All (EAA) Foundation** is a global foundation established in 2012 by Her Highness Sheikha Moza bint Nasser. EAA Foundation aims to transform lives through education. We believe that education is the single most effective means of reducing poverty, creating peaceful and just societies, unlocking the full potential of every child and youth, and creating the right conditions to achieve Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Through our multi-sectoral approach, unique financing models, focus on innovation as a tool for social good, and partnerships, we aim to bring hope and real opportunities to the lives of impoverished and marginalised boys and girls.
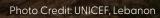
EAA Foundation is comprised of the following programmes: Al Fakhoora, Educate A Child (EAC), Reach Out to Asia (ROTA), Protect Education in Insecurity and Conflict (PEIC).

Al Fakhoora: Fakhoora believes in the strength and adaptability of youth, and works to enable the most marginalised, particularly refugees and Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), to reach their full potential, despite their surrounding circumstances. We do this by removing obstacles and helping youth access quality, relevant higher education. We place students at the heart of our programming, and design our scholarships to fit the economic, social and cultural context in which they live. Al Fakhoora empowers youth to become educated, engaged, productive individuals who can adapt and excel in their challenging environments.

Educate A Child (EAC): Aiming to trigger significant breakthroughs and a material difference in the lives of children who have no access to primary education, Education Above All's Educate A Child (EAC) programme launched in 2012, has been helping millions of out of school children (OOSC) all over the world, through partnership and innovation, overcome the access and retention barriers blocking their path to education. Playing a catalytic role in the field of OOSC and quality primary education, EAC strives to achieve individual and social outcomes for these children, their communities and a more sustainable world for us all.

PEIC: Conflict is no reason to deny anyone education. Protect Education in Insecurity and Conflict (PEIC) envisions a world where the right to education is protected for individuals and communities affected by conflict and insecurity, including the most vulnerable and marginalised. Our goal is to safeguard everyone's right to inclusive and equitable quality education as a universal human right.

ROTA: ROTA has revised its mandate to focus on 'Education for Climate Action' in order to support the integration of Climate Change Education in secondary schools; and, capacity building for refugee and community-based youth in Green Skills for Climate Action. In addition, ROTA considers it vitally important to develop young people's green skills in order to prepare them for green jobs in the green economy.

www.EducationAboveAll.org