

Walking the Talk? Financing for Education in Emergencies, 2015–2018

The right to education is most at risk during humanitarian emergencies. Yet, these are also the times when education is needed the most. Natural disasters, armed conflict, and forced migration are direct obstacles to realizing Sustainable Development Goal 4, to *ensure inclusive and equitable quality education for all*. In 2015, Save the Children published the report “Walk the Talk: Review of Donors’ Humanitarian Policies on Education”. In this brief, we present the results of the updated 2020 report, examining whether donor policies and humanitarian funding are keeping up with the increased demand for education in emergencies.

Brief Points

- Humanitarian aid allocations to education doubled between 2015 and 2018.
- 44% of education sector needs were covered in humanitarian aid appeals in 2018, up from just 30% in 2015.
- Pooled funds are also contributing more money to the education sector than in 2015.
- Four countries received half of all humanitarian aid for education between 2015 and 2018: Syria, Yemen, South Sudan, and Iraq.
- More donors have policies on education in emergencies than in 2015.
- Nevertheless, the amount of humanitarian aid allocated to education (2.24%) remains well below the 4% global goal.

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Introduction

Humanitarian disasters are preventing achievement of Sustainable Development Goal #4, to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education for all. Large numbers of young people are currently living in crisis situations, their lives being altered by armed conflict, political upheaval, and natural disaster. Of the estimated 23 million refugees in the world today, one-half are under the age of 18, only 61% of them attend primary school – as compared to a global average of 91% – and far fewer attend secondary school. Today, more than half – at least 4 million out of 6.4 million – of the refugee children who fall under the mandate of the UNCHR receive no schooling at all. More now perhaps than ever before, there is a huge need for provision of quality education for crisis-affected young people. Are allocations of humanitarian aid to the education sector of crisis-affected states keeping up with the demand? Are donor policies addressing this acute need? We examined these questions for the years 2015 to 2018 using quantitative data on humanitarian aid flows to education, as well as document analysis of 16 donor policies on education in emergencies. We supplement Financial Tracking Services (FTS) data where necessary with additional information from the OECD's International Development Finance Statistics, bilateral aid agencies, the Global Partnership for Education, the Global Education Monitoring Report, and the Education Cannot Wait Fund.

Trends in Financing of Education in Emergencies, 2015–2018

At the United Nations' Global Education First Initiative (GEFI) in 2011, a commitment was made to ensure that education receives 4% of the budget in every humanitarian response, up from 2%. Figure 1 shows the percentage of humanitarian aid allocated to education over time since 2006. Overall allocations of humanitarian aid to education have increased since 2014, and the amount of humanitarian aid allocated to education doubled between 2015 (when \$284 million was allocated to education) and 2018 (when \$565 million was allocated). Between 2015 and 2018, a total of \$1.68 billion in humanitarian finance was allocated to education. The allocation increases in education have followed the overall trend in increased humanitarian financing, as shown in Figure 2. But the current global average of 2.24% of humanitarian funding is still

well below the 4% global spending goal. Meeting this goal would require doubling the share of financing for education within humanitarian aid.

Who Spends What?

Between 2006 and 2018, there has been a lot of variation among government donors in contributing humanitarian aid to education. The United States, Japan, Norway, and the European Commission have consistently remained among the top government donors of humanitarian aid to education during this time period. Donors such as Norway, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and the United Arab Emirates have increased their allocations over time, while donors like Sweden and Denmark have reduced their contributions in recent years (though it should be noted that Denmark increased its humanitarian spending on education in 2019, and it is the top contributor to the Education Cannot Wait Fund). As a relative proportion of humanitarian aid, only Norway and Japan meet (or nearly meet) the global goal of spending 4% of humanitarian aid on education. Three Middle Eastern states – Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, and Kuwait – have become more visible major donors of humanitarian aid to education in emergencies. Our analysis shows that these states are largely channelling their assistance to crisis-affected states in the region, including Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq, Yemen, Turkey, and Palestine. These states' funding patterns are likely driven by not only their involvement in some of the conflicts in recipient states (such as Saudi Arabia in Yemen), but also by other

considerations like regional proximity and shared language, history, and culture.

Education ranked second in Norway's total humanitarian spending of \$523 million during 2017. The greatest amount of funding (21%) was allocated to multi-sector spending, then to education. Figure 4 shows Norway's humanitarian spending share per sector in 2017. Norway's high prioritization of education in its allocations of both development and humanitarian aid is an explicit foreign policy goal of the Norwegian government in both development and humanitarian contexts.

The Education Cannot Wait Fund

The Education Cannot Wait Fund was established in 2016. As the first and only global fund specifically for education in emergencies and protracted crises, the fund represents a major step forward in the financing of education in emergencies. The advantages of such a fund are many; institutionalizing a specific finance mechanism for education in emergencies can help to coordinate aid to the sector, funnel finance to the most urgent needs, draw attention to specific crises, and bridge the emergency-development gap.

The Education Cannot Wait Fund has already achieved a major goal by helping the international community to increase total financial contributions to education in emergencies. The 2018 Education Cannot Wait Fund report estimated that the fund has helped to raise global humanitarian aid allocations to education by

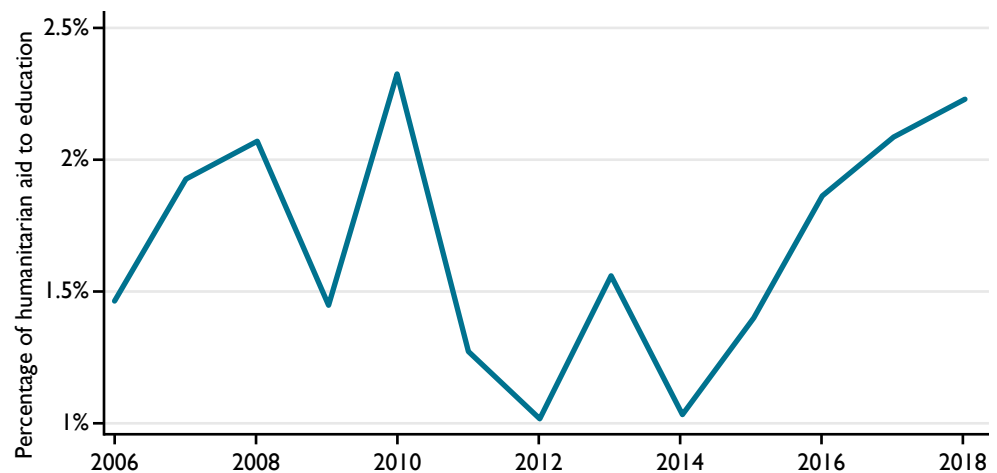


Figure 1: Percentage of humanitarian aid allocated to education

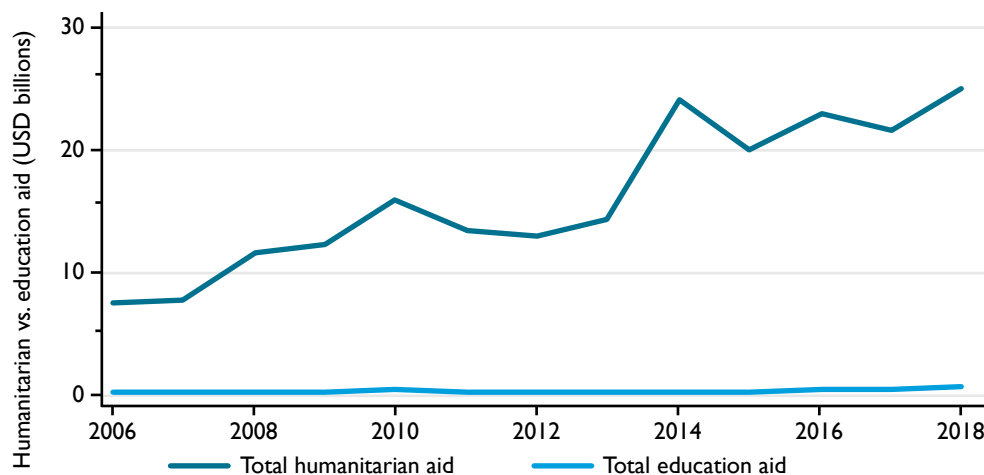


Figure 2: Trends in total humanitarian aid versus allocations to education

0.2% – a large achievement in a relatively short amount of time. When we include contributions made by Education Cannot Wait, aid allocations to education in emergencies increases from 2.24% to 2.6%.

Pooled Funding Allocations to Education

Pooled funding for the education sector increased during the period 2015–2018, from 3% (2010–2014) to 3.7%, a figure that is greater than the overall global average of government humanitarian aid allocations to education. The top five pooled funds for the 2015 to 2018 time period in the education sector were: the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) (\$33 million total allocated to education out of a total of \$1.8 billion across all sectors); the South Sudan Humanitarian Fund (\$19 million allocated); the Iraq Humanitarian Fund (\$13 million allocated); the Turkey Humanitarian Fund (\$13 million allocated); and the Somalia Humanitarian Fund (\$13 million allocated). Between 2015 and 2018, funds for education increased in the CERF and Turkey funds in particular.

Recipient Countries

Four countries received half of all the humanitarian aid allocated to education between 2015 and 2018: Syria, Yemen, South Sudan, and Iraq. These, of course, represent some of the worst humanitarian disasters that occurred during this time period.

Donor Policies on Education in Emergencies

In the 2015–2018 time period, the 16 donors in our analysis have paid increased policy attention to education in emergencies. Among the 16 donors we examined, eight refer explicitly to “education in emergencies” in the analysed

documents: Canada, the EU, Norway, Switzerland, the UK, the US, France, and the United Arab Emirates. This is twice as many countries as in 2015. Four of the eight donors have separate documents in the form of factsheets and white papers on education in emergencies.

Among the 16 donors in our analysis, 11 donors list education as a priority area in their humanitarian and development policies. Donors often frame education as a tool to achieve broader development goals, including employment, reducing or eradicating poverty, and contributing to economic growth. Education is also frequently promoted as a tool to achieve gender equality.

But there are also variations in policy framing across donors. For instance, Germany, Denmark, and the EU in particular view education as a key priority in addressing displacement and refugee situations, while the United Arab Emirates and Denmark frame education as a counter-radicalization tool.

During the 2015–2018 period, we observed several shifts in policy around education in emergencies. First, donors are placing greater emphasis on “quality”, with 14 donors highlighting challenges relating to education quality, not only access. A second change concerns target populations and a focus on equity. While providing education to girls is important across nearly all the donors in our sample (with the exception of Saudi Arabia), refugees, migrants, and internally displaced persons are also getting more policy attention. An additional shift concerns aid data

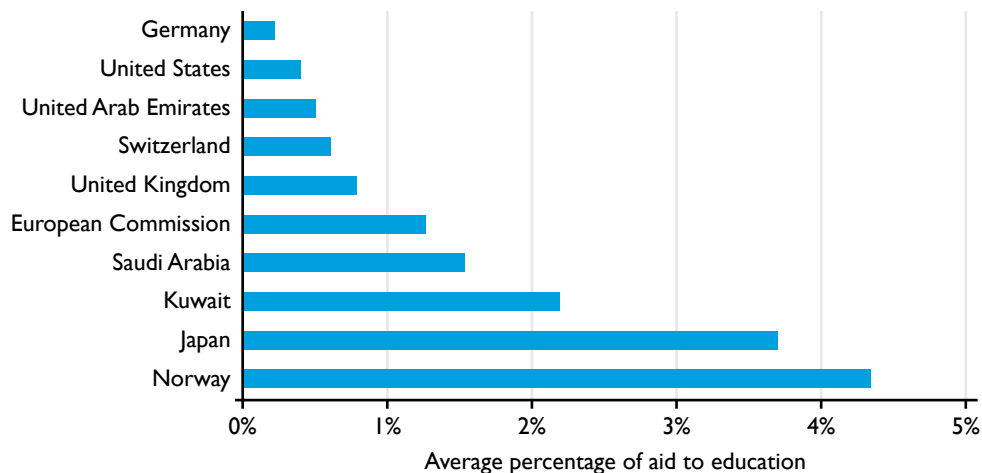


Figure 3: Top ten donors of humanitarian aid to education, 2015–2018

Funding for Education in Humanitarian Appeals

Humanitarian appeals for the education sector continue to be under-funded in general. However, the percentage covered for education has increased very slightly each year during the 2015–2018 time period. In 2018, 44% of education appeals were funded, versus 38% during the 2006–2014 time period.

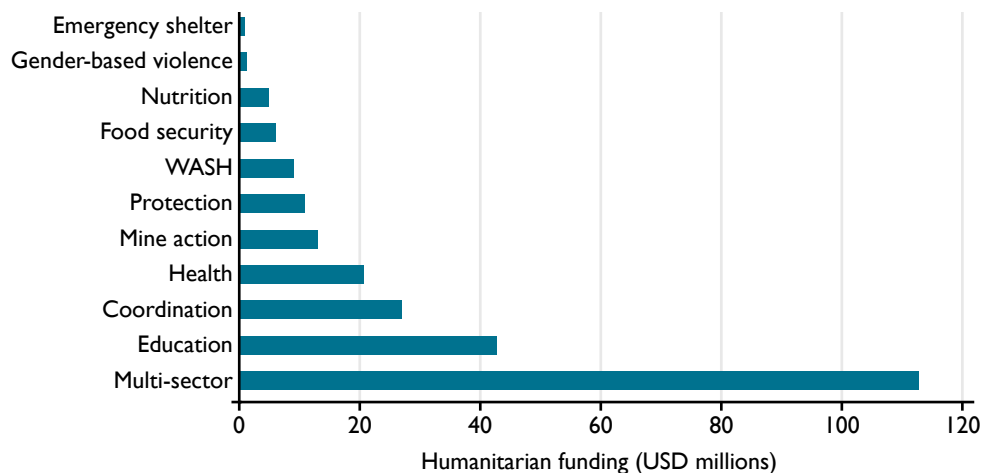


Figure 4: Norway's humanitarian funding per sector, 2017

transparency, which should be improved to ensure aid effectiveness. Public availability of documents regarding the goals, means, and evaluation methods of aid in education in emergency situations fosters inter-donor cooperation and makes it easier to highlight gaps, and ultimately to increase aid effectiveness. Norway and the EU are good examples of qualitative transparency.

Recommendations for Action

- Donors should increase the level of humanitarian **funding for education**, and should further ensure a consistent level of funding is allocated throughout a given emergency situation.
- Donors should improve the availability and quality of **information about education in emergencies**, including information about specific policies and data on aid allocations. This information should ideally include disaggregated data on funded programs and projects (including their location), beneficiaries, and how such aid is monitored and by whom. This information should ide-

ally be stored in a central, publicly accessible location.

- Donor agencies, international organizations like the United Nations, and civil society organizations should consider using more **consistent terminology around education in emergencies** in policy documents and data collection. This would make it easier to understand aid allocations to emergency versus more “normal” situations, and facilitate comparisons of aid allocations and funded programs over time and space.
- Donor agencies, international organizations like the United Nations, and civil society organizations should consider funding **further research on education in emergencies**, in order to improve understanding of who is doing what, where, and how, and what types of finance models and approaches “work” to improve education access and quality in crisis situations.
- International organizations and civil society organizations should ensure that they engage

with and better understand the states and actors that are contributing funds to education in emergencies, including **smaller states** like Norway and Japan, as well as **emerging donors** such as those in the Middle East. ■

Further Reading

Dupuy, Kendra, Júlia Palik & Gudrun Østby (2019) ‘Walk the Talk? Review of Financing for Education in Emergencies, 2015–2018’. Oslo: Save the Children. Available at: resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/library/walk-talk-review-financing-education-emergencies-2015-2018.

Save the Children Norway and the Norwegian Refugee Council (2015) ‘Walk the Talk: Review of Donors’ Humanitarian Policies on Education’. Oslo. Available at: www.nrc.no/resources/reports/walk-the-talk---review-of-donors-humanitarian-policies-on-education/.

Examples of Donors’ Gender Equality Approaches in Education in Emergencies

- **Canada** has adopted a Feminist International Assistance Policy.
- **Japan** views education as a primary tool for women’s empowerment.
- **Norway** has identified education for girls as a priority area since 2013.
- **The United Kingdom** aims to reach out to “hard-to-reach girls”, establishing in 2012 the largest fund devoted to girls’ education, “Girls’ Education Challenge”.
- **The United States** has since 2015 specifically focused on breaking down the barriers to adolescent girls’ education through the interagency initiative “Let Girls Learn”.
- **The United Arab Emirates** prioritizes women’s empowerment and protection in its development policy.

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THE PROJECT

This PRIO Paper summarises a follow-up report to Save the Children’s 2015 ‘Walk the Talk: Review of Donors’ Humanitarian Policies on Education’. The update examines whether donor policies and humanitarian funding are keeping up with increased demand for education in emergencies, and whether there has been any progress towards addressing the recommendations in the 2015 report.

PRIO

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