



Save the Children

education global challenge

OVERVIEW

A hundred million children across the world are missing out on school, and half of them live in countries affected by conflict. Millions more are receiving a substandard education because of the effects of war. Yet all children have the right to a good education, whatever their circumstances. It is essential in a crisis, because it gives children protection and stability, and gives their societies a route out of conflict.



ANNA KARI

By 2010, the International Save the Children Alliance and its many partner organisations will ensure eight million children benefit from an education that offers them protection, stability and opportunities in their life. In doing so, we'll generate the impetus that will enable millions more to get the same chances, and make a massive contribution towards the Millennium Development Goal of achieving universal primary education by 2015.

This is our Global Challenge. To achieve it, we need to raise \$450 million and harness the resources of all 27 Save the Children organisations around the world in a global campaign that changes the lives of millions of children.

You can help us rise to the challenge.



ELIN TOFT/SAVE THE CHILDREN

Henang, 15, was kidnapped by Maoist guerrillas in Nepal and forced to fight. "A guerrilla soldier pointed his pistol at me and threatened to kill me if I didn't go with them," he says.*

After nine months he managed to escape, and now stays at the Underprivileged Children Education Project supported by Save the Children.

"I like to write. I would like to continue going to school so that I can get a good education. There is so much I need to learn! School is important if I am going to become something in life."

*Henang is not his real name

The issue

Armed conflict blights education. Families split up and survival becomes the most urgent need during war. Education systems break down. Yet schools can give children the skills and knowledge they need to survive conflict and, as they become adults, to reduce the chances of it happening again.

Military action creates large populations of displaced people and exposes vulnerable children to terrible risks. Young people living through conflict face injury, trauma and death, but also the prospect of being forced into exploitative labour or military servitude, as soldiers or sex slaves. They face new responsibilities, such as earning a living or caring for siblings. Even when conflict has ended, their futures are damaged because of the learning time they've lost.

War can destroy the fabric of education systems. Governments at war often divert funds towards military use rather than schools. Conflict destroys school buildings or soldiers turn them to other uses. Supply systems for books, pens and teaching materials break down. Teachers, administrators and education ministry staff are among the dead and displaced.

Low levels of international investment in education do little to relieve the situation, and even those children who do have access to school often receive a very poor quality education. Teachers may be few and poorly qualified. Bad training and monitoring leaves children vulnerable to bullying, abuse and even sexual exploitation. Classes could have 100 or more pupils, and curricula are inadequate or inappropriate.

It can take years for an education system to recover from war, during which time an entire generation will have lost out on an education and its benefits.

But it doesn't have to be this way.

The solution

Education saves lives.

Going to school can increase a child's chances of surviving conflict. Schools can equip children with the knowledge and skills they need to stay safe and healthy, and to survive conflict and its aftermath.

Schools are vital in protecting children and supporting their emotional and social development by giving them comfort, security and opportunity. The routine of school develops a sense of normality and the environment is one in which children are allowed to be children, not forced to behave like adults.

In a school environment, children can begin the process of recovering from trauma and grief, and voice their feelings without fear. The child protection role of school is vital, and properly trained teachers can lead the process of identifying and supporting vulnerable children who are at immediate risk of harm.

For societies affected by conflict, education is integral to building long-term peace and prosperity. The legacy of properly-resourced schools with well-trained teachers and appropriate curricula is a generation of young people with the knowledge and skills for employment, and with an understanding of conflict resolution and human rights.

Simply going to school each day can transform the lives of children living in conflict and generations to follow.



Angola has a desperate shortage of doctors and trained nursing staff because the education system was so badly damaged by war. Save the Children is helping to improve access to the education young people need to become nurses, including vocational training. The benefits for Angola will be enormous.

“Studying is the most important thing in my life. I will not slave away in the field like my mother and earn very little. I want to be a doctor so I can help a whole lot of people and my family.” Selestina, 14, Angola

Our Global Challenge is:

- to improve education for eight million children, including three million who currently have no access to school with the help of our partners in conflict-affected countries
- to exert pressure to help millions more.



Actions

Quality education To improve the quality of education for eight million children,* we will:

- invest in teacher training and materials to support learning
- support community education committees, parent/teacher groups and student councils to support education
- ensure adequate materials are in place for all children
- involve children in improving the quality of education

Access to education To provide education opportunities to three million children who currently have no access:

- work with ministries of education and local partners to re-establish education systems by training teachers, waiving fees, and forming partnerships with district education bodies
- develop appropriate curricula and learning programmes for children whose education is disrupted by conflict
- supply teaching and learning materials, and support the building of schools

Child protection To make schools safe for children in conflict-affected countries, we will:

- train teachers, parents and children and young people in children's rights and child protection
- ensure school buildings are safe, secure 'zones of peace'
- set up child protection systems, particularly for monitoring the safety of individual children
- establish codes of conduct for teachers and other school staff

Finance To improve the financing of education in countries affected by conflict, we will:

- train ministries of education, and support schools and communities, to use their resources more efficiently
- work with local and national governments and international donors to make more money available for education
- work with governments to abolish user fees and other hidden costs, such as books and uniforms

Advocacy

- demonstrate the impact that poor quality teaching has on children
- persuade governments to follow the INEE's** Minimum Standards for Education in Emergencies.

* Five million children who are in school and three million who currently have no access

** Inter-agency Network for Education in Emergencies

- show governments and education authorities the impact of policies that obstruct access to learning. These may include charging for education or books, and the use of languages in schools which aren't spoken fluently by most pupils
- persuade governments to implement inclusive policies to allow the most vulnerable children, such as girls, ethnic minorities and children with disabilities, to have access to school.

- make teachers, education authorities and governments aware of the vital role schools should play in ensuring children are kept safe from harm during conflict
- persuade donor governments that education plays a key role in protecting children and improving human security.
- persuade governments to include life skills, children's rights and peace-building in the curriculum.

- persuade governments and other organisations of the need for education in the recovery of countries affected by conflict
- persuade governments to direct less money towards military expenditure and more towards education
- persuade donors to direct a higher proportion of money to education
- persuade the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund to support countries to invest in their own education systems.



A route out of conflict

Of the world's 20 poorest countries, 16 have suffered a major civil war since the end of the Cold War. Education is particularly important for these nations, because it offers a route out of conflict. In south Sudan, Save the Children has set up 300 Community Support Groups to increase awareness of the benefits of education and helped to build 200 schools. The results have been startling, and children now going to school include ex-child soldiers, girls and children with disabilities. One Community Support Group member said, "Now children are choosing to go to school instead of the army. What is more, the Sudan People's Liberation Army is no longer recruiting them."



"Millions of children are caught in the crossfire of armed conflict in all continents. It is a moral outrage how the world is treating these children. It is a moral outrage that more is not done for children

who are without school, without protection, without healthcare or security in armed conflict.

"I've seen Save the Children at work in northern Uganda, in Darfur, in the Congo. Save the Children is a partner of the UN in the battle in favour of children and against abuse. With your campaign to help all children get school, education and protection in situations

of armed conflict we can make a big step forward.

"We salute Save the Children. But we should now redouble our effort together and say we will not accept situations like Uganda, Colombia, Nepal and the Congo. We will not allow it to continue."

Jan Egeland, United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Co-ordinator

What you can do

We need to raise \$450m to help us rise to the Global Challenge. To find out how you can play your part, check out our advocacy and fundraising plans on the Alliance website at www.savethechildren.net or if you are a staff member, log on to the Alliance Extranet at www.savethechildren.net/xtranet

Join us in demanding action for eight million children denied a quality education because of armed conflict. Your actions could change their lives.