

Save the Children

EDUCATION AGAINST THE ODDS

Meeting marginalised children's demands for a quality education

Save the Children fights for children every single day.

We stand side by side with children in the toughest places to be a child. We do whatever it takes to make sure they survive, get protection when they're in danger, and have the chance to learn.

Because every child should be able to make their mark on the world and build a better future for us all.

Acknowledgements

This report is based on our review of eight studies produced by a number of child-focused organisations, including Save the Children, either independently or in coalition. For the full list of publications that informed the development of this report, see the Appendix on page 17.

This report was written by Rasha Daya and Emma Wagner. We would like to acknowledge the contribution of children and their carers who shared their experiences with us and gave permission to use their images.

Some names have been changed to protect identities.

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Cover photo: Marzela's house was destroyed in the earthquake and tsunami that hit Sulawesi, Indonesia, in October 2018. Marzela is back at school and feels positive about the future. She hopes to become a teacher. She says, "I like science, Indonesian and maths, because in science we learn about nature, in Indonesian we learn how to write properly and in maths we learn how to count."

Around the world 75 million children caught up in crises are in need of support to continue their education. (Photo: Jiro Ose/Save the Children)

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Children at the margins: when will they get the chance to learn?

Children at the margins are growing up in the toughest situations. They include children affected by conflict or environmental disasters, child refugees, children with disabilities, child labourers, children from minority ethnic communities, and street children. And they are frequently locked out of education

Yet every day millions of marginalised children go against the odds – by managing to get to school and learn. In their daily struggle for an education, these children are fighting for their right for a better future.

These children know that education is critical to their life chances. Yet 262 million children[1] – representing nearly one-fifth of the global population of school age – are excluded from their national education systems for reasons such as poverty, gender, location, environmental disasters, disease outbreaks, conflict, disability and socioeconomic status. The children left furthest behind often experience multiple disadvantages – and an even bigger challenge to realising their right to learn.

In 2015, world leaders stood with children all over the world when they promised – as part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) – that all boys and girls would have access to a high-quality education (SDG4). To achieve this goal, global leaders made a complementary pledge to **leave no one behind**.

However, that promise is far from being fulfilled. If current trends continue, we will be more than 50 years late in delivering SDG4.[2] Without a significant and sustained push between now and 2030, 225 million children and young people will still be denied the opportunity to learn by the SDG deadline – simply because of who they are or where they live.[3]

The evidence is clear. The Leave No One Behind pledge – a commitment 'to reach those who are furthest behind first' and ensure that targets are met for all segments of society – is a vital element of the SDGs. But it is not being delivered.

This neglect of unfair inequalities threatens to derail the entire SDG project. And it is putting the education – and life chances – of a generation of the world's poorest children at risk.

Children themselves know what is at stake. And they are fighting back by demanding their right go to school. As the stories in this publication show, children, parents and their communities are going to extraordinary lengths to realise the right to learn.

EDUCATION IN EMERGENCIES

Children in emergencies demand their right to a good education. Today 75 million children caught up in humanitarian crises are in desperate need of educational support. This report provides a detailed analysis of needs identified by those children themselves – rather than aid planners. We reviewed data from rapid field surveys by aid workers stretching back more than a decade, encompassing the hopes and fears of more than 8,000 children in the toughest places on earth. This was combined with data from qualitative interviews with children aged 5–18 in emergencies conducted between 2013 and 2018. Our research reveals that children are more than twice as likely to rank going to school as their top concern, compared with immediate needs like food, water, shelter or money (see page 4).

Education has a vital role to play in restoring children's hope and helping them to rebuild their lives after emergencies. But there is a real danger that millions of children living through conflicts and disasters will be deprived of the education they desperately need.

A GLOBAL CHALLENGE

The world must respect the right of all children from marginalised groups to an education – and match their resolve to realise it. In order to provide the practical support these children need to go to school, we are calling on governments and the international community to:

1. **Agree a global plan of action on education**
2. **Commit more and better funding for education**
3. **Deliver the education commitments in the Global Compact on Refugees**
4. **Endorse and fully implement the Safe Schools Declaration.**

For detailed recommendations on each of these four action points, see page 16.



PHOTO: HANNA ADCOCK/SAVE THE CHILDREN

Imelda, age six, at the camp where she is living with her family after their home in Mozambique was destroyed by Cyclone Idai in 2019. With no school to go to, she attends a child-friendly space run by Save the Children.

Children's number one priority in a crisis: education

On the front lines of a conflict. In the aftermath of an environmental disaster. Amid a mass of hastily pitched tarpaulins. Wherever and whatever the crisis, the voices of children all too often go unheard.

A vital part of Save the Children's work is simply to ask children in crisis what they need. We reviewed data from rapid field surveys stretching back more than a decade, capturing the hopes and fears of more than 8,000 children in the toughest places on earth.

Time and time again, their answers are clear, unambiguous – and surprising. Even when food is scarce, water is dirty and medical care non-existent, children tell us they want one thing above all else: the chance to go to school. Faced with extreme adversity, children of all ages see education as the key to their safety, their health, their happiness and their future.

NEW ANALYSIS AND DATA

While most surveys we reviewed were qualitative records of small group discussions, some quantitative data about children's priorities was available. For this analysis, we drew on information gathered in eight countries facing a humanitarian emergency with 1,689 children aged 5–18 between 2013 and 2018, where our teams and those of our partners conducted small-group discussions and specific exercises with children to identify their issues of concern and then rank them. On average, 37% of the children surveyed placed education among their top three needs – significantly outstripping the next most prioritised concerns of food (19%), healthcare (19%), water (16%) and shelter (15%).

Even more striking were the results from surveys in six countries. These covered a wide spectrum of responses across Asia, Africa and the Middle East:

- children struggling to survive in the aftermath of Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines
- unaccompanied child refugees from Syria and Afghanistan
- children living in conflict in the Democratic Republic of Congo
- Rohingya children in refugee camps in Bangladesh
- children displaced by fighting in Ethiopia and South Sudan.

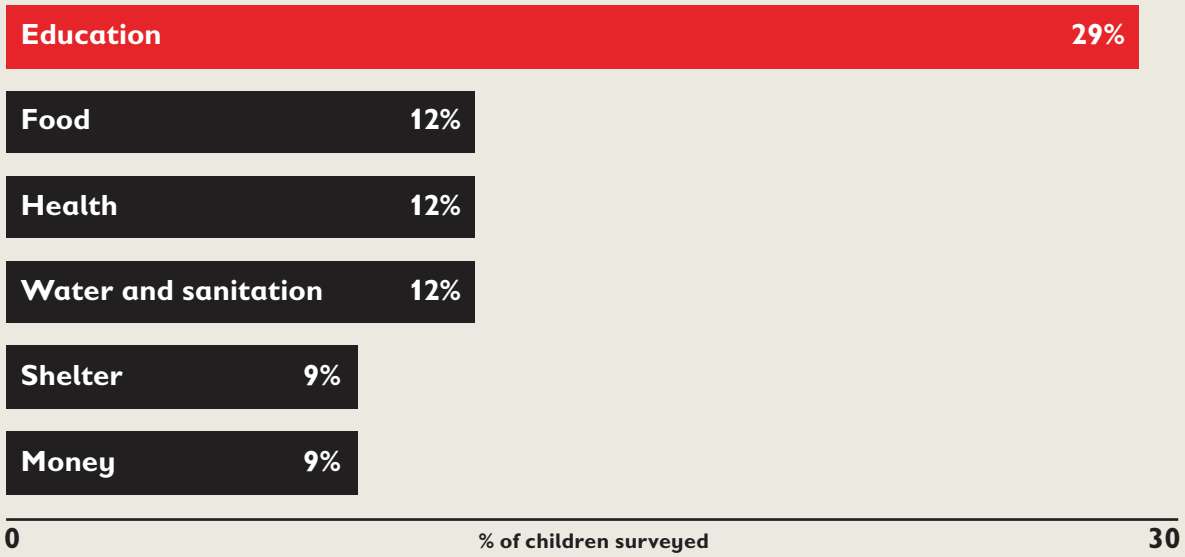
Of the 1,689 children who took part in the ranking exercise, 1,215 identified their top priority needs. Children overwhelmingly stressed education as what they needed the most. On average, nearly a third (29%) of children surveyed said education was their top priority. Children's prioritisation of education was more than double that of food (12%), health (12%), and water and sanitation (12%). Education was also three times more prioritised than shelter (9%) and money (9%). Smaller numbers of children identified other needs as their top priority, including clothing (3%), sport and leisure activities (3%), safety (2%) and family (1%).

It is often forgotten that listening to what children have to say in an emergency is not just 'a nice thing to do', it is a humanitarian obligation. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child – the most widely ratified international human rights treaty in history, which marks its 30th anniversary in 2019 – enshrines the right of children to participate through being "heard and taken seriously".

The Convention is clear. If children say they want education, we must listen. That is the duty of aid workers in the field, international donors in wealthy capitals and world leaders in the corridors of power.

Education gives children the skills and knowledge they need to escape a crisis and build a future. It protects them from child marriage, exploitation and abuse. It helps them recover from traumatic experiences, and demonstrably improves their mental health.[4]

Top priorities for children in crisis



Other responses not shown on the graph accounted for 17% of children's priorities; these comprised clothing (3%), sport (3%), safety (2%), insecurity (1%), family (1%), phones (1%), transport (1%), collecting firewood (1%), not specified (4%).

Source: Based on surveys of 1,215 children aged 5–18 in six countries. Data was collected from the reports listed in the Appendix. The percentages displayed represent the average score across the surveys reviewed.

CLOSE THE GAP: FUNDING EDUCATION IN EMERGENCIES

While children caught up in humanitarian crises prioritise their education, donor support for education in emergencies continues to lag behind, making it the poor cousin of an overstretched and underfunded humanitarian system. Educational interventions receive just 2% of humanitarian funding – leaving 75 million school-aged children and young people in urgent need of educational support in 35 crisis-affected countries.[5]

At the World Humanitarian Summit in 2016, international humanitarian and development actors created Education Cannot Wait (ECW) – the first and only global fund dedicated to education in emergencies – in recognition of children's priorities and the huge need for well-funded and coordinated education in emergency responses. ECW provides first emergency response investment that supports education programmes in sudden-onset or escalating crises, as well as multi-year funding to strengthen humanitarian development coherence. In its first two years of funding, ECW has been able to operate in some of the most challenging conflict-affected, fragile states, supporting good-quality education for more than 1.4 million children and young people, half of whom are girls, in 25 crisis-affected countries.[6]

ECW has proved to be a critical way to reach and unlock education for children in crisis. However, we are still far from providing good learning opportunities to all 75 million of the most marginalised children[7] currently living in crisis. Therefore, we call on all governments, private sector companies, philanthropic foundations and global leaders to keep their promise to children and help ECW to mobilise $1.8 billion by 2021.[8] This investment will provide good-quality education for 9 million children and young people experiencing war, forced displacement and disasters over the next three years.

Marginalised children's right to learn

All children have the right to a good-quality education that ensures they learn, supports their wellbeing and is relevant to their lives. At present, however, millions of the most marginalised children are unable to fulfil their potential.

By delivering education services and advocating for more support from government and the international community, Save the Children fights for these children's right to learn – and their chance of a better future.

Displaced children

Worldwide, nearly 31 million children were forcibly displaced at the end of 2017. This number comprises 14 million child refugees and asylum-seekers and an estimated 17 million children displaced within their own countries by violence and conflict.[9]

Displacement leaves children facing significant barriers to getting an education – including discrimination, lack of documentation, overstretched education systems and a lack of funding. Children who cross borders to reach safety as refugees are often hosted by a government already struggling to deliver good-quality learning to their own native-born children. Where refugee children are able to attend school, they may find that the classrooms are overcrowded and they may not understand the language, affecting their learning outcomes.

Save the Children delivers education programming in numerous refugee-hosting countries to help meet the gaps in local provision and to meet children's needs. In Uganda, we coordinate a consortium of 17 partners funded through ECW. In its first school term, the programme directly benefited more than 46,000 refugee and host-community children, and indirectly benefited 114,500 more children through recruiting teachers, paying their salaries and supporting their professional development.[10]

As our analysis shows, displaced children demand their right to an education, frequently over other major needs. The Global Compact on Refugees (2018), a new international agreement to transform the way the world shares the responsibility for responding to refugees, includes a commitment that all refugee children should receive a quality education within a few months of displacement. Following advocacy by Save the Children, a commitment was inserted in the Compact to include refugee children in national education sector plans.

The Global Refugee Forum in December 2019 represents the first major opportunity to turn this commitment into reality. We are calling for a global plan on refugee education to be developed and agreed to ensure real needs are identified in advance and pledges are aligned to them, coordinating a global response that can be monitored and held to account.

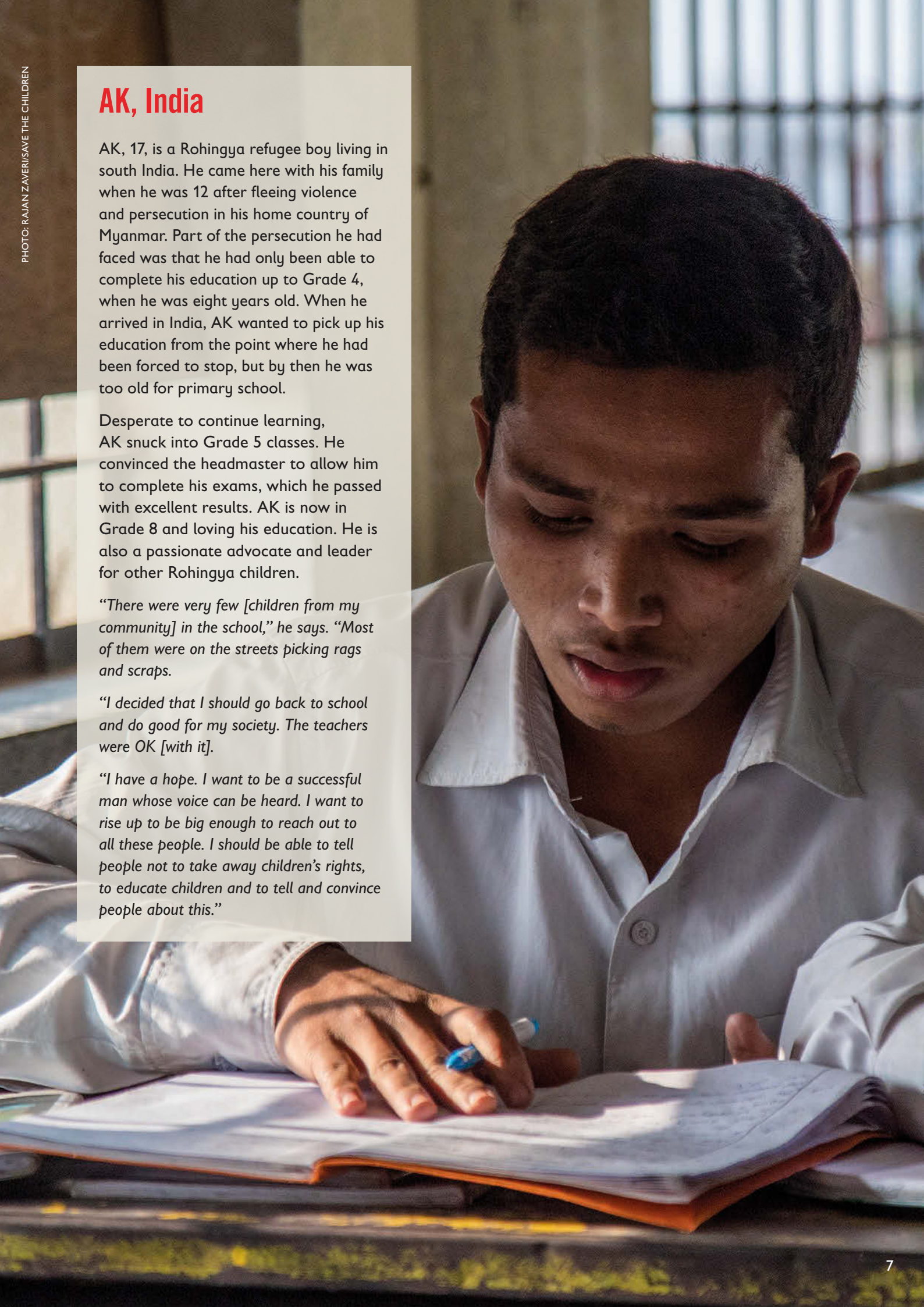


PHOTO: RAJAN ZAVERI/SAVE THE CHILDREN

AK, India

AK, 17, is a Rohingya refugee boy living in south India. He came here with his family when he was 12 after fleeing violence and persecution in his home country of Myanmar. Part of the persecution he had faced was that he had only been able to complete his education up to Grade 4, when he was eight years old. When he arrived in India, AK wanted to pick up his education from the point where he had been forced to stop, but by then he was too old for primary school.

Desperate to continue learning, AK snuck into Grade 5 classes. He convinced the headmaster to allow him to complete his exams, which he passed with excellent results. AK is now in Grade 8 and loving his education. He is also a passionate advocate and leader for other Rohingya children.

"There were very few [children from my community] in the school," he says. "Most of them were on the streets picking rags and scraps.

"I decided that I should go back to school and do good for my society. The teachers were OK [with it].

"I have a hope. I want to be a successful man whose voice can be heard. I want to rise up to be big enough to reach out to all these people. I should be able to tell people not to take away children's rights, to educate children and to tell and convince people about this."

Children affected by conflict

Nearly one fifth of children worldwide live in a conflict-affected area. Of these children, 142 million are living in high-intensity conflict zones.[11] Children's education is severely disrupted by conflict-related violence, particularly when schools themselves are targeted. The immediate consequences of attacks on education can include the death or injury of children, the destruction of facilities and disrupted access to learning. In the long term, attacks can lead to diminished education quality, loss of teachers and weakened education systems. Yet, as presented in this report, children living in crisis desperately want to continue their education. For a child facing the traumatic experience of conflict, school should provide a safe space to learn and has been shown to have a positive impact on children's mental health.[12]

However, in 2017, there were 1,432 verified attacks on schools.[13] 4 million children in Syria and Yemen[14] are locked out of education as their schools have been destroyed by missiles and bombs or are occupied by armed actors. In Nigeria, the armed group Boko Haram has killed an estimated 2,295 teachers and more than 600,000 children have lost access to education.[15] Nearly 65% of the 920 schools closed in Mali are located in the Mopti region; most have closed due to insecurity, depriving more than 179,000 children of their fundamental right to education.[16]

Save the Children is a member of the Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack, which has been encouraging governments to endorse and implement the Safe Schools Declaration, an intergovernmental political commitment to protect education during armed conflict. To date, 95 UN member states have endorsed it. The Declaration appears to be having a positive effect: in countries that have not endorsed the Declaration, there has been a 97% increase in the reported incidents of military use of schools since 2014, whereas in countries that have endorsed the Declaration, the number of incidents has dropped by half in the same period.[17]

Save the Children delivers 'safe schools programming', which aims to address the impact on children of conflict and of attacks on schools and which is informed by our experience of promoting schools as zones of peace in conflict. Safe schools programming brings together different interventions that support the psychosocial and physical protection of children through building resilience and strengthening referral mechanisms.

In Mali, Save the Children provides psychosocial and protection support to conflict-affected children through a child resilience approach, with an emphasis on learning and education. The programme has helped establish mechanisms for community preparedness, alertness and reaction to different levels of threat to the local education system. Thanks to the efforts of local communities, the project has set up 11 temporary learning centres, which have benefited 296 children, including 131 girls, who were out of school and early school leavers.[18] In cooperation with the Ministry of Education, the programme successfully integrated 255 children, including 111 girls, into the formal education system.



PHOTO: SAVE THE CHILDREN

Aminata, Mali

Aminata and her mother had to flee the conflict in Niafunké in Mali to seek refuge with relatives in a safer area. Aminata was not able to enrol in school – partly because of the threat of armed groups.

Aminata joined Save the Children's learning project and continued her schooling – and she has now transferred into the formal education system.

"The project took me off the street and back to school," says Aminata. "Before I enrolled in school, I wasn't at all well. The school is very important and has many advantages to prepare for the future. In the future, I would like to become a doctor."

Children affected by environmental disasters

Nearly 40 million children a year have their education interrupted because of environmental disasters such as floods, droughts, earthquakes, landslides and hurricanes.[19] The climate crisis is intensifying many of these threats. Environmental disasters often lead to schools being destroyed, damaged or commandeered as temporary shelters. Children's education may be disrupted for months or even years, leaving them vulnerable to abuses such as child labour, gender-based violence, early marriage and trafficking. In Mozambique, 3,400 classrooms were destroyed or damaged by Cyclone Idai in March 2019. Education was interrupted for more than 305,000 children.[20] Entire villages were devastated, and many communities have been displaced.

In response to the effects of Cyclone Idai, ECW and its partners are investing $14 million to restore education services to more than 500,000 children and adolescents in Mozambique, Zimbabwe and Malawi. Save the Children is receiving some of this funding and is supporting the rehabilitation of damaged and destroyed schools. We set up temporary learning spaces, provide teacher training, distribute learning materials and give psychosocial support to teachers and students. In Mozambique, our temporary learning spaces are helping 9,500 children catch up on education. We are also providing 1,700 children with safe spaces to play and recover from the distressing experiences they have faced.

Despite the setbacks they face, children affected by an environmental disaster often show great resilience and want to continue their education as soon as possible. They talk about how education will help them rebuild their homes and communities.

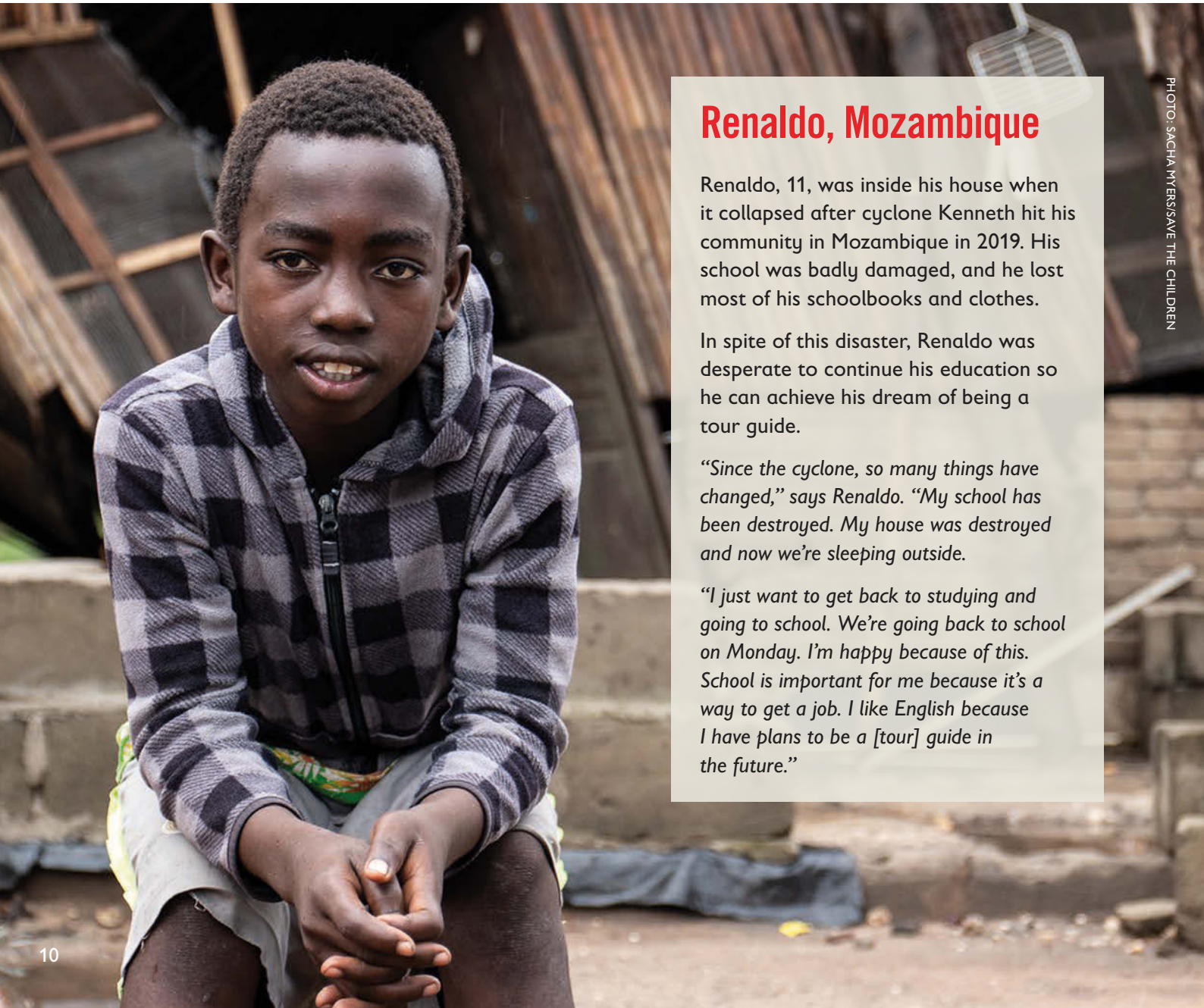


PHOTO: SACHA MYERS/SAVE THE CHILDREN

Renaldo, Mozambique

Renaldo, 11, was inside his house when it collapsed after cyclone Kenneth hit his community in Mozambique in 2019. His school was badly damaged, and he lost most of his schoolbooks and clothes.

In spite of this disaster, Renaldo was desperate to continue his education so he can achieve his dream of being a tour guide.

"Since the cyclone, so many things have changed," says Renaldo. "My school has been destroyed. My house was destroyed and now we're sleeping outside.

"I just want to get back to studying and going to school. We're going back to school on Monday. I'm happy because of this. School is important for me because it's a way to get a job. I like English because I have plans to be a [tour] guide in the future."

Children in remote areas

Geography has a big impact on the distribution of schools, infrastructure and resources, as well as the mobility of students and teachers.[21] Nearly 80% of the world's poor people live in rural areas where there are often no good schools nearby. Yet children's education is key to increasing the socio-economic status and development of these areas.[22]

Despite the huge challenges many children in remote geographical areas face, many of them go against the odds to get an education. Some walk for hours, climb mountains or travel down treacherous rivers in order to go to school.

All children living in hard-to-reach areas should have an equal opportunity to access good-quality education. Our First Read programme gives children from remote areas of Cambodia the chance to learn. In the floating village of Ses Slab, for example, we train teachers, provide teaching materials, renovate school buildings – which is needed every year – and organise a boat to transport children from their homes to the floating school. First Read is being implemented in 614 villages and helping 30,500 children between the ages of three and six to learn and develop.

Seima, Cambodia

Seima, age five, lives in a floating home in Cambodia. She goes to a floating pre-school, which she loves.

Seima and her parents are determined she gets the opportunity to learn. Through our First Read project, Seima is able to travel to school on a boat, often operated by her teacher. At school she enjoys reading storybooks, singing songs, and learning the numbers and the alphabet.

"When I grow up, I want to be a teacher, a nurse and a doctor!" says Seima.

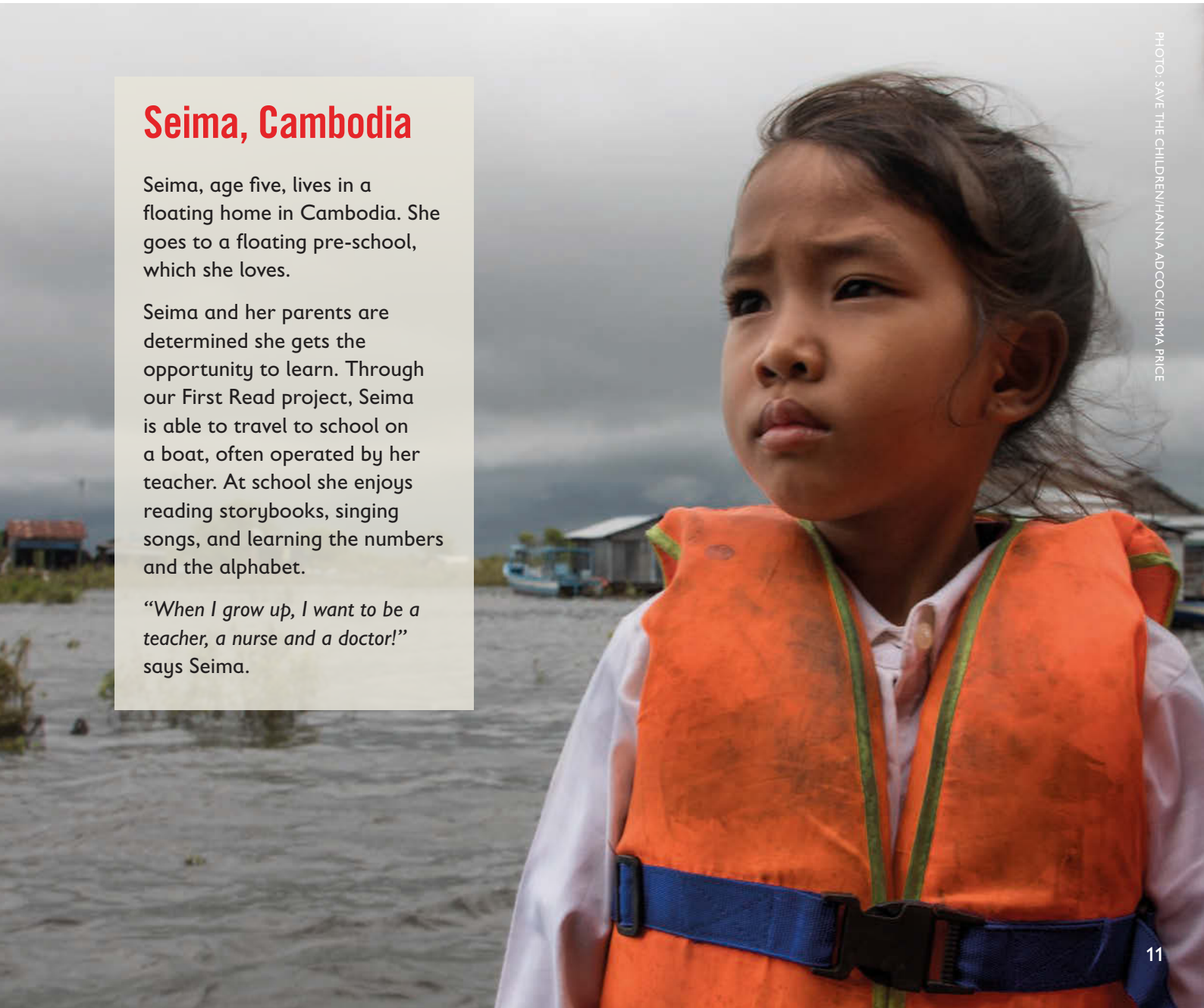


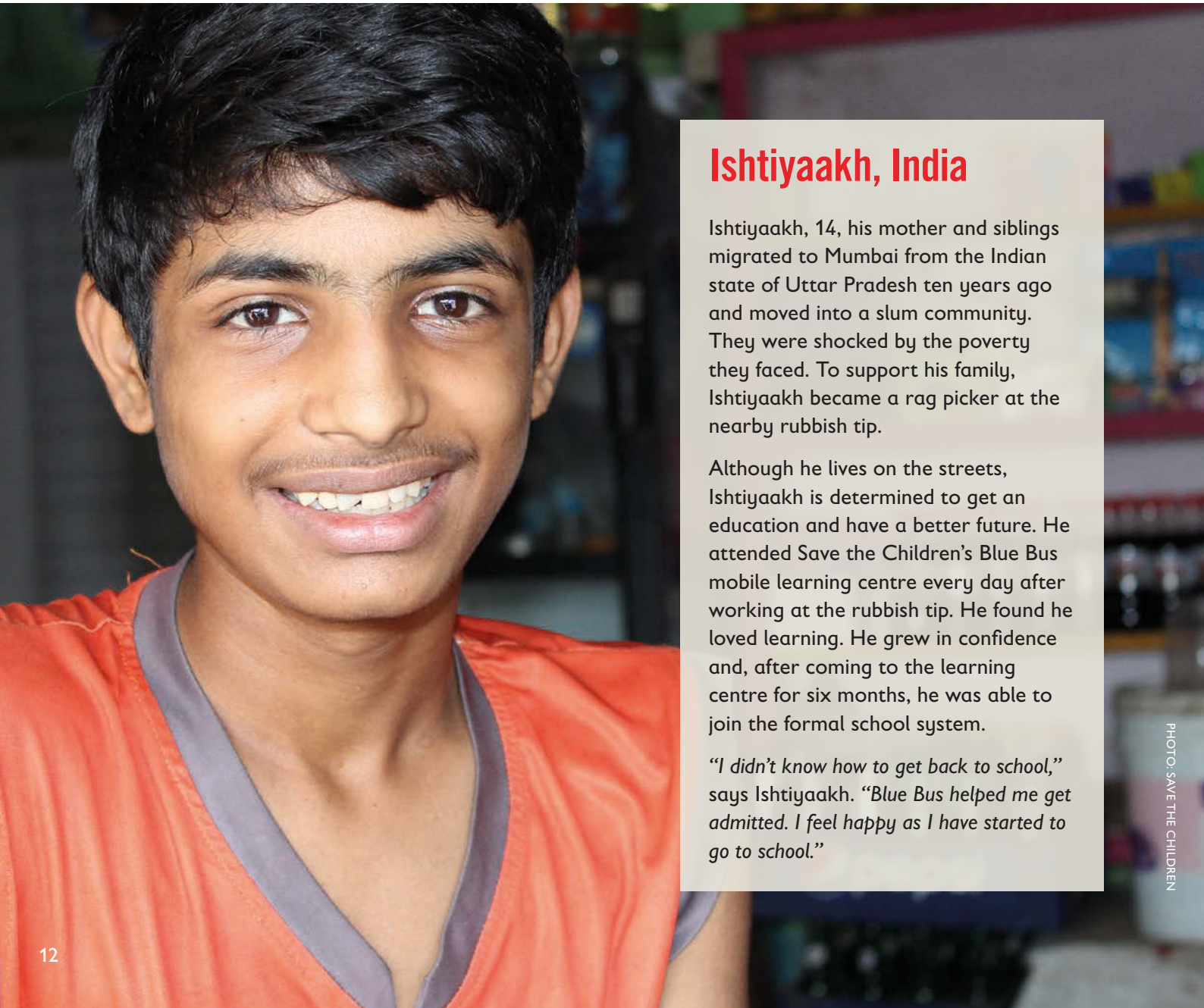
PHOTO: SAVE THE CHILDREN/HANNA ADCOCK/EMMA PRICE

Street children

There are many reasons why children end up living and working on the streets. Their families may live in poverty or they may have been neglected, abandoned or trafficked. Street children are often hidden, isolated or on the move, so it is difficult to gather accurate statistics about them. However, the latest estimates show that there were more than 100 million street children worldwide in 2015.[23]

Children living in slums are often left out of the formal education system. They may need to work in the streets to earn a living, making it a struggle to meet school requirements, and to fit into its routine, rules and code of discipline. Even if they make it into formal education, street children are often bullied and experience discrimination from other students and from teachers, leading them to drop out.

Despite the harsh environment they live in, many children from slums go against all odds and, alongside their work, succeed in getting an education. To support street children in the Indian state of West Bengal and respond to their demands for education, Save the Children has established a mobile learning centre. A bus – the Blue Bus as the children call it – has been transformed into a classroom. It is taken into slum communities to give children the opportunity to learn. Children who have fallen behind in their education are helped to catch up so they will be able to return to school at the appropriate level for their age.



Ishtiyaakh, India

Ishtiyaakh, 14, his mother and siblings migrated to Mumbai from the Indian state of Uttar Pradesh ten years ago and moved into a slum community. They were shocked by the poverty they faced. To support his family, Ishtiyaakh became a rag picker at the nearby rubbish tip.

Although he lives on the streets, Ishtiyaakh is determined to get an education and have a better future. He attended Save the Children's Blue Bus mobile learning centre every day after working at the rubbish tip. He found he loved learning. He grew in confidence and, after coming to the learning centre for six months, he was able to join the formal school system.

"I didn't know how to get back to school," says Ishtiyaakh. *"Blue Bus helped me get admitted. I feel happy as I have started to go to school."*

PHOTO: SAVE THE CHILDREN

Child labourers

Child labourers are one of the most marginalised groups in the world. They face many barriers in accessing education. Around 152 million children under 18 are targets of child labour, often working in hazardous conditions.[24] In Africa alone, one child in five is subject to child labour. The majority of child labourers work in agriculture (71%) including fishing, forestry, livestock-herding and aquaculture. Other children are subject to the worst forms of child labour such as slavery, sexual exploitation or mining.

While working children are at risk of dropping out of school, it is striking that an estimated 68% of child labourers aged 5–14 manage to attend school.[25] They face a daily challenge of balancing the time and energy required by their work with the ability to focus at school, learn and do homework.[26]

Every girl and boy has the right to be protected from any type of economic exploitation and child labour. In both long-term development settings and in humanitarian crises, we support and protect child labourers. We advocate for the prevention of harmful work and run education workshops to help child labourers learn in a safe environment. In Nepal, we work in partnership with the Child Development Society to tackle child labour and to protect children living and working in brick kilns. We protect these children through education, healthcare and awareness raising. We encourage parents to keep their children in school, set up daycare centres and run clubs where children can learn, play and thrive.



Babita, Nepal

Every year, many poor Nepali families like Babita's are forced to migrate to the brick kilns of Kathmandu for work during the brick-making season. Despite the harsh and dangerous conditions, 13-year-old Babita works at the kiln, where she makes bricks and laboriously stacks them into piles.

Babita goes to a children's club, run by Save the Children. It means she can keep learning. She is now able to combine work with school, where she enjoys playing with her friends, taking part in sports and reading storybooks in the library.

"At first, I used to miss my village very much," says Babita. *"But now I'm going to school. Our school teachers are very friendly – they encourage us to join in different activities and they give us more opportunities."*

PHOTO: OLI COHEN/SAVE THE CHILDREN

Child brides and child grooms

Today, there are around 765 million boys and girls worldwide who were married when they were children.[27] It is estimated that one in five young women aged 20–24 old were child brides[28] and that 115 million boys and men were married as children.[29]

Child marriage raises issues around cultural traditions and gender inequalities. Girls and boys who are married are frequently forced to drop out of school. In humanitarian crises, parents often face financial difficulties and struggle to safeguard and support their families. Therefore, they may see early marriage as the best available solution to protect their daughters from sexual violence. Crises also limit the resources available for the family, thus parents may prefer to invest in their boys' education instead of their daughters'. In Lebanon the United Nations Population Fund found that 24% of Syrian refugee girls between the ages of 15 and 17 were married.[30] Similarly, in Burkina Faso Girls Not Brides estimate that more than half (52%) of girls are married before their 18th birthday, including 10% before the age of 15.[31]

The good news is that we can significantly reduce child marriage by investing in education for the most marginalised children. Girls with secondary education are three times less likely to marry by the age of 18.[32] Providing child brides and child grooms with education can also significantly increase their earning potential and help them break out of the cycle of poverty.

Save the Children is fighting to eradicate child marriage. We call on governments and donors to invest in girls' education and help bring an end to child marriage and gender discrimination. We run a range of programmes that support child brides around the world. In Niger, we run 'Marriage is No Child's Play', a programme that provides young girls in ten villages in the Maradi region with a supportive environment where they can decide when to get married and to whom, while learning about their sexual and health rights.

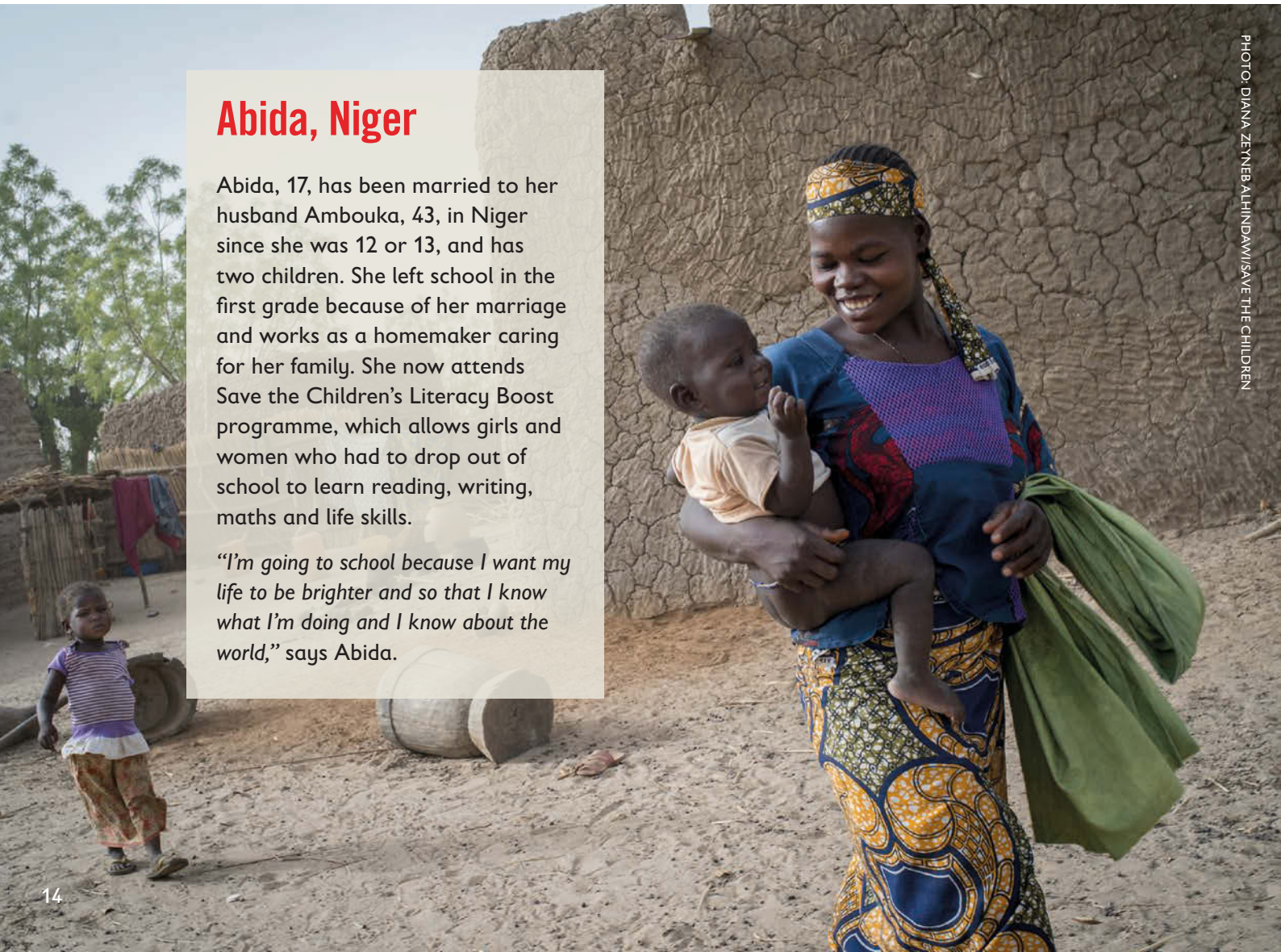


PHOTO: DIANA ZEYNEB ALHINDAWI/SAVE THE CHILDREN

Abida, Niger

Abida, 17, has been married to her husband Ambouka, 43, in Niger since she was 12 or 13, and has two children. She left school in the first grade because of her marriage and works as a homemaker caring for her family. She now attends Save the Children's Literacy Boost programme, which allows girls and women who had to drop out of school to learn reading, writing, maths and life skills.

"I'm going to school because I want my life to be brighter and so that I know what I'm doing and I know about the world," says Abida.

Children with disabilities

There are an estimated 93 million children with disabilities around the world,[33] 80% of them in developing countries. Children with disabilities are among those most likely to be out of education. Schools often fail to accommodate their needs. Children with disabilities are excluded from learning environments and their communities; stigma and societal attitudes frequently mean parents choose to withdraw them from education.

Children with disabilities have the right to an education and the support they need to learn. We believe the key to unlocking their potential is inclusive education. Children with disabilities should be able to learn side by side with other students in the same classroom, while receiving support for their individual learning needs.

Our Education for All project, funded by the IKEA Foundation, aims to increase the education opportunities for children with disabilities in China, by training teachers, changing attitudes in communities, and introducing systems for inclusive education.

Jiawei, China

Jiawei was born with cerebral palsy, in a village in Sichuan province in south-west China. He was excluded from the education system until he was 14, when Save the Children supported a nearby school to include children with disabilities.

"Studying is the first step to carry on my dreams," says Jiawei. *"It will allow me to find a job and to save some money, so that I can open my own small grocery shop."*



PHOTO: YUYANG LIU/SAVE THE CHILDREN

Recommendations

This report illustrates the remarkable determination shown by children in the most challenging circumstances to go against the odds to continue their education. However, the value these children and their parents place on education contrasts starkly with the lack of importance national governments and the international community accord to education services for the children left furthest behind. With a decade left to achieve Sustainable Development Goal 4 – inclusive quality education for all children by 2030 – we must double down on all our efforts.

Having an agreed global goal but no coherent global plan of action to deliver it was never going to be good enough. Swift and concerted action is needed now to prevent 225 million children being cut out of education in 2030.[34] National governments and the international community urgently need to:

- become fully accountable
- invest more and better
- prioritise and accelerate progress for marginalised children around the world.

Without a robust, focused approach, we risk failing a generation of children growing up in the toughest situations. To meet our global promise on education for the furthest-behind children, we call on governments and the international community to:

1 AGREE A GLOBAL PLAN OF ACTION ON EDUCATION

- A global action plan should be developed focusing on securing learning outcomes in pre-primary and basic education. In the spirit of the Leave No One Behind principle, it should focus on action for the furthest-behind countries and for the poorest and most marginalised children.
- The action plan must align and accelerate efforts towards SDG4 and allocate responsibilities for its delivery and key accountabilities to developing countries and to the international community.

2 COMMIT TO MORE AND BETTER FUNDING FOR EDUCATION

- Low- and middle-income countries should allocate an average of 6% of GDP and/or at least 15–20% of public expenditure to education through growth and improved resource mobilisation.
- Donors should increase education's share of development aid to 15% and its share of humanitarian funding to 6–10%, and should ensure more of this funding is channelled through multilateral mechanisms in multi-year increments to ensure maximum impact.
- Governments, private-sector companies and foundations should urgently increase funding for Education Cannot Wait (the global fund for education in emergencies), to support efforts to mobilise $1.8 billion in funding for education in crisis settings by 2021. This investment will support the delivery of quality education to nearly 9 million children affected by some of the world's worst humanitarian crises each year.

3 DELIVER THE EDUCATION COMMITMENTS IN THE GLOBAL COMPACT ON REFUGEES

- To deliver quality education to the world's 7.4 million school-aged refugee children, we urge governments and international organisations to support the development of a needs-based global plan of action for refugee education in advance of the world's first Global Refugee Forum in December 2019.

4 ENDORSE AND FULLY IMPLEMENT THE SAFE SCHOOLS DECLARATION

- Endorse, implement and support the Safe Schools Declaration to ensure that all students and educators, male and female, can learn and teach in safety.
- Avoid using schools and universities for military purposes, including by implementing the Guidelines for Protecting Schools and Universities from Military Use during Armed Conflict.
- Strengthen monitoring and reporting of attacks on education, systematically investigate them and ensure perpetrators are prosecuted.

Appendix: Studies that informed the development of this report

We reviewed the following studies, which survey children living in crisis. A simple average of children's responses was calculated across all studies.

Typhoon Haiyan Response: Baseline report, World Vision Philippines, 2014

Hear it from the Children: Why Education in Emergencies is Critical – a study on the role of education for conflict-affected communities in the DRC and Ethiopia, Save the Children UK, 2014

Hear it from the Children: South Sudan – "We want to learn – even during war", Care International, The Republic of South Sudan Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, INTERSOS, World Vision, 2015

Greece: Education Needs Assessment, Save the Children, 2016

Hear it from the Children: On the Move and Arriving in Norway, Save the Children, 2016

Children's Voices from the Rohingya Refugee Crisis, World Vision, Save the Children and Plan International, 2017

Families Torn Apart: Protecting and caring for children separated from their families by the conflict in north-east Nigeria, Save the Children, 2019

Voicing the Needs and Priorities of Children Living in Conflict in Democratic Republic of Congo, Save the Children, 2019

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EDUCATION AGAINST THE ODDS

Meeting marginalised children's demands for a quality education

Every day, millions of marginalised children go against the odds – by managing to get to school and learn. In their daily struggle for an education, these children are fighting for their right for a better future.

Education Against the Odds presents findings from surveys with more than 8,000 children in humanitarian crises. It shows that, time and time again, children living in the world's toughest places wanted one thing above all else: the chance to go to school.

This report also tells individual stories of children engaged in that struggle – from those living in conflict zones or facing environmental disasters, to those forced to flee, work or marry, to children with disabilities and living in remote areas.

Education Against the Odds closes with a series of recommendations to governments and the international community to deliver on the global commitment to give every child the chance to learn.

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