According to a new Education Cannot Wait study¹, the number of crisis-affected children and adolescents who need education support is estimated at 222 million. This is much higher than a previous estimate of 75 million from 2016² and indicates an alarming trend.

Children should not have to wait for wars to end or for the climate crisis to be resolved to have the opportunity to learn and thrive – it will be too late. We must act now to empower them with the education they need to achieve their dreams and become positive changemakers for themselves, their families, their communities and our world.

Access to a quality education in times of humanitarian crisis is not only the right of every child, it can also be both life-saving and life-sustaining. Education offers a sense of normalcy and protects children’s physical and mental wellbeing. Education represents hope to children whose lives and futures are threatened by crises.

More than ever before, vulnerable girls and boys trapped in emergencies and protracted crises need our attention and urgent support to ensure they can enjoy their right to a safe, inclusive quality education and are no longer left furthest behind. As the United Nations global, billion-dollar fund for education in emergencies and protracted crises, Education Cannot Wait (ECW) reaches children and adolescents in need with quality education, no matter who or where they are.

It is against this backdrop – and utilizing an innovative methodology that shines a light on those left furthest behind – that ECW and the INEE reference group on EiE Data developed the new estimates on crisis-affected children and adolescents in need of education support. For the first time, EiEPC stakeholders can rely on a common methodology to ensure these children are ‘visible’ in global education data.

¹ Global Estimates: Number of crisis-affected children and adolescents in need of education support, ECW, 2022
² While the 2016 estimate used a different methodology and data source—see the full study for more information—the latest estimates in the new study reflect a serious deterioration of the scale of crisis-affected children globally.
Estimates for minimum proficiency levels are in the lower bounds as they don’t include the impact from the COVID-19 pandemic. Initial analyses suggest that COVID-19-induced learning losses are more pronounced amongst the poorest and amongst those who were already lagging in terms of learning prior to the pandemic; two categories that typically include children in crises.

Together with strategic partners, our collective commitment is to uphold crisis-affected children’s fundamental right to education by providing them with quality learning opportunities, including whole-of-child, holistic learning approaches to help them overcome the specific challenges they face amidst crises and achieve learning outcomes.

Behind these numbers, millions of vulnerable girls and boys around the world await our collective action. From inside makeshift refugee settlements, damaged walls of classrooms and communities torn apart by war and disaster, these children are desperately holding on to the hope that education will allow them to realize their dreams of becoming a doctor, an engineer, a scientist, a teacher ...

Each of them has an inherent right to equitable, inclusive, quality education. We must act now to ensure that the dreams of these 222 million girls and boys are realized. The need has never been greater, nor more urgent.

WE MUST RESPOND TOGETHER WITH THE FIERCE URGENCY OF NOW!

#222MillionDreams