

Advocacy Brief

10 PRINCIPLES TO GUIDE EIEPC FINANCING APPROACHES: Recommendations for Multilateral & Bilateral Donors

This brief, developed by civil society actors and endorsed by 29 education actors, articulates foundational principles and shared messaging for financing education in emergencies and protracted crises (EiEPC).

Global aid architecture, including for the Education in Emergencies and Protracted Crisis (EiEPC) sector is facing fundamental disruption. Geopolitical realignment, coupled with major reductions to aid flows, has led to the UN80 process and its widespread review of multilateral structures, priorities and operations. Global ODA for education was already declining, but the detrimental loss of recent funding from several large bilateral donors, is bringing unprecedented pressure on the sector for reform. At the same time the number of children and youth negatively impacted by crises continues to grow. Recent analyses, including UNICEF's Education aid cuts: A broken promise to children and the INEE/Geneva Global Hub for EiE/GEC joint policy brief Futures Cut Short: The devastating impact of foreign aid cuts on education for children and youth in emergencies, highlight the severe consequences of shrinking aid and the urgent need for reform.

Some bilateral donors are actively reviewing the multilateral aid system for EiEPC (with phase 2 of this study reviewing the multilateral aid system for system strengthening) and are seeking to make recommendations and options for reform that aim to improve the coherence, efficiency and effectiveness.

Calls to action from 29 undersigned organizations:

- For all multilateral and bilateral donors to use the following 10 Principles to Guide EiEPC Financing Approaches to inform decision-making around potential reforms for EiEPC investments. These have been developed by civil society actors with significant experience implementing EiEPC investments from a variety of multilateral and bilateral donors. These align with existing criteria such as the OECD DAC Evaluation Criteria and the Grand Bargain.
- For donors to actively validate findings from any review of the multilateral aid system for EiEPC with civil society actors, including local/national civil society organisations.

10 Principles to Guide EiEPC Financing Approaches:

1. Fast: EiEPC financing must be rapid to keep children and the youth protected in safe spaces with access to life-saving learning and ensure inclusive and equitable quality education is an integral part of every humanitarian response. EiEPC funding mechanisms should include a simple speed metric, to be able to better measure the length of time from emergency alert to disbursement of funds in relation to new acute crisis or escalation. Some EiEPC investments have been able to disburse funding within 4 weeks, and this could be considered a realistic target for acute response funding, with potentially a more ambitious target for activation of crisis modifiers in existing multi-year grants in protracted or development contexts. Over time, financial instruments such as parametric insurance or pooled risk facilities may help further reduce disbursement delays in high-frequency crisis settings.

2. Coordinated, coherent and catalytic: EiEPC funding must be coordinated to avoid duplication, coherent to ensure alignment of humanitarian and development priorities, and catalytic to maximize scarce resources. Working together, aligning humanitarian-development-climate financing flows is even more essential given shrinking resources and increased humanitarian needs. Coordination ensures collective action, coherence strengthens sustainability, and catalytic use unlocks additional resources and innovation. In a context of rising needs and limited funding, this joined-up approach will be necessary to scale up rapid response while also investing in resilient systems. Financing approaches should work through existing architecture - the Education Cluster, sector working groups including Local Education Groups, and refugee education working groups. Catalytic funds and innovative financing must not further burden the government and public delivery systems for social services.

3. Anticipatory: Pre-finance and act early to ensure timely responses to emerging crises. EiEPC funding should be used to invest in preparedness measures that allow education systems to anticipate shocks and reduce disruption before a crisis peaks. This not only supports learning continuity but is extremely cost effective. Evidence shows that on average for every \$1 invested in Disaster Risk Reduction and preparedness, \$4 is saved in reconstruction. Preparedness investments should include contingency planning, prepositioning both stocks and (local) partnerships, and sector-level risk monitoring, particularly in high-risk climate-affected settings. Further investments should be made in testing and scaling innovative pre-arranged financing mechanisms – such as forecast-based or trigger-based models – so that funds are automatically released in anticipation of predictable hazards, reducing the impact of shocks and limiting the disruption of learning.

4. Predictable: Use multi-year funding frameworks to ensure learning continuity during crises, facilitate increased funding for governments, as well as local and national organizations over time, and support transitions to financially sustainable longer-term inclusive public education systems. Predictable support reduces the waste of stop-start funding and is better able to connect to other donor investments, including those made by governments. EiEPC funding should intentionally bridge to systems-strengthening initiatives. In cyclical crises, multi-year frameworks should build preparedness and local capacity and be scalable during spikes.

5. Localized: Directly investing significant proportions of EiEPC funding in the capabilities and expertise of diverse local partners to deliver EiEPC is critical. Increasing direct funding to national authorities and local civil society organizations is not only a Grand Bargain commitment and investment in sustainability, but it is also cost effective, reducing transaction costs and layers of overheads. This approach will allow interventions to be firmly rooted in the perspectives of communities and responsive to their priorities. Any reforms to EiEPC financing must actively remove barriers for local partners including obstructive risk frameworks, address institutional capacity gaps, and information asymmetries that serve to reinforce the status quo.

6. Adaptive: Funding models for EiEPC must be structured to remain effective in fragile, unpredictable settings, leveraging flexible frameworks and crisis modifiers. Donors to EiEPC and system strengthening should build flexibility into their investments and grant agreements, allowing partners to adapt programming to new realities at country level without requiring significant additional sign-off, while ensuring compliance and mitigating risks. Embedding adaptive design principles into both funding flows and financing mechanisms is critical to ensuring timely and relevant response in volatile and protracted crises.

7. Humanitarian independence, needs-based and holistic: EiEPC funding must ensure that support is based on findings from rigorous needs assessments, and analysis and evidence on what works for education. Funding decisions must center humanitarian independence to make needs-based allocations, ensuring that support responds to the rights and priorities of crisis-affected children rather than political or donor interests. Funding should be delivered through civil society actors where the formal system does not reach. EiEPC funding must support learning while also serving as a critical entry point for addressing other lifesaving needs such as protection, health, nutrition, and MHPSS. This multi-sectoral, needs-driven approach is central to the EiEPC sector and must continue to guide funding so that resources have the greatest possible impact.

8. Impact-driven: EiEPC financing must deliver measurable impact for crisis-affected children. Strong disaggregated data and monitoring systems must continue to track not only access but also quality, safety, equity, and wellbeing, ensuring resources reach the most marginalized. Particular attention must be given to persons with disabilities and gender disparities, refugees and other displaced children, so that girls and boys—especially adolescent girls—have equal opportunities to learn in safe and inclusive environments.

9. Inclusive and accountable: EiEPC financing must be gender equitable and put the most marginalized crisis-affected children at the center, ensuring resources reach the hardest to reach and promote accessible and inclusive learning environments. True inclusion requires accountability not only to taxpayers but also the communities directly affected, particularly teachers, to children and youth, giving them a voice in shaping priorities and programs.

10. Championing EiEPC: EiEPC funding should enable strong sectoral leadership that drives high-level advocacy, resource mobilization, and influence over humanitarian norms, policy, and accountability. Informed by the experiences from local communities, EiEPC funding must facilitate the elevation of EiEPC on global agendas and sustain political attention, prioritization, and investment.

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