

Learning Out Loud.

**Atlas on Child-Centred
and Transformative Education
through the CARES Framework**



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Atlas on Child-Centred and Transformative Education through the CARES Framework

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FOREWORD

For many years, **WeWorld has been working to promote reflection and debate around the concept of the right to the future**. We understand this as the right of individuals and communities – present and future – and especially of children and young people, to live in a world that offers fair and sustainable opportunities for growth, wellbeing and development. Making the right to the future a priority means recognising the urgent need for a renewed intergenerational pact, and for adults to listen more closely, opening up spaces for genuine and equal dialogue with those who will shape the world tomorrow.

The research carried out for the *ChildFund Alliance World Index 2024* – developed by WeWorld together with Alliance members committed to the protection of children's rights – set out to amplify the voices, aspirations and dreams of more than 10,000 girls and boys across 41 countries. **Its findings are clear: children are acutely aware that access to quality education is a fundamental condition for imagining, let alone achieving, their ambitions and dreams. One figure is particularly striking: 89.4% of the children interviewed identified access to education as an urgent and essential need for improving their living conditions and securing a future. Put simply, the right to the future cannot exist without the right to education.**

This Atlas brings together data that helps to frame the current global state of education, while also illustrating how WeWorld works, and intends to continue working, in this sector, with children and young people at the heart of every intervention.

Developed by the Research Centre with the invaluable contributions of colleagues working directly in the countries where WeWorld operates, the Atlas offers concrete examples of our work, highlights good practices, and identifies areas where new or strengthened approaches will be needed in the years ahead.

Today's global context is marked by overlapping and persistent crises. These affect not only low-income countries or those experiencing conflict, emergencies and protracted instability, but also high-income and Western countries. **In this context, investment in education should be an unquestionable priority. Yet funding for education programmes – in both development and humanitarian settings – remains insufficient and, in humanitarian response, is declining sharply.** Recent UNICEF estimates suggest that international aid for education could fall by USD 3.2 billion by 2026, a reduction of 24%, potentially

increasing the number of out-of-school children from 272 million to 278 million. **As humanitarian budgets shrink, education is often pushed aside, seen as less urgent or not "life-saving". WeWorld's approach challenges this assumption. We believe that access to education is a non-negotiable foundation.** Schools and educational communities are spaces of possibility, places where children and young people can begin to imagine a more just and less unequal world. For this reason, we see schools and learning spaces as starting points for meaningful and lasting change.

Several key concepts run throughout this Atlas. One of these is the **(educational) Community**: all those who, in different ways, share responsibility for ensuring that everyone can access education on equal terms. Through our projects, WeWorld actively engages, strengthens and supports these actors as part of a collective effort. By focusing on the community, we also reaffirm the importance of building relationships based on listening and collaboration, working alongside institutions, civil society organisations and local communities. Only in this way can we design actions that respond effectively and respectfully to the specific needs of each context.

A further core focus of WeWorld's work is **equitable Access to education**. Access, in this sense, goes beyond removing physical, economic or social barriers. It also means inclusion: ensuring that all children, once in school, are truly able to learn, participate and thrive on equal terms.

The Atlas also repeatedly returns to the theme of **human Rights**. For children and young people to claim their rights, they must first be aware of them. In the pages that follow, readers will find practical examples of how WeWorld promotes participatory processes and develops educational materials with and for children, with the aim of strengthening their awareness and, ultimately, their sense of agency.

When we speak of the right to the future, and of the need to recognise and amplify the voices of children and young people, **we are calling for meaningful spaces for Expression**. Our ambition is to ensure increasingly **active and substantive participation by children and young people in the projects we implement, recognising them not as passive recipients, but as active actors and legitimate partners**.

This can only happen if adults are willing to engage in equal dialogue, to question their own assumptions – what we call "adultism" – and to create space for children to speak, to challenge us, and sometimes to help us imagine new paths forward.

Safety of educational spaces also play a crucial role in contexts of crisis. For children living through conflict, emergencies, or prolonged instability, schools can offer safety, continuity, and emotional support. Research consistently shows that exposure to stress and trauma undermines learning; emotional wellbeing and learning are therefore deeply connected. Schools must be safe, supportive environments for the entire educational community, including teachers. In humanitarian settings, education in emergencies also provides an entry point for other forms of support, such as health, nutrition, and protection services. For this reason, in WeWorld's education work child protection mainstreaming is paramount.

Our approach to education is captured in the acronym CARES, which reflects the key concepts outlined in this Atlas. **WeWorld CARES about education by caring for children, teachers, and communities, and by supporting them so that educational spaces can truly become places of opportunity.** Through this approach, we aim to respond more effectively to children's needs and aspirations, while also encouraging adults within educational communities to "become children again" in the best sense of the phrase: rediscovering curiosity, imagination, and the courage to believe that change is possible. Ultimately, this is what it means to guarantee the right to the future for all.

Elena Modolo
Global Education Expert WeWorld



Children make the best theorists, since they have not yet been educated into accepting our routine social practices as "natural," and so insist on posing to those practices the most embarrassingly general and fundamental questions, regarding them with a wondering estrangement which we adults have long forgotten. Since they do not yet grasp our social practices as inevitable, they do not see why we might not do things differently.

- bell hooks, Teaching to Transgress: Education as the Practice of Freedom

INTRODUCTION



MAP 1: Global Out-of-School Children in Primary Education (%)

Data are updated to 2022-2023.
Source: World Bank elaboration on UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS), 2025.

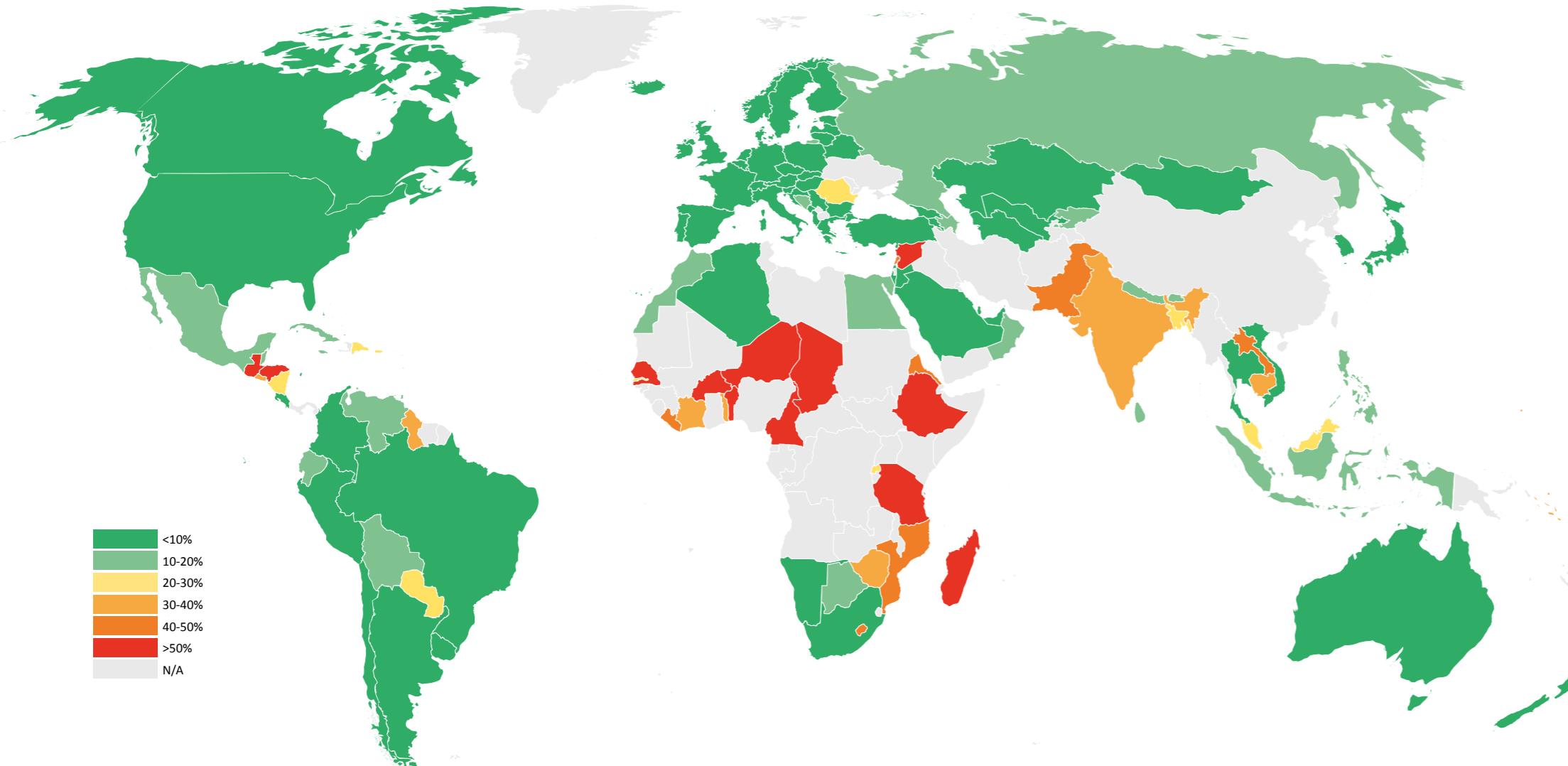
Percentage of primary-school-age children who are not enrolled in primary school.



MAP 2: Global Out-of-School Children in Secondary Education (%)

Data are updated to 2022-2024.
Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS), 2025

Percentage of secondary-school-age children who are not enrolled in secondary school.



In 2024, UNESCO estimated that approximately **251 million children worldwide are still out of school** (UNESCO, 2024). This alarming figure reflects a deeply complex reality in which a range of interlinked factors—such as climate-related disasters, poverty, armed conflict, disability, and gender inequality—continue to deny millions of children their right to education. **Globally, access to education remains far from guaranteed.**

Yet access alone is not enough. When we speak of education, we are not only referring to physical attendance in school. We are speaking of **quality education**—experiences that equip learners not just with cognitive skills, but also with the **social and emotional competencies** needed to understand themselves, relate to others, and actively engage with the world. Meaningful education must nurture the holistic development of each child and help lay the foundations for **inclusive and peaceful societies**.

Central to this vision is the recognition of children as active participants in their own learning journeys. Education systems must move beyond treating children as passive recipients of knowledge and instead **create spaces that value their voices and perspectives**. This requires questioning adult-centric structures and norms—especially those that silence children's input or reinforce top-down decision-making. Building more participatory and intergenerational school cultures is essential for advancing equity and deepening democratic engagement in education.

Education also plays a critical role in shaping **sustainable and just futures**. In a world facing climate emergencies, growing inequality, and social fragmentation, education must prepare younger generations to confront and respond to these pressing challenges. **Ensuring inclusive and transformative learning is part of a broader commitment to intergenerational justice, and to social and environmental sustainability.** However, this potential remains undermined in many places by underfunded, rigid, or disconnected education systems—especially where structural inequalities, discrimination, and exclusion persist, disproportionately affecting the most marginalised.

In this context, **education can be understood not only as a driver of development but also as a capacitation intervention** in its own right. As reaffirmed in the 2015 Incheon Declaration¹, education empowers individuals with the skills, values, and attitudes they need to lead healthy and fulfilling lives, make informed choices, and meet local and global challenges head-on.

At the same time, schools that fail to ensure safety can become sites of serious harm. These experiences gravely affect students' well-being, hinder academic achievement and attendance, and, in some cases, lead to early school dropout (Hague et al., 2018).

EDUCATION IS A SAFE SPACE

A protected environment, such as a school, provides a variety of activities for boys' and girls' physical and psychological development, integrating classroom learning with recreational experiences such as play, sport, and socialisation, and expanding its intervention boundaries beyond the building's walls.

EDUCATION ACTS AS A FORM OF PREVENTION

By educating children about the hazards associated with crises, preventative measures may be taken.

Nevertheless, **schools can also be powerful spaces of prevention, protection, and empowerment**. Through formal and informal learning – what is usually called the hidden curriculum – students develop their understanding of themselves, their rights, and interpersonal dynamics, and learn how to navigate relationships within their communities (ibid.).

This protective and educational role becomes especially crucial in **emergency contexts**, where schools serve not only as centres of learning, but also as **symbols of stability and continuity**. In such circumstances, schools provide physical and psychological safety, promote health, and transmit essential knowledge and practices across generations. Here, education becomes more than just classroom instruction; it serves as a buffer against crisis and a pillar of community resilience.

EDUCATION MEANS STABILITY

Structured activities and daily commitment to lessons can restore a sense of continuity and normality not only for boys and girls but also for their families through psychosocial support and the peace of mind that comes from knowing that their children are safely participating in activities during school hours.

EDUCATION PROVIDES PROTECTION

Concrete and everyday threats like female genital mutilation, early marriages and pregnancies, and forced labour can be opposed and prevented in schools through educating children and communities.

Education in Emergencies

Education in emergencies refers to the provision of learning opportunities in contexts disrupted by armed conflict, forced displacement, natural disasters, climate events, and economic instability. These crises often lead to school closures, unsafe learning environments, and systemic breakdowns in the delivery of education (Education Cannot Wait, 2025). The term “*crisis-affected*” can have a wide interpretation: not only to refer to children who are forcibly displaced or living in conflict zones, but also those who remain in their communities but face barriers such as overcrowded schools, lack of teachers, damaged infrastructure, or underfunded education systems. In many of these settings, children may still technically be enrolled, but the quality and consistency of learning is severely compromised.

According to Education Cannot Wait's latest update (2025), around **234 million** school-aged children and adolescents are living in crisis-affected countries and require support to access quality education. This marks an increase of at least 35 million over the past three years. **Of these, approximately 85 million—or 37%—are out of school. While some have been forcibly displaced – about 14.5 million – the vast majority—more than 70 million—still live in their communities but are nonetheless unable to access education.**

The situation is particularly acute in **Sub-Saharan Africa**, which **accounts for 50% of all crisis-affected school-aged children globally**. Southern Asia and Western Asia follow, with 16% and 12% respectively. Five countries—Sudan, Afghanistan, Ethiopia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Pakistan—account for nearly half of all crisis-affected out-of-school children (ibid.).

Learning outcomes are equally alarming. **Only 17% of crisis-affected children enrolled in primary school are achieving minimum reading proficiency by the end of the cycle. An estimated 59 million children attend school but fail to reach this basic standard.** Girls tend to perform slightly better than boys in reading assessments, but they are also more likely to drop out as they advance to higher education levels, due to economic pressures, social norms, and safety risks.

Children with disabilities are among the most disadvantaged. They represent more than 20% of the out-of-school population in crisis-affected settings—about 17 million children—and three-quarters of them live in areas experiencing high-intensity crises (ibid.).

Education in emergencies is not just about continuity of schooling. It is a vital lifeline for children and adolescents caught in crisis. It provides structure, stability, and a sense of normalcy during times of upheaval. Crucially, education also supports psychosocial recovery, helps children develop coping mechanisms, and protects them from risks like child labour, recruitment into armed groups, or early marriage. It contributes to social cohesion and peacebuilding, equipping learners with the skills and values needed to rebuild their societies. Importantly, children in crisis settings, when given access to safe and quality education, show remarkable resilience and potential. Yet the challenges are significant.

Delivering education in emergencies requires navigating a range of obstacles, including active conflict, widespread displacement, chronic underfunding, destroyed or unsafe infrastructure, and trauma among both learners and teachers. Marginalised groups such as girls and children with disabilities face even greater barriers, often related to social stigma, safety concerns, or lack of accessible facilities.

Education in emergencies is not just about continuity of schooling. It is a vital lifeline for children and adolescents caught in crisis. It provides structure, stability, and a sense of normalcy during times of upheaval.

¹ The Incheon Declaration, adopted in 2015, is a global commitment to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education for all by 2030. It emphasises lifelong learning, reducing disparities, and promoting sustainable development through education. The declaration was endorsed at the World Education Forum in Incheon, South Korea. The Declaration is available here https://uis.unesco.org/sites/default/files/documents/education-2030-incheon-framework-for-action-implementation-of-sdg4-2016-en_2.pdf



Education Cannot Wait

Education Cannot Wait (ECW)² is the United Nations global fund dedicated to education in emergencies and protracted crises. Launched in 2016 at the World Humanitarian Summit, ECW was created to bridge the gap between humanitarian response and long-term development by ensuring that children and adolescents affected by conflicts, natural disasters, forced displacement, and other crises can access quality education. ECW's mission is to deliver safe, inclusive, and free education to the millions of children who are too often left behind when emergencies strike. The fund supports both rapid response interventions in acute emergencies and multi-year programmes in protracted crises, working across the humanitarian-development-peace nexus. This dual approach aims not only to restore access to learning quickly, but also to strengthen education systems and build long-term resilience. ECW works in close collaboration with national governments, UN agencies, civil society organisations, donors, and local communities. It prioritises support for the most marginalised learners—including girls, children with disabilities, and those living in extreme poverty or displacement—and promotes integrated education responses that address not only access, but also protection, psychosocial support, and learning outcomes. In practical terms, ECW provides funding, coordination, and data-driven planning to enable faster, more effective, and more accountable education responses in crisis settings. As of 2025, ECW has helped reach millions of children worldwide, yet the needs continue to grow, and the fund continues to call for expanded support from public and private donors to fulfil its mandate. **In 2022, through its involvement in the Italian chapter of the Global Campaign for Education³, WeWorld supported the Education Cannot Wait pledge to fund education in emergencies, engaging in advocacy with donors and institutions.**

2 For more information, see: <https://www.educationcannotwait.org/>
 3 For more information, see: <https://campaignforeducation.org/en>



The INEE Minimum Standards for Education: Preparedness, Response, Recovery (INEE MS)

The Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE)⁴ is a global network of organisations, practitioners, and policymakers working to ensure the right to quality, safe, and inclusive education for all individuals affected by crises. Established in 2000, INEE serves as a collaborative platform to strengthen education preparedness, response, and recovery in emergencies and protracted crises.

The **INEE Minimum Standards for Education: Preparedness, Response, Recovery** is a foundational framework containing **19 standards**, each of which includes key actions and guidance notes designed to enhance the quality and accountability of education programming in emergencies⁵. These standards provide guidance on key aspects of education delivery in crisis settings and are organised into five domains:

1. **Foundational Standards:** Ensure community participation, coordination, and analysis of education needs.
2. **Access and Learning Environment:** Promote safe, equitable, and inclusive access to learning opportunities.
3. **Teaching and Learning:** Support quality teaching, curricula, and learner outcomes.
4. **Teachers and Other Education Personnel:** Address recruitment, training, and well-being of educators.
5. **Education Policy:** Strengthen education governance, planning, and funding in crisis contexts.

The standards are widely used by governments, INGOs, NGOs, and UN agencies to uphold the right to education during crises, as outlined in the **Sustainable Development Goals (SDG 4)** and the **Global Compact on Refugees**.

4 For more information, see: <https://inee.org/>
 5 For more details, visit the INEE Minimum Standards page.



Education in Emergencies. WeWorld's Commitment

Education in emergencies (EiE) is a key pillar of **WeWorld's 2024-2030 Education Strategy**, reflecting the organisation's dedication to ensuring safe, inclusive, and quality learning opportunities for children and youth affected by crises. As outlined in our **2023 Capacity Statement**, WeWorld integrates humanitarian and development approaches to overcome barriers to education in conflict, displacement, and disaster settings—aligning with global frameworks such as the **INEE Minimum Standards** and **SDG 4**.

WeWorld's EiE work focuses on three interconnected themes: **access to education, quality learning, and well-being and inclusion**. To expand access, WeWorld rehabilitates and builds safe, inclusive schools and Temporary Learning Spaces (TLS), ensuring facilities are accessible for children with disabilities and equipped with gender-sensitive WASH infrastructure. Recognising that many children in crises miss years of schooling, WeWorld implements Non-Formal Education (NFE) programmes—such as catch-up classes and self-learning courses—to help out-of-school children (OoSC) re-integrate into formal education and Remedial Classes (RC) to provide additional support to children at risk of dropout. Community mobilisation, including back-to-learning campaigns and door-to-door outreach, further supports enrolment and retention. **Quality education** is advanced through teachers' continuous professional development, with a focus on topics like inclusive education, psychosocial support (PSS), and conflict-sensitive education. WeWorld also provides teaching materials and collaborates with local authorities to adapt curricula to crisis contexts. Central to our approach is **promoting well-being and inclusion**. WeWorld integrates PSS and life-skills activities into education programmes to help children cope with trauma, while advocating for disability inclusion through rights-based models. Our interventions also address protection risks—such as gender-based violence and child recruitment—by creating safe learning environments that foster social cohesion. To achieve this goal, WeWorld also works with the wider educational community: parents, guardians, caregivers, community leaders, and all those who, in various ways, contribute to the education and development of children. This is done through community awareness campaigns on issues such

as the prevention of harmful practices and the promotion of positive parenting, as well as by supporting and working alongside school committees.

These innovative methodologies and approaches developed in EiE contexts—such as Non-Formal Education (NFE) programmes, alternative teaching methods, and community-based outreach—hold significant potential even in development settings. **These strategies, designed to overcome barriers in crisis situations, can also address systemic educational challenges like dropout rates, exclusion of marginalised groups, and rigid formal systems in non-emergency contexts.**

Our EiE efforts exemplify a holistic approach that blends emergency response with sustainable system strengthening. **By prioritising equity, quality, and protection, we ensure education remains a lifeline for children in crises, aligning with global goals to leave no one behind.**

Capacity Statement
- Education in Emergencies

Capacity Statement in Education in Emergencies

WeWorld's approach to and experience in Education in Emergencies (EiE)





From this broader perspective, education must be seen as **multi-dimensional and deeply interwoven with health, equity, social cohesion, and sustainability**. It is both a right and a powerful tool for transformation. **This Education Atlas emerges from the urgent need to better understand and navigate this complex landscape.** Through data, stories, and critical reflections from

diverse global contexts, it seeks to illuminate the challenges we face and to identify **pathways toward more just, inclusive, and resilient education systems** – systems that truly respond to the rights and needs of all children, everywhere.

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THIS EDUCATION ATLAS?

This Atlas – the fourth in the series of Atlases promoted by WeWorld, following previous editions focused on sexual and reproductive justice⁶, WASH (Water, Sanitation and Hygiene)⁷, and women's and girls' rights⁸ – is more than just a compilation of data. **It aims to provide a comprehensive and global overview of the state of education worldwide, using a selection of key indicators from accredited secondary sources presented clearly and accessibly through maps, graphs, infographics, and tables.**

But this Atlas does not stop at describing the current situation: it also seeks to question it and contribute to change. Alongside data analysis, it offers insights, field experiences, and concrete proposals drawn from the many projects and programmes that WeWorld has implemented over the years in more than 20 countries.

It highlights not only the challenges, but also the practical responses we are helping to build in the diverse contexts where we work. We show what it means for WeWorld to promote inclusive, equitable, and quality education even in the most complex environments, from fragile and emergency settings to those marked by deep-rooted inequality.

This Atlas is therefore intended to inform, raise awareness, and inspire action. Above all, it aims to strengthen a shared commitment to the right to education: a right that is also a gateway to dignity, protection, and a better future. Because every child, everywhere in the world, deserves an education that opens horizons and creates opportunities.

WEWORLD'S EDUCATION STRATEGY 2024-2030

This Education Atlas is also designed as a tool for reflection and consolidation after the first years of implementing our 2024-2030 Global Education Strategy. This ambitious strategy, developed under the guidance of our Global Education Expert, took shape through a participatory process of adaptation and contextualisation across the various countries and regions where we operate. **Despite its local and regional variations, the strategy is built on a fundamental and cross-cutting principle: promoting an educational model truly centred on the rights and needs of girls, boys, and adolescents.**

From this perspective, the Atlas is not just a collection of data or an advocacy tool. Rather, it is a narrative—both visual and descriptive—of how WeWorld translates its vision of education into concrete action. Through maps, graphs, testimonies, and analysis, we shape an educational approach that:

- Places the rights of children and adolescents at its core, recognising them as active agents, rights holders, with their own voices and agency.
- Adapts to multiple and complex contexts, thanks to the multi-mandate nature of our organisation, capable of working across different areas—from emergencies to development, from education to child protection—without losing coherence or vision.
- Integrates a commitment to social justice, inclusion, and sustainability. Because education is never neutral: it can either reproduce classism, racism, and inequalities, or—if approached as we strive to do—become a powerful tool to challenge injustice, promote equity, and contribute to building fairer, more resilient, and democratic societies.

This Atlas is therefore also an opportunity for evaluation, vision, and sharing: it allows us to reflect on what has been accomplished, while strengthening and guiding our future

commitment. It is an open window into how we understand and practice education as a fundamental right and a lever for social transformation.



WeWorld's 2024-2030 Organisation Strategy

WeWorld's 2024-2030 Organisation Strategy is built around a programme-based strategic framework, focusing on five key areas of field intervention. This is complemented by an organisational development framework that outlines the organisation's priorities for growth and development in the coming years.

Our strategy remains firmly rooted in the priorities identified in the previous strategic cycles:

- Supporting people in vulnerable and marginalised situations to promote their inclusion and protection.
- Strengthening communities by fostering active participation and building more inclusive and resilient structures.
- Advancing governance and localisation, by involving local stakeholders, from NGOs to local authorities, to enhance their capacities and responsibilities in safeguarding rights.

Inclusion, Community, and Governance/Localisation have thus become the pillars of our action, around which we have defined three long-term outcomes that guide all of our interventions. We have outlined and structured the framework within which our strategy operates, grounded in three guiding principles: **HUMAN RIGHTS-BASED APPROACH, CHILD RIGHTS, GENDER AND INTERSECTIONALITY.**

These guiding principles shape our actions, and we have specified them for each pillar, extending to measurable indicators for progress.

The current global landscape presents increasingly complex and interconnected challenges, which is why our approach remains multi-sectoral and integrated. We have defined five Domains of Change, each contributing directly to eleven Sustainable Development Goals:

1. WATER, SANITATION AND HYGIENE
2. EDUCATION
3. FOOD SECURITY, LIVELIHOOD AND LOCAL DEVELOPMENT
4. GENDER AND PROTECTION
5. ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE

In alignment with WeWorld's multidimensional mandate, the 2024-2030 strategic framework outlines three distinct programmatic approaches:

1. Long-term Development Approach: Contributing to sustainable development for both people and the planet, in line with the 2030 Agenda.
2. Humanitarian and Emergency Approach: Responding effectively to various humanitarian crises with emergency interventions.
3. Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus Approach: Offering flexible solutions in complex, protracted crises and conflict situations through an integrated approach between emergency, development, and peace.



⁶ The report is available here <https://ejbn4fjvt9h.exactdn.com/uploads/2023/09/ATLANT-TE-ENG-preview-affiancate.pdf>

⁷ The report is available here https://ejbn4fjvt9h.exactdn.com/uploads/2024/03/Flow-ing-Futures-web_compressed.pdf

⁸ The report is available here https://ejbn4fjvt9h.exactdn.com/uploads/2025/11/Atlan-te-Donne_Claiming-Space_preview-affiancate.pdf

WeWorld CARES about Child-Centred Education

The following infographic presents **our child-centred approach to education—a model that places the rights, experiences, and perspectives of children at the heart of educational action, challenging the adult-centric dynamics still prevalent in many education systems**. Rather than viewing children as passive recipients, this approach recognises them as active participants capable of shaping and contributing meaningfully to the educational paths that affect their lives. The goal is to design truly

child-friendly interventions built with them, in the environments where they live and grow.

In the following pages, we explore our educational vision and methodology through the lens of the **2024–2030 Global Education Strategy**, by introducing the WeWorld's **CARES Framework about Child-Centred Education**, which is structured around five key dimensions:



Three of these dimensions—**Access, Community, and Safety**—represent the **strategic goals** guiding our interventions:

- to guarantee inclusive and quality education for all,
- to strengthen education systems and communities through active engagement,
- and to protect children through targeted, education-based interventions.

The remaining two dimensions—**Rights** and **Expression**—serve as **cross-cutting enablers** applied throughout all of our programmes and areas of work. Recognising children as *rights holders* and amplifying their voices are fundamental principles that inform the co-creation of educational pathways that are participatory and transformative.

Each section of the infographic is explored in greater depth in the following pages, with global and regional data highlighting critical challenges, followed by concrete examples of WeWorld's response: how we work to close education gaps and address violations of children's rights through good practices, proven methodologies, and scalable models.

The CARES Framework is the result of years of field experience and now serves as our guiding compass for building more equitable, inclusive, and resilient education systems; systems that truly meet the needs and uphold the rights of those who deserve it most: children and adolescents.

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1. COMMUNITY

Engaging Communities in Promoting Children's Agency



1. COMMUNITY - Engaging Communities in Promoting Children's Agency

COMMUNITY.

Engaging Communities in Promoting Children's Agency

Educational communities are the foundation of a strong education system. They include not only school principals, teachers, and other education personnel, but also families, local leaders, civil society, and children themselves. When these groups work together, education becomes a shared responsibility and a driver of social change – not just a service for children, but a public good that benefits all. At WeWorld, we are committed to empowering children by engaging the communities that shape their everyday lives. Barriers to education are rooted in deep social norms and cannot be solved by institutionalised education systems alone. They require coordinated, community-based responses. Active community participation, for us, is a key element in ensuring the sustainability of our interventions. Our aim is to foster participation of families, educators, and children in shaping the learning environment, recognising them as powerful advocates for children's education. We strive not only to improve access to education, but to transform it into a participatory, empowering tool for lasting change.



KEY FACTS

- ✓ When the whole community is fully engaged, it becomes a driver of inclusive and quality education.
- ✓ In many communities, traditional norms prioritise boys' schooling while girls are expected to stay home, marry early, or take on caregiving responsibilities (World Bank, 2024).
- ✓ In many communities, discriminatory beliefs persist that children with disabilities are unable to learn or that investing in their education is not worthwhile (Humanity & Inclusion, 2025).
- ✓ **Community involvement is a key pillar of education systems strengthening**, as it ensures that reforms are grounded in local realities and supported by those directly affected by them.
- ✓ Investment in education remains alarmingly insufficient, with **a funding gap of US\$97 billion annually looming for low- and lower-middle-income countries** to achieve Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG4) by 2030 (UNESCO, 2025c).
- ✓ In 2024, only 29.8% of the required education funding was secured, while in 2025 approximately 24% has been covered (OCHA, 2025).



WHAT DOES ENGAGING COMMUNITIES MEAN?

Education is not just about children, nor is learning confined to the boundaries of a learning environment. When the whole community is fully engaged, it becomes a driver of inclusive and quality education. Indeed, **when communities go beyond supporting schools and begin to actively participate in the continuous improvement of education, they become powerful agents of systemic change**. This deeper engagement strengthens the entire education system, fostering effective governance, accountability, and the ability to respond to evolving needs. This entails building institutional capacities, integrating structured child protection services – such as committees, parent-teacher associations, and participatory planning – and ensuring that policies are effectively implemented at all levels (CARE, 2023).

Defining an Educational Community

An educational community is intended as a group of actors (persons, organisations, institutions, etc.) that are involved and have responsibilities in children's and youth's education. Therefore, besides families (parents and caregivers) and schools (teachers and other education personnel), the concept of educational community also includes community organisations, local NGOs, religious organisations, and – of course – children and youth themselves (WeWorld, 2024).

WeWorld's Community Campaigns on Education

WeWorld carries out a **wide range of community campaigns focused on education**, recognising it as a fundamental right and a key tool for protecting children and promoting equality. These campaigns aim to raise awareness at both school and community levels, using creative and participatory methods such as storytelling, photography, games, and role-play to engage children, families, and educators. Education-related campaigns include initiatives like "**Back to Learning**" (BTL) or "**Back to School**" (BTS), which encourage school enrolment, especially for girls and children with disabilities. Alongside this, WeWorld promotes the creation and strengthening of Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs) and school committees, empowering communities to take an active role in education planning and school governance.

1.1 THE BARRIERS THAT STAND IN THE WAY OF EDUCATION

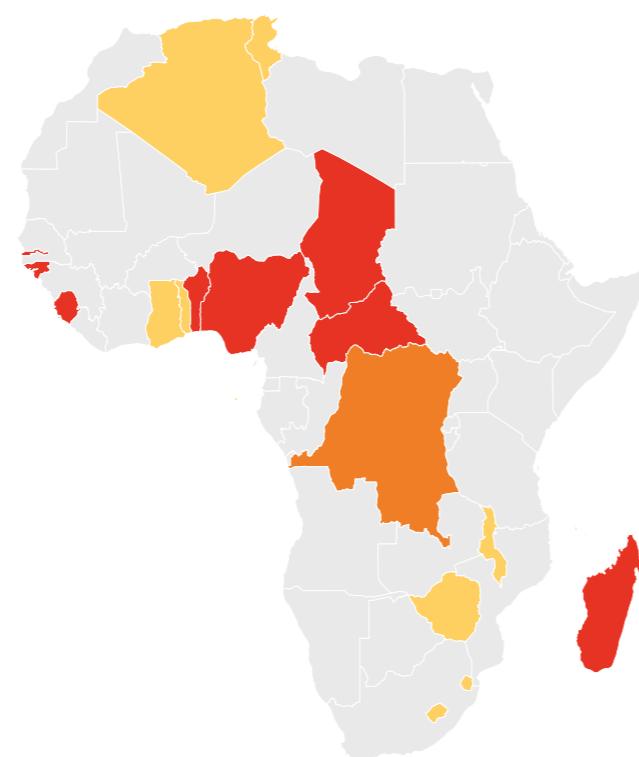
SOCIAL AND CULTURAL BARRIERS

Millions of children around the world are excluded from education due to deeply rooted social and cultural barriers. These are often the result of long-standing beliefs and practices that shape attitudes towards who should access education, when, and how.

Gender remains one of the most persistent and pervasive barriers to education. In many communities, **traditional norms prioritise boys' schooling while girls are expected to stay home, marry early, or take on caregiving responsibilities** (World Bank, 2024).

Globally, an estimated 12 million girls are married before the age of 18 each year – a practice that often leads to early pregnancy, school dropout, and social isolation (UNICEF, 2022). Similarly, adolescent pregnancy continues to disrupt education, with around 13% of girls giving birth before the age of 18, limiting their chances of returning to school (UNICEF, 2024b). Other harmful practices, such as female genital mutilation (FGM), further compound the issue. Affecting more than 230 million girls and women worldwide, many before the age of 15 (WHO, 2025), FGM is seen in some countries as a rite of passage, in others as a way to suppress a girl's sexuality or ensure her chastity. It is not only a violation of human rights, but often leads to health complications, school absenteeism or dropout (UNICEF, 2024c). **For both boys and girls, child labour remains a major barrier to education.** In the world's poorest countries, more than 1 in 5 children are engaged in child labour, many in hazardous conditions that prevent them from attending school

regularly or performing well academically (UNICEF, 2024). In many communities, with regard to children with disabilities, discriminatory beliefs persist that they are unable to learn or that investing in their education is not worthwhile. Families may be reluctant to send their children to school out of fear, shame or concern for their safety, leading to systemic exclusion and lifelong disadvantages (Humanity & Inclusion, 2025).



WeWorld's Inclusive Educational Communities Modality

Building inclusive learning environments that are safe and accessible to everyone is critical to adequately protect children's rights. Many children are victims of violence, abuse, and exploitation, particularly in emergencies and protracted crises. To ensure that all children at risk of violence have access to quality, relevant, and inclusive education, that can lower their chances of being bullied, harassed, or physically and sexually assaulted, WeWorld adopts an inclusive education approach. Detailed in the document ***Inclusive educational communities. Piloting a community approach to inclusive education in Aleppo and Deir-Ez-Zor, Syria***, our approach was first implemented in a project focused on the Syrian context, but is applicable, if appropriately contextualised, to other regions too.



Syria Case Study

From 2021 to 2023, we implemented a project called ***Inclusive education and income generation opportunities for the creation of resilient communities in underserved areas of the Aleppo and Deir-Ez-Zor governorates***, funded by the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation (AICS) and in partnership with the Syrian Ministry of Education, the Directorates of Education (DoE) of Aleppo and Deir-Ez-Zor and the Syrian Arab Red Crescent (SARC). The project aimed to promote the inclusion of children with disabilities and special educational needs in schools. The project applied a comprehensive, community-based approach, combining school rehabilitation to remove physical barriers, the creation of dedicated rooms for specialised support, and extensive training for teachers on inclusive pedagogical practices. In parallel, we worked with parents, caregivers, and community leaders through awareness-raising activities designed to challenge social stigma, promote positive attitudes towards inclusion, and foster shared responsibility for children's education.



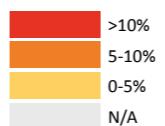
Inclusive Educational Communities

Piloting a community-based approach to inclusive education in Aleppo and Deir-Ez-Zor, Syria



MAP 3: Children With Disabilities Who Never Attended School in Africa (%)

Data are updated to 2023. Source: WeWorld's Elaboration on UNICEF, 2024.



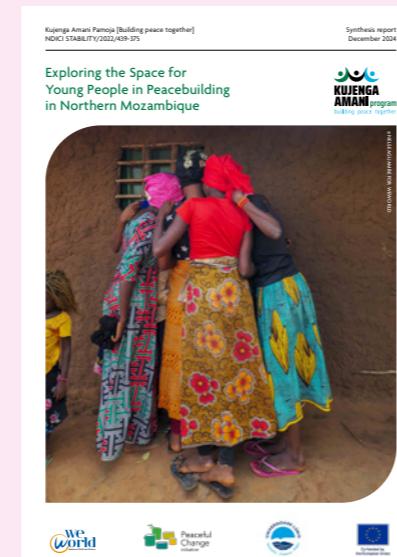


WeWorld's Kujenga Amani Pamoja Programme. Exploring the Space for Young People in Peacebuilding in Coastal Communities of Tanzania, Kenya and Mozambique

The *Kujenga Amani Pamoja* is a three-year project implemented by WeWorld with support from Peaceful Change Initiative (PCi), TABUFO (Tanzania Building Future Organisation), 4H Tanzania, Stretchers Youth Organisation (SYO), and CNV (Conselho Nacional de Voluntariado). Co-funded by the European Union and running from 2023 to 2026, the initiative focuses on youth empowerment and peacebuilding across the Swahili coast - specifically in Kenya's Kwale region, Tanzania's Tanga and Mtwara regions, and Mozambique's Cabo Delgado and Nampula provinces. **The project draws on positive cultural traditions of the Swahili coastal communities to support young people in becoming active contributors to peace in their societies.** Across all three countries, the project revealed that young people are often excluded from formal peacebuilding structures and are more likely to be viewed as threats rather than as actors for positive change. Key findings show that while young men are often stereotyped as perpetrators of unrest, young women face exclusion due to gender norms. However,

informal networks, such as youth associations and religious and cultural gatherings, serve as essential spaces where young people, including young women, exercise agency, engage in dialogue, and foster social cohesion. **Through this project, we call for a shift in perception: from viewing youth as passive recipients to recognising**

and supporting them as essential actors in peacebuilding processes. Recommendations emphasise the need to invest in both formal and informal youth spaces, promote intergenerational dialogue, and build partnerships that integrate social, cultural, and economic inclusion strategies to foster long-term stability.



The Role of School Committees and Parent-Teacher Associations

School Committees and Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs) play a crucial role in linking schools with their communities and strengthening education systems. Although their structure and level of formalisation vary across countries, **their role as a bridge between education providers and families remains essential. These bodies provide a shared platform for parents, teachers, students, and community members to engage in school governance and support the school's daily functioning and sustainability.** Beyond educational support, school committees and PTAs are key actors in promoting community awareness and child protection. Their grassroots presence allows them to address harmful practices, inequalities and child abuse (UNICEF, 2021a; Girls' Education Challenge, 2024). They also serve as important reporting mechanisms, offering confidential and accessible channels for reporting abuse, neglect, or exploitation, particularly in contexts where formal protection systems may be weak or under-resourced.



Legal Frameworks as Catalysts for Inclusive Education

Robust legal frameworks are essential to uphold the right to education and eliminate cultural and social barriers that prevent many learners from accessing it. International instruments such as the **UNESCO Convention against Discrimination in Education and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights** oblige states to ensure inclusive, equitable, and non-discriminatory education for all (UNESCO, 2025c).

These frameworks inform national legislation, guiding countries in adapting their education systems to address the needs of diverse learn-

ers – promoting gender equality, supporting children with disabilities, and respecting cultural and linguistic diversity. They also provide mechanisms for accountability, allowing civil society and institutions to monitor progress and advocate for reforms.



The State of Inclusion of Children with Disabilities

While 68% of countries have a definition of inclusion, only 57% of those define it in a way that applies to all learners without exception. **In 25% of countries, laws require that people with disabilities be educated in separate settings – a number that rises to over 40% in Latin America, the Caribbean, and Asia.** In contrast, national policies, which are updated more frequently than laws, tend to be more supportive of inclusion: only 5% call for separate education, 12% promote integration, and 38% emphasise full inclusion. Despite these encouraging policy trends, governments often fail to ensure that inclusive education laws and policies are properly implemented (UNESCO, 2020).



WHAT DOES SYSTEM STRENGTHENING MEAN?

Building resilient and responsive education systems requires the active involvement of institutional stakeholders, particularly Ministries of Education and other government bodies responsible for shaping education policy and implementation. To strengthen an education system means ensuring that all its components work together to support learning for everyone. This starts with recognising that many different people and groups are involved in education, from those who provide services to those who use them. Each has a role to play, and it is important that these roles are clearly defined and well-coordinated to achieve education goals (World Bank, 2020; INEE, 2024).



WeWorld's Approach to Strengthening Non-Formal Education

As part of its commitment to improving access to education in crisis-affected areas, WeWorld launched an initiative in Cabo Delgado to support the development of harmonised Non-Formal Education (NFE) programmes. In collaboration with other education sector partners and as an active member of the Education Cluster, **WeWorld organised a workshop to address concerns over inconsistent NFE methodologies, which were undermining the effectiveness and coordination of education interventions.** The workshop was successful in reaching a common agreement to create a technical working group – including education sector partners and Ministry of Education representatives – to define a shared vocabulary (in Portuguese) and a common framework outlining programme types, duration, objectives, and other elements. **The Ministry of Education is now considering scaling these NFE programmes nationally to reach out-of-school children facing economic barriers in accessing school. Moreover, we plan to contextualise this modality to adapt it to different countries and contexts.**



The Global Education Cluster

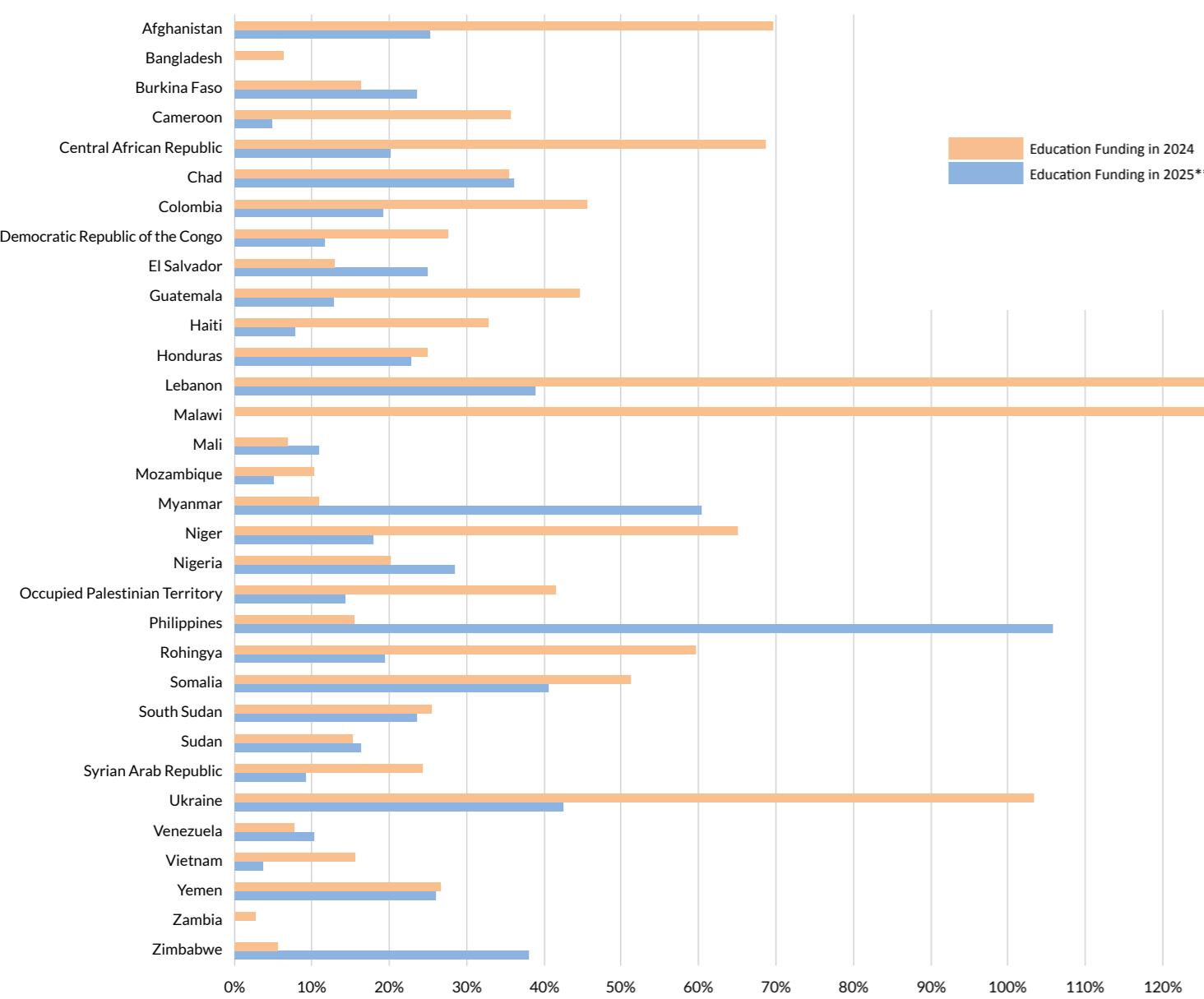
The Global Education Cluster (GEC) is the primary coordination mechanism for education responses in humanitarian emergencies. Co-led by UNICEF and Save the Children, it brings together NGOs, UN agencies, and other partners to ensure that children affected by crisis have access to safe, quality, and inclusive education. Operating in over 30 countries, the GEC supports national clusters with technical guidance, capacity strengthening, and tools to coordinate education responses effectively. Its work helps bridge the gap between humanitarian aid and long-term development, prioritising education as a life-saving and protective intervention during emergencies⁹

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9 For more information, see: <https://www.educationcluster.net/>

WeWorld's Commitment to Education Coordination

WeWorld is actively engaged in both global and national education coordination mechanisms. As a member of the [Global Education Cluster Partners Forum](#), we contribute to collective efforts to improve preparedness, response, and recovery in education during emergencies. We also actively participate in country-level education clusters and thematic working groups, where we work alongside our partners to ensure that responses are aligned with local needs and global standards. WeWorld is part of the Education Cluster Strategic Advisory Group (SAG) in Syria and Mozambique. In addition, we contribute to the work of the Inclusive Education Working Group of the [Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies \(INEE\)](#) through our Global Education Expert, focusing on promoting global dialogue, sharing technical expertise, and helping shape policy and practice aimed at promoting inclusive, safe, and quality education in crisis and fragile contexts.



1.3 INVESTING IN EDUCATION TO DRIVE QUALITY LEARNING

Sustainable education financing and active community engagement are closely linked. Increased investment is essential to provide adequate infrastructure, trained teachers, inclusive learning materials, and safe learning environments to guarantee inclusive education for all. At the same time, community participation ensures that these investments respond to local needs, improving accountability and long-term impact (UNESCO, 2024b). Yet reaching the 2030 goal of universal basic education will require **low- and lower-middle-income countries to spend US\$461 billion annually, leaving a projected financing gap of US\$97 billion**, with Sub-Saharan Africa accounting for the largest share – US\$70 billion annually (UNESCO, 2025d). Closing this gap calls for stronger domestic investment, better fund allocation, and enhanced international support. But financing alone is not enough – it must be paired with community engagement and strong governance to ensure every investment leads to inclusive, meaningful learning for all (UNESCO, 2024b, UNESCO, 2024d).

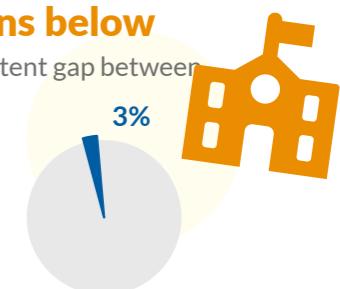


Education in Emergencies. Funding Education in Emergencies

Funding education in emergencies is critical to safeguarding children's rights and ensuring continuity of learning during crises. **Not only is education the most recent sector that has been integrated into humanitarian interventions, but it is also the most vulnerable to being deprioritised due to chronic underfunding.** Despite the target set by the UN for Official Development Assistance (ODA) at 0.7% of Gross National Income¹⁰, only a few countries spend more than this percentage of their GNI on aid, and many more have been stagnating at lower figures (UNESCO, 2024b). In 2023, humanitarian funding for education decreased to US\$1.12 billion – a 4% drop from the previous year (GPE, 2024). **In 2024, only 29.8% of the required education funding was secured, and in 2025 approximately 24% has been covered**, highlighting a significant shortfall in meeting education financing needs (OCHA, 2025). The average allocation for education in humanitarian appeals remains below 3% of total aid, highlighting a persistent gap between commitments and actual funding (UNESCO, 2024b).

10 For more information, see: OECD (2024), The 0.7% ODA/GNI target – a history, <https://web-archive.oecd.org/temp/2024-06-17/63452-the07odagnitar-get-a-history.htm>, accessed in May 2025.

The **average allocation for education in humanitarian appeals remains below 3% of total aid**, highlighting a persistent gap between commitments and actual funding (UNESCO, 2024b)



GRAPH 1: Global Funding for Education in 2024 and 2025* (%)

Data are updated to 2025. Source: OCHA Financial Tracking Service, 2025

Coverage of education funding in relation to the total funding requirements outlined in OCHA's Humanitarian Needs and Response Plans (HNRPs), Humanitarian Response Plans (HRPs), Regional Response Plans (RRPs), Flash Appeals, and other humanitarian funding mechanisms.

*A percentage above 100% indicates that the actual funding received by a country exceeded the required amount.

**If the bar for the year 2025 is missing from the chart, it means that no funds have been allocated to education as of September 2025.



2. ACCESS Unlocking Access to Inclusive, Quality Learning



ACCESS. Unlocking Access to Inclusive, Quality Learning

Every child deserves the chance to thrive, and education is where that journey begins. WeWorld champions an approach to learning that empowers every student to realise their full potential. This means ensuring access to high-quality, inclusive education experiences that are engaging, relevant, and responsive to each learner's needs. When children and young people can access meaningful learning, they gain more than knowledge: they gain the tools to shape their future. Education unlocks pathways out of poverty, nurtures active and informed citizenship, and strengthens communities for generations to come. We believe that transformation starts with smart investment in what matters most: safe and inclusive schools, well-resourced classrooms, and teachers who are equipped and supported to make a lasting impact. Quality education is the foundation for equity, resilience, and a more just and sustainable world.



KEY FACTS

- ✓ In some areas, schools are simply not there, and children are required to travel long distances to attend the nearest one. For many, the journey is too far or unsafe, leading to irregular attendance or children not enrolling at all.
- ✓ In 2023, **447 million children lacked a basic drinking water service at school, while 646 lacked a basic hygiene service** (WHO/UNICEF, 2024).
- ✓ **Menstruation continues to have a significant impact on girls' and female teachers' access to and participation in education** around the world: a lack of gender-separated toilets and menstrual hygiene support often prevents them from attending school regularly.
- ✓ In many cases, children are expected to help support their households, making it harder to attend school regularly. **Economic insecurity leads families to turn to coping mechanisms such as early marriage or child labour as a means of financial relief.**
- ✓ When education systems are inclusive, well-resourced, and responsive to learners' needs, students are more likely to stay in school and advance through grades, completing their schooling.
- ✓ **44 million more primary and secondary educators are needed** to meet global education goals by 2030 (UNESCO, 2024a).



WHAT DOES ACCESSING EDUCATION MEAN? MORE THAN A SEAT IN THE CLASSROOM

Around the world, millions of children still struggle to access quality education. The obstacles they face are many, and they are not the same everywhere. Whether it is poverty, conflict, discrimination, disability, or a lack of resources, these barriers can make it incredibly hard for children to get to school, stay there, and learn in a way that helps them grow. We use the term "access" to highlight that not all children have the opportunity to receive an education, and as a result, many are completely left out of school. In some cases, schools are too far away, unsafe, or unaffordable. In others, social norms or discrimination prevent certain groups – especially girls, children with disabilities, or those affected by crises – from enrolling at all. Some of these challenges are easy to see, others are hidden – but all of them have a real impact. **When children are held back from learning, they are also held back from opportunities to reach their full potential and shape a better future.**

2.1 THE BARRIERS THAT STAND IN THE WAY OF EDUCATION



PHYSICAL BARRIERS

A major barrier to education in many low-income countries is the lack of adequate school infrastructure. In some areas, schools are simply not available, and children are required to travel long distances to attend the nearest one. For many, the journey is too far or unsafe, leading to irregular attendance or children not enrolling at all.

Even when school buildings exist, they are often in poor condition. Classrooms may have damaged walls, leaking roofs, and no basic furniture such as desks or chairs. These conditions make it difficult for students to concentrate and for teachers to deliver lessons effectively (UNICEF, 2019).

In some countries, **lack of classroom furniture forces children to sit on the floor** (UNESCO, 2020). Poor infrastructure – including electricity and adequate WASH (Water, Sanitation and Hygiene) facilities – not only deter attendance, but also disproportionately affect girls, children with disabilities and those affected by humanitarian crises (UNICEF, 2019). Indeed, 1 in 4

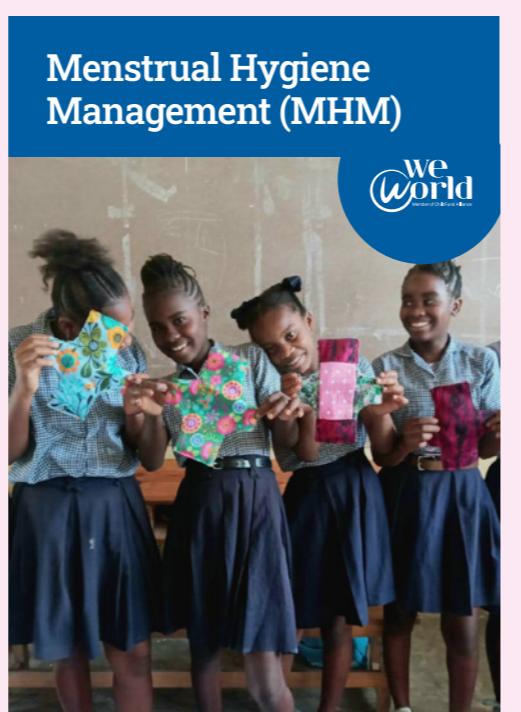
of the world's primary schools lack electricity (UNESCO, 2023), and in 2023, 447 million children lacked a basic drinking water service at school, while 646 lacked a basic hygiene service (WHO/UNICEF, 2024).

Sanitation remains a significant challenge. A lack of gender-separated toilets and menstrual hygiene support often prevents girls from attending school regularly. Less than 1 in 3 schools (31%) globally have bins for menstrual waste in girls' toilets, dropping to only 1 in 10 schools (11%) in sub-Saharan Africa (ibid.). Menstruation continues to have a significant impact on women's and girls' access to and participation in education around the world, as their needs are often unfulfilled, and menstruation may result in shame, harassment, or social isolation. Indeed, **only 2 out of 5 schools (39%) globally provide menstrual health education**, and in sub-Saharan Africa, for example, only 1 in 8 schools (12%) provide menstrual materials for free or for purchase (ibid.).



WeWorld's Menstrual Hygiene Management Modality

Menstrual Health and Hygiene Management (MHHM) is a working modality that WeWorld has integrated into its global WASH strategy. MHHM aims to ensure menstrual health and hygiene at multiple levels and in multiple contexts. As far as schools are concerned, pupils and/or teachers are frequently inhibited or unable to manage their menstrual health with dignity due to inadequate water and sanitation facilities and access to appropriate menstrual materials. As a result, girls miss time in school during menstruation. Through our interventions, we work to remove barriers to menstrual hygiene materials, supplies, and services, ensuring the availability of water and sanitation facilities, gender-separated toilets, and doors with functional locks and lighting for privacy and security. Through the rehabilitation or construction of accessible and inclusive sanitation infrastructure in schools, we make sure that women, girls, and menstruating individuals realise their full potential, and ensure a dignified and equitable learning environment. We also implement our MHHM modality in humanitarian crises and emergencies, formal and informal refugee/IDP camps and conflict zones, ensuring that women and girls receive the necessary support and protection.



ECONOMIC BARRIERS

While education may be free in principle, families often have to cover indirect costs such as uniforms, textbooks, transport, exam fees, and hygiene products. High and unpredictable school fees contribute significantly to dropout rates in many countries (Associated Press, 2024). In rural areas, lack of affordable transport means children often walk several kilometres to school each day.

In many cases, children are expected to help support their households, making it harder to attend school regularly. **Economic insecurity leads families to turn to early marriage as a means of financial relief**, as a coping mechanism for precarious and uncertain situations, such as armed conflicts, food shortages, and natural disasters, **reducing educational opportunities, especially for girls**. Today, it is estimated that 1 in 5 women got married before the age of 18 (UNICEF, 2022).

On the other hand, children are often employed in child labour, as **due to financial constraints, education becomes a lower priority**. Child labour still affects 138 million children globally (UNICEF, 2025); in West and Central Africa, 26% of children are engaged in child labour, most of them being boys (UNICEF, 2024).

Without tackling the root causes of financial vulnerability, even well-designed interventions by NGOs or INGOs risk having only a short-term impact. To address these barriers, it is essential to work not only on school-based interventions: by supporting sustainable livelihoods, multi-sectoral interventions, social protection programmes, and income-generating opportunities, communities are better equipped to prioritise education over short-term coping strategies.



WeWorld's WASH in Schools Modality

Children spend a significant part of their day at school, making access to safe Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) essential not only for their health, but also for dignity, safety, and learning. This is especially critical for girls, who often face additional barriers in the absence of gender-appropriate WASH facilities. To address these challenges, WeWorld adopted the WASH in Schools (WinS) framework as a standard component of its global education programmes. In 2021, WeWorld developed the *WASH in Schools (WinS) Modality*, providing clear guidelines for implementing WASH interventions in educational settings. The framework is based on international standards and best practices and can be adapted to diverse contexts. The approach promotes synergy between education and WASH, recognising that access to sanitation is integral to inclusive and effective learning. Its guiding principles stress the importance of accessible, age-appropriate, gender-sensitive, and disability-inclusive services, ensuring that WASH interventions promote equity, dignity, and protection from discrimination, abuse, and violence for all children.

WASH in Schools (WinS) Modality



Our Integrated Approach in the Middle East

WeWorld's WASH-Education Integrated Approach in the Middle East – Lebanon, Palestine and Syria – is designed to holistically address the intersecting needs of communities affected by conflict and protracted crises. At its core, the approach weaves together Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) interventions with inclusive, quality education programming, ensuring that humanitarian assistance also lays the groundwork for long-term resilience and context-sensitive interventions. Central to our work is the transformation of schools into spaces where both health and learning are protected and promoted. Through this integrated approach, schools received functioning toilets, handwashing stations and clean drinking water systems, designed to be gender-sensitive and accessible to children with disabilities. Hygiene promotion has become part of daily school life, where children learn safe practices such as handwashing and water use, and girls are able to manage menstruation safely and confidently, thanks to menstrual hygiene support, the provision of adequate materials and appropriate facilities. At the same time, teachers took part in training sessions to help them create health-aware, inclusive classrooms.

BEYOND ACCESS: THE IMPORTANCE OF QUALITY EDUCATION

Being in school is not enough: simply attending classes or being placed in a learning environment does not guarantee that children are gaining the knowledge and skills they need to thrive. Thus, education must be quality education. According to INEE¹¹, quality education is a holistic, inclusive, and rights-based learning process that is equitable, culturally relevant, and learner-centred, supported by well-trained teachers, adequate resources, and enabling environments, that ensures that all learners develop the knowledge and skills needed for lifelong learning and personal development, as well as responsible citizenship, economic sustainability and peacebuilding (INEE, 2024). This requires well-trained and adequately paid teachers, appropriate learning materials, and safe, supportive environments that foster not just academic achievement, but also personal development and lifelong skills.

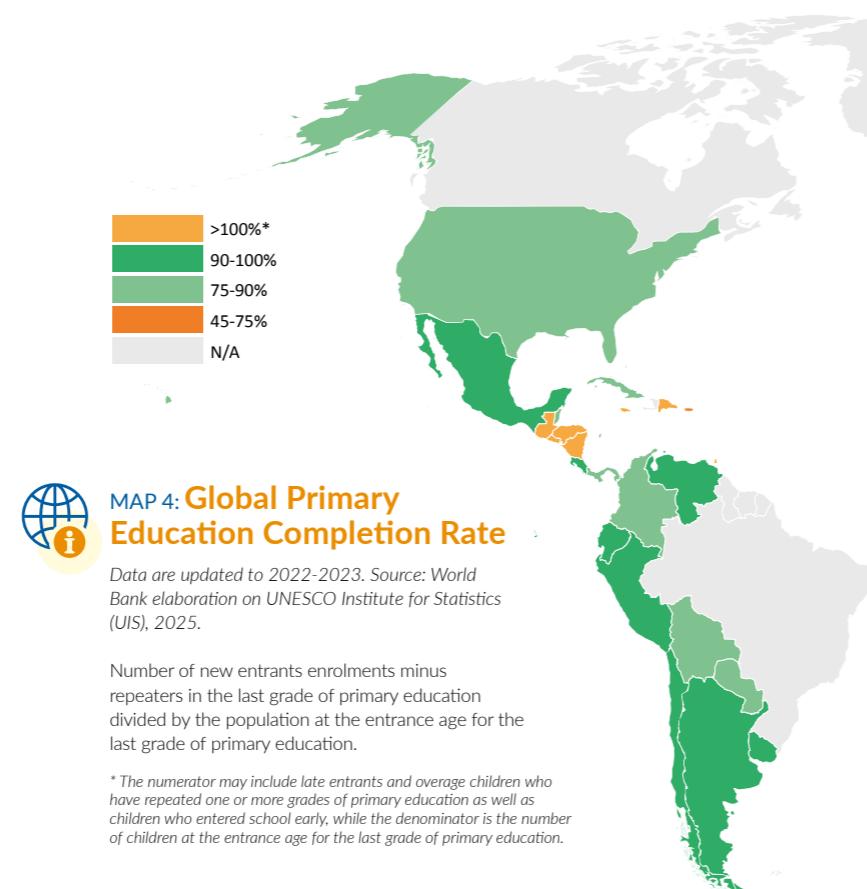
11 The Inter-agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE) is an open, global network of members working together within a humanitarian and development framework to guarantee that all individuals have the right to a quality, safe, relevant, and equitable education. Their mission is to ensure the right to a quality, safe, and relevant education for all who live in emergency and crisis contexts through prevention, preparedness, response, and recovery.



ACADEMIC BARRIERS

Academic barriers such as learning gaps, grade repetition, failure, and dropout often stem from poverty, discrimination, language challenges, and geographic isolation. When children fall behind due to missed schooling, poor learning conditions, unsafe environments or a lack of trained teachers, it becomes difficult for them to catch up (ECHO, 2019).

This can erode students' confidence, increase frustration, and contribute to school dropout (UNESCO, 2025a; Hughes et al., 2017), and these challenges are exacerbated during emergencies, where schools often lack the flexibility and resources to support vulnerable learners. Non-formal education programmes, including accelerated learning, vocational training, and community-based programmes, offer a second chance for those who have experienced significant disruptions. These alternatives help children regain essential skills and re-engage with education, especially in crisis situations where formal schooling is inaccessible (UNESCO, 2022).



Defining Formal and Non-Formal Education

- **FORMAL EDUCATION (FE):** Formal education refers to learning that takes place in official, structured environments like schools, colleges, and universities. It is organised and planned by recognised public or private institutions, and forms part of a country's official education system. These programmes are approved by national or sub-national education authorities. Formal education typically follows two main pathways: academic schooling, and Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) – which focuses on practical skills, job readiness, and preparing learners for employment (INEE, 2024).
- **NON-FORMAL EDUCATION (NFE):** Non-formal education is organised and structured learning that takes place outside the official school system. It is designed to be flexible and responsive, especially for children and young people who may

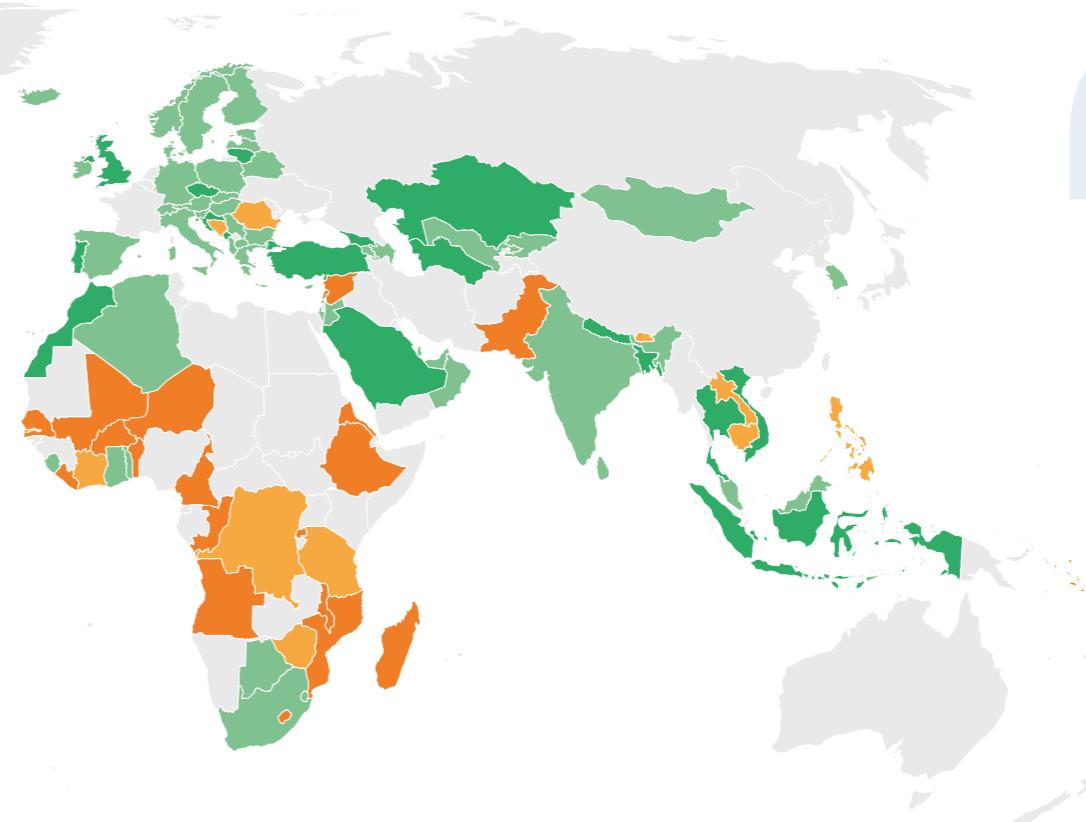
According to UNESCO, **56% of young people** aged 15 to 24 **participate in formal or non-formal education and training** across 131 countries (UNESCO, 2023a)

not be able to access formal schooling. Some non-formal education programmes can lead to certified qualifications or recognised learning outcomes, while others do not. Although it operates outside the formal system, non-formal education should support and connect with it, helping learners to get engaged in formal pathways when possible (ibid.). In crisis settings, non-formal education often plays a central role, as it helps either the transition to or the continued participation in the formal education system.

2.2 QUALITY EDUCATION AND SCHOOL COMPLETION

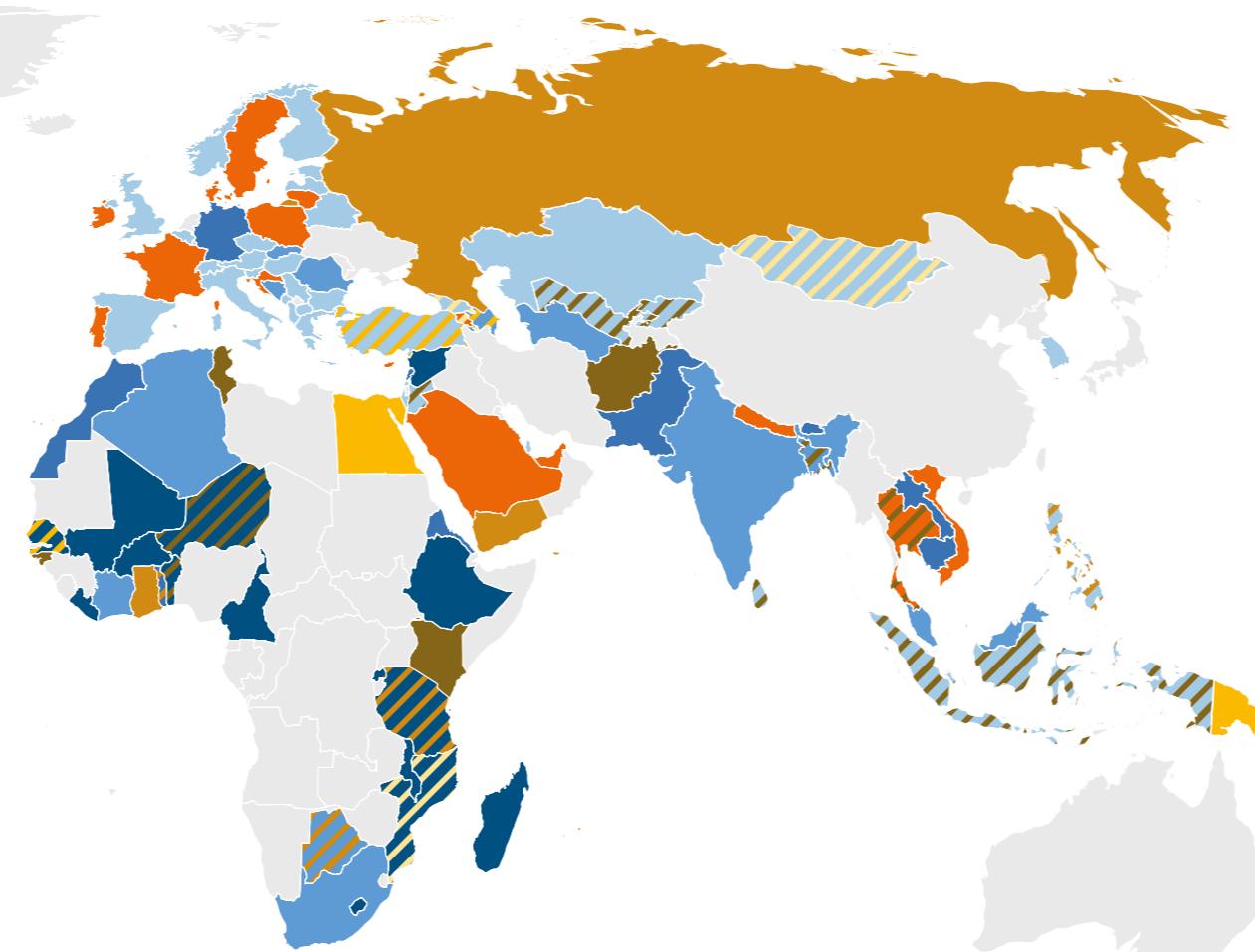
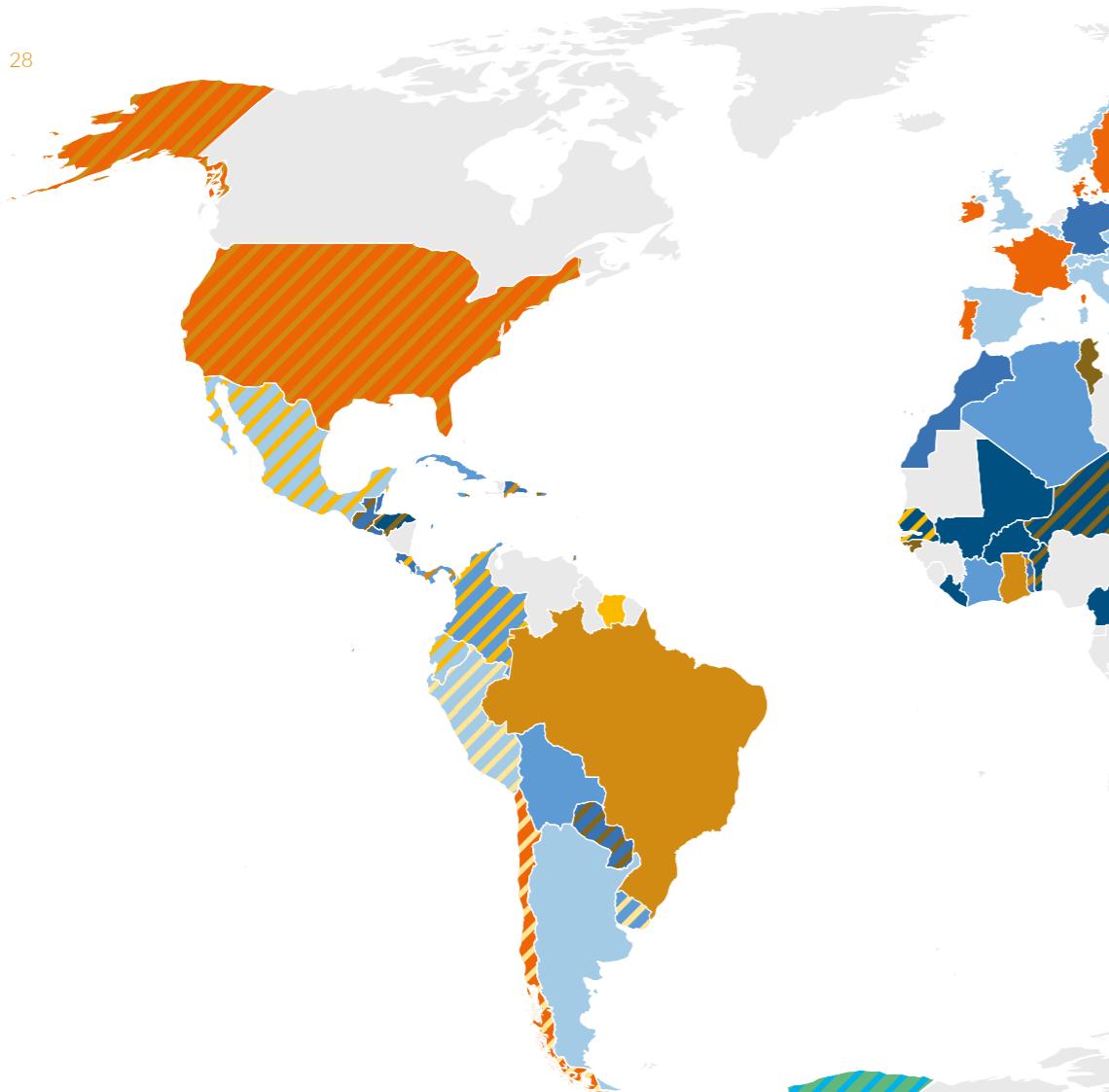
Quality education is a key driver of school completion rates, namely the percentage of children and young people who successfully complete a given level of education, such as primary, lower secondary, or upper secondary, within a specific age range (UNESCO, 2025). When education systems are inclusive, well-resourced, and responsive to learners' needs, students

are more likely to stay in school and advance through grades, completing their schooling. According to UNESCO, children in low-income countries who receive poor-quality education are 4 times more likely to drop out early compared to those in systems with strong teaching and support (UNESCO, 2020).



When education systems are inclusive, well-resourced, and responsive to learners' needs, students are more likely to stay in school and advance through grades, completing their schooling.





MAP 5: Global Secondary Education Completion Rate

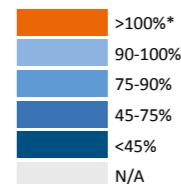
Data are updated to 2022-2023.

Source: World Bank/UNESCO Institute of Statistics (UIS), 2025

*The numerator may include late entrants and average children who have repeated one or more grades of lower secondary education as well as children who entered school early, while the denominator is the number of children at the entrance age for the last grade of lower secondary education.

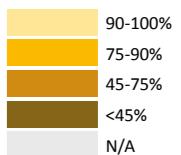
LOWER SECONDARY EDUCATION COMPLETION RATE

Number of new entrants in the last grade of lower secondary education divided by the population at the entrance age for the last grade of lower secondary education.

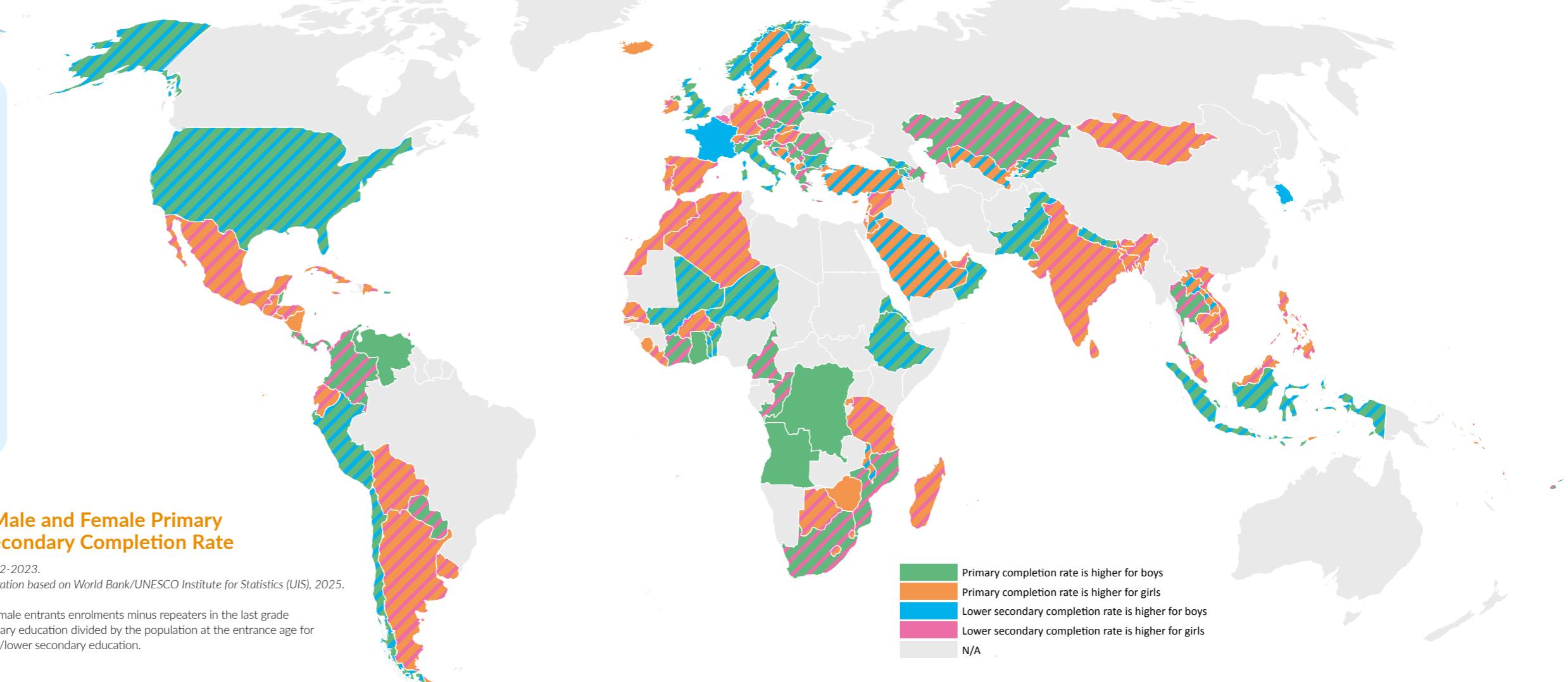


UPPER SECONDARY EDUCATION COMPLETION RATE

Percentage of a cohort of children or young people aged 3-5 years above the intended age for the last grade of secondary education who have completed that grade.



Gender disparities in school completion rates are shaped by a complex interplay of social, economic, and cultural factors, which are further exacerbated in emergency contexts. In countries like Afghanistan, Mali and Niger, conservative social norms prevent girls from accessing education (World Vision, 2023). Girls often face heightened risks of early marriage, unintended pregnancies and increased domestic responsibilities, particularly during crises, leading to higher dropout rates among girls. Child marriage also affects boys and young men: child grooms are forced to assume adult responsibilities, and therefore limit their access to education (UNICEF, 2022).

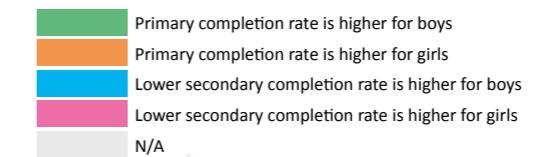


MAP 6: Global Male and Female Primary and Lower Secondary Completion Rate

Data are updated to 2022-2023.

Source: WeWorld's elaboration based on World Bank/UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS), 2025.

Number of new male/female entrants enrolments minus repeaters in the last grade of primary/lower secondary education divided by the population at the entrance age for the last grade of primary/lower secondary education.



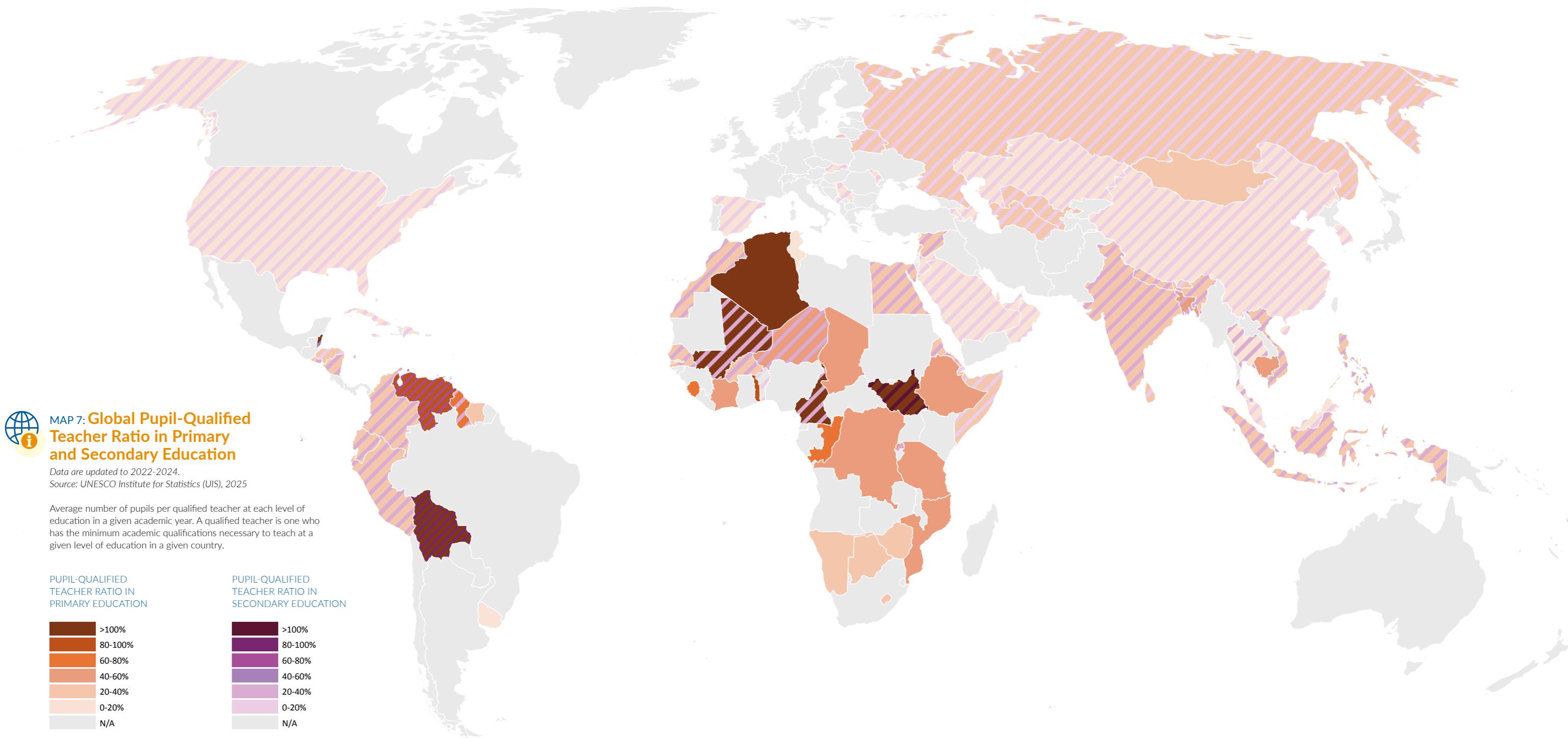
2.3 WHAT IS THE ROLE OF TEACHERS?

The quality of teaching is at the heart of every strong education system. Skilled, motivated, and well-trained teachers do not just deliver lessons: they create inclusive, safe spaces where children can grow academically, socially, and emotionally. **But to make quality education a reality for all, we need more and better prepared teachers. The world is currently facing a major teacher shortage, with 44 million more primary and secondary educators needed by 2030 to meet global education goals**

(UNESCO, 2024a). However, in primary education, the percentage of teachers with minimum training dropped from 90% in 2010 to 85% in 2023—even as over 5 million more teachers entered the system (UNESCO, 2024). In low-income countries, the situation is even more critical: 26% of primary and 39% of secondary teachers lack the basic qualifications needed to teach (UNESCO, 2024a).



In primary education, **the percentage of teachers with minimum training dropped from 90% in 2010 to 85% in 2023**—even as over 5 million more teachers entered the system (UNESCO, 2024)





MAP 8: Global Percentage of Qualified Teachers in Primary and Secondary Education

Data are updated to 2022-2024.
Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS), 2025.

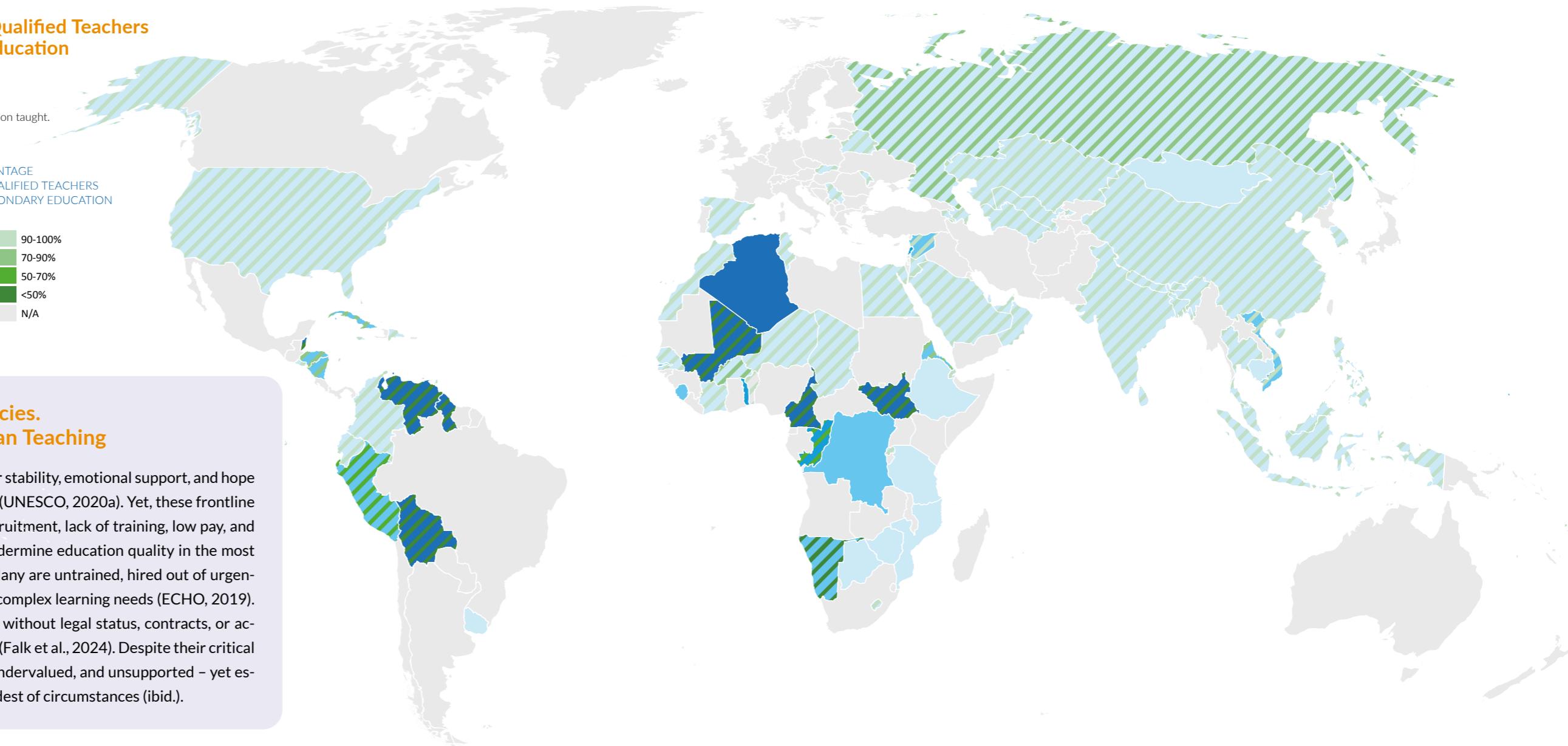
Percentage of qualified teachers by level of education taught.

PERCENTAGE OF QUALIFIED TEACHERS IN PRIMARY EDUCATION

90-100%
70-90%
50-70%
<50%
N/A

PERCENTAGE OF QUALIFIED TEACHERS IN SECONDARY EDUCATION

90-100%
70-90%
50-70%
<50%
N/A



Education in Emergencies. Teachers Do More Than Teaching

Especially in crisis settings, teachers offer stability, emotional support, and hope to children facing trauma and disruption (UNESCO, 2020a). Yet, these frontline teachers face major challenges: poor recruitment, lack of training, low pay, and limited career prospects, all of which undermine education quality in the most vulnerable contexts (Falk et al., 2024). Many are untrained, hired out of urgency, and lack the skills needed to address complex learning needs (ECHO, 2019). Some are refugees themselves, teaching without legal status, contracts, or access to formal professional development (Falk et al., 2024). Despite their critical role, these teachers remain underpaid, undervalued, and unsupported – yet essential to keep education alive in the hardest of circumstances (ibid.).

There is increasing recognition of the need for **continuous professional development** (CPD) for teachers, particularly in crisis-affected settings. Rather than one-off training, CPD should be embedded within education systems and sustained beyond emergencies to build long-term resilience and impact (INEE, 2015; Perry et al., 2019).

Teachers not only deliver education but also support the psychosocial well-being of children affected by trauma, conflict, and displacement. To address these complex needs, they require ongoing, structured support to develop inclusive teaching practices, adapt to diverse learning contexts, and manage their own well-being. Investing in continuous professional development is therefore crucial for ensuring quality, inclusive, and equitable education for all (INEE, 2021).



WeWorld's Framework for Quality Teaching

We aim to place a strategic focus on teachers, recognising them as key actors within the educational community. By investing in their role, we seek to promote quality, inclusive education both locally and internationally, ensuring continuity and coherence across our domestic and global programmes. To ensure quality education and contribute to a safe, inclusive and empowering learning environment, we believe that teachers should be able to:

→ **CREATE A SAFE AND SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENT:** foster a classroom where students feel physically and emotionally safe, respected, and free to express themselves. A safe environment is essential for effective learning.

- **IDENTIFY AND RESPOND TO RISKS:** be alert to signs of abuse, neglect, or distress and know how to act, whether through classroom support or referrals to protection services.
- **BE COMMITTED TO STUDENTS AND THEIR LEARNING:** set high expectations, support each learner's progress, and foster a positive learning culture that motivates and includes all students.
- **ADAPT TEACHING TO DIVERSE NEEDS:** use inclusive, flexible methods to address different abilities, languages, and backgrounds—especially in crisis or multilingual settings.
- **KNOW THE SUBJECT THEY TEACH AND HOW TO TEACH:** combine strong content knowledge with effective teaching strategies that promote curiosity, engagement, and critical thinking.
- **BE RECOGNISED FOR THEIR SOCIAL ROLE:** gain acknowledgement as key contributors to children's development, community well-being, and social progress.
- **PROMOTE STUDENTS' WELL-BEING:** foster a positive classroom climate that supports students' emotional, social, and mental health alongside their academic growth.
- **INVEST IN THEIR OWN WELL-BEING:** practice self-care and seek support when needed. A teacher's well-being directly influences their ability to teach and support students.
- **CONTINUE PROFESSIONAL GROWTH:** stay updated through ongoing training and collaboration, strengthen skills and adapt to new needs.
- **ENGAGE WITH FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES:** teachers should involve parents, engage with the community, promote student participation, and collaborate with other educators to strengthen learning and support school development
- **BE FAIRLY COMPENSATED:** receive adequate and timely pay that reflects their professional role.



3. RIGHTS Advancing and Protecting Children's Rights

RIGHTS. Advancing and Protecting Children's Rights

In a world designed for adults, promoting and enacting child-centred policies and interventions remains a significant challenge. Children are often not fully aware of their rights and potential, and when their agency is not recognised, power imbalances are reinforced, limiting their ability to exercise their rights and impacting their self-perception and confidence. At WeWorld, we work to help children recognise themselves as rights holders by building their awareness, knowledge, and skills to claim and exercise their rights in everyday life. Through dedicated tools, participatory methods, and the creation of safe spaces for self-expression, we strengthen their capacity to participate meaningfully, make decisions, and advocate for their needs. Achieving this requires a shift in adult perspectives. As primary duty-bearers, adults must challenge traditional power dynamics and move towards a more equitable relationship where children are fully heard, valued, and supported in exercising their agency.



KEY FACTS

- ✓ The level of happiness correlates positively with school attendance, indicating that children who attend school regularly tend to be happier, as it provides a stable and structured environment for learning, developing essential life skills, and forming positive relationships with peers and teachers (Gómez-Baya et al., 2021).
- ✓ Education is one of the most powerful tools for enabling children to understand, claim, and exercise their rights.
- ✓ In 2023, serious violations of children's rights increased by 21% due to ongoing global conflicts (Scottish Alliance for Children's Rights, 2024).
- ✓ According to research, with regard to rights' perception, 46% of 8-year-old children claim to know about their rights, a lower percentage than for older children aged 10 and 12 – 58% said they understand what their rights are (Jacobs Foundation, 2016).
- ✓ Recognising children as rights holders is a critical step toward breaking cycles of marginalisation and instability.
- ✓ The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), ratified by 196 countries, represents a landmark achievement for the establishment of children's and young people's rights, as it recognises children as social, economic, political, civil, and cultural actors and guarantees and sets minimum standards for protecting them (UNICEF, 2019a).

3.1 RECOGNISING CHILDREN AS RIGHTS HOLDERS

Schools and learning environments are not only places for academic learning, but also spaces where children experience inclusion, respect, participation, and develop essential life skills. Positive relationships with peers and teachers contribute to their well-being, and there is evidence of a positive correlation between happiness and school attendance (Gómez-Baya et al., 2021)¹². Education is also a key tool for enabling children to understand, claim, and exercise their rights. When grounded in a rights-based approach, it empowers children to recognise both their own rights and those of others, fostering critical thinking, confidence, and active citizenship.



However, persistent crises continue to threaten children's rights worldwide. In 2023, 30,705 grave violations affecting 22,557 children were documented – a 21% increase from the previous year – including killing, maiming (over 50% of cases), recruitment, abductions, and restricted humanitarian aid (Kids-Rights Foundation, 2024). Children facing multiple forms of discrimination are particularly at risk, as this lack of recognition undermines their development and future prospects.

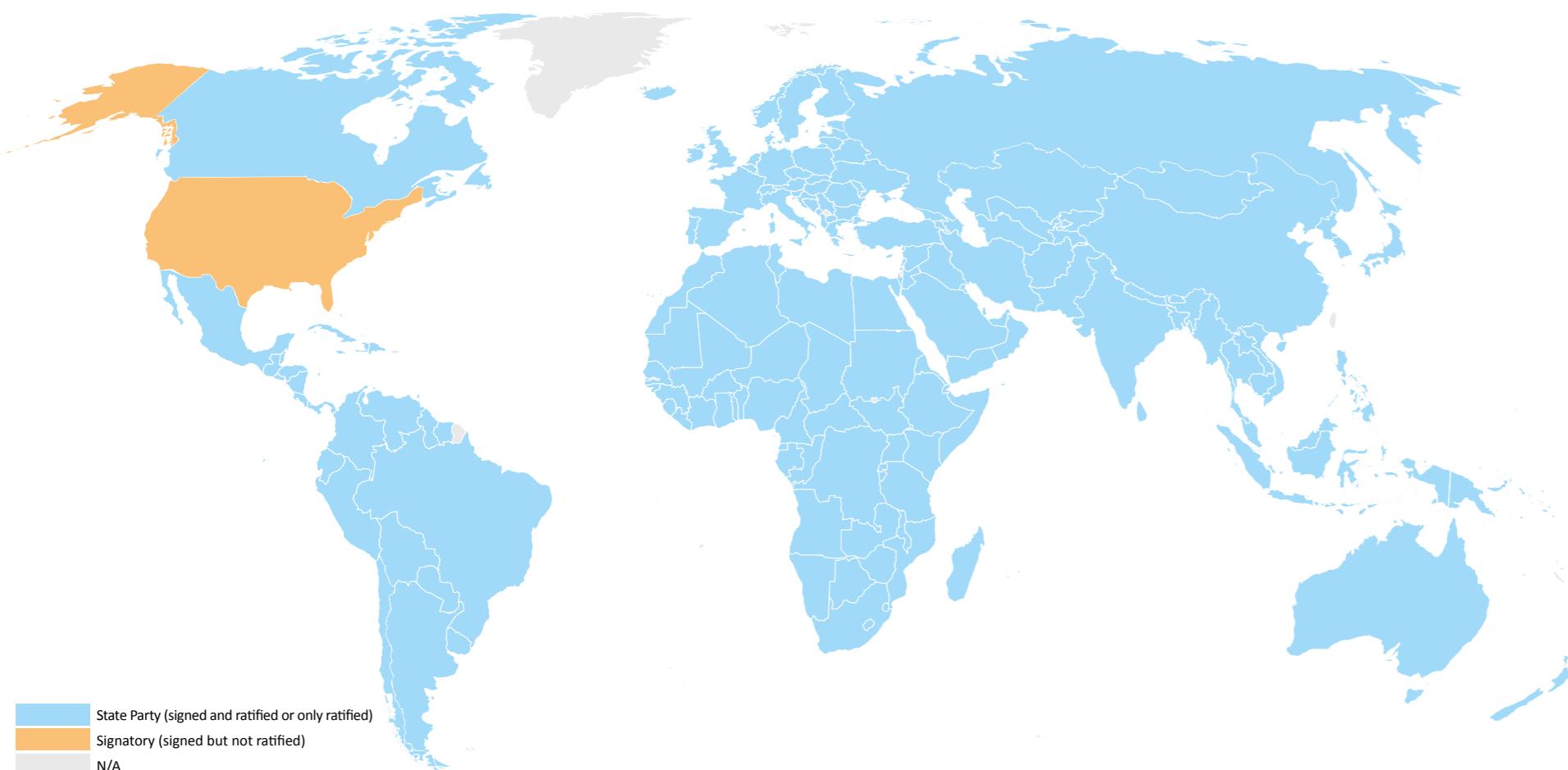
These challenges are closely linked to children's limited awareness of their rights: only 46% of 8-year-olds report knowing about their rights, compared to 58% of 10- and 12-year-olds, while younger children paradoxically believe more often that adults respect their rights (Jacobs Foundation, 2016; Fairhall & Woods, 2021).

Schools and learning environments are not only places for academic learning, but also spaces where children experience inclusion, respect, participation, and develop essential life skills.



MAP 9: Global Status of Ratification of the Convention on the Rights of the Child

Data are updated to 2023. Source: OHCHR, 2025.



The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)

Recognising children as rights holders is a critical step towards breaking cycles of marginalisation and instability. It enables children to participate in shaping the solutions that affect them and ensures that responses to today's crises build a more just, inclusive, and sustainable future. A landmark achievement for the recognition of children's and young people's rights is the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1989. The CRC recognises children as social, economic,

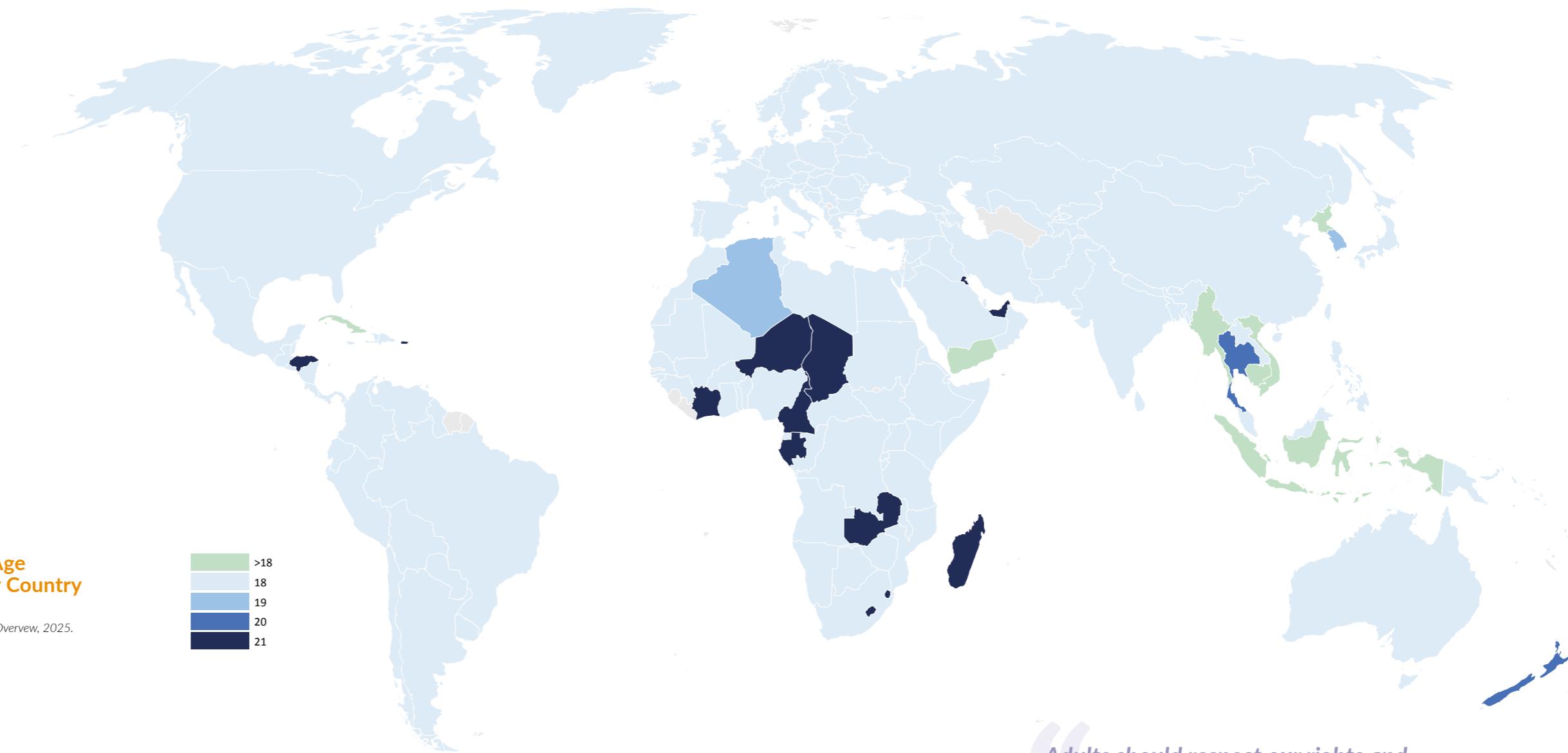
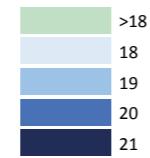
political, civil, and cultural actors, defining a child as anyone under the age of eighteen. The Convention guarantees and sets minimum standards for protecting children's rights across 54 articles, emphasising governments' responsibilities to protect these rights and ensure every child can enjoy them (UNICEF, 2019a). Today, 196 countries have ratified the CRC.



There is a structural imbalance in how rights and responsibilities are distributed across childhood and adulthood. As children are seen as vulnerable and lacking full decision-making autonomy, adults are given significant control over their lives, often limiting children's participation in decisions that affect them. However, the moment a young person turns 18, they are legally considered as adults. This shift can be problematic, as it assumes that all young people immediately have full capacity and autonomy, overlooking the reality that many still face vulnerabilities and require support beyond the age of majority.

MAP 10: Global Age of Majority By Country

Data are updated to 2025.
Source: World Population Overview, 2025.



WeWorld's Understanding of The Right to The Future

The actual global context threatens not only children's rights today but also their prospects for tomorrow. Recognising that children and youth have a right to the future is essential. Grounded in the CRC and a human rights-based approach, the concept of the right to the future is gaining traction among scholars and practitioners as a way to recognise the need to address long-term and intergenerational issues, to today's crises while laying the foundation for a new, inclusive social contract centred on younger generations (UNICEF, 2024d; ChildFund Alliance, 2024).

Our understanding of the right to the future acts as an interpretative framework. It could be defined as **the inherent entitlement of individuals and communities – present and future – and especially of children and youth to live in and contribute to a world that ensures sustainable and equitable opportunities for growth, well-being, and development**. Therefore, it is an invitation to look holistically at the complex and intersecting nature of the challenges that young generations—and even new generations—are experiencing.

Talking about the right to the future means looking at the present and the future with new eyes, giving agency back to children and young people so that they can actively contribute to the creation of this future.

Talking about the right to the future means looking at the present and the future with new eyes, giving agency back to children and young people so that they can actively contribute to the creation of this future. It also means considering the complexity and multifacetedness of their needs and aspirations. Such concept is not intended as a provocation, but as a call to focus on crucial aspects of human rights fulfilment and social responsibility. Talking about the right to the future involves thinking in terms of legacy and building a new social pact (Rights of Future Generations, 2023; HLCP, 2024).

Adults should respect our rights and end the war so that we can return home and have a better life than what we are currently experiencing."

- Boy, 11, Mali*

*Testimony collected for the ChildFund Alliance World Index 2024



Defining Children's Agency

Children's agency refers to the ability and right of children to express their views, make choices, and actively participate in decisions that affect their lives. It recognises children as capable individuals, not just passive recipients of care and protection, but as active contributors to their families, communities, and societies. **Promoting children's agency means creating spaces where their voices are heard, respected, and meaningfully integrated into policies and actions**, in line with their capacities and their rights.

3.2 ENABLING CHILDREN TO CLAIM AND EXERCISE THEIR RIGHTS

To truly uphold children's rights, it is not enough to recognise them: we must actively create the conditions for children and young people to understand, claim, and exercise those rights in their daily lives. This perspective fully aligns with the capabilities approach (Sen, 1999; Nussbaum, 2011), which emphasises that rights must translate into real opportunities for individuals to act and develop according to their own values and aspirations.

It means going beyond formal recognition to ensure that children have the capabilities – the actual means, resources, and supportive environments – needed to fully realise their rights. This process requires more than legal frameworks: it calls for providing children with the **tools, spaces, and support necessary to understand their rights, express their needs, and actively participate in decisions that directly affect them**.

WEWORLD'S PLAY-BASED LEARNING APPROACH FOR RIGHTS EDUCATION AND AWARENESS

The right to play, as stated in Article 31 of the CRC, is a fundamental right of every child, yet it is often denied, restricted, or overlooked. At WeWorld, we see play not just as a form of recreation, but as a meaningful way for children to learn, express themselves, and engage with the world around them. **This is why we use play-based methods to explore even complex topics such as rights, agency and power. Through games and other similar activities, we create inclusive spaces where children can participate freely and confidently.** This approach helps us communicate in ways that are age-appropriate and relatable, shifting away from an adult-centred perspective and placing children's experiences, voices, and understanding at the core of our work.



ChildFund Alliance's Booklet "Our Voice! Our Rights! Our Power!"



In 2024, ChildFund Alliance consulted 10,000 children across over 40 countries, inviting them to share their experiences, rights, and hopes for the future. Their input shaped the *World Index on the Rights of Women and Children*, a global report on the status of these rights. In 2025, a **child-friendly version of the Index was created to acknowledge the children who contributed and to ensure their voices continue to inform a future built around their perspectives. By giving children a space to participate, we are helping shape a world that truly reflects their hopes.**

The booklet includes a range of interactive activities designed to actively engage children in learning about their rights and sharing their perspectives. Children are invited to draw or write about their dreams, respond to simple questions, reflect on challenges they face, and express their feelings and their views. These hands-on activities not only make complex topics more accessible but also encourage children to understand their rights, reflect on the experiences of others, raise awareness, build empathy, encourage participation, and inspire children to take action in their communities – empowering them to play an active role in shaping a more inclusive future.

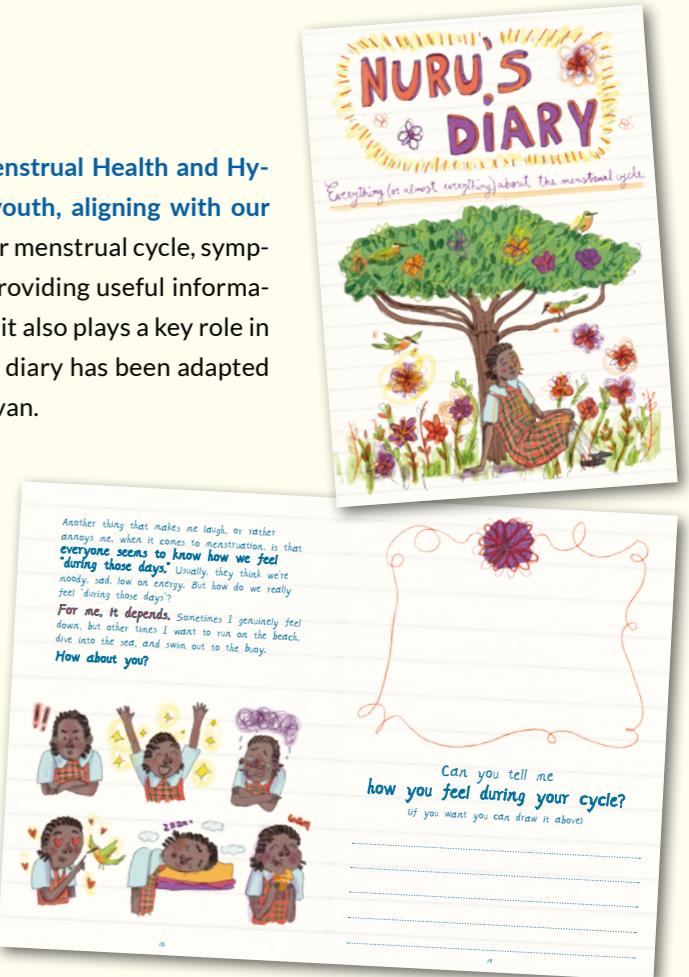


3. RIGHTS - Advancing and Protecting Children's Rights

WeWorld's Menstrual Diary

In 2024, we introduced a menstrual diary as part of our Menstrual Health and Hygiene Management (MHHM) activities with children and youth, aligning with our **play-based learning approach**. The diary helps girls track their menstrual cycle, symptoms, and body changes, supporting health awareness and providing useful information to share with healthcare professionals. Beyond tracking, it also plays a key role in breaking menstrual stigma. Originally developed in Italy, the diary has been adapted and translated in English, Swahili, Arabic, Russian and Moldovan.

The activities in the diary are designed to educate and empower girls through a playful, interactive approach to menstrual health. They include personal journaling, drawing, cycle tracking, hygiene tips, and reflections on emotions, social taboos, and the importance of self-care. These activities aim to build body awareness, reduce stigma, and promote open dialogue around menstruation. By encouraging self-expression and shared experiences, the diary fosters confidence, solidarity, and a deeper understanding of one's body and well-being, especially during menstruation.



WeWorld's Manual de Jogos: Using Play for Education and Psychosocial Support

The *Manual de Jogos: O Jogo como Método Educativo e de Apoio Psicosocial*¹³ is an educational resource developed by WeWorld in partnership with Associação Ndangwini, as part of an education programme in Cabo Delgado, Mozambique, and funded by the European Union and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation. Created to respond to the urgent educational and psychosocial needs of children in conflict-affected areas, the manual promotes play not simply as leisure, but as a structured and meaningful method for learning and emotional support. The manual offers a methodology aimed at supporting children's holistic development through group activities that encourage participation, cooperation, empathy, and reflection on key themes such as peace, gender, and the environment. **With 33 categorised games and a solid theoretical foundation, it provides practical tools for educators, facilitators, and community actors to transform informal learning spaces into inclusive, supportive, and empowering environments.** By doing so, it reinforces the idea of children as active rights-holders and contributors to their own development. We plan to contextualise this manual to adapt it to different countries and contexts.





WeWorld's Therapeutic Art Toolkit

The Therapeutic Art Toolkit is part of the *Pamoja Tudumishe Elimu* Project led by WeWorld in Kenya and Tanzania, implemented in partnership with Education Above All's Educate A Child (EAC) Programme and aimed at promoting emotional well-being and reducing school dropout among at-risk children and youth. Rooted in a human-centred and holistic approach, the toolkit supports both education and mental health by helping children reconnect with themselves, others, and their learning environment. Developed through cross-country collaboration, it draws directly on field experience and local challenges. The toolkit includes a structured 10-week Therapeutic Art Programme using inclusive, trauma-sensitive group sessions to support children's psychosocial well-being. Led by trained facilitators, the sessions provide safe spaces for children to express emotions, build resilience, and explore identity. The methodology focuses on three themes – "sense of self," "body," and "me and the world" – through creative activities like drawing, music, and role-play. These help children process experiences, develop coping strategies, and boost self-esteem. The toolkit is designed to be adapted for different contexts: indeed, it has already been translated into Arabic to be used in Lebanon and Syria.



Children after creating their own shield. The aim was to teach them to set and respect personal boundaries.



Community art activity using various art materials: collage, paint, pencils, markers and pastels.



WeWorld's Scale Project: Social Inclusion Through Game and Sport

The Scale Project, developed by WeWorld in partnership with UISP and funded by the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation through the HOPE programme, was implemented in Lebanon, focusing on refugee and host communities in Akkar and Baalbek-Hermel. It aimed to promote the inclusion of Syrian and Lebanese children with special needs through inclusive recreational and sports activities. **Rooted in the belief that play and movement are fundamental rights and tools for inclusion, the project, completed by a "Games and Inclusive Sports Manual", created accessible, child-friendly environments where all children could participate, regardless of ability or background.** Teachers, parents, and social workers were trained in inclusive strategies and adapted games to support psychosocial development and peer interaction, using a flexible, inclusive teaching method tailored to each child's needs. Beyond sports, the project tackled architectural, cultural, and attitudinal barriers to inclusion. By engaging entire school communities in participatory training and cooperative activities, the initiative improved access to education for marginalised children and fostered social cohesion, empathy, and respect. The project can be adapted to different countries and contexts: indeed, the related paper has already been partially translated into Arabic and is being used also in Tanzania.



4. EXPRESSION Amplifying Children's Voices and Perspectives



4. EXPRESSION - Amplifying Children's Voices and Perspectives

EXPRESSION. Amplifying Children's Voices and Perspectives

Recognising and amplifying children's voices means ensuring their meaningful participation in the decisions that affect their lives, in safe and inclusive spaces where their views are genuinely valued. For us, participation goes beyond just listening. It means giving children real, ongoing opportunities to express their views and to see that those views lead to concrete change. To enable this, we must challenge traditional power dynamics – the adult-centred structures and attitudes that see children as passive, less capable, or not yet ready to contribute, and that too often silence or dismiss their opinions. We see child participation as a powerful driver of confidence, life skills, and responsibility, supporting children's growth as active members of society. Children bring unique perspectives to the challenges they experience, and it is our responsibility to respect their voices and ensure their full participation.



KEY FACTS

- ✓ When students are meaningfully involved in school decision-making, they develop key civic skills, greater self-esteem, stronger motivation and a more positive atmosphere (Council of Europe, 2024; Voight & Nation, 2016).
- ✓ Adults' attitudes represent a significant barrier to child participation, with many adults underestimating children's capacity (Froden et al., 2020; Kilic et al., 2018).
- ✓ According to a European survey, **2 out of 3 children** (of 19,933 respondents) **in Europe reported being unhappy with the way their local decision makers in cities and towns engage with them** (UNICEF & Eurochild, 2019).
- ✓ Only 2.4% of climate funds from key multilateral climate funds support projects incorporating child-responsive activities (UNICEF, 2023).
- ✓ The average overall Global Youth Participation Index score stands at just 61 out of 100, underscoring the existence of substantial barriers to youth participation. This suggests that **limited engagement stems more from restricted opportunities across various sectors and institutions than from apathy or lack of interest** (European Partnership for Democracy, 2025).
- ✓ There are significant variations between and within regions in terms of youth participation. European, North American, and Australian countries generally show higher levels of youth engagement, while many sub-Saharan African states and those in the Middle East and North Africa region tend to display lower levels (ibid.).

4.1 ENSURING CHILD PARTICIPATION THROUGH EDUCATION



Recognising children and youth as agents of change requires affording them opportunities to participate in decision-making processes across various levels. Adults play a crucial role in this by creating spaces for children to voice their opinions, thereby enhancing their capacity to contribute to society. As far as education is concerned, involving children in the learning process means taking their opinions and experiences into account when building knowledge. School and learning environments are more than places for learning: there, children begin to understand who they are and how they fit into the world.



Defining Child Participation

According to Article 12 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, child participation is the process by which children express their views freely and have those views given due weight in decision-making processes that affect their lives, in accordance with their age and maturity. It requires creating spaces where children can share their perspectives, contribute relevant insights, and influence outcomes, while placing an obligation on adults and institutions to actively listen, engage, and facilitate their meaningful involvement (Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989).

As the first space outside their home and their family where they can express themselves, school teaches children that their voice counts and can have a real impact. Research shows that when students are meaningfully involved in school decision-making, they develop key civic skills, greater self-esteem, stronger motivation and a more positive atmosphere (Council of Europe, 2024; Voight & Nation, 2016). Students in schools that actively seek their feedback and are given a platform to voice their opinion tend to perform better (OECD, 2023). **Authentic participation also supports well-being and life satisfaction** (Anderson et al., 2022), and children report feeling more confident, capable, and aware of their opportunities (Lundy, 2018).

As the first space outside their home and their family where they can express themselves, school teaches children that their voice counts can have a real impact.



Barriers and Challenges to Child Participation

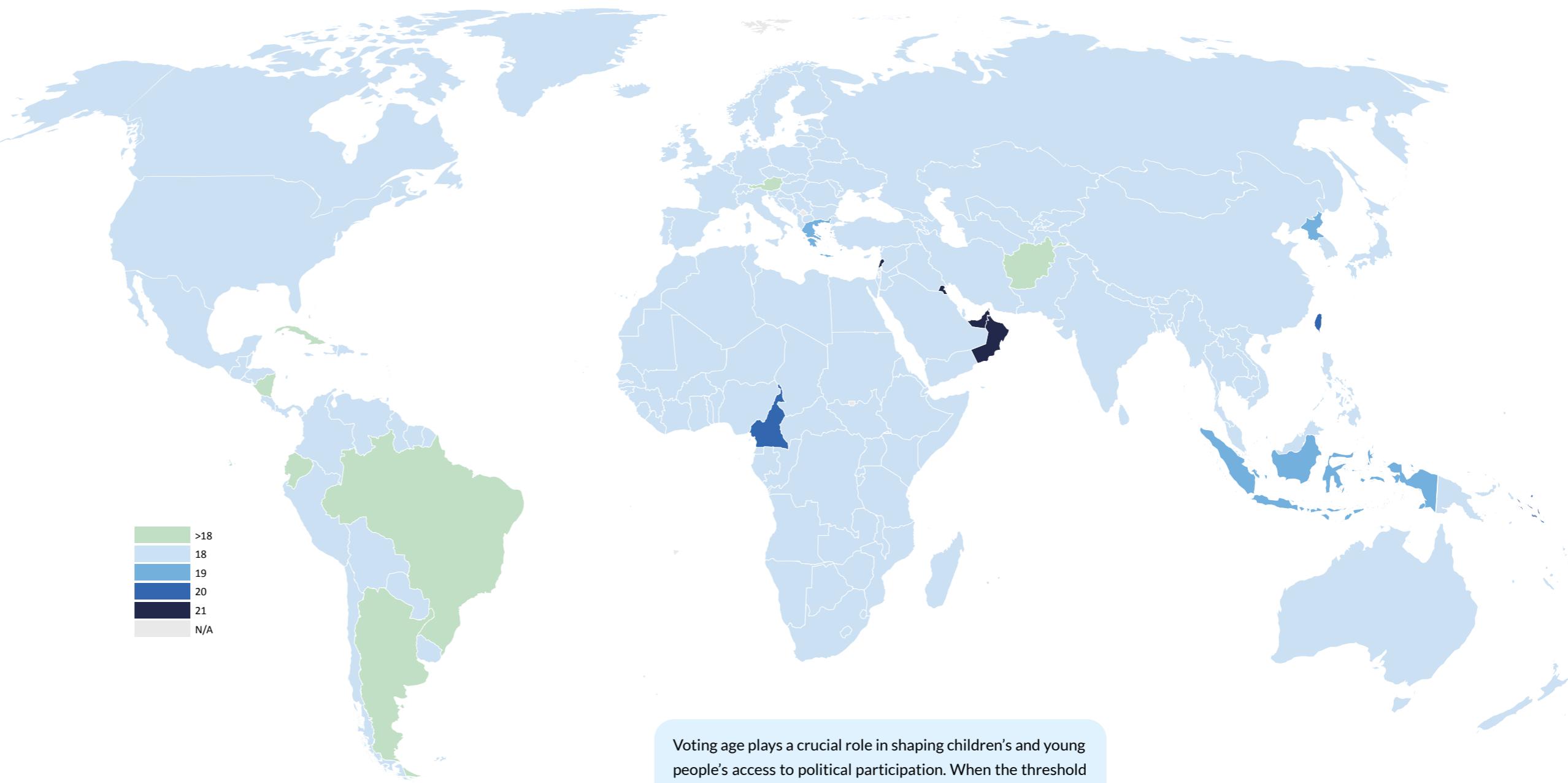
Adults' attitudes remain a significant barrier to child participation, as many underestimate children's capacity and view participation as a challenge to their authority (Kilic & Öztürk, 2018; Frödén & Tellgren, 2020). Even when participation mechanisms exist, there is often a disconnection: children expect to influence decisions, while adults often see participation merely as a learning exercise for children (Fitzmaurice, 2017). **Adults control agendas, criteria, and resources, subordinating children's rights to organisational priorities.** Consequently, children often report limited influence over decisions that affect them directly, including their own intervention plans (Horgan, 2017; Creaney & Burns, 2023). True partnerships with adults are rare: children are often expected to adopt adult norms, leading to disengagement (Öberg & Nouri, 2021) and tokenistic participation, where their views are heard but carry little weight in decision-making (European Commission, 2021; Kay & Tisdall, 2021; OECD, 2023).



MAP 11: Global Minimum Voting Age by Country

Data are updated to 2025.
Source: World Population Review, 2025.

>18
18
19
20
21
N/A



Voting age plays a crucial role in shaping children's and young people's access to political participation. When the threshold is set even higher than 18, which is the most common minimum voting age, it extends the period during which young people are excluded from formal democratic processes, limiting their ability to influence decisions that directly impact their lives.



I think that adults should not forget their youthful thinking. It is important that they listen to us because we are also capable of having an opinion in front of the world and our thoughts are just as important for the development of today's society. - Girl, 17, Ecuador*

Legal Frameworks Supporting Child Participation

The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), in its Article 12, firmly established in international law the child's right to be heard. In recent years, more children have begun participating in decision-making processes, and **many countries have adopted legal and policy frameworks to support child participation**, translating CRC principles into regional and domestic law¹⁴. These approaches vary, with some countries setting age thresholds and others focusing on developmental capacity. Despite these advancements, meaningful and inclusive participation remains limited. In a European survey, 2 out of 3 children (out of 19,933 respondents) expressed dissatisfaction with how local authorities engage with them (UNICEF & Eurochild, 2019). Moreover, many initiatives suffer from insufficient investment and lack the structures needed for effective involvement. For example, only 2.4% of multilateral climate funds include child-responsive activities (UNICEF, 2023), highlighting the gap between policy commitments and actual practice.

14 Other legal frameworks supporting child participation are the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights – ICCPR (1966) and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child – ACRWC (1990).

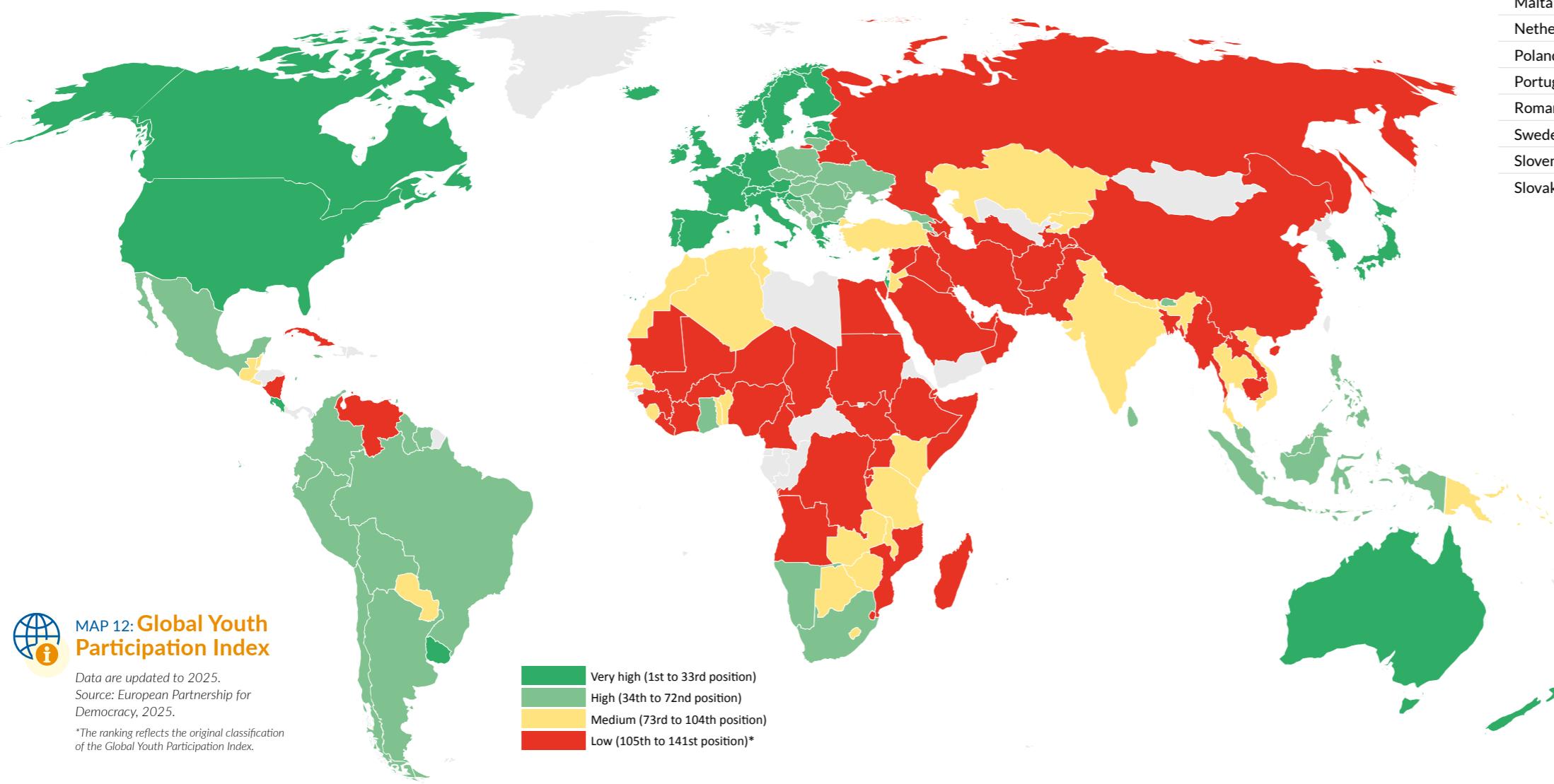
In Europe, children's participation in political and democratic life is supported through several key mechanisms:

- **Children's/youth councils** often serve as an introduction to decision-making processes, though their influence is usually limited to non-binding recommendations and they are truly child-led in only about half of the countries.
- **Children's/Youth parliaments** typically function as educational programmes or competitions culminating in plenary sessions, with some achieving tangible policy impacts.
- The **Ombudsperson's Office for Children** (or equivalent) is a structure operating in all Member States and is also part of the European Network of Ombudspersons for Children (ENOC), but structures and mechanisms largely vary across countries.

TABLE 1: Child Participation Mechanisms in Europe

Data are updated to 2021.
Source: European Commission, 2021.

Country	Children's/ Youth Council	Children's/ Youth Parliament	Structures/ mechanisms facilitated by the Ombudsperson for Children's office
European Union	✓	✓	✓
Austria	✓		
Belgium	✓	✓	✓
Bulgaria	✓		
Cyprus	✓	✓	
Czech Republic		✓	
Germany	✓		
Denmark	✓		
Estonia	✓		
Greece	✓	✓	✓
Spain	✓		✓
Finland	✓	✓	✓
France	✓	✓	✓
Croatia	✓		✓
Hungary	✓		✓
Ireland	✓	✓	✓
Italy	✓		✓
Lithuania	✓	✓	
Luxembourg	✓	✓	
Latvia	✓	✓	
Malta	✓	✓	
Netherlands	✓		
Poland	✓	✓	
Portugal	✓	✓	
Romania	✓		
Sweden	✓		
Slovenia	✓		
Slovakia	✓		



The Global Youth Participation Index (GYPI) is a comprehensive and comparative index measuring youth participation in 141 countries, created with the aim of providing key insights into the state of youth political participation. It measures how young people (aged 15-30) engage across four dimensions: the Socio-Economic dimension (opportunities for youth in education and the labour market); the Civic Space dimension (capacity of youth to express themselves and participate in civic life); the Political Affairs dimension (representation and participation of youth in formal politics); and the Elections dimension (barriers and opportunities to vote and engage with electoral processes). Each country receives a score from 0 to 100 for each dimension and for the overall GYPI (European Partnership for Democracy, 2025)¹⁵.

15 For more information, see: <https://gypi.epd.eu/>

4.2 CHILD PROTECTION MAINSTREAMING AND PARTICIPATION

Child protection mainstreaming (CPM) is the process of making sure that child protection principles are included in all sectors and activities¹⁶. This means that every intervention should promote children's safety, dignity, well-being, access to services, and their rights to be consistently upheld (INEE, 2013). However, true integration of child protection is not possible without child participation.

WEWORLD'S TOOLS AND BEST PRACTICES FOR CHILDREN'S PARTICIPATION

Our overarching goal is to strengthen mechanisms for engaging and involving children and young people, and to promote an open and inclusive dialogue that considers their unique perspectives and specific needs. Such work builds upon our long-standing commitment to engage children and elevate their voices through our programmes and policies.



WeWorld's Integrated Approach to Global Citizenship Education and Climate Justice

WeWorld actively promotes Global Citizenship Education (GCE) and climate action through a deeply interconnected approach that places young people at the heart of global transformation. Recognising that today's challenges, particularly the climate crisis, require informed, responsible, and engaged citizens, WeWorld's work in education seeks to empower youth with the knowledge, tools, and agency to become changemakers in their communities and beyond. GCE serves as a foundation for developing critical thinking, empathy, and civic participation through debates, workshops and practical activities, helping children and adolescents to understand the complexity of global issues and empowering them to take action. At the same time, climate action in our work is not viewed solely as a technical response to environmental threats but as a broader effort rooted in equity and community resilience. By integrating climate awareness into educational processes and fostering participation in decision-making, WeWorld ensures that learning becomes both relevant and transformative.

In an effective child protection system, children must be given the chance to take part in shaping, implementing, and reviewing the policies that directly affect them (FRA, 2025). This requires creating safe, age-appropriate, and accessible ways for children to express their views and influence decisions, to build stronger and more responsive protection systems based on their lived experiences (ibid.).



Environmental Rights and The Role of Environmental Education

The escalating planetary crisis – driven by climate change and environmental degradation – is severely impacting children, especially in low-income countries. In 2024 alone, 242 million students faced school disruptions due to climate events (EiE Hub, 2025). In this context, education is not only a fundamental right but also a critical lever for addressing the underlying drivers of environmental decline and advancing the transition toward a more sustainable future (GPE, 2024a). Indeed, even though the right to a healthy environment has been recognised only recently, it is strongly connected to the right to the future. Environmental education can build the knowledge, skills, and emotional resilience needed to respond to climate challenges. Yet it remains largely absent from global climate strategies: only 2 out of 72 transnational climate initiatives have explicitly addressed education, and curriculum content across 76 countries reached just 50% of its potential for green education (UNESCO, 2024c). Moreover, most references to climate change in primary education focus on cognitive and scientific learning (67%), with minimal emphasis on behavioural (27%) and socio-emotional (7%) learning (ibid.). To fully harness the transformative power of education, environmental learning must go beyond scientific knowledge: it should incorporate action-oriented, interdisciplinary and emotionally engaging approaches, such as environmental clubs, that empower learners not only to understand the climate crises, but to become agents of change within their communities.



The ChildFund Alliance World Index on the Rights of Women and Children 2024: Children's Voices on Their Right to The Future



The ChildFund Alliance World Index is a flagship report of ChildFund Alliance. Formerly known as the WeWorld Index and published annually since 2015 by WeWorld – the Italian member of ChildFund Alliance – the Index measures the living conditions of women and children worldwide by assessing the promotion, exercise, and violation of their rights. It has been presented in various international settings, including at the United Nations in New York and in Brussels, in the presence of stakeholders active in children's rights and Members of the European Parliament. The 2024 edition focuses on the right of children and youth to have a future. ChildFund Alliance articulates its understanding of a "right to the future" as a lens to analyse and address the complex contexts children and youth are facing today and will face tomorrow. This section includes the voices of **10,000 children and youth from 41 countries consulted about their future**. During the consultation, children were asked to share their views on what adults should do to ensure them a better future, and to identify their feelings, recurring themes, and areas of greatest concern and hope, with **many expressing a strong desire to improve access to and quality of education**, viewing it as the key to unlocking better opportunities and improving their overall quality of life. The section also contains examples of good practices implemented by the 11 ChildFund Alliance members to safeguard children's rights.



**ChildFund Alliance
World Index on the Rights
of Women and Children**
Focus: Children's Voices on Their Right to The Future





What Do the Children of Tanzania Imagine for Their Future? Rights to Be Listened to, Play, and Participate: The WeWorld Toolkit

This research-based toolkit developed by WeWorld is part of the 2024 International Conference "Building Brighter Futures: Evidence for Children," co-hosted by the National Planning Commission and the Zanzibar Planning Commission, with support from UNICEF Tanzania. Implemented in partnership with Education Above All's Educate A Child (EAC) Programme and co-funded by the European Union, the study aimed to generate new knowledge on children's well-being and agency by directly engaging 200 children and adolescents across schools in Pemba, Njombe, and Dar es Salaam.

The research explored how children perceive their own well-being, fears, aspirations, and the support they need to achieve their goals, particularly in situations of vulnerability and marginalisation. **Education emerged as one of the key areas that children believe needs improvement in order to better support their development and future opportunities.** Using a mixed-methods approach, the study combined quantitative surveys with participatory, play-based qualitative tools, providing a safe and accessible way for children to express themselves and share their visions for the future. Based on their inputs, the study developed policy recommendations and identified areas for targeted intervention, framed within the concept of the right to the future.

The research advocates for a paradigm shift that gives greater agency to children and promotes a more equitable sharing of power among adults, younger, and future generations. Responses were collected through play-based methodologies which, if properly adapted, can be applied in different settings. Indeed, similar studies are being conducted in other contexts.



The Joining Forces Campaign

In 2017, ChildFund Alliance – and therefore its members, including WeWorld – joined forces with the other five largest child-focused agencies: Plan International, Save the Children International, SOS Children's Villages International, Terre des Hommes International Federation, and World Vision International. **In May 2024, Joining Forces officially launched a global Call to Action on children's participation**, advocating for children to have a seat at the table, actively and meaningfully participating in all matters and decisions affecting their lives as rights holders.

This entails providing them with friendly spaces within the chambers of power, rather than merely seeking their views before or after decisions are made, as well as empowering them to be part of the entire decision-making process¹⁷.

17

For more information, see: <https://joining-forces.org/news/urgent-call-greater-support-child-participation/>



5. SAFETY

Safeguarding Children's Protection and Well-Being Through Education



5. SAFETY - Safeguarding Children's Protection and Well-Being Through Education

SAFETY.
Safeguarding Children's Protection and Well-Being Through Education

Schools must be spaces where children feel physically secure, emotionally supported, and socially connected. Ensuring safety and well-being in education means creating inclusive environments where children can grow, learn, and thrive in every aspect of their development. Through our work, we promote protective learning environments that support not only academic learning but also physical and psychological development by integrating classroom teaching with recreational activities like play, sport, and socialisation, extending its protective role beyond the school's walls. We pledge to make education settings responsive to the diverse needs of all learners and free from violence, neglect, or exclusion, so that children are more likely to participate actively, build confidence, develop life skills, and receive safe, inclusive, and quality education.



KEY FACTS

- ✓ While schools are meant to be safe spaces for learning and development, they [can also be sites of serious risk](#) – exposing children to bullying, corporal punishment, sexual violence, or psychological harm (Alliance for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action, 2021).
- ✓ Between 2022 and 2023, there were nearly [6,000 reported attacks targeting students, educators, schools, and universities](#) (GCPEA, 2024).
- ✓ Risk education, a key component of Disaster Risk Reduction, refers to systematic inclusion of knowledge, skills and behaviours that help children understand, assess and reduce disaster risks, including those arising from natural disasters, emergencies and conflicts into the school curricula (GADRRRES, 2022; MAG, 2022).
- ✓ Globally, [793 million school-age children live in countries where corporal punishment in school is not fully prohibited](#) (End Corporal Punishment, 2023).
- ✓ Around the world, girls and children with disabilities face a continuum of violence – at school, on their way to and from school, and even at home or in their communities – that undermines their right to education.
- ✓ In conflict-affected areas, girls are 2.5 times more likely than boys to be out of school (World Bank, 2017).



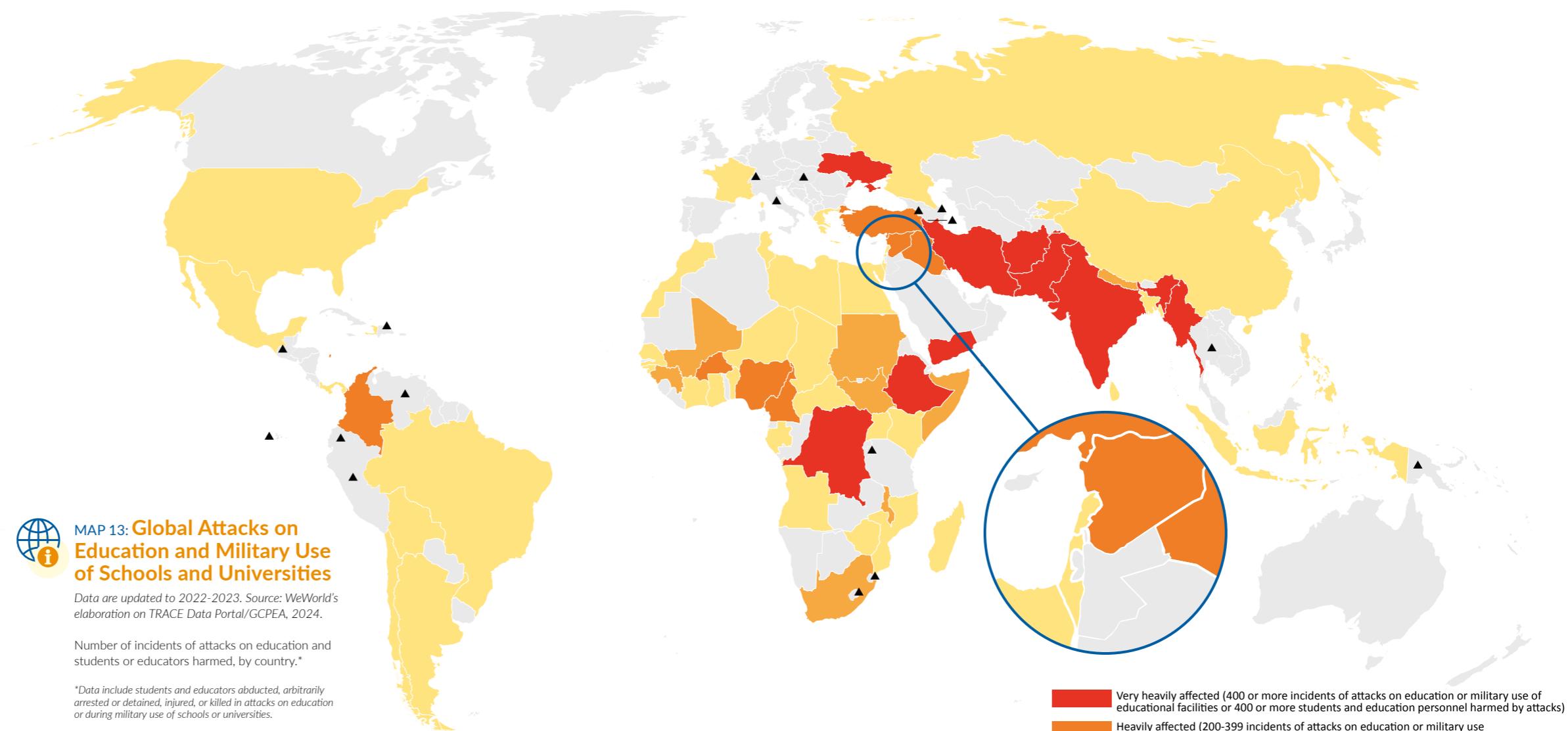
Defining Child Protection

Child protection refers to the prevention and response to all forms of abuse, neglect, exploitation, and violence against children (UNICEF, 2024a). It is not only a standalone area of intervention but a core, cross-cutting principle that should guide every humanitarian and development response. When applied effectively, child protection safeguards children's rights and well-being and ensures they grow up in safe and supportive environments. While schools are meant to be safe spaces for learning and development, they can also be sites of serious risk – exposing children to bullying, corporal punishment, sexual violence, or psychological harm, sometimes at the hands of those meant to protect them (Alliance for

Child Protection in Humanitarian Action, 2021). In emergency contexts, these risks are magnified: displacement, insecurity, and trauma leave children even more vulnerable, making it essential to embed child protection measures into every aspect of education delivery (EiE Hub, 2023). [Child protection in and around schools means more than preventing harm: it means creating safe learning environments where every child is respected, supported, and empowered](#). This includes establishing safeguarding policies, training school staff, ensuring access to psychosocial support, and setting up referral systems when risks arise, to help build the foundation for more inclusive and equitable education systems.

WHAT DOES SAFETY MEAN?

Schools and learning environments should be spaces where children grow, play, and thrive. Inclusively built and managed schools and learning environments provide structure, protection, and opportunities for physical, emotional, and social development through a balance of learning, play, and connection. Achieving this requires a comprehensive understanding of safety. However, many schools fall short due to unsafe infrastructure, lack of services, or conflict-related threats, sometimes turning schools into danger zones (Education Cannot Wait, 2025). Girls may face barriers like inadequate menstrual hygiene facilities or gender-based violence, while children with disabilities often face exclusion due to inaccessibility and lack of inclusive teaching. **True safety goes beyond physical protection and demands inclusive, responsive environments tailored to the needs of all learners.**



Education in Emergencies. Attacks on Education

Schools should be a place where children feel safe and protected from threats and crises, not battlegrounds. **In many war-affected areas, schools are attacked or used for military purposes, putting students and educators at risk and disrupting access to education¹⁸** (Education Cannot Wait, 2025). Between 2022 and 2023 alone, there were around 6,000 reported attacks on educational institutions and over 1,000 instances of military use of schools. These incidents resulted in more than 10,000 students and educators being killed, injured, abducted, or otherwise harmed (GCPEA, 2024).

¹⁸ Attacks on education are any intentional threat or use of force carried out by state or non-state armed groups for political, military, ideological, sectarian, ethnic, religious, or criminal reasons against students, educators, or education personnel while going to or coming from an education institution or elsewhere because of their status as students or educators. Includes abduction, recruitment of child soldiers, forced labour, sexual violence, targeted killings, threats and harassment, and other violations. Actual and threatened looting, seizure, occupation, closure, and demolition of educational property by armed groups may displace educators and students, denying students access to education (INEE Glossary).

Between 2022 and 2023, **more than 10,000 students and educators were killed, injured, abducted or otherwise harmed** by attacks on education (GCPEA, 2024)

Such violations strip children of more than just education: they lose access to protection, food, clean water, and stability, as well as safety and security. The impact is especially severe for girls, many of whom never return to school. In these unstable conditions, children face increased risks of recruitment by armed groups—whether forcibly or out of desperation, to serve as combatants, spies and human shields. From 2005 to 2022, over 105,000 children were confirmed as child soldiers, with estimates possibly reaching 300,000, and girls making up as much as 40% of that number (UNICEF, 2022a; NRC, 2018).



Attacks on Education in the Gaza Strip

In the Gaza Strip, nearly 91.8% of school buildings (518 out of 564) will either need full reconstruction or major rehabilitation work to be functional again. 432 school buildings have been directly hit since 7 October 2023 (Occupied Palestinian Territory Education Cluster, 2025). Satellite-derived analysis found that at least 85 schools were totally destroyed, while 73 lost at least half of their structures. North Gaza governorate is the most affected, with 100% of its school buildings being either directly hit or damaged, followed by Gaza governorate, with 92.8% of its total school buildings (Occupied Palestinian Territory Education Cluster, 2025a).

Safe Schools Declaration

The Safe Schools Declaration is a non-binding political commitment launched in 2015 by Norway and Argentina, aimed at protecting students, teachers, and educational institutions during armed conflict. It sets out key measures to prevent attacks on education, limit military use of schools, and ensure learning continues safely in crisis situations. **So far, 121 countries have endorsed the declaration, committing to actions such as integrating protective guidelines into national policies, collecting data on attacks, supporting victims, prosecuting violations, and promoting conflict-sensitive education.** They also work with the UN and civil society to monitor progress and strengthen implementation¹⁹.

¹⁹ For more information, see: <https://ssd.protectingeducation.org/>

5.1 DISASTER RISK REDUCTION AND RISK EDUCATION IN SCHOOLS



Defining Disaster Risk Reduction

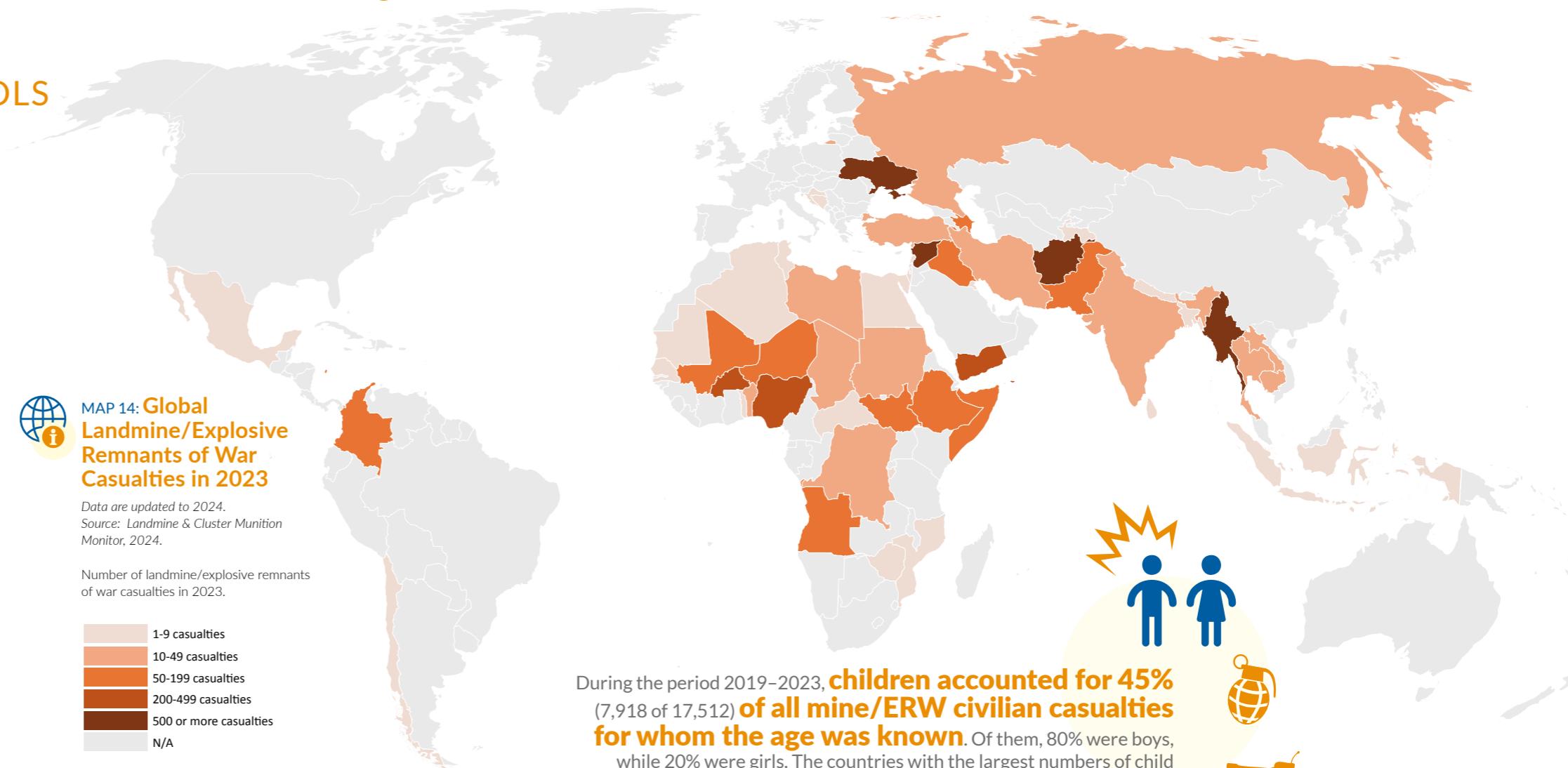
Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) refers to the systematic process of identifying, assessing, and minimising the causal factors of disasters through a wide range of policies, strategies, and practices. This includes reducing exposure to hazards, decreasing the vulnerability of people and assets, managing land and the environment sustainably, and strengthening preparedness and response capacities for adverse events. DRR aims to prevent new disaster risks, reduce existing risks, and strengthen resilience, thereby contributing to sustainable development and the protection of lives, livelihoods, and infrastructure (UNDRR, 2023; INEE, 2024).

In disaster-prone regions, education systems must shift from being reactive – responding only after a crisis has occurred – to proactive – anticipating risks and taking steps to reduce the impact before disasters strike – by embedding Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) into national education policies and positioning schools as centres of preparedness and protection. At the community level, DRR is not just about survival, but also ensuring that learning continues, even in times of crisis (ECHO, 2019). When schools are prepared, children do not just survive disasters, they emerge stronger and more empowered to overcome them (GADRRRES, 2022).

A key component of DRR within the education sector is **risk education**, which refers to systematic inclusion of knowledge, skills and behaviours that help children understand, assess and reduce disaster risks, including those arising from natural disasters, emergencies and conflicts into the school curricula (GADRRRES, 2022, MAG, 2022). During humanitarian crises, particularly in conflict zones, risk education becomes vital for protecting children from the dangers of conflict, including bombings, unexploded ordnances and other hazards.



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The Comprehensive School Safety Framework

The Comprehensive School Safety Framework (CSSF) 2022-2030, promoted by the Global Alliance for Disaster Risk Reduction and Resilience in the Education Sector, offers a strategic approach to help education policymakers, planners, school administrators, and their partners strengthen child rights, sustainability, and resilience within the education sector. Based on three pillars – Safe Learning Facilities, School Safety and Educational Community Management and Risk Reduction and Resilience Education – the CSSF offers a holistic framework for protecting learners, educators and staff from harm in schools and other learning spaces, planning for education and protection continuity and promoting knowledge and skills to contribute to risk reduction and resilience building (ECHO, 2019; GADRRRES, 2022)²⁰.

²⁰ For more information, see: <https://inee.org/sites/default/files/resources/The-Comprehensive-School-Safety-Framework-2022-2030-for-Child-Rights-and-Resilience-in-the-Education-Sector.pdf>

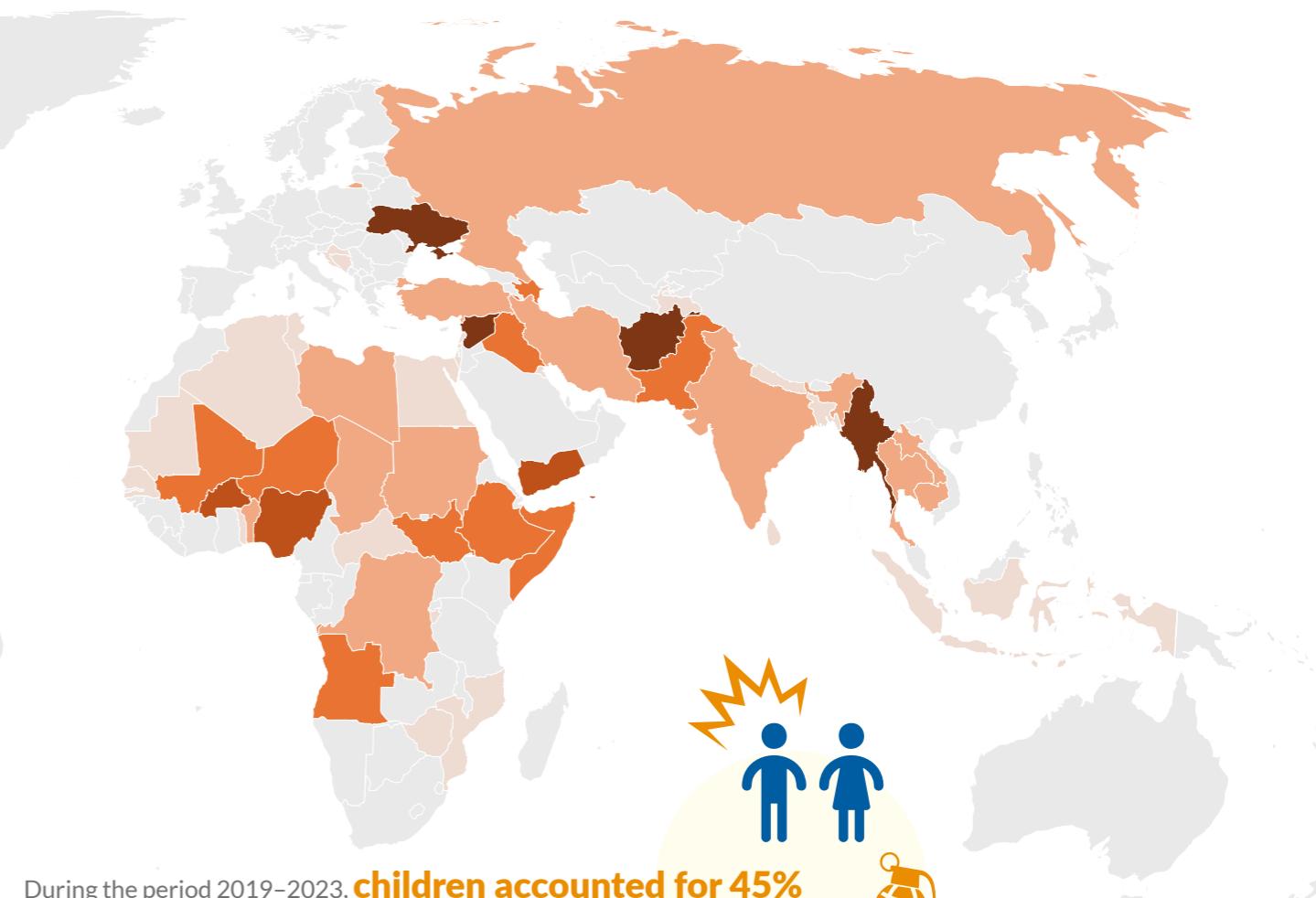


TABLE 2: Global Cluster Munition Remnant Contamination

Data are updated to 2024.
Source: Landmine & Cluster Munition Monitor, 2024.

Laos
Vietnam
Iraq
Cambodia
Azerbaijan
Chad
Chile
Mauritania
Syria
South Sudan
Ukraine
Yemen
Afghanistan

Georgia
Germany
Iran
Lebanon
Libya
Serbia
Somalia
Sudan
Tajikistan
Angola
Armenia
Democratic Republic of the Congo
Kuwait

WeWorld's Conflict Sensitivity Toolkit

WeWorld's Conflict Sensitivity Toolkit, developed in collaboration with the Peaceful Change Initiative and funded by the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation (AICS), offers a comprehensive resource on conflict sensitivity providing a range of methods, resources, and case studies to support personnel in integrating conflict sensitivity into every aspect of the project cycle – from design to implementation and MEAL. Initially developed in Libya, the toolkit is now being rolled out across the organisation as a global resource.



WeWorld's Disaster Risk Reduction in Schools Modality

For over a decade, WeWorld has implemented Disaster Risk Reduction projects with a strong focus on Community-Based Disaster Risk Reduction (CBDRR) and civil protection. **Through a two-level approach, WeWorld strengthens both community capacities and institutional frameworks at national and regional levels, combining bottom-up and top-down strategies to enhance preparedness and response.** The education sector is central to WeWorld's DRR efforts, aiming to build resilience by ensuring schools can withstand and respond to disasters.

Through participatory Hazard, Vulnerability, and Capacity Assessments and youth-led DRR activities, children play a key role in contributing to local knowledge, raising awareness, and promoting risk reduction within their communities. WeWorld supports the establishment of School Disaster Risk Management Committees (SDRM), bringing together students, teachers, administrators, and community members. These structures give children a meaningful voice in disaster management and strengthen the overall resilience of education systems.



Implementing a School Emergency Plan in Mozambique

Between 2021 and 2023, WeWorld implemented the **ECHO-REDE-EDUCAMA project** in Cabo Delgado, Mozambique, funded by the European Union and in partnership with the CIMA Foundation, INGD, and MINEDH (Ministry of Education and Human Development). Focused on Education in Emergencies (EiE) and Disaster Risk Reduction, the project aimed to strengthen disaster preparedness and education systems in vulnerable communities of Cabo Delgado and Manica. At the core of the project was the establishment of School Disaster Risk Management Committees (SDRMs), bringing together students, teachers, and community members to develop tailored Disaster Preparedness Plans, drawing from MINEDH's methodology guidelines. SDRMs were formed or revitalised through community assemblies, ensuring gender balance and broad representation. Members received extensive training in first aid, search and rescue, and emergency planning, combining theory with practical simulations supported by emergency services and education authorities. **Participatory tools such as risk mapping exercises and an educational disaster game made DRR concepts accessible and engaging. Regular simulation drills allowed school communities to practice emergency responses, clarify roles, and test evacuation procedures.** Training materials were designed for easy adaptation, empowering schools to independently maintain and update their preparedness plans. By fostering a culture of safety and shared responsibility, the project transformed schools into active hubs of resilience, strengthening both education and community cohesion. Plans are underway to adapt this model in other countries and contexts.

WHAT DOES WELL-BEING MEAN?

Learning environments must ensure that children feel safe, valued, and at ease – physically, socially, and emotionally. Since education shapes how children understand the world, make informed decisions, and access essential services, **schools must actively promote well-being as part of learning.** In a positive learning environment, students build nurturing relationships with teachers and peers, feel respected and valued, and develop a strong sense of belonging. These daily interactions help strengthen their self-confidence, encourage active participation in learning, and support both their academic success and personal growth.



Defining Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) and Psychosocial Support (PSS)

- **Social and Emotional Learning (SEL):** Social and Emotional Learning refers to the process through which individuals learn and apply a set of social, emotional, cognitive, and related skills, attitudes, behaviours, and values that help direct their thoughts, feelings, and actions in ways that enable them to succeed in school, work, and life (INEE & Harvard, 2022). An example of SEL is when children, during school time, take turns sharing a time they felt proud, happy or sad, helping them build self-awareness and confidence.
- **Psychosocial Support (PSS):** Psychosocial Support refers to the processes and actions that promote the holistic well-being of people in their social world. It includes support provided by family and friends. PSS can also be described as a process of facilitating resilience within individuals, families and communities, and aims to help individuals recover after a crisis has disrupted their lives and to enhance their ability to return to normality after experiencing adverse events (INEE, 2018). An example of PSS is when a trained facilitator leads relaxation and breathing exercises to help children reduce stress and feel safe after a traumatic event.

Together, SEL and PSS provide a holistic framework that not only improves learning outcomes but also supports mental health, emotional resilience, and social development, especially for children experiencing trauma, displacement, or prolonged adversity (ibid.).

5.2 CHILD PROTECTION IN SCHOOLS

For too many girls and boys around the world, school is not a place of safety, but one where they experience violence. Bullying, harassment, verbal abuse, sexual exploitation, corporal punishment, and other forms of humiliation often come not only from peers, but also from teachers and school authorities (UNICEF, 2021).

These risks are even greater for those who are already marginalised, including girls and children with disabilities, because learning environments, teaching methods, and educational approaches are too often built around a single, exclusive model. When systems fail to account for diverse needs, they exclude by design (UNESCO, 2025b). **Yet education holds immense potential to protect.** It empowers children to understand their rights, build life skills, and connect with support networks.

When schools are inclusive, well-resourced, and staffed with trained professionals, they can become protective spaces where all children – regardless of gender, ability, or background – feel safe, respected, and able to thrive (INEE, 2024).

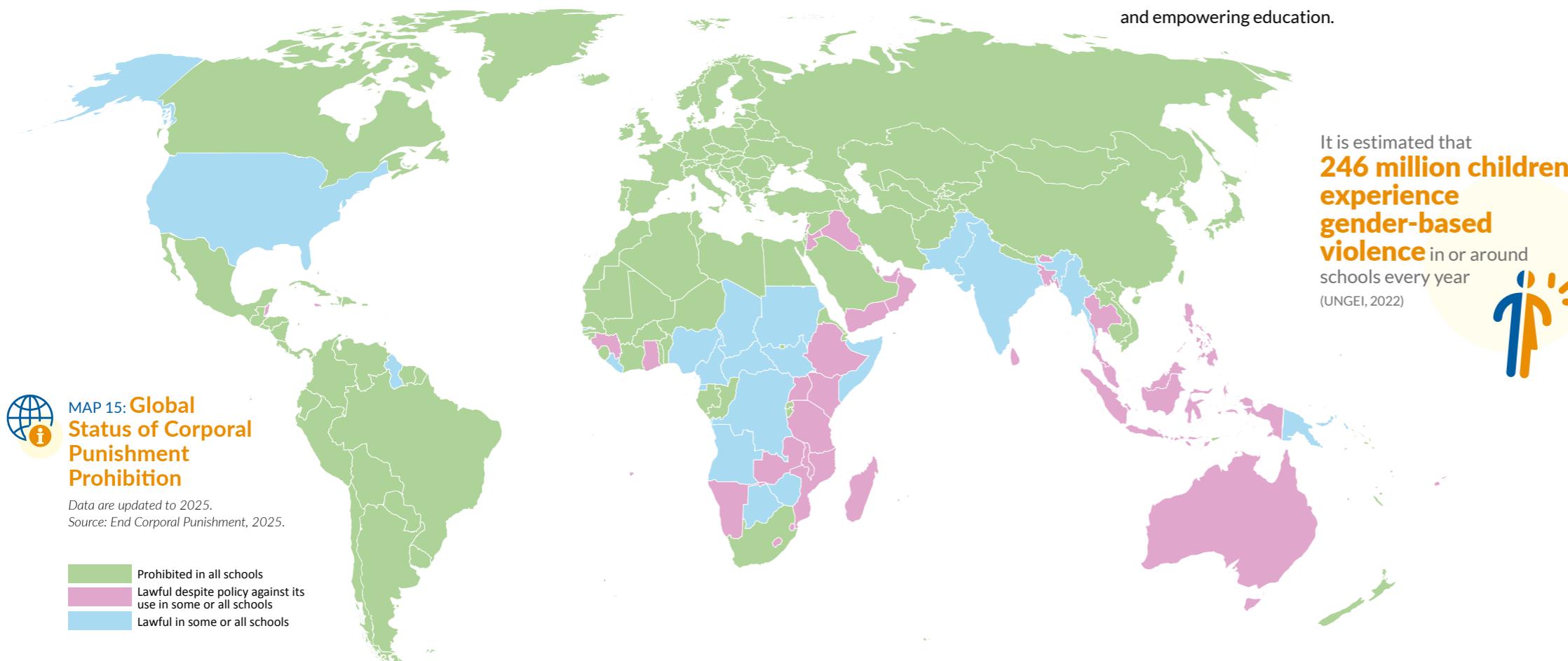


Corporal Punishment in Schools

Corporal punishment in schools remains a pressing global concern, with significant implications for children's well-being and educational outcomes. Corporal punishment is fully prohibited in schools in 137 countries, while it is still lawful in some or all education settings in 62 States. Globally, 793 million school-age children live in countries where corporal punishment in school is not fully prohibited (End Corporal Punishment, 2023)²¹. **Corporal punishment in schools causes serious harm to children's physical and mental well-being, leading to increased aggression, anxiety, and poor academic performance. It often results in lower achievement and higher dropout rates.** Girls and children with disabilities are especially at risk: for girls, it reinforces harmful gender norms and discourages school attendance, while children with disabilities face greater physical and emotional harm, deepening their exclusion from inclusive education (ibid.).

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²¹ Data are updated to 2025.



The Importance of Referral Mechanisms

Referral systems in schools and communities are critical for identifying and responding to cases of abuse, violence, psychological distress, or trauma. These mechanisms ensure that both students and teachers can safely report concerns and access appropriate support services. **A well-functioning referral system links schools with child protection and health, forming an integrated network of care. To be effective, these systems must be widely understood, inclusive, confidential, and culturally appropriate, enabling early intervention and promoting a safe and supportive learning environment** (INEE, 2024). When embedded in school governance and backed by trained staff, referral pathways not only safeguard children's rights but also contribute to long-term resilience and recovery, especially in crisis-affected contexts (INEE, 2018; UNICEF, 2020a).

5.3 THE BARRIERS THAT STAND IN THE WAY OF EDUCATION

GENDER-BASED DISCRIMINATION AND VIOLENCE

It is estimated that 246 million children experience gender-based violence in or around schools every year (UNGEI, 2022). Gender-based violence (GBV) remains one of the most pervasive and devastating barriers to girls' education, affecting their safety, well-being, and ability to learn both in and beyond school walls. Around the world, girls face a continuum of violence – at school, on their way to and from school, and even at home or in their communities – that undermines their right to education. **These patterns of violence are often reinforced by deeply rooted cultural and social norms around gender, which shape expectations, roles, and power dynamics.** In many contexts, such norms contribute to the normalisation of violence against girls, limit their mobility, and restrict their participation in education and public life. In and around schools, GBV takes many forms, ranging from sexual harassment in hallways, inappropriate touching during lessons, coercion by teachers in exchange for grades, to verbal abuse that prevents girls from speaking up or participating (ibid.). All these experiences can lead to chronic absenteeism, poor academic performance, dropout, and lasting psychological harm, ultimately denying girls their right to a safe and empowering education.



Education in Emergencies. Girls' Education in Crisis Settings

Crises exacerbate pre-existing and intersecting inequalities, and women and girls face increased risks of violence, human rights abuses, food insecurity, forced and child marriage, and loss of protection (ICRC, 2019; UNFPA, 2024). During crises, girls are often withdrawn from school to assist their families with increased domestic responsibilities, and to be protected from gender-based violence, abduction, and gang activity (Kwauk et al., 2019). **In conflict-affected areas, girls are 2.5 times more likely than boys to be out of school** (World Bank, 2017). At the same time, recruited girls often serve as combatants and domestic workers, making them even more vulnerable to sexual violence and exploitation (ILO, 2023).

ABLEISM

It is estimated that **246 million children experience gender-based violence** in or around schools every year (UNGEI, 2022)

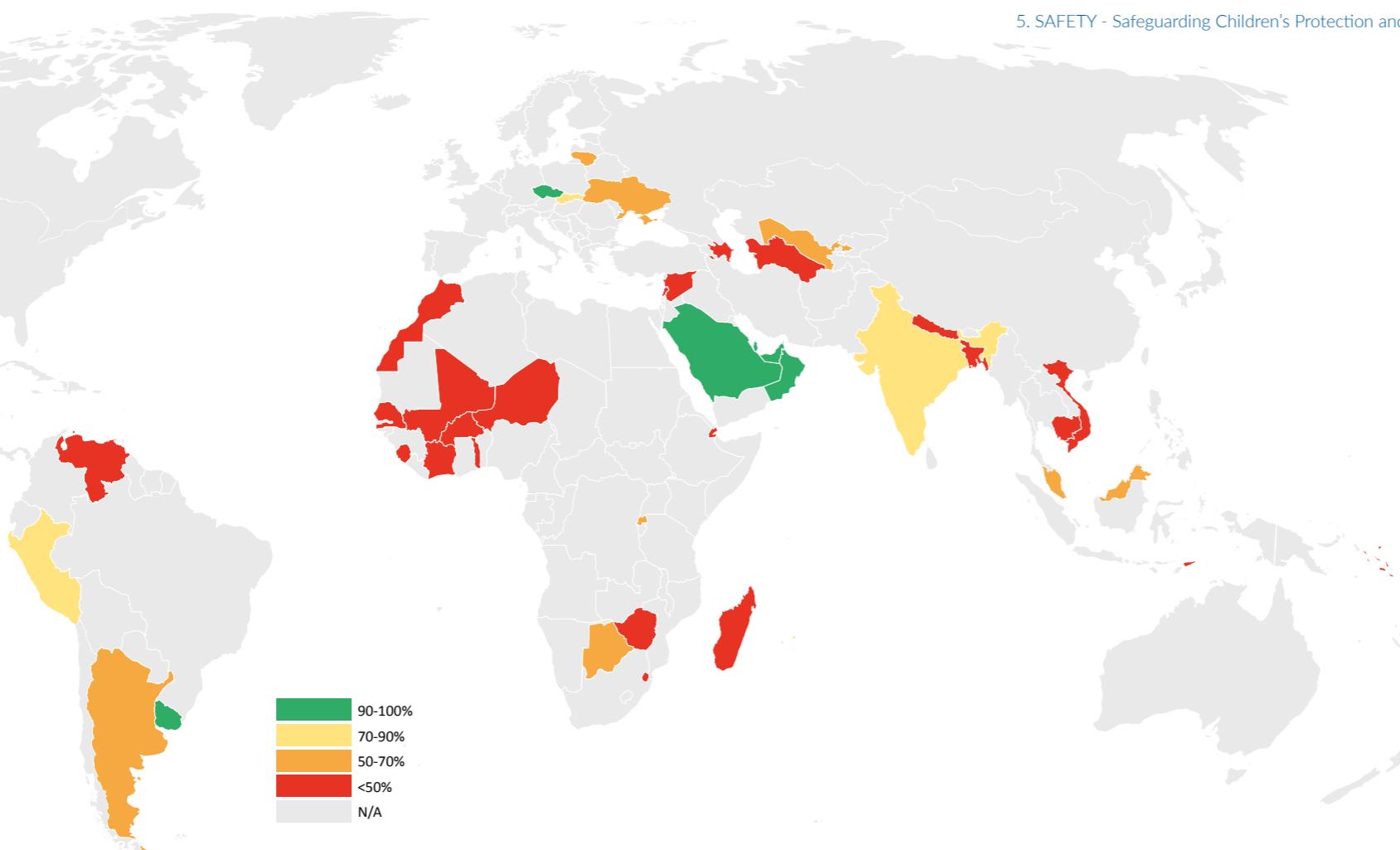


Safe and accessible schools are vital for every child—but for children with disabilities, they can be the difference between inclusion and exclusion, opportunity and isolation. These exclusionary experiences are not merely the result of logistical failures but are rooted in ableism – a system centred on the concept of 'normality' that privileges certain bodies and minds, leading to the devaluation, marginalisation, invisibility, and oppression of those deemed 'abnormal' or 'less capable'. Despite global commitments, **children with disabilities continue to face some of the steepest barriers to learning**. In many parts of the world, the journey to school itself is a major hurdle. Long distances, unsafe roads, and a lack of accessible transportation often mean that children with disabilities are simply unable to attend school (INEE, 2023). For those who do make it, the physical environment frequently fails to meet their needs – ramps are missing, doorways are too narrow, classrooms are inaccessible, and WASH facilities are not adapted for mobility or sensory impairments (UNICEF, 2019; INEE, 2023). When they manage to access education, many of them are placed in segregated classrooms or denied appropriate support. Worse, **they often face bullying, harassment, and abuse, sometimes from peers, and alarmingly, also from educators, and are more likely to experience these situations than their peers without disabilities** (Anti-Bullying Alliance, 2024).



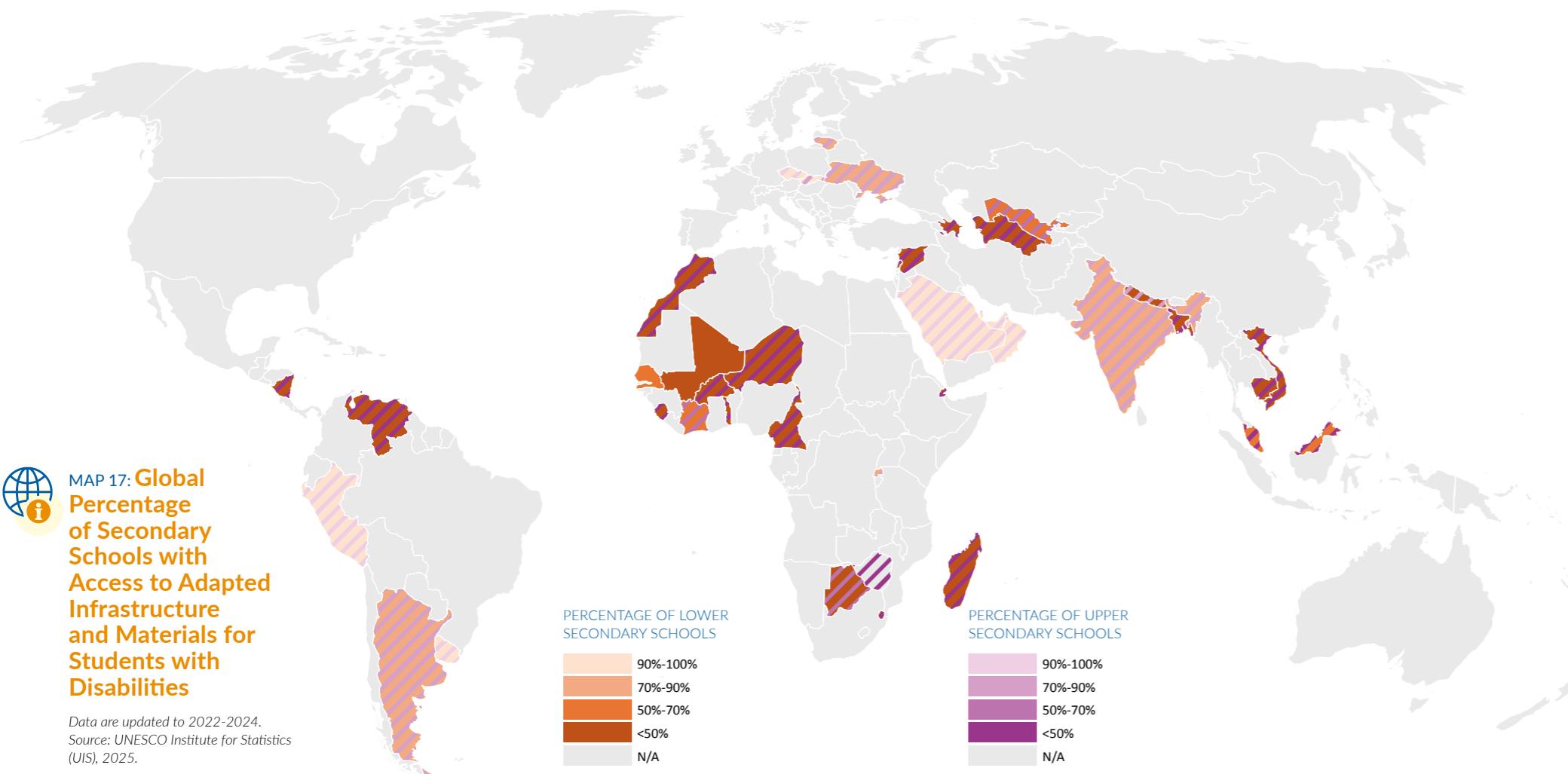
MAP 16: Global Percentage of Primary Schools with Access to Adapted Infrastructure and Materials for Students with Disabilities

Data are updated to 2022-2024.
Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS), 2025.



MAP 17: Global Percentage of Secondary Schools with Access to Adapted Infrastructure and Materials for Students with Disabilities

Data are updated to 2022-2024.
Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS), 2025.



5.4 TOWARDS AN INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

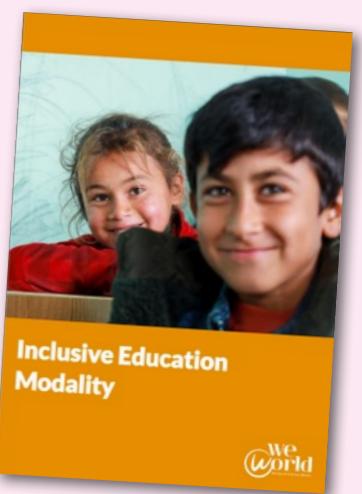
An inclusive learning environment ensures that every child has equal opportunities to learn and participate, while respecting and valuing diverse social identities. Inclusive education not only removes barriers, but actively promotes equity, belonging, and engagement. It guarantees that all learners can access quality education in safe and supportive settings (UNESCO, 2020). Ensuring inclusive education for children means designing systems that are flexible, accessible, and responsive to every child's needs, including the provision of appropriate materials, trained staff, and strong community engagement (INEE, 2023). By embedding inclusive practices in school governance, teacher training, and curriculum design, education systems can transform schools into spaces where every child can thrive.



WeWorld's Inclusive Education Modality

We define inclusive education as a comprehensive and rights-based approach that seeks to dismantle the physical, social, cultural and institutional barriers that prevent children from accessing and participating fully in quality education. Far beyond ensuring mere access to school, our inclusive education modality is grounded in the belief that all children, regardless of ability, background, gender, ethnicity, language, or displacement status, have the right to learn in environments that respect their identities, support their potential, and protect their dignity. WeWorld's **Inclusive Education Modality** is implemented across a wide range of contexts, from emergencies to protracted crises and development settings, in countries such as Syria, Lebanon, Palestine, Mozambique, Brazil, and Kenya. Our interventions are tailored to the specific challenges of each context while maintaining a consistent commitment to equity, participation, and systemic transformation.

We work across five interconnected areas: **making learning environments physically accessible and safe; investing in teacher training and inclusive learning materials; promoting positive attitudes through community engagement and awareness; supporting inclusive teaching practices such as individual learning plans and culturally adapted content; and strengthening school-level and national policies that uphold inclusive education.** To promote inclusive education, both in emergency, protracted crises, and development contexts, we recognise the primary role of the national institutions and authorities and adopt an educational community approach.



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COUNTRY FACTSHEETS

BENIN

✓ OUR LATEST ACHIEVEMENTS



25 new local bodies including **Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs) and School Committees** were established or strengthened in Zou, Collines, Ouémé and Plateau Departments to enhance community involvement in education.

300 remedial classes involving a total of **685 children, including 352 girls**, were organised for students with the lowest academic averages.



367 teachers were trained to strengthen their skills to meet children's learning needs.

Through **4 community events, 4,026 individuals** were reached through awareness-raising campaigns and events focused on **education and child protection**.

32 community teachers were recruited and distributed across **14 schools** in order to reduce the **school dropout** rate by retaining and supervising 1,603 children, including 807 girls, with an average class size of 49 children.



A total of **73 teachers were recruited to conduct 12 sessions of after-school lessons**, reaching **1,420 children** in middle elementary classes.

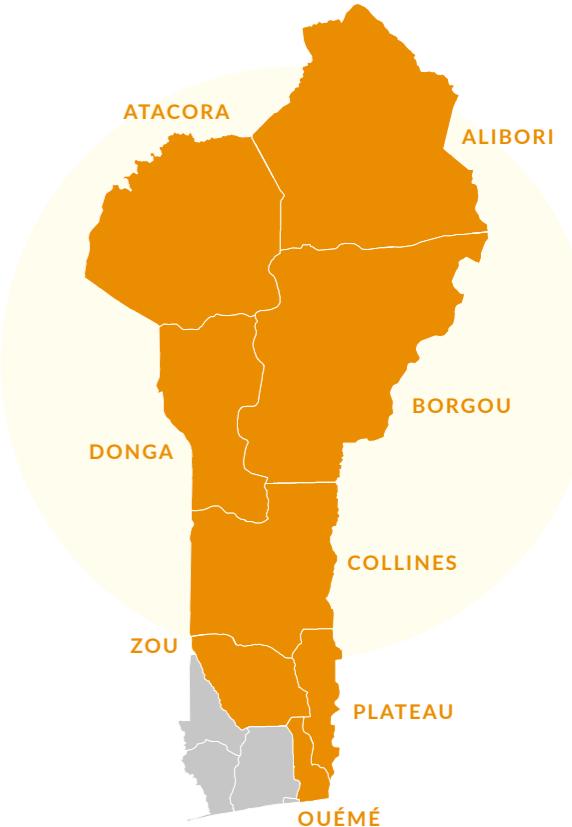
10 schools were equipped with furniture and essential school materials to improve learning environments, while **620 school kits**, were distributed to support students, including 310 girls, with basic educational supplies.



5 educational talks involving 4,179 children were organised in schools to raise children's awareness of their rights and responsibilities.



Several **Journées de Compétences de Vie (JCV) - Life Skills Days** - were set up in 19 schools reaching **14,879 children and adults**, to foster children's education and holistic development through community-driven engagement.



FRAMING THE CONTEXT

We have been active in Benin since 2008. In the country, access to quality education remains significantly constrained by a combination of socio-economic, infrastructural, and systemic challenges: **1 in 3 children is currently out of school** (UNICEF, 2024). **Poverty is a major barrier, as many families are unable to afford basic school supplies**, despite education being officially free (Action Education, 2022). Many schools face a critical shortage of teaching materials, making it difficult for students to engage with lessons and study effectively at home. **Overcrowded classrooms** – often the result of **inadequate infrastructure** – further hinder the quality of instruction (Campus Benin, 2024).

A lack of standardised teaching curricula, especially for aspiring educators, contributes to insufficient teacher preparation. This issue is compounded by the **limited availability of technical staff with expertise in pre- and in service training for teachers** at the local level, which restricts ongoing professional support (Broken Chalk, 2023) and severely impacts children's numeracy and literacy skills. Indeed, 1 in 4 primary school leavers is below the school-leaving competency threshold (UNICEF, 2024). In rural areas, child labour is prevalent, with children frequently missing school to assist with farming or market work. Indeed, **24.7% of children aged 5-14 are engaged in work, with 16.8% combining school and labour** (U.S. Department of Labor, 2021). Violence in schools remains a pervasive issue, with alarming rates of disciplinary abuse affecting children across the country. **9 out of 10 children are victims of some form of violent discipline - 84% of whom are girls** (UNICEF, 2024).

Gender disparities are also pronounced: **girls are more likely to drop out** due to early marriage, domestic responsibilities, or the need to support their families. While progress has been made – primary school enrolment for girls rose from 900,000 in 2013 to 1.2 million in 2023 – significant gaps remain: around **400,000 girls are still out of school**, and only **19.7% - 1 out of 5 - manage to finish the first cycle of secondary education, dropping to 1 out of 10 in the northern regions** (UNICEF, 2023). Additional challenges include the lack of drinking water in rural communities, the exclusion of children with disabilities, and the ongoing humanitarian crisis in the northern areas of the country, all of which further hinder access to education.



WeWorld CARES about Child-Centred Education in Benin

In Benin, our intervention is distinguished by a deep-rooted community-approach. Children thrive because their entire community is engaged, empowered, and held accountable. Education is locally led, shaped by the voices and values of those who live it daily. Our approach goes beyond inclusion: it builds education systems from the ground up, with families, teachers, local stakeholders, institutions and children themselves to ensure that every decision reflects the real needs of children. Communities are not just informed: they are at the core of governance, planning, and monitoring. Their active participation transforms education into a shared responsibility, where solutions are culturally relevant, sustainable, and deeply rooted in the school system.



COMMUNITY

Engaging Communities in Promoting Children's Agency

We implemented a series of community-based initiatives to strengthen education governance, promote the collaboration between schools, communities and government institutions, and build the capacity of local stakeholders.

- ◆ As part of our **Engagement Communautaire pour L'éducation des Enfants (ECoLE) Project**, we implemented key **community engagement activities** to strengthen educational stakeholders' capacities and promote community-based education governance.
- ◆ **25 new local bodies including Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs) and School Committees** were established or strengthened to enhance community involvement in education.
- ◆ **Community dialogue platforms** were launched to encourage participatory governance in education. Held in various schools, these sessions brought together **parents' associations, local officials, educators, and women-led groups** to identify school-related challenges and possible future actions, and enhance collaboration. The initiative increased community awareness and engagement in improving local education systems.



- ◆ Through **4 community events, 4,026 individuals** were reached through awareness-raising campaigns and events focused on education and child protection.
- ◆ We organised a **workshop with 40 school heads to collect and share good practices** on the ECoLE project, also based on the insights of community monitors who used different tools to track the progress of our educational activities in 23 villages.
- ◆ In parallel, we contributed to **thematic working groups** with sector partners to align efforts, support policy dialogue, and promote sustainable improvements in Benin's education system. These partnerships were active from the project design stage and supported through regular reviews and reciprocal technical assistance with the **Ministry of Nursery and Primary Education (MEMP), Departmental Directorates and 13 School Districts** across the four Departments.



ACCESS

Unlocking Access to Inclusive, Quality Learning

As part of the ECoLE Project, targeted interventions were implemented to improve learning outcomes, reduce overcrowding, and promote inclusive education by supporting students at risk and strengthening teaching capacity in underserved schools.

- ◆ **300 remedial classes** involving a total of **685 children** were organised for students with the lowest academic averages. **Each group included 10 students** to avoid replicating standard classroom settings and to ensure personalised support.
- ◆ From February to May 2024, a total of **73 teachers were recruited to conduct 12 sessions of after-school lessons**, reaching **1,420 children** in middle elementary classes across the **23 schools** targeted by the project. Supervisors monitored attendance and reported on the educational content covered.
- ◆ To address teacher shortages, **32 additional teachers were hired** in 2024 and distributed across 14 schools in order to reduce the school dropout rate by retaining and supervising 1,603 children, including 807 girls, with an average class size of 49 children. This helped maintain manageable class sizes and supported school retention, as children were assigned to the new personnel. Moreover, **367 teachers** were trained to strengthen their skills to meet children's learning needs.
- ◆ **10 schools** were equipped with furniture and essential school materials to improve learning environments, while **620 school kits** were distributed to support students with basic educational supplies.
- ◆ In May 2024, a ceremony in Porto-Novo was organised to donate **IT equipment** – including laptops, printers, and USB drives - **to the four Departmental Directorates** in Zou, Collines, Ouémé, and Plateau to enhance educational management. The event was attended by government officials and community representatives. During the event, the importance of children's education and school retention was emphasised, and teachers were encouraged to make good use of the materials.



RIGHTS

Advancing and Protecting Children's Rights

Children's rights are a guiding principle across all our interventions. In a world shaped by adult priorities, it remains difficult to design spaces and policies that truly reflect children's needs and perspectives. Many are still unaware of their rights, making awareness and empowerment essential.

- ◆ Our activities include **learning through play, discovery, and experimentation**, helping to make school a space for personal growth. Through **interactive and play-based activities**, they learn about fundamental rights such as access to water, food, and hygiene – and often become advocates within their communities.
- ◆ We organised **educational talks** in schools to raise children's awareness of their rights and responsibilities, focusing on allowing them to clearly understand what they mean and their implications.
- ◆ **Teachers received specific training** on rights and play-based methodologies to diversify teaching tools and make learning more engaging.

For us, play is not just recreational, it is a meaningful way for children to explore complex ideas like rights, agency, and power. In the future, we are planning of using **visual tools**, such as simple images, to better engage children. Visual tools, indeed, can play an essential role in keeping the lessons attractive, clarifying ideas and facilitating memorisation, to allow teachers to fully implement interactive and inclusive methodologies in the classroom.



EXPRESSION

Amplifying Children's Voices and Perspectives

We recognise children as active participants in shaping the decisions that affect their lives. In our approach, learning is not just about absorbing information – it is about **building knowledge** through experience, reflection, and dialogue. **Teachers act as facilitators**, encouraging children to share their views and connect learning to their lived realities. This strengthens self-confidence, autonomy, and engagement in the classroom.

- ◆ In 2024, we launched a global consultation involving children and adolescents worldwide to explore their hopes, dreams, and fears about the future. The consultation, part of the broader "**ChildFund Alliance World Index on the Rights of Women and Children**"²², involved a total of **353 children**.
- ◆ To deepen this commitment, we have planned **interviews** with children in November 2025 across our project schools. Using anonymous feedback collection mechanisms, including sessions by non-project staff, we aim to gather **children's perceptions, impressions, and suggestions** to inform future actions from 2026 onwards.
- ◆ Their input helps shape decisions, while adults – parents, teachers, and community leaders – are engaged to create a supportive environment. This inclusive approach also promotes stronger links between schools, families, and communities, ensuring that children's development is supported holistically and their voices are heard meaningfully.



SAFETY

Safeguarding Children's Protection and Well-Being Through Education

Our education programming under the ECoLE project adopts a holistic and inclusive approach that prioritises children's safety, well-being, and access to quality learning environments.

- ◆ Between January and August 2025, we established **Menstrual Health and Hygiene Management (MHHM) spaces** in **6 schools**, promoting dignity, health, and school attendance among adolescent girls.
- ◆ In the village of Yoko – Plateau Department – where school infrastructure had been severely damaged, we initiated the **construction of modern classroom modules to ensure continuity of learning** in safe and dignified conditions. Simultaneously, in Agondji – Zou Department – we began building **protective fencing** around the school to enhance safety and create a secure learning space.
- ◆ Our commitment to inclusive education is reflected in our efforts to **adapt school infrastructure to meet the needs of vulnerable and disabled children**, ensuring that every child can learn in an environment that respects their rights and supports their development.

The Journées de Compétences de Vie

In May, June, and October 2024, we set up several *Journées de Compétences de Vie (JCV)* - Life Skills Days - reaching 14,879 children and adults in 19 schools across Zou, Collines, Ouémé and Plateau, fostering children's education and holistic development through community-driven engagement, with a strong focus on **building bridges between enrolled children and out-of-school ones**. These events brought together schools, parents, children, and local workers to promote life skills and inclusive learning. In particular, a group of artisans who support out-of-school children through supervised apprenticeships were involved to raise awareness about the value of attending school among students who took part in the activities. After receiving information on child apprenticeship regulations, they were trained to understand why **completing primary education is essential before entering vocational training**. Committed to reducing early school dropout, particularly among girls, artisans facilitated **educational games** designed to build emotional intelligence, communication, and collaboration among students and apprentices. Each JCV concluded with a **community meeting** to highlight and reinforce the collective responsibility to keep children in school, strengthening local ownership and commitment to children's safety, well-being, and lifelong learning.



THE VOICE OF

Félix Dansou

Education Thematic Advisor

"We are committed to put children at the centre of all our activities, recognising them as true agents of change. This involves the creation of safe, inclusive spaces where children can express themselves freely, using age-, gender- and context-appropriate communication tools. We want children to be actively involved in every phase of our projects - during needs assessment, design, implementation and evaluation - with their voices influencing decisions.

To achieve this, we are planning to provide more training on children's rights and the importance of civic participation, while also engaging adults - parents, teachers and community members - to build a respectful and supportive environment. Special attention will be given to marginalised children, by adapting different and new approaches to meet their specific needs and favour their full inclusion.

Our play-based learning methodology is guided by what we call the 'RCA Technique', which stands for: reflecting on lived experiences (R), connecting to children's existing knowledge (C), and applying that knowledge to new contexts and circumstances (A). This approach encourages children to build on what they know through active exploration and reflection. Rooted in key principles such as engagement, motivation, active participation, and the creation of a positive, stimulating learning environment, this approach encourages children to build on what they know through active exploration and reflection."

OUR PARTNERS AND ALLIES

We actively participate in several coordination spaces related to education. One of the key platforms we take part to is the **Groupe Thématique Éducation (GTE)**, an education thematic group which gathers all technical and financial partners (TFPs) involved in the education sector. During group meetings, members discuss on critical issues that affect education and formulate possible solutions and recommendations to improve the quality of education across the country. We also engage in several sub-groups such as the **Sous-Groupe Éducation des Filles** - Girls' Education Sub-Group - which works to improve girls' access to education and improve their retention in school, and the **Sous-Groupe Éducation en Situation d'Urgence** - Emergency Education Sub-Group - which focuses on ensuring continued education even during times of crisis. Locally, we closely work with **school personnel, Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs), Community Councils** and **Community Watch Committees** to foster safe, inclusive, and supportive environments for students and families through collaborative initiatives and shared decision-making.

BRAZIL

This factsheet was realised with the support of Avuar Social

✓ OUR LATEST ACHIEVEMENTS

A **campaign** on access to water, prevention of bullying and children's and adolescents' rights reached **29 schools, 6,000 students and 744 teachers** in Ceará State.



3 workshops with the participation of **580 people from 23 schools** were held on Contextualised Education for Coexistence of the Semi-Arid Region.



6 modular training courses were conducted engaging **91 participants** in capacity-building activities designed to strengthen educational practices and promote child-centred approaches.



We are working on strengthening **Municipal Councils of Education and Municipal Councils for the Rights of Children and Adolescents** in 5 municipalities in the State of Ceará.



43 kits containing didactic materials - including paper, pens, scissors, notebooks, glue and other essential items - were distributed to **8,985 students**.



2 music courses were established, each with a workload of 96 hours per class, reaching **40 children and adolescents**.



Specific efforts were made to enhance **restorative practices** with the **training of 129 individuals** who completed a course in facilitating restorative justice circles, the identification of **10 reference professionals**, and the formation of **8 peace circle instructors**.



FRAMING THE CONTEXT

WeWorld has been working in the country since 2008. Brazil is currently facing structural challenges to ensure quality and equitable education, especially for vulnerable populations. **Multi-dimensional poverty affects 63.6% of racialised groups**, against 45.2% of historically advantaged ones (Agência Brasil, 2025). **In 2023, 7.7% of children and adolescents were deprived of education**, while 4 million were behind the expected school level or were not literate by the age of 7 (UNICEF, 2022). Between 2019 and 2022, the proportion of 7-year-olds who could not read and write doubled from 20% to 40%, with a greater impact among black Brazilian children and those living in the Northern region (UNICEF, 2023). In 2019, **1.1 million school-age children and adolescents were out of school**, with the most affected being **children aged 4 to 5 years and adolescents aged 15 to 17 years**, predominantly from different ethnical backgrounds, indigenous, poor or living in rural areas (UNICEF, 2022).

Child labour, early pregnancy, disability, discrimination and lack of school infrastructure further compound these issues. In rural areas, **92% of children and adolescents face deprivation of basic sanitation services**, which severely compromises health and school attendance (Agência Brasil, 2025). Moreover, **violence in schools** is exponentially growing: **9,530 complaints** related to episodes of violence within the school environment were registered between January and September 2023 (O Dia, 2023). These complaints resulted in the identification of **50,186 human rights violations**: the main forms of violence reported were humiliation, psychological violence, threats, bullying and injuries (Ministério dos Direitos Humanos e da Cidadania, 2023).

As part of WeWorld's 2024–2030 strategy, a localisation process led to the creation of **Avuar Social**, a Brazilian civil society organisation. Building on WeWorld's strong reputation and experienced team in Brazil, Avuar Social gained greater autonomy in both political and managerial decision-making. A Memorandum of Understanding formalised the partnership between WeWorld and Avuar Social for the period 2025 to 2027, securing financial and strategic support. This transition aims to promote a model of international cooperation that is more inclusive, sustainable, and rooted in local communities. The founding of Avuar Social marks an important step toward strengthening local governance and supporting resilient development across Brazil.



WeWorld CARES about Child-Centred Education in Brazil

Grounded in the realities of the territories where we work, our approach begins by listening to and learning from those who live there. It is about building relationships that extend beyond individual projects – founded on trust, shared experience, and local knowledge. Combining the tools of international cooperation with a deep understanding of the context, we ensure our actions reflect the complexities and nuances of each community. This connection gives us the flexibility to adapt, the insight to respond, and the foundation to co-create solutions that truly make a difference.



COMMUNITY

Engaging Communities in Promoting Children's Agency

Our Long-Distance Sponsorship (LDS) Programme has been implemented to **reinforce early childhood and primary education** across numerous municipalities and schools in the semi-arid region of Ceará State. Through its commitment to inclusive and quality education, the programme has supported schools in addressing key issues that truly reflects the realities of the region.

- ◆ To celebrate the achievements of the programme, a **campaign** was organised to highlight this collective effort. The campaign, focused on different topics such as access to water, prevention of bullying and children's and adolescents' rights, reached **29 schools, 6,000 students and 744 teachers**.
- ◆ An **inter-school exchange** was organised to create space for the sharing of experiences and knowledge between schools. The exchange brought together **104 individuals** – including students, teachers, and facilitator such as technical staff from Cáritas Diocesana de Crateús and WeWorld, as well as members of the **Rede de Educação do Semiárido Brasileiro (RESAB)**²³, local parishes, the Federal Institute of Ceará, municipal education Secretariats, and school and municipal managers from Ipaporanga, Tamboril, Quiterianópolis and Ararendá.



- ◆ In the municipality of Trairi, in partnership with the Pastoral do Menor Nordeste 1, **advocacy and lobbying activities** were carried out with the Municipal Department of Education and the Municipal Council of Education to strengthen the implementation of Law No. 1,091/2023, approved in 2023 through the efforts of WeWorld and Pastoral do Menor NE1. This Law, shifting from the traditional punitive culture in schools, mandates the use of **restorative practices** as the first response to **conflict prevention and resolution** in all **45 schools** in the municipality.

Educação Contextualizada para a Convivência com o Semiárido (ECCSA)



The *Educação Contextualizada para a Convivência com o Semiárido (ECCSA)* - Contextualised Education for Coexistence with the Semi-Arid Region - model is a pedagogical approach that integrates educational processes with the socio-environmental, cultural and economic specificities of the semi-arid region of Ceará such as habits, costumes and traditions of local realities, breaking with hegemonic and decontextualised pedagogical models by proposing an educational practice committed to valuing the territory, local knowledge and the subjects who live in it, especially children. This model also represents a form of epistemic justice, as it recognises and legitimises the systems of local communities, challenging the historical marginalisation of their ways of knowing and affirming their right to be producers and holders of knowledge.

By recognising the historical and structural inequalities that mark the semi-arid region, this approach acts as a mechanism to promote equity and social justice, contributing directly to addressing the multiple vulnerabilities that affect children. It provides a school environment that strengthens community and family ties and ensures the right to community life and access to opportunities compatible with child development. Contextualised education also favours child and youth protagonism, allowing children and young people to understand the reality in which they live and develop critical skills to intervene in it consciously. Furthermore, it seeks to promote schools that are adapted to the environmental conditions of the region, affected by low rainfall and chronic water scarcity due to climate change, while emphasising the inclusion of gender issues such as economic emancipation and gender-based violence.

In recent years, including 2024, we have worked intensively at the level of advocacy in public educational policies to guarantee the rights of children and adolescents. As part of the LDS Programme, together with municipal and state public authorities and several partners, we have promoted the mainstreaming of contextualised education, with emphasis on gender and restorative practices. Indeed, we have worked on the approval of municipal laws that mandate the full adoption of the model, so that all schools are now required to implement this approach. In 2024, we held 23 workshops with the participation of 580 people from 23 schools. Additionally, 3 municipal seminars were organised, reaching 249 participants, and a regional seminar was held, with 92 participants. These activities have contributed to strengthening our pedagogical approach and expanding its reach, reaffirming the role of the school as a privileged space for the child protection and development in the semi-arid region.



ACCESS

Unlocking Access to Inclusive, Quality Learning

- ◆ Under our LDS Programme's ongoing efforts to support inclusive and contextualised education in the semi-arid region of Ceará State, **43 kits containing didactic materials** – including paper, pens, scissors, notebooks, glue and other essential items – were distributed to **8,985 students**, aimed at enhancing classroom learning and supporting teachers in delivering quality education. Moreover, **63 educational facilities** were equipped with adequate school furniture.
- ◆ **6 modular training courses** were conducted engaging **91 participants** in capacity-building activities designed to strengthen educational practices and promote child-centred approaches, while **143 individuals** enrolled in **Non-Formal Education (NFE) activities**.
- ◆ At the Instituto Irmã Giuliana Galli and the Pastoral do Menor's Santa Maria Eufrásia Community Centre located in the outskirts of Fortaleza, in Ceará State, specifically in the Serrinha and Parque Santa Rosa neighbourhoods, a series of cultural and educational activities were carried out. These included **2 music courses**, each with a workload of 96 hours per class, reaching **40 children and adolescents**. The courses ensured that participants had access to the necessary instruments, tools and accessories for the restoration and maintenance of musical instruments, fostering both artistic expression and technical skills.
- ◆ Through the "**Alimentos No Semiárido - Resiliência Agroecológica No Sertão Cearense**"²⁴ Project, further educational opportunities were provided. A **training course on agroforestry systems** was delivered to **50 students** from the **Escola Família Agrícola Dom Frágoso (EFA)**, as part of their professional technical education. In addition, technical visits to 6 families with students from EFA's rural areas were organised, promoting practical learning skills and strengthening the link between education and sustainable agricultural practices.

24 Food in the Semi-Arid - Agro-Ecological Resilience in the Ceará Hinterland. For more information, visit: <https://www.weworld.it/en/what-we-do/global-projects/food-in-the-semi-arid-agro-ecological-resilience-in-the-ceara-hinterland>



RIGHTS

Advancing and Protecting Children's Rights

Our Contextualised Education for Coexistence with the Semi-Arid approach promotes a broad set of rights by recognising the specific realities of children and adolescents living in semi-arid regions. First, it promotes the realisation of the **right to quality education**, by ensuring an education that respects the cultural, social and environmental identity of children in the semi-arid region.

In addition, it contributes to the fulfilment of other fundamental dimensions, such as **access to water, adequate and nutritious food, and a healthy environment**. In this sense, education is understood not only as a stand-alone right, but also as a transversal instrument for the defence and promotion of other rights, enabling children and adolescents to live, learn and grow with dignity in their communities.

- ◆ As part of the "**Trilha Democrática - Fortalecendo Conselhos De Direito Para a Incidência Em Políticas Públicas**"²⁵ Project, financed by the Public Prosecutor's Funds for Diffuse Rights, we are working to reinforce the role of **Municipal Councils of Education** and **Municipal Councils for the Rights of Children and Adolescents** in **5 municipalities** in the State of Ceará - Piquet Carneiro, Deputado Irapuan Pinheiro, Milhã, Solonópole and Senador Pompeu. This initiative places children's rights at the heart of public policy, promoting capacity-building in management, advocacy and policy monitoring to ensure that institutional mechanisms are responsive to the needs and voices of children and adolescents.
- ◆ In partnership with these Councils, the project aims to strengthen social participation in public management through advocacy and training, with a particular focus on the **rights of children and adolescents**. We are supporting the implementation of the Law of Contextualised Education for Coexistence with the Semi-Arid, while promoting **community engagement in the defence of children's rights** and the development of inclusive education policies²⁶.

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25 Democratic Path - Strengthening Rights Councils for Advocacy in Public Policy

26 In 2024, we conducted 5 needs assessments on the conditions of childhood and adolescence. In the 5 municipalities. These assessments were designed to identify local needs and inform the planning of actions that uphold the rights of children and adolescents. They contributed to more precise decision-making in the field of childhood and adolescence policy, guided the implementation and optimisation of municipal programmes and policies, and promoted social accountability by empowering children and adolescents to actively participate in shaping the policies that affect their lives.



EXPRESSION

Amplifying Children's Voices and Perspectives

Our interventions place children at the centre, recognising their role as active participants in shaping their educational and social environments.

- ◆ The direct involvement of children has consistently taken place through "**culminâncias**", namely moments of celebration and reflection that take place at school, where students present the knowledge and skills acquired throughout the school year. The entire school community takes part in these moments, including parents, caregivers, public authorities, teachers and other students.
- ◆ In the specific case of restorative practices, children and adolescents have been trained to use these tools in the classroom and now act as **mediators of conflict** in the school environment, becoming **promoters of peaceful resolution strategies**.
- ◆ In 2024, we launched a global consultation involving children and adolescents worldwide to explore their hopes, dreams, and fears about the future. The consultation, part of the broader "**ChildFund Alliance World Index on the Rights of Women and Children**"²⁷, involved a total of **383 children**.

We plan on expanding children's participation in the future, involving them not only in the execution of activities, but also in the co-creation and design of new projects, ensuring their voices are heard and valued from the very beginning.

27 ChildFund Alliance World Index on the Rights of Women and Children - Focus. Children's Voices on Their Right to The Future. For more information, visit: <https://ejbn4fjvt9h.exactdn.com/uploads/2024/11/INDEX-2024-7-web-pagine-affiancate-1.pdf>



SAFETY

Safeguarding Children's Protection and Well-Being Through Education

- In 2024, under the LDS Programme, we carried out **3 workshops** on **play-based educational practices** with teachers, student representatives and school managers from **21 schools** in Ceará State, fostering inclusive and engaging learning spaces.
- 6 pedagogical monitoring visits** were conducted within teaching sectors of the Departments of Education in 3 municipalities, involving **75 participants**, to strengthen the capacity of local education systems to respond to the protection and learning needs of children.

OUR PARTNERS AND ALLIES

In Brazil, we participate to a number of education coordination spaces. We are a member of the **Rede de Educação do Semiárido Brasileiro (RESAB)**, a network that promotes the Contextualised Education for the Coexistence with the Semi-Arid Region through the formulation of meaningful educational proposals and public policies that meet the needs of the region, bringing together educators, governmental and non-governmental institutions. At the local level, we work closely with a range of partners and stakeholders in Ceará State, including **Pastoral do Menor NE1**, **Cáritas Diocesana de Crateús** and **Esplar**, with whom we have collaborated for over a decade to develop and monitor municipal public policies that strengthen Contextualised Education, incorporating gender and conflict mediation. Another important partner is the **Escola Família Agrícola (EFA) Dom Fragoso**, which provides secondary education and technical vocational training in agriculture and agroecology. In recent years, we have also partnered with the **Associação para o Desenvolvimento Local Coproduzido (Adelco)** in Ceará and the **Associação Nacional de Ação Indigenista (ANAI)** in Bahia, to carry out initiatives that support young indigenous women in achieving economic autonomy, self-care, and stronger organisation within their territories, with a particular focus on feminist economics and ethno-development. We also collaborate with the **Instituto Irmã Giuliana Galli (IIGG)** in Ceará, a philanthropic school that fosters the social inclusion of children and adolescents through music and culture.

THE VOICE OF

Mirlania Lima Bezerra

Institutional Coordinator for Avuar Social

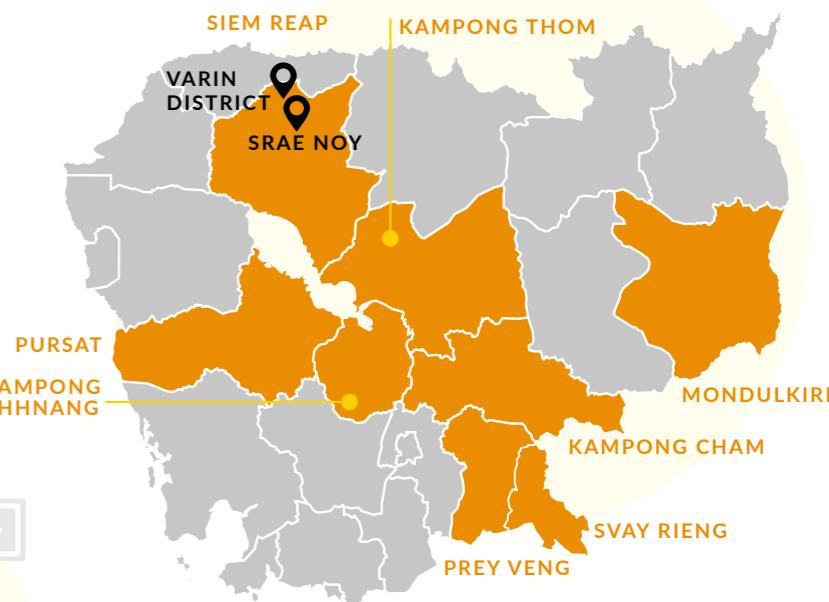
"We aim to promote Contextualised Education as a public policy that supports coexistence with the semi-arid region, the elimination of gender and race inequalities, and ensures access, retention, and success for vulnerable groups. We are dedicated to strengthening teacher training and creating school environments and infrastructures that are safe, accessible, and diversity-sensitive. We work to eliminate discrimination and gender-based violence, while promoting the autonomy and protagonism of women and girls. We strive to ensure their full participation in public and private spaces and equal access to economic resources and scientific knowledge."

To address climate challenges, we promote initiatives that enhance resilience and adaptation to climate change, integrating agroecology, environmental education, and efforts to conserve and restore ecosystems, biodiversity, and healthy food production in the semi-arid region. We are committed to promoting peace, justice, and strong institutions by fostering safe and inclusive environments, reducing violence, improving access to information, and supporting public policies that uphold human rights. We also invest in the creation of participatory mechanisms that strengthen transparency, accountability, and equity, ensuring the effective implementation of laws and practices that combat discrimination and promote social justice."

CAMBODIA

✓ OUR LATEST ACHIEVEMENTS

In 2024, **11 Women's and Children's Consultative Committees' meetings** on issues related to gender equality, children, young people and marginalised groups were held at the Varin District Hall in Siem Reap Province.



76 participants - including **56 women** - from **41 schools** in Svay Rieng, Prey Veng, Kampong Chhnang, and Pursat Provinces took part in **training sessions** on school management, community mobilisation, Early Warning Systems for dropout prevention, and strategies to enhance parental engagement.

In Srae Noy Commune, in Siem Reap Province, **22 remedial classes** were established across 10 schools, reaching **302 students**. They offered weekly sessions throughout the school year for grade 1-2 students.

In March and June 2024, **a total of 735** - including **446 girls** - and **832 students** - including **512 girls** - respectively, participated in **awareness-raising sessions** across **14 schools** in Siem Reap Province.

Pedagogical materials - including educational games, stationery, and thematic teaching aids - were provided to **34 pre-school and primary school teachers** in Svay Rieng, Prey Veng, Kampong Chhnang, and Pursat Provinces.

To improve access to learning resources, over **1,000 school supply kits** were distributed, and **8,063 new books** were delivered to school libraries.



In Svay Rieng, Prey Veng, Kampong Chhnang, and Pursat Provinces, we carried out **21 remedial classes** across 19 schools, involving **394 students**.



Targeted counselling sessions were delivered to **4,812 students** - including **4,761 girls**, focusing on health, puberty, menstrual hygiene, and girls' rights.



FRAMING THE CONTEXT

We have been active in the country since 2009. Cambodia's education system faces several challenges that hinder equitable access and quality. While primary school completion rates are relatively high – **78.8% children were enrolled in primary education in 2023 – only a small proportion of students manage to reach higher levels of education** (UNESCO, 2023). Indeed, the **enrolment rate in upper secondary education in 2023 was 49.6%** (UNESCO, 2025). Although some progress is evident, many children in Cambodia still struggle to meet age-appropriate learning standards. **In 2018, nearly 25% of Grade 3 students²⁸ were unable to write, and only 27% of children aged 3 to 5 were on track in literacy and numeracy skills** (UNICEF, 2018).

Geographical inequalities remain significant, with children in rural areas less likely to complete school compared to their urban peers. Dropout rates in urban areas of Cambodia are significantly lower than in rural areas, with only 7.8% of students leaving primary education compared to 10.9%, and 14.3% for lower secondary education versus 23.2% (Parliamentary Institute of Cambodia, 2017). Furthermore, the number of students exceeds the number of teachers, and **the lack of trained educators** have negative impacts on instructional quality, student learning outcome, and attainment, contributing to the risk of dropping out (Yem, 2025).

Gender disparities persist, especially in rural areas, where **girls are more likely to drop out than boys**. Indeed, **the dropout rate for girls was 9.5% in primary education** in 2022–2023, compared to **8.6% for boys** (Cambodianess, 2025). Poor infrastructure also affects the learning environment, severely impacting adolescent girls and children with disabilities: **WASH services in schools** have seen improvements, yet major challenges persist, especially in rural regions. While 76% of schools have access to basic water supply and 68% offer basic hygiene facilities, **only 32% provide basic sanitation services** (UNICEF, 2024).

WeWorld CARES about Child-Centred Education in Cambodia

We place children's well-being and protection at the heart of our education strategy, ensuring they grow up in safe, inclusive, and stimulating environments that nurture their emotional, social, and academic development. Our deep-rooted commitment to building a protective and empowering ecosystem around children is shaped by a deep understanding of Cambodia's cultural and social context. Awareness-raising plays a central role in this effort: it helps communities recognise the importance of safeguarding children and supporting their development. By fostering open dialogue and shared understanding, especially from and among children, we create a system where child protection is not only acknowledged but actively practiced, making children's well-being a shared responsibility and a lasting priority.

"I come from a very poor family. I live near the Vietnamese border with my grandmother, my father and my sister. My mother passed away, and my father, who is a farmer, sometimes goes to Vietnam to work. Before I met WeWorld I was facing significant challenges in attending school. I live three kilometres far from the school building, so I often had to walk, sometimes with some friends, because otherwise I did not know how to get there. I struggled to attend school regularly, not only because many times I arrived late, but also because I did not have sufficient school supplies to study. Additionally, my grandmother is not feeling well lately, so given all these hardships I was thinking about leaving the school. Fortunately, thanks to WeWorld's support, I was given a bicycle to reach the school safely and different school supplies I needed, including a uniform, flip-flops, pens, books and a school bag. Now I can go to school regularly, and I arrive on time. My academic performance has improved significantly, and I feel more engaged and motivated. WeWorld not only has helped ease my family's financial burden by giving me what I needed the most, but has also boosted my confidence and happiness at school."

Puth Sambath (9 years old),
student at Samrong Primary School in Svay Chrum, Svay Rieng Province



COMMUNITY

Engaging Communities in Promoting Children's Agency

- As part of the **"Promote Education and Child Protection in Remote Schools of Siem Reap Province" (VARIN) Project**, under our Long-Distance Sponsorship (LDS) Programme, we actively supported **Women's and Children's Consultative Committees (WCCCs)** in organising regular meetings to address issues related to gender equality, children, young people and marginalised groups. In particular, women collected referrals and discussed episodes of violence, child labour, and child rights. In 2024, **11 meetings** were held at the Varin District Hall, led by the WCCC Chairperson and attended by **237 participants**, including 81 women. These meetings served as platforms for coordinating timely support to vulnerable children.
- We also worked closely with the **Commune Committees for Women and Children (CCWC)**, recognising their vital role in monitoring and responding to violence affecting children and their families. In 2024, we partnered with CCWC to conduct child protection awareness campaigns across **8 villages** in Srae Noy commune, Siem Reap Province, reaching **325 people**. These campaigns focused on key child rights, such as the right to life, development, protection, and participation.
- In parallel, we strengthened local education systems through our **"Reinforcing Education Access with Community Help" (REACH) Project**, implemented in Svay Rieng, Prey Veng, Kampong Chhnang, and Pursat Provinces under the Long-Distance Sponsorship (LDS) Programme. The project, through the support of School Support Committees, resulted in steady **increases in student enrolment, reduced repetition rates, and a rise in Grade 6 promotion rates** – from 88% to 97.4% over three years.
- Between June and July 2024, **276 participants – including 56 women** – from **41 schools** took part in training sessions on school management, community mobilisation, Early Warning Systems for dropout prevention, and strategies to enhance parental engagement. These sessions, attended by representatives from District and Provincial Offices of Education, included **practical workshops, group discussions**, and the development of school-level action plans to ensure sustainability.



ACCESS

Unlocking Access to Inclusive, Quality Learning

- Under the VARIN Project, **playground rehabilitation** was carried out in **6 schools** in Siem Reap Province, to provide adequate materials to build and install playground equipment including slides, swings, seesaws, climbing walls, and football goals. Floor tiles were also supplied for the renovation of two pre-primary classrooms.
- 6 new libraries** were established in Siem Reap Province, while in Kampong Chhnang, Pursat, Svay Rieng, and Prey Veng Provinces, we supported **61 schools** – targeted by the REACH Project – with library renovations, book supplies, and librarian training, enhancing learning environments and promoting literacy.
- A refresher training for **125 librarians** – including 59 women – focused on cataloguing, creating engaging reading spaces, and supporting diverse learning needs, helping transform libraries into active and inclusive learning hubs. To improve access to learning resources, **over 1,000 school supply kits** were distributed, and **8,063 new books** were delivered to school libraries.
- Emergency support materials were provided to **223 vulnerable children** – including 113 girls – to facilitate their access to pre-primary and primary education.
- In Srae Noy Commune, in Siem Reap Province, **22 remedial classes** reaching a total of **302 students** were established across **10 schools**, offering weekly sessions throughout the school year for grade 1–2 students. In Svay Rieng, Prey Veng, Kampong Chhnang, and Pursat Provinces, we carried out **21 remedial classes** across **19 schools**, involving **394 students**. Both activities were delivered by trained teachers, focused on addressing learning gaps in Khmer and Mathematics through small-group sessions using adapted materials and active learning strategies.

- ◆ In 2024, to enhance classroom learning, **pedagogical materials** such as educational games, stationery, and thematic teaching aids were introduced to make lessons more effective – especially for reading and numeracy. These materials were provided to **34 preschool and primary school teachers** in Svay Rieng, Prey Veng, Kampong Chhnang, and Pursat Provinces, under the REACH Project. Additionally, **145 classrooms** were **reorganised and decorated with learning corners** for Khmer, Mathematics, Social Studies, Science, Library, and Student Talent, supported by visual resources aligned with the main textbooks. These improvements aimed to foster active participation and improve academic outcomes.
- ◆ **Parental engagement** was also prioritised: meetings were held with parents of children needing learning support to share information about the remedial programmes and encourage involvement. A total of **116 parents** attended these sessions. Teachers received ongoing support, with **138 preschool and primary school teachers trained in Teaching and Learning Methodology** in Siem Reap Province as part of the VARIN Project. Additionally, **228 literacy coaches** – including 80 women – participated in quarterly reflection **workshops** to exchange experiences and explore the use of educational games to enhance students' reading skills.
- ◆ In Varin, Siem Reap Province, **23 pre-school teachers** and **59 contracted teachers** from **12 schools** have enhanced their skills in curriculum development, teaching materials preparation, lesson planning, teaching methodology, and classroom management.
- ◆ To address **household-level vulnerabilities** and reduce the risk of school dropouts, **food kits distribution** was provided to families of vulnerable students. Each package included 20 kilograms of rice, six cans of fish, one box of pasta, one bottle of cooking oil, and one bottle of soy sauce, helping to **stabilise food security and support continued education**.



RIGHTS

Advancing and Protecting Children's Rights

In Cambodia, we ensure that children's rights are a cross-cutting priority, aiming to make interventions more inclusive, child-friendly, and impactful. Starting from these peer-led campaigns, children become aware of their rights and can act as multipliers within their communities.

- ◆ In March and June, a total of **735** – including 446 girls – and **832 students** – including 512 girls – respectively, participated in awareness-raising sessions across **14 schools** in Siem Reap Province, as part of the VARIN Project. These sessions, organised with the support of Student Councils, school directors, and teachers, focused on **child rights, school safety, and diabetes awareness**. The aim was to promote the fundamental rights of children and address key protection issues such as abuse, violence, psychosocial risks, disasters, and health concerns.
- ◆ Through **educational games and student-led campaigns**, children were encouraged to understand and advocate for their rights, becoming agents of change within their communities. Student Councils also led enrolment drives, hygiene awareness campaigns, and community events involving local authorities and institutions to raise support and funds.

Our WASH-in-Schools (WinS) Modality in Cambodia



In Siem Reap Province, as part of the VARIN Project, we carried out the **renovation of toilets and latrines in 3 primary schools**. Alongside these improvements, **drinking water filters** were installed, ensuring access to safe water for **807 students, including 413 girls**. At the same time, we worked on the **maintenance and upgrading of WASH facilities** in Svay Rieng, Prey Veng, Kampong Chhnang, and Pursat Provinces, under the REACH Project. This included the regular upkeep of rehabilitated toilets and latrines to maintain cleanliness and functionality, as well as the **repair of handwashing stations**. Moreover, **basic hygiene materials** were supplied to ensure students could practice daily hygiene routines. **WASH-related messages** promoting handwashing, safe water use, and waste management were embedded in life skills activities and school campaigns led by Student Councils. These efforts contributed to creating a **safer and more hygienic school environment, encouraged regular attendance, particularly among girls**, and helped strengthen healthy hygiene habits among students.



EXPRESSION

Amplifying Children's Voices and Perspectives

We consider children's participation essential to promote children's agency. Our activities are designed to give children **space to express their views, engage with their communities, and contribute to solutions for issues affecting them**. Their involvement strengthens confidence, teamwork, and problem-solving skills, while amplifying their voices in both school and community settings.

To ensure child participation, we promoted the creation and strengthening of **student-led bodies**, such as student councils and child clubs, that allow children and young people to voice their perspectives, engage in decision-making, and take an active role in addressing issues that affect their lives and communities.

- ◆ **Student Councils** are formal school-based groups, that follow the guidelines of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport, composed of students and teachers, with voluntary membership active in **44 schools** in Svay Rieng, Prey Veng, Kampong Chhnang, and Pursat Provinces, involving children aged 6 to 10. Their role includes **monitoring the school environment**, such as checking classroom and library cleanliness, ensuring proper use of common areas, and verifying access to learning materials and playground equipment.

Child Clubs



Child Clubs are informal student-led groups of 10 to 14-year-old children focused on identifying and addressing issues affecting children in their communities. In 2024, some clubs were newly established, while others were strengthened and improved. Each Club holds **bi-monthly meetings** to discuss the root causes of the challenges they face, gathering data through **interviews** with teachers, health staff, parents, and other community members with the help of other teachers or the project staff. In 2024, **4 community events** were organised by Child Clubs, reaching **1,431 participants** – including **841 women and girls**. The Clubs identified four main priority issues: domestic violence, oral hygiene, environmental hazards and fever, and children being left behind in school. In Varin, Siem Reap Province, activities were implemented in **8 villages**, involving **142 members** – of whom **122 girls** – led by **8 volunteers**. Participation has brought increased confidence in engaging with adults, improved group collaboration, and stronger critical thinking. Clubs also take part in social events, such as traditional Apsara dance performances during school ceremonies, reinforcing their role as **active members of the community**.

- ◆ In 2024, these Councils also organised several **student-led campaigns** involving 209 Student Councils members, such as awareness activities focused on school safety, hygiene, prevention of violence, and environmental risk management as well as campaigns related to children's enrolment, actively involving teachers, parents, and community leaders. Their functionality is regularly monitored to ensure meaningful participation and impact. These efforts reached **2,654 students**, of whom 1,551 were girls.
- ◆ Moreover, we launched a global consultation involving children and adolescents worldwide to explore their hopes, dreams, and fears about the future. The consultation, part of the broader "**ChildFund Alliance World Index on the Rights of Women and Children**"²⁹, involved a total of **338 children**.



SAFETY

Safeguarding Children's Protection and Well-Being Through Education

- In 2024, efforts were made to create safer, more inclusive, and engaging school environments for students. A **School Safety campaign** was conducted in **14 target schools** in Siem Reap Province, as part of the VARIN Project, reaching **832 students** in Grades 4–6. Supported by school directors and teachers, the campaign addressed key protection topics such as abuse, violence, psychosocial well-being, disaster risk reduction, fire hazards and safe transportation, promoting safety both at home and at school.
- With regards to girls' well-being, targeted **counselling sessions** were delivered to **4,812 students** – including **4,761 girls**, focusing on **health, puberty, menstrual health, and girls' rights**. Facilitated by **trained female counsellors**, these sessions promoted awareness and healthy practices and supported girls' regular school attendance. Moreover, **hygiene materials** were provided to facilitate these activities, reaching a total of **2,196 students**, including 1,964 girls.

OUR PARTNERS AND ALLIES

In Siem Reap Province, we participate in several child protection and education coordination mechanisms, such as the **Supporting Education Siem Reap Team (SEST)**, which includes 31 NGOs. Led by a committee of 5 NGOs, the cluster organises regular quarterly meetings where its members share best practices, work on and update the education strategy in the country and discuss about issues and challenges faced during the implementation of their projects. Results of the meetings are then reported to the Siem Reap Provincial Office of Education (PoE). We are also member of the **Violence Against Children Working Group (VACWG)**, which through the work of several institutional stakeholders and NGOs focuses on child protection, violence prevention and women's rights. At the local level, we closely collaborate with **Kampuchea Action to Promote Education (KAPE)**, a local NGO operating in 13 Cambodia Provinces. It is the largest education-focused organisation in the country and has been implementing WeWorld's Long-Distance Sponsorship (LDS) projects since 2009.

ITALY

THE VOICE OF

Andrea Cefis
Country Representative

"Cambodia's education strategy focuses on ensuring access to quality education, reducing dropout rates, including out-of-school children, and improving learning environments. To achieve this, we are working on expanding early childhood education, strengthening teacher training, enhancing learning-assessment systems, supporting technical and vocational education, and integrating digital tools. Special attention is given to marginalised groups, such as girls, children with disabilities, and those who live in remote areas. Our priority at the moment is to improve primary education, where we aim to enhance teaching quality and improve school management by engaging vulnerable teachers, students, and community members to ensure an inclusive, quality education for all. We promote a community-based school management model, empowering local stakeholders to run and support schools, boosting educational outcomes and increasing community awareness on the value of education."

We are also improving WASH-in-Schools components to our interventions, with the aim to upgrade infrastructure and running campaigns to raise awareness on hygiene practices. In line with the Cambodian government's strategy, WeWorld supports Information and Communication Technology (ICT) integration in public schools by providing computers, projectors and other supplies, in order to modernise teaching methods, strengthen governance, and enrich learning environments, fostering critical thinking and equipping students with the skills Cambodia's evolving scenario requires."

✓ OUR LATEST ACHIEVEMENTS

5,262 students across the country participated in various initiatives and **campaigns** designed by young people themselves to tackle challenges and explore opportunities within their schools and communities.



In Bologna and Naples, **30 youth educators** have participated in **capacity building trainings** aimed at supporting children and young people from marginalised backgrounds in co-designing community actions.



In 2025, **327 young people** aged 10 to 16 attended our **5 educational centres** in Aversa, Catania, Cagliari, Milan and Rome, and **205** of them accessed the centres at least **twice a week**.



As part of our **Global Citizenship Education (GCE) Programme**, **1,476 students** were involved in debates, workshops and other initiatives, while **312 teachers** were trained.

Through our **multi-phase debate competition "Exponi le tue Idee!"**, a total of **1,885 students** were reached, involving **175 classes**.



8 help desks in Milan, Rome, Aversa, Cagliari and Catania were activated to offer individualised education and Psychosocial Support (PSS) to **117 children and young people** aged 11 to 25.



Helps desks provided **one-to-one support** to **75 parents** to enhance their parenting skills, and **group workshops** involving a total of **85 parents** to foster shared learning and peer-to-peer assistance.



In Milan, **42 key community figures** – coaches, scout leaders and teachers were trained to recognise **early warning signs of distress** among students and how to guide them to **appropriate support services**.



FRAMING THE CONTEXT

We have been operating in the country since 2014. The Italian education system is marked by deep inequalities, with **significant territorial disparities** in access and quality from early childcare to university. Southern regions show worse educational outcomes compared to the North (Istat, 2024). Rural and marginalised areas remain underserved, and socio-economic disadvantage contributes to digital poverty, school segregation, and lack of resources (ibid.). Early school leaving remains critical, with a **national dropout rate of 10.5% in 2023, disproportionately affecting males** – 12.2% vs. 7.1% for girls (Eurostat, 2025) – and the South – 23.4% in Sardinia and 18.6% in Sicily – making it one of the highest rates in Europe (European Commission, 2024). **Learning loss** – students failing to reach basic competency levels – is estimated at 8.7% nationally (Invalsi, 2025).

Gender inequalities in academic performance persist: according to the 2022 PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment) test – which assesses the knowledge and skills of 15-year-old students in mathematics, reading and science – in Italy **boys outperform girls in mathematics** by 21 points **while girls excel in reading** – +19 points (OECD, 2023). **Students with a migrant background face compounded challenges**, as 52% are socio-economically marginalised. This suggests that much of the educational inequality experienced by students with migration background is tied to their socio-economic circumstances rather than their immigrant status itself (ibid.).

Students with disabilities face several resource and infrastructure gaps (European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education, 2024). Well-being data shows that 76% of students make friends easily, but only 64% feel a sense of belonging – below the OECD average and declining since 2018 (OECD, 2023). **Bullying and cyberbullying are widespread**: 25.3% report victimisation, 18.1% admit participation; cyberbullying affects 7.9% as victims, while 7.4% as perpetrators (Piattaforma Elisa, 2022). Prejudice-based bullying includes **ethnic (6.2%), disability-related (5.3%), and LGBTI+ discrimination (4.7%)**, deeply impacting on student's safety, mental health and their overall well-being at school (ibid.).



WeWorld CARES about Child-Centred Education in Italy

Our approach to education in Italy starts from creating learning environments where children and young people, especially those from marginalised backgrounds, are recognised as key actors in shaping their education. We prioritise participation by actively involving those whose voices are often left out of decision-making processes, working within schools and communities to shift power from traditional, adult-led models to ones where students lead and adults support as facilitators and co-learners. Through this approach, education becomes a shared responsibility, rooted in equity, participation and the adoption of a critical pedagogy that nurtures children's and young people's ability to question and analyse power structures, identify inequalities and understand the social context that shapes their lives.



COMMUNITY

Engaging Communities in Promoting Children's Agency

◆ As part of the **"Gener-Azione 5"** and **"Changemakers for Climate Justice"** Projects, funded by the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation (AICS), a total of **5,262 students** nationally were involved in different actions and campaigns conceived by young people themselves, with the aim of addressing challenges and opportunities within their schools and communities. Through participatory workshops and peer-led activities, students were encouraged to reflect on issues such as climate justice, participation, sustainability, and global citizenship, and to translate their ideas into concrete actions.

"I attend a scientific high school. I have been going to WeWorld's centre for 3-4 years. What I like most about it is the people I interact with. I have fun and even do my homework there. Since I started going to the centre, I have been improving a lot at school. They help me with the things I do not understand. The best experience was when we went to Paestum: we spent five days going to the pool and to the beach. For the next activity, I would love to play football."

Ryan (16 years old),

user of the Frequenza 200 centre in Aversa, Campania



ACCESS

Unlocking Access to Inclusive, Quality Learning

We work to ensure that every young person has the opportunity to learn, grow, and thrive through participatory educational environments tailored to their needs and potential.

- ◆ As part of the **"Obiettivo 200"** Project, funded by Fondazione San Zeno, and the **"Diritto al Futuro"** Project, financed by Fondazione Cassa Depositi e Prestiti (CDP), we implemented the **"Frequenza 200"** Programme³² dropout and educational poverty among youth aged 10 to 16 in Italy's most socially vulnerable neighbourhoods. Launched in 2013, the programme operates through **5 educational centres** located in **Aversa** (Campania), **Catania** (Sicily), **Cagliari** (Sardinia), **Milan** (Lombardy), and **Rome** (Lazio).
- ◆ These centres are open every weekday afternoon and serve as safe and engaging spaces offering **school support, individualised educational guidance**, and a **wide range of learning activities** aimed at strengthening life skills and personal development. During the summer months – often a fragile time for children and youth due to school closures – the centres remain open, offering dedicated summer programmes that provide enriching experiences and access to leisure activities that would otherwise be unavailable.
- ◆ Initiatives include **creative workshops, sport-, play-based and cultural activities** that foster emotional growth and social engagement. A key feature of the programme is the **Case Manager**, who coordinates personalised educational pathways and connects families, schools, and communities to ensure long-term support.
- ◆ **Frequenza 200** not only supports academic success but also promotes community regeneration by integrating its work into local policies and building a network of institutions committed to quality education for all. In 2024, **322 young people** aged approximately 10 to 16 attended our 5 educational centres, and **215** of them accessed the centres at least **twice a week**. In 2025, attendance rose to **327 young people**, and **205** of them engaged with the centres at least twice weekly.

³¹ **Global Districts**, funded by the EU Development Education and Awareness-Raising (DEAR) Programme, <https://www.weworld.it/en/what-we-do/european-projects/global-districts-for-an-inclusive-education-to-change>; **Wishing a Future – Garantire il diritto al futuro per le giovani generazioni**, co-funded by the Intesa San Paolo Charity Fund; **WORLD: Our World Our Planet**, funded by the EU Erasmus+ Programme, <https://www.weworld.it/en/what-we-do/european-projects/world/>; **HYPE – YouH unified in local ecosystEms Promoting Solidarity**, funded by the EU Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values (CERV) Programme, <https://www.weworld.it/en/what-we-do/european-projects/hype-youth-unified-in-local-ecosystems-promoting-solidarity-2/>.



RIGHTS

Advancing and Protecting Children's Rights

We actively create spaces and opportunities for children and young people to recognise, claim, and exercise their rights, both as individuals and as active members of society.

- ◆ In Milan, Bologna, Naples and Cosenza (Calabria), our **Global Citizenship Education (GCE) Programme**'s activities support students and teachers in developing critical thinking, adopting learner-centred approaches, and deepening awareness of **human rights and the principles of the 2030 Agenda**. The ultimate goal is to nurture a generation that is not only aware of global dynamics but also actively involved in shaping inclusive communities and advocating for equity and justice. Through this Programme, which included a **training for 312 teachers**, we place young people at the centre of educational transformation, recognising them as key actors in the exercise of their rights.
- ◆ As part of the "Gener-Azione 5" and "Changemakers for Climate Justice" Projects, we promote **self-expression, reflection, and civic engagement**, encouraging students to explore their identities, values, and responsibilities. A total of **1,476 students** were involved in debates, workshops, and creative initiatives, which helped them in becoming informed, responsible citizens capable of contributing to a more just and sustainable world.

"Exponi le tue Idee!"

Since 2014, WeWorld has been promoting "**Exponi le tue Idee!**"³³, now in its 11th year, a national initiative that uses **structured debate** as an innovative educational tool to foster critical thinking, public speaking, and democratic engagement. Since its launch, the initiative has aimed to promote active citizenship, intercultural dialogue, and democratic participation among young people. Currently involving students from **upper secondary schools** across Italy, the project has also been successfully tested in middle schools and universities across more than 15 EU countries. Students take part in a multi-phase debate competition that encourages them to explore complex global issues such as inclusion, human rights, migration, development, and climate justice. Students form teams to argue both sides of a topic, regardless of personal beliefs, developing empathy, intellectual flexibility, and civic awareness. The programme begins with in-school debates, followed by regional playoffs and a national Debate Day that usually takes place in summer. Local communities are also engaged through the role of voluntary judges, who are trained to evaluate the debate. In the 2024-2025 edition, a total of **1,885 students** were reached, involving **175 classes**. By combining education with active engagement, **Exponi le tue Idee!** continues to empower young people to become informed, articulate, and responsible citizens³⁴.



EXPRESSION

Amplifying Children's Voices and Perspectives

Through our initiatives and activities, we ensure that children and young people, especially those from marginalised backgrounds, can meaningfully engage in shaping the decisions that impact their lives. Our aim is to empower them to play an active role in the design and implementation of our projects and programmes, making sure their perspectives are placed at the centre of our intervention.

We focus on creating the right conditions – child-friendly spaces, appropriate resources, and culturally-sensitive activities – that foster genuine participation. While systemic inequalities, limited representation of individuals from migrant backgrounds, and cultural norms that hinder the participation of girls and children with disabilities persist, our efforts have shown the **potential of children to take on meaningful roles** in shaping safer and more inclusive educational communities, gain leadership experience, and engage more actively in community dialogue.



SAFETY

Safeguarding Children's Protection and Well-Being Through Education

- ◆ In 2024, we launched a global consultation involving children and adolescents worldwide to explore their hopes, dreams, and fears about the future. The consultation, part of the broader "**ChildFund Alliance World Index on the Rights of Women and Children**"³⁵, involved a total of **100 children**.
- ◆ The **WeWorld Academy** is a free initiative aimed at young people aged 18 to 29, designed to strengthen personal skills and promote active participation in democratic life. Through testimonies, workshops, and moments of dialogue, the programme offers both theoretical knowledge and practical skills related to youth activism, addressing topics such as climate justice, human and environmental rights, and the role of cities as drivers of change. The goal is to provide young people with concrete tools to understand global challenges and develop solutions, creating inclusive spaces where they can express themselves and contribute as agents of change within their communities and contexts.
- ◆ To enhance children's future role, we are working on deepening their **participation across all project phases**, to implement more **child-led initiatives**, and creating **platforms** for them to interact with decision-makers and influence policy. One such platform is our "**Scuola di Attivismo Digitale**"³⁶, which focuses on the evolving landscape of youth communication and activism. It offers free **training courses** for young people aged 14-35 who aspire to become digital creators or influencers. By focusing on themes like climate justice, gender equality, and participation, the initiative equips them with the tools to use social media strategically for advocacy and awareness-raising.
- ◆ A network of **42 key community figures** was created in Milan under the "WeCare" Project. The network is composed of coaches, scout leaders, and teachers who regularly interact with young people. These figures were trained to recognise **early warning signs of distress** and how to guide individuals toward the **appropriate support services**. These efforts will also contribute to the development of a shared protocol in collaboration with local institutions and third-sector organisations, aiming to establish unified procedures for identifying, referring, and supporting young people across the territory.

In the future, we plan to introduce **workshops on sexuality education** and **deconstruction of gender stereotypes** into school curricula, with the aim of promoting gender equality, challenging harmful norms, and fostering safe, respectful learning environments for all students.

"My name is Sarah, I am 14 years old and I have been attending the centre since the second year of middle school. Sometimes at school I struggle, especially when I have to write or speak in Italian in front of others. But at the centre I feel calm: the educators encourage me and help me understand what I really enjoy doing. My favourite thing about the centre is the friends I have made - I always have fun with them. I also really loved the trap music course we did last year and the summer activities, especially going to the swimming pool! In the future, I would love to go on another summer trip, maybe to the seaside like we did this summer, or even to the mountains!"

Sarah (14 years old),
user of the Frequenza 200 centre in Milan, Lombardy

OUR PARTNERS AND ALLIES

In Italy, we actively contribute to national and local coordination spaces focused on education and inclusion. At the national level, we are part of **strategic networks** such as **CONCORD-CGE**, the Italian NGO **Gruppo di Lavoro per la Convenzione sui diritti dell'infanzia e dell'adolescenza (Gruppo CRC)**³⁷, **Alleanza per l'Infanzia**, the **SDG4 working group** promoted by **Alleanza Italiana per lo Sviluppo Sostenibile (ASviS)**³⁸, **Educare alle Differenze and Scuola Sconfinata**, ensuring presence through partnerships in project design and implementation. At the local level, we work with the QUBI Group in Milan's Municipalities 4 and 6, as well as with the **Transizioni Giuste** network in Bologna. These collaborations **strengthen our advocacy and programming, enabling us to co-create inclusive educational strategies and promote systemic change**. Through our **Frequenza 200** Programme, we collaborate with **L'Impronta** in Milan, **Cemea** in Rome, **Patratrac** in Aversa, **Fondazione Somaschi** in Cagliari and **Diacionia Valdese** in Catania. Under our **Global Citizenship Education (GCE)** Programme, we closely work several NGOs such as **ACRA**, **Mani Tese**, **ActionAid**, **Scosse**, **CADIAI**, **CAPSA2** and the **University of Bologna**. In Milan, we also work with both **Welcomed** and **Solidare** to ensure youth access to mental health services.

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³⁷ Group for the Convention of the Rights of the Child (CRC Group)
³⁸ Italian Alliance for Sustainable Development

THE VOICE OF

Elena Muscarella Education Programme Officer

"In Italy, growing socio-economic disparities are deeply impacting educational equity, with poverty disproportionately affecting youth and shaping their academic outcomes and future expectations. Students from marginalised backgrounds face systemic barriers, often perceiving limited opportunities for change. Students with a migration background, in particular, experience racialisation dynamics, that extend beyond individual prejudice to embedded biases in policies, curricula and teacher attitudes. We believe that educational spaces must evolve to become truly safer spaces where young people can drive change in all their diversities.

A strategic shift is needed: education must embrace anti-oppressive pedagogies that challenge structural inequalities across race, class, gender, and ability. To do this, a radical reshaping of the role of education is necessary to rebalance power and promote a critical self-reflection among educators, to put children and young people at the centre. This demands proactive measures to ensure inclusivity for all, including LGBTQIA+ youth, students with disabilities, and those from diverse cultural and socio-economic backgrounds. Schools should foster environments where young people feel empowered to express their identities and voice their concerns.

Another crucial aspect is the urgent need for comprehensive sexual education, which is vital for empowering young people to make informed decisions, build healthy relationships and actively prevent gender-based violence. Under this framework, we need to promote a gender-sensitive pedagogy that addresses the socialisation of gender identities, challenging rigid and outdated norms of masculinity. School can become a space of freedom, where students can learn to express their emotions, understand their bodies and desires, and promote the co-existence of differences.

Student participation in schools, though legally recognised, often remains a mechanical formality, limiting meaningful engagement and agency. This is compounded by gaps between civic education policies and their actual implementation, and by broader ideological shifts that restrict democratic spaces for children's involvement. Our strategy aims to transform children's participation by creating inclusive platforms for dialogue, embedding participatory practices across all school levels, and strengthening the collaboration with families and communities."

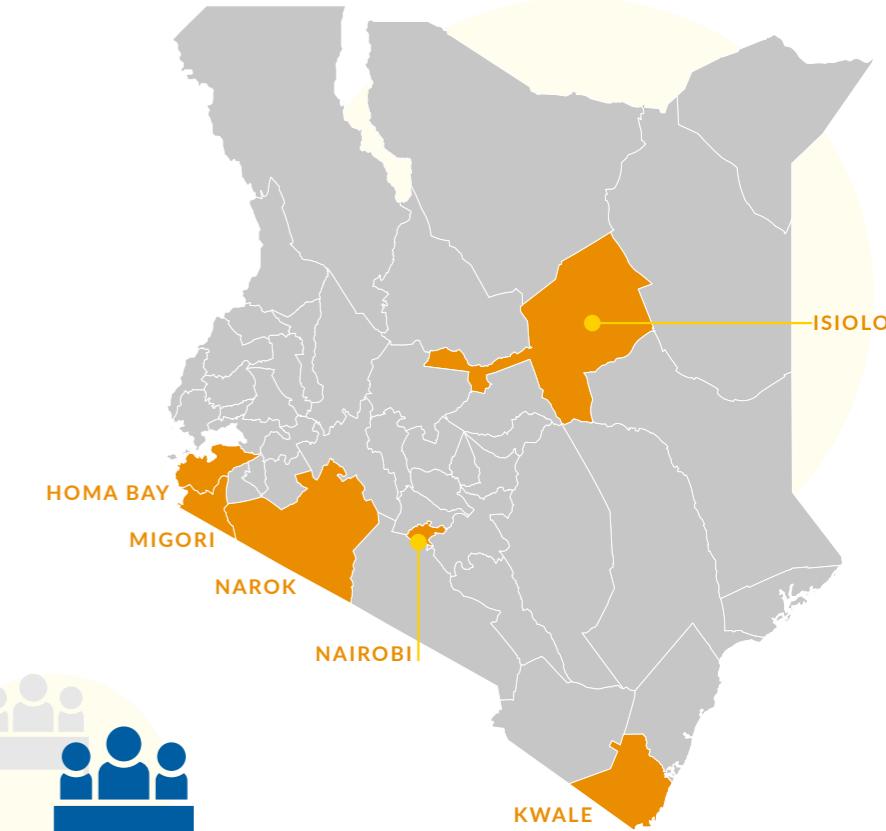
This factsheet was realised in partnership with the Education Above All's Educate A Child Programme (EAC)

KENYA

✓ OUR LATEST ACHIEVEMENTS



Anti-FGM campaigns in Narok County through community forums reached **229 community members** – 145 women and 84 men.



A **training on child protection** was conducted for **415 individuals** – 153 women and 262 men – including parents, caregivers, teachers, and other key stakeholders across **37 schools** in Migori and Narok Counties.

566 teachers – 322 female and 244 male – were **trained** on the introduction of the **Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC)** and creative learning methodologies.

Therapeutic art sessions were implemented reaching **135 children**, to help them recover from mental distress and trauma and build their confidence.

Child-led Governance Councils have been strengthened in **37 schools**, and **18 Children Advisory Committees** have been established at Ward, Sub-County, and County level.



12 classrooms were built across **11 primary schools**, significantly reducing congestion and improving the learning environment.



A total of **6,000 vulnerable children** received **notebooks containing child rights' messages** to raise awareness and encourage their active participation as agents of change.



A total of **74 teachers** – 45 female and 29 male – were **trained** in **child guidance, counselling, and Psychosocial Support (PSS)**, to enhance their ability to identify and support pupils with socio-emotional and behavioural challenges, abuse cases and disciplinary problems.



FRAMING THE CONTEXT

We have been working in Kenya since 2009. Learning institutions in the country face significant challenges, including **inadequate infrastructure** – such as classrooms, libraries, laboratories, and toilets – **overcrowding, limited subject choices³⁹, and poor learning environments**. These issues compromise practical training, student safety, and retention, ultimately contributing to low enrolment and high dropout rates (MoE, 2024; UNICEF, 2025). **As of 2023, approximately 8.5% - 1.8 million - of children aged 6 to 15 were out of school**, a rise of 7.5% from 2021 (USAWA, 2023). The transition rate from primary to secondary school has also declined, **dropping from 91% in 2020 to 78.5% in 2022**, and is alarmingly low at **1.5% among children with disabilities**, who face barriers such as a lack of trained teachers, inclusive curricula, and assistive devices (KNBS, UNICEF & UNFPA, 2024).

Access to education is further disrupted by both **natural and human-made crises**, including floods, droughts, ethnic conflicts, and terrorism. An estimated **9 million children are exposed to drought and water scarcity, while over 1.3 million face flood risks** (UNICEF, 2024). Additionally, children are increasingly vulnerable to radicalisation, substance abuse, and harmful online content, including cyberbullying and cybercrime.

Gender inequalities remain deeply rooted, driven by discriminatory laws, cultural norms, and harmful practices that limit girls' access to education. **Girls face multiple barriers that severely affect their school attendance and completion**, such as female genital mutilation (FGM), child marriage, teenage pregnancy⁴⁰, poor parenting, and sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), particularly in informal settlements and Arid and Semi-Arid Lands (ASALs).

³⁹ Most schools in Kenya, especially in rural areas, face significant resource challenges. They often lack essential facilities such as laboratories, technical equipment, and qualified teachers for subjects like science and technology. For example, primary schools typically do not have workshops for technical subjects such as art and craft, limiting students' exposure to hands-on learning. Moreover, learners in these schools are disadvantaged when transitioning to secondary education under the Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC) approach – see definition below – which offers three main pathways: STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics), Social Sciences, and Arts and Sports Science. Although students are encouraged to choose a pathway based on their interests and career goals, many rural schools lack the infrastructure to effectively offer the STEM pathway, further restricting students' opportunities.

⁴⁰ Data show a strong link between education and early pregnancy: 38% of young women with no education have experienced pregnancy, compared to just 5% among those with education beyond secondary level (KNBS, 2022).

WeWorld CARES about Child-Centred Education in Kenya

We believe every child deserves to be heard, especially when their voices are excluded from decisions that shape their lives. That is why we work closely with children, promoting their active participation in governance councils, advisory committees, and child-friendly feedback sessions, to give them real opportunities to influence how their education and protection are designed and implemented. By actively involving communities in this process, we help shift mindsets and build environments where children are seen as active participants, not passive recipients.



COMMUNITY

Engaging Communities in Promoting Children's Agency

As part of the **Pamoja Tudumishe Elimu (PTE) Project⁴¹**, implemented in partnership with Education Above All's Educate A Child (EAC) Programme, with support from QFFD, and through our Long-Distance Sponsorship (LDS) Programme, **coordination meetings** were facilitated with education and child protection stakeholders, bringing together representatives from various **Ministries, Departments, local authorities** and **Community Antennas**, who act as a bridge between schools and communities. These meetings provided a platform to address child protection issues such as the reporting and follow-up of child abuse cases, sensitisation on child rights and protection, and the establishment of referral pathways.

⁴¹ *Pamoja Tudumishe Elimu* - Promotion of quality and inclusive education for the retention and engagement of students at risk of dropping out in Kenya and Tanzania. For more information, visit: <https://www.weworld.it/en/what-we-do/global-projects/pamoja-tudumishe-elimu-promotion-of-quality-and-inclusive-education-for-the-retention-and-engagement-of-students-at-risk-of-dropping-out-in-kenya-and-tanzania>

- Through the **Tudumishe Elimu Na Afya (TENA) Project⁴²**, part of the LDS Programme, **anti-FGM campaigns** were organised in Narok County through **community forums** reaching **229 community members** – 145 women and 84 men. These forums addressed comprehensive sexuality education, women's rights, adolescent sexual and reproductive health (ASRH), pregnancy prevention, and the elimination of harmful traditional practices, while promoting locally driven solutions.
- Sensitisation meetings** were conducted with **42 religious leaders** – 5 women and 37 men – and **44 members of the Maasai Council of Elders** as part of the ongoing anti-FGM campaigns. These sessions focused on the consequences of FGM and other harmful cultural practices, encouraging elders to take a leading role in advocating against FGM within their communities.
- Under the PTE Project, we also supported the **training on child protection** for **415 individuals** – 153 women and 262 men – including **parents, caregivers, teachers, and other key stakeholders** across **37 schools** in Migori and Narok Counties. These sessions reinforced the critical role of School Boards of Management (BOM) in safeguarding children and implementing both preventive and responsive child protection measures. Additionally, **468 BOM members** – 187 women and 281 men – received **training on school governance**, with a focus on reviewing school development and infrastructure plans through a comprehensive needs analysis.
- A **media campaign** with the aim of promoting the importance of school retention has been carried out in Migori and Narok Counties, directly engaging learners, teachers, and communities in **37 schools**, and indirectly **reaching 2,274,309 people** via social media platforms, local FM stations and K24 Television.
- Dissemination forums** on education policies were organised at the county level, reaching **114 participants** – 46 women and 68 men – including officials from the Ministry of Education, the Teachers Service Commission, and other key stakeholders in Migori and Narok Counties. These forums enhanced participants' understanding of the **legal framework, tools, and procedures governing the education sector**, and clarified roles and responsibilities in policy enforcement, implementation, and monitoring.



ACCESS

Unlocking Access to Inclusive, Quality Learning

- Under the PTE Project, **12 classrooms** – 4 in Migori County and 8 in Narok County – were constructed across **11 primary schools**, significantly reducing congestion and improving the learning environment. Each of the **11 classrooms** were equipped with **40 desks**, and **4 schools** were supported with **tables and chairs**, to ensure adequate learning spaces.
- Gutters and water tanks were installed** to enable rainwater harvesting, ensuring reliable water supply for hygiene practices such as handwashing and cleaning of toilets and classrooms. Additionally, **20 ventilated improved pit (VIP) latrines with 5 doors each** were built in **10 schools** enhancing sanitation and student well-being.
- Learning materials** such as storybooks, textbooks, and revision guides were distributed to **37 schools**, alongside **sports equipment** – balls, skipping ropes and ball nets – to foster inclusive and engaging sport-based activities.
- Remedial classes** reached **3,025 students** – 1,455 girls and 1,570 boys – supporting **low-performing learners and those at high risk of dropping out** to provide them additional opportunities to improve their academic outcomes, including their reading, speaking and writing skills.
- Motivational talks** were organised in **37 schools**, reaching **9,287 learners** – 4,654 girls and 4,633 boys – to inspire, guide, and encourage students. These sessions featured role models who have succeeded in higher education or hold notable community positions, motivating learners to stay committed to their education and improve retention and academic performance.
- 566 teachers** – 322 female and 244 male – were **trained** on the introduction of the **Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC) and creative learning methodologies**. The training empowered teachers with the necessary skills and capacities to adapt new institutional methods that cater for individual learning needs and prioritises critical skills over mere memorisation.

⁴² *Tudumishe Elimu Na Afya (TENA)* - Promotion of quality and inclusive education and community engagement on child protection, GBV and SRH in Narok and Migori Counties in Kenya via LDS support.

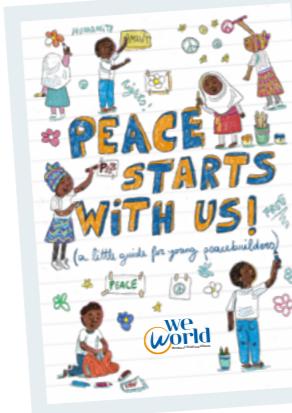


RIGHTS

Advancing and Protecting Children's Rights

In Kenya, interventions targeting children are designed to strengthen children's understanding of their rights and encouraging active participation in shaping their environments.

- ◆ We have actively supported the organisation of the **2024 Day of the African Child (DAC)** to raise awareness on children's rights. During the 2024 DAC celebrations, held under the theme "Education for All Children in Africa: The Time is Now⁴³" a total of **3,149 participants** – 1,660 female and 1,489 male – were reached.
- ◆ As part of the PTE Project, a total of **6,000 vulnerable children** received **notebooks** containing **child rights' messages** to raise awareness and encourage their active participation as agents of change. Starting from our "**Therapeutic Art Toolkit**", we implemented **therapeutic art sessions reaching 135 children** to help them recover from mental distress and trauma and build their confidence.
- ◆ In **37 schools**, the "**Germs and Ladders**" game was introduced to promote handwashing, hygiene and sanitation practices.
- ◆ Under the ongoing **Imarisha Mwanamke Afya na Rasilimali⁴⁴ (IMARA) Project**, funded by the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation, we distributed the "**Nuru's Diary**" to **120 girls** during the MARA Girls Summit as part of the "16 Days of Activism" campaign. The menstrual diary is a playful, interactive tool designed to help girls track their cycles, symptoms, and body changes while promoting health awareness and self-expression, reducing stigma and encouraging open conversations about menstruation and self-care.



participation from an early age.



EXPRESSION

Amplifying Children's Voices and Perspectives

- ◆ As part of the PTE Project, children were provided with opportunities to express their views, as well as ask questions on different topics, during **motivational talks** and **Sexual Reproductive Health (SRH) sessions** where children could express their views on different topics.
- ◆ To enhance child protection and participation, **child-led Governance Councils** have been strengthened in **37 schools**, and **18 Children Advisory Committees** have been established at location, Ward, Sub-County, and County level. These platforms provide opportunities where duty bearers engage in dialogue on child-related matters.
- ◆ In 2024, we launched a global consultation involving children and adolescents worldwide to explore their hopes, dreams, and fears about the future. The consultation, part of the broader **ChildFund Alliance World Index on the Rights of Women and Children⁴⁸**, involved a total of **200 children**.
- ◆ In 2025, the IMARA Project established the **Narok County Adolescent Council on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHRs)**. This council will serve as a platform for young people to have the opportunity to learn, practice and influence decision-making while raising awareness and promote the importance of young people's health and rights. The council is composed by **20 peer-experienced students** and **13 activists** that are stakeholders in the SRHRs Project. **Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)** are regularly conducted under the **Kujenga Amani Pamoja (KAP) Project**, co-funded by the European Union, the establishment of **peace clubs** and **art and culture sessions** – through poems, dances and recitals – provided children with the opportunity of using their own **creativity** to express themselves and interact with teachers, parents, and other members of their communities. Under the **Kujenga Amani Pamoja (KAP) Project**, co-funded by the European Union, the establishment of **peace clubs** and **art and culture sessions** – through poems, dances and recitals – provided children with the opportunity of using their own **creativity** to express themselves and interact with teachers, parents, and other members of their communities.
- ◆ Under the PTE Project, a total of **74 teachers** – 45 female and 29 male – were **trained** in **child guidance, counselling, and Psychosocial Support (PSS)**, to enhance their ability to identify and support pupils with socio-emotional and behavioural challenges, case reporting, and management and referral of abuse cases and disciplinary problems.
- ◆ **566 teachers** – 322 female and 244 male – received **training on promoting positive behaviour, child protection** and the importance of **safe school environments**. Moreover, efforts are underway to strengthen safe internet use through the implementation of **child online safety policies**.



SAFETY

Safeguarding Children's Protection and Well-Being Through Education

We promote holistic learner development through targeted interventions that support children's safety and well-being.

- ◆ To support learners at risk of dropping out, **extracurricular and life skills activities** were implemented in **37 primary schools**, reaching **6,002 children** – 2,918 girls and 3,084 boys. Through sports, storytelling sessions, and team-based activities, students expressed themselves and developed confidence and essential social skills.
- ◆ **Health and hygiene promotion activities** were carried out with support from the County Health Department, reaching **11,137 learners** – 5,583 girls and 5,554 boys – through sessions on sanitation, menstrual hygiene, handwashing, and Sexual and Reproductive Health, alongside the distribution of sanitary towels for girls.
- ◆ As part of the IMARA Project, **training sessions on SRHR** was conducted in **18 schools** in Narok County, reaching **4,182 students** – 2,070 girls and 2,112 boys.
- ◆ Under the PTE Project, a total of **74 teachers** – 45 female and 29 male – were **trained** in **child guidance, counselling, and Psychosocial Support (PSS)**, to enhance their ability to identify and support pupils with socio-emotional and behavioural challenges, case reporting, and management and referral of abuse cases and disciplinary problems.
- ◆ **566 teachers** – 322 female and 244 male – received **training on promoting positive behaviour, child protection** and the importance of **safe school environments**. Moreover, efforts are underway to strengthen safe internet use through the implementation of **child online safety policies**.

"One of the biggest changes I have seen thanks to WeWorld is the construction of a modern, spacious classroom for Grade 9 students. My own child is among the students who have directly experienced the positive impact of this initiative. At the same time, the Board of Management training has also really helped us. It gave the board members all the skills we need to better manage and lead our school. Through training and ongoing support, we have learnt how to engage our local community to mobilise resources, which even helped us upgrade classroom floors. I truly appreciate what WeWorld has done to improve both the school's infrastructure and governance. I believe that if this partnership continues, we can achieve even more for our children."

Thomas Achar,

father of a Grade 9 student and member of the St. Joseph Alendo Comprehensive School Board of Management in Nyatike, Migori County



OUR PARTNERS AND ALLIES

At national level, we are a member of the [Education in Emergencies Working Group](#) and the [Education Development Partners Coordination Group](#), as well as the [Elimu Yetu Coalition \(EYC\)](#), a national education advocacy network in Kenya that mobilises stakeholders and communities to champion inclusive, quality education for all. We also partner with [Girls not Brides](#) – which is a global partnership of civil society organisations which works to amplify the voices of girls across Kenya to realise a society where all girls enjoy their rights and reach their full potential – and the [ECD Network for Kenya \(ECDNek\)](#), a collaborative platform that promotes multi-sectoral partnerships to advance nurturing care in early childhood development across the country. We also closely collaborate with the [Ministry of Education](#).

At county level, WeWorld participates in [several education coordination forums](#), such as the WASH Cluster, the Children Advisory Committee, the County Education Network, the Gender Technical Working Group, the Court Users Committee on Child Protection and in the main Sexual and Reproductive Health coordination forums. Locally, we collaborate with [Community Health Partners \(CHP\)](#) and the [Anglican Development Services South Rift \(ADS SR\)](#) in Narok County, to improve health, education, and child protection services through advocacy and capacity building. In Kwale County, we partner with the [Stretchers Youth Organization \(SYO\)](#) to support youth-led networks in peacebuilding, conflict prevention, and the promotion of inclusive cultural practices in schools. We also work with the [Organization of African Youth \(OAY\)](#) in Nairobi County to improve youth access to technical and vocational training and enhance their employability skills, and with [Crown Trust](#) to enhance the voice, skills and capacities of women and girls.

THE VOICE OF

Annarita Spagnuolo

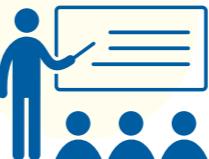
Country Representative

"In line with Kenya's National Education Sector Strategic Plan and the Ministry of Education's directives, we are committed to delivering competency-based, inclusive, and equitable quality education. Our efforts focus on expanding access, improving learning outcomes, strengthening governance, and integrating cross-cutting issues into the curriculum. Kenya's education system is undergoing a major transformation, from the traditional 8-4-4 model, which emphasised teacher-led education, to a Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC). This new approach focuses on each student's ability to self-learn and acquire practical skills, and favours a child-centred environment, where children are not just taught, but fully supported during their educational path. The shift to CBC aims to better align education with labour market needs and prepare students for employment and entrepreneurship. Our future interventions will focus on addressing gaps in basic education through infrastructure development, the provision of relevant educational and recreational materials, capacity building for teachers, Boards of Management (BOM), learners and communities, as well as the promotion of safe, inclusive and child-friendly learning environments. We are adopting a community-based approach to improve retention and transition to formal schooling, as well as to strengthen child protection systems and education platforms and build the capacity of duty bearers to remove barriers to education. We are also committed to amplifying children's voices in learning spaces, including school parliaments and participatory events, where children can express themselves and be actively involved in policy dialogue as active citizens who are able to shape their present and future. Following this approach, we closely collaborate with the Ministry of Education and other stakeholders by contributing with technical expertise and resources, as well as actively participating in education forums to support policy development and implementation at both national and county levels."

LEBANON

✓ OUR LATEST ACHIEVEMENTS

As part of the [Ana Kamen Project](#), **251 parents** of children enrolled in [Retention Support \(RS\)](#) and [Community-Based Early Childhood Education \(CBECE\)](#) programmes in Akkar participated in regular [school-based sessions](#) focused on positive communication, learning styles, and early development.



Advocacy initiatives promoted disability inclusion in schools and communities, **reaching 1,412 individuals** through training on respectful communication, social etiquette, and inclusive practices to communicate better with children with disabilities.

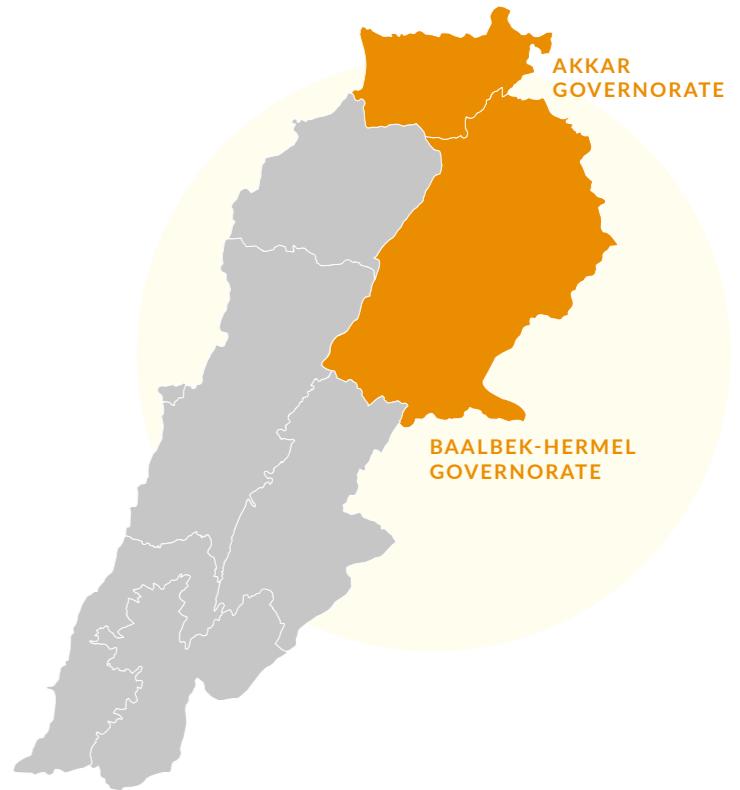


Three cycles of Retention Support programmes were rolled out in Akkar, reaching **868 at-risk students** between September 2023 and June 2025.

A total of **75 children** were involved in the 2024 ChildFund Alliance global consultation which explored their hopes, dreams, and fears about the future.



This factsheet was produced with the financial support of the Italian government. Its contents are the sole responsibility of WeWorld and do not necessarily represent the views of the Italian government.



Across **4 public schools** in Akkar **targeted renovations** focused on safety, disability inclusion, and hygiene access reached **1,489 individuals**.



To promote more effective teaching and classroom performance, **76 public school teachers and teachers' assistants** in Akkar participated in the **Quality Teaching and Learning (QTL)** training programme.



Children used **mood board panels** to assess their enjoyment and satisfaction on play-based activities they took part in.

FRAMING THE CONTEXT

We have been operating in the country since 2006. Lebanon's education sector continues to face profound challenges due to a multi-layered crisis that began in late 2019. School closures resulting from COVID-19, compounded by the enduring socio-economic crisis, have severely disrupted learning, particularly for the most marginalised children. Many households, struggling to afford basic needs, **have been forced to de-prioritise education**, leading to an increase in dangerous coping strategies - including child labour - which disproportionately affects school-age girls and boys (OCHA, 2023).

As of September 2024, approximately **25% of all children in Lebanon were out of school**, even before the escalation of the conflict with Israel (Save the Children, 2024). Between 2021 and 2022, 47% of school-aged refugee children (aged 6-17) did not attend school, and only 16% of adolescents and youth aged 15-24 were attending school in 2022 (UNHCR, UNICEF & WFP, 2024). The spillover of violence has further destabilised the education system. Over **300 schools and university branches** were reported as **damaged, including 33 that were completely destroyed** (OCHA, 2025). Additionally, **more than 600 educational facilities have been repurposed as shelters**, significantly reducing access to safe learning environments (ibid.). This disruption has widened learning gaps across the country, particularly among displaced and vulnerable children groups. Despite efforts to maintain continuity of learning, ongoing conflict, inadequate infrastructure, and household-level vulnerabilities continue to hinder educational progress, with long-term risks including exploitation and social exclusion.



WeWorld CARES about Child-Centred Education in Lebanon

In Lebanon, where intersecting challenges affect children's access to quality education, our multisectoral approach places their safety, well-being, and potential at the core of learning environments. By integrating WASH in Schools, Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) in school, and infrastructure upgrades, we foster spaces that go beyond instruction and promote holistic development. Our technical teams work alongside field staff and the MEAL department to ensure that programmes respond to real needs through participatory activities, data-driven adaptation, and community engagement. A strong localisation approach – grounded in local knowledge, leadership, and capacity – guides our work, ensuring relevance and sustainability to our interventions, allowing us to remain anchored in children's lived experiences. This coordinated blend of interventions supports not only academic achievement, but also the emotional, physical, and social growth of every child, laying the foundation for a more inclusive and empowering education system.



COMMUNITY

Engaging Communities in Promoting Children's Agency

In the Akkar Governorate, we strengthened family and community engagement to improve children's development and inclusion through targeted education initiatives.

- ◆ In 2024, as part of the **Ana Kamen Project**⁴⁹, funded by the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation (AICS), **251 parents** of children enrolled in **Retention Support (RS)** and **Community-Based Early Childhood Education (CBECE) programmes** participated in regular **school-based sessions** focused on positive communication, learning styles, and early development.



LEBANON

- ◆ For parents of CBECE attendees, sessions covered early literacy, communication and psychomotor and cognitive development. In response to incidents of violence and harassment in the area, final sessions emphasised conflict sensitivity and violence prevention. Parents expressed positive feedback, noting improvements in their children's abilities and communication and emotional skills.

- ◆ **Advocacy initiatives** promoted disability inclusion in schools and communities, reaching **1,412 individuals** through training on respectful communication, social etiquette, and inclusive practices to communicate better with children with disabilities.

To further shift social norms and strengthen children's rights, future actions will focus on engaging caregivers, religious leaders, and local institutions to build a supportive, child-friendly environment for all.



ACCESS

Unlocking Access to Inclusive, Quality Learning

Through the **Ana Kamen Project** (Phase I and Phase II), our initiatives helped create safer, more inclusive learning spaces for Lebanese and refugee children, while renewing school capacity and improving teaching quality.

- ◆ Across **4 public schools**, **targeted renovations** focused on safety, disability inclusion, and hygiene access reached **1,489 individuals**. Improvements included ramps, elevators, gender-sensitive toilets, and enhanced WASH facilities.
- ◆ **Solar energy systems** were also installed to ensure uninterrupted power supply. To improve learning conditions, schools received essential **materials, classroom furniture, and IT equipment**.
- ◆ **Three cycles of Retention Support programmes** were rolled out, reaching **868 students at risk of dropout** between September 2023 and June 2025 – 362 from Phase I and 506 from Phase II of the Project. Activities included homework assistance, methodology training, exam preparation, and psycho-social support to promote students' well-being.
- ◆ Post-programme assessments showed significant academic progress in Arabic, French, Mathematics, and Science, alongside better engagement and students' behaviour, as reported by school staff.
- ◆ To promote more effective teaching and classroom performance, **76 public school teachers and teachers' assistants** – 35 from Phase I and 41 from Phase II – participated in the **Quality Teaching and Learning (QTL) training programme**, developed with the Centre for Educational Research and Development (CERD)⁵⁰.
- ◆ Following the training, classroom observations informed individual coaching sessions that focused on actionable improvements in lesson delivery and student engagement.

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The Project "Ana Kamen – Inclusive and quality education in three communities in Akkar Governorate", in partnership with Ana Aqra Association and the NGO Arcenciel, seeks to enhance access to inclusive, quality education for both the Lebanese population and vulnerable refugee communities, with particular attention to children with disabilities. Key activities include the rehabilitation of school buildings and upgrades for energy efficiency, the implementation of retention support programmes and early childhood education. For more information, visit: https://www.aics.gov.it/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/Relazione-gender_attivita-2022.pdf; <https://arcenciel.org/projects/ana-kamen-inclusive-and-quality-education-in-three-communities-in-akkar-governorate/>

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A national public institution directly linked to the Lebanese Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MEHE).



RIGHTS

Advancing and Protecting Children's Rights

- ◆ Our “[Therapeutic Art Toolkit](#)”, originally developed in Kenya and Tanzania under the *Pamoja Tudumishe Elimu* Project, was translated into Arabic and adapted to the Lebanese context to promote emotional well-being and support the psychosocial needs of vulnerable children through creative, trauma-sensitive practices.
- ◆ A “[Games and Inclusive Sports Manual](#)”, part of the [Scale Project](#) funded by AICS, was developed in partnership with UISP to foster inclusion and psychosocial well-being among Syrian and Lebanese children through sport- and play-based activities.
- ◆ In the *Ana Kamen* Project (Phase II), teachers and community volunteers will be trained on the use of this manual to implement community-based activities to promote inclusion and social cohesion.
- ◆ As part of our 2024 Menstrual Health and Hygiene Management (MHMH) initiatives, we launched and distributed the “[Amar's Diary](#)”: a play-based tool originally developed in Italy and later translated in Arabic to adapt it for the Lebanese context, it was designed to promote girls’ well-being, self-expression, and body awareness, blending cycle tracking, journaling, and stigma-challenging activities in a playful and interactive format.
- ◆ A series of initiatives is being planned to put children’s creativity, voice, and agency at the centre of meaningful learning experiences. [Participatory workshops](#) will use [games](#), [visuals](#), and [open discussions](#) to help children explore their rights in engaging, age-appropriate ways.
- ◆ [Peer-led groups](#) will be created in [safe spaces](#), where children can meet to share experiences, learn together, and support one another. [Theatre courses](#) will enable children to create and perform plays to [understand their rights and to address issues that affect them](#) such as violence, war, and displacement.
- ◆ Rooted in play and art, these activities aim to communicate complex topics while encouraging inclusive participation. Moving away from adult-centred approaches, the focus will shift toward children’s own understanding, perspectives, and lived experiences, placing their voices at the core of all learning and expression.



EXPRESSION

Amplifying Children's Voices and Perspectives

We have recently started to adopt specific participatory tools to integrate children’s participation at different stages of project implementation.

- ◆ In 2024, we launched a global consultation involving children and adolescents worldwide to explore their hopes, dreams, and fears about the future. The consultation, part of the broader “[ChildFund Alliance World Index on the Rights of Women and Children](#)⁵¹”, involved a total of **75 children**.
- ◆ As part of the *Ana Kamen* Project (Phase I), children in 4 schools in Akkar were invited to share their thoughts on the school rehabilitation process through [child-friendly suggestion boxes](#). These boxes provided a safe and accessible space for children to express their feedback, concerns, and complaints, helping ensure their voices were heard and valued.
- ◆ In addition to written feedback, children were encouraged to [draw their school](#), offering a visual representation of how they perceived the new environment.
- ◆ To evaluate the impact of play-based activities, after learning and engaging in various circus-related games, children used [mood board panels](#) to assess their enjoyment and satisfaction by placing post-it notes on the panels to indicate how they felt.



SAFETY

Safeguarding Children's Protection and Well-Being Through Education

Our education programming in Akkar prioritises children’s safety, emotional well-being, and disaster preparedness. Under the *Ana Kamen* Project (Phase II), [Psychosocial Support \(PSS\)](#) has been integrated into the Retention Support and Community-Based Early Childhood Education curricula, reaching both children and adults to promote inclusivity and a supportive school environment.



Child-Friendly Consultations on WASH in Schools



Under the *Ana Kamen* Project (Phase II), we worked to enhance safe and inclusive access to education, including the rehabilitation of WASH facilities in Awade, Knaisseh and Al Noura mixed public schools. Between April 29 and May 14, 2025, we conducted [child-friendly consultations](#) to gather meaningful information from children to understand the WASH status of school facilities and different needs linked to water and hygiene. **155 students – 77 boys and 78 girls** – from grades 6 to 8 participated in a total of **8 Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)**, facilitated by project and MEAL staff. During the FGDs, interactive tools such as [flip charts](#) and [sticky notes](#) were used to allow children to express their views through writing or drawing on the 9 designed questions. Students also received Feedback and Complaint Response Mechanisms (FCRM) flyers to understand how to report concerns.

"Fridays and Saturdays are my favourite days because that's when we go to the school. The teachers there are really kind and make everything easier to understand. We learn and laugh and even enjoy breaks! Since joining the Homework Support Programme as part of the Ana Kamen Project, French became my favourite subject! Mrs. Ghazwa tells us stories, plays music, and lets us learn in a way that is fun and calm. I used to be shy reading in class, but now I feel more confident and enjoy it."

Math used to feel like a scary language from space! I did not understand it and had no one to help me at home. But with Mrs. Noor's support, smartboards, and games, I finally get it, and I even pass my tests now! All my grades have improved, and my parents are so happy. We get free help, so they do not worry anymore. Even my regular school teachers notice my progress! I dream of being a writer and opening a beauty salon with my sister. This programme is helping me get there. I just hope it continues next year, when I start grade 7."

Zeinab Awad (13 years old),
student at Kfartoun Mixed Public School, Akkar Governorate

THE VOICE OF

Camilla Rebora

Education Project Manager

"Given the presence of well-established NGOs and INGOs delivering cross-cutting education services across the country, our added value in Lebanon lies in a complementary approach – focusing primarily on hard components such as school rehabilitation and solar system installations, while integrating Menstrual Health and Hygiene Management (MHM) and WASH in Schools interventions. We do this through targeted needs assessments, standardised checklists, participatory monitoring tools, and community-driven processes. We aim to reinforce local capacities by offering tailored training courses, enhancing intervention methodologies, and improving accountability."

To do this, we are committed to advancing our localisation strategy by partnering with Lebanese NGOs to demonstrate strong expertise and deep-rooted experience in the education sector. These organisations not only have the operational capacity to implement educational activities at the field level but also maintain strong relationships with key stakeholders in both formal and non-formal education systems, including the Lebanese Ministry of Higher Education.

To further enhance the impact and sustainability of our education programming, we also plan to strengthen the community engagement component through deeper localisation efforts and targeted capacity-building support for our local partners and organisations, fostering inclusive participation and ownership at all levels."

OUR PARTNERS AND ALLIES

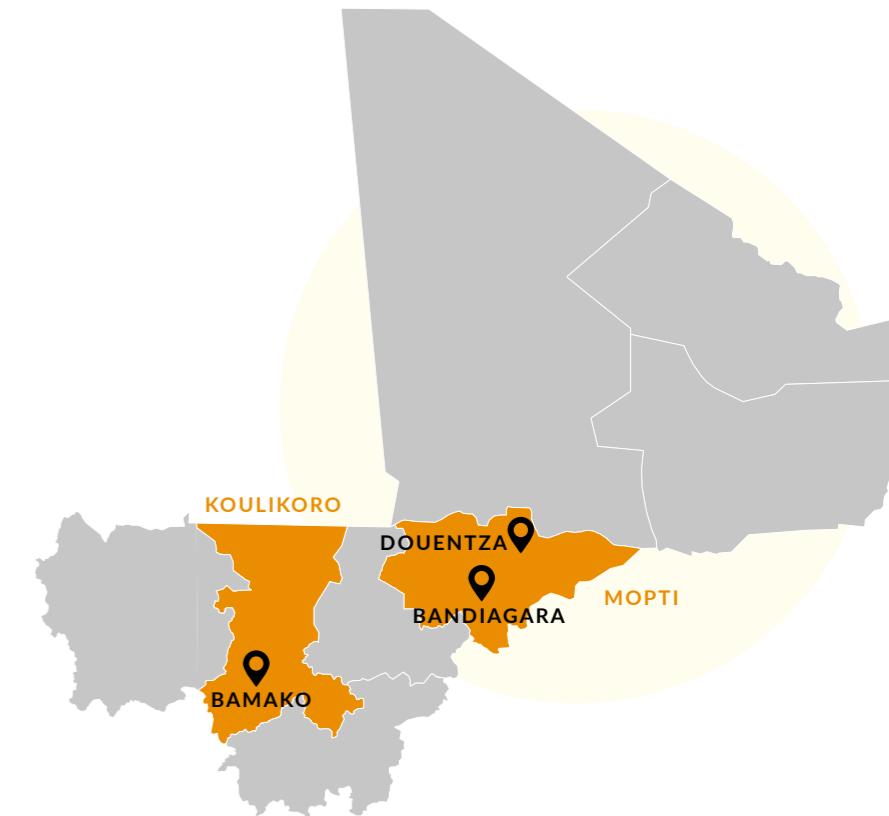
In Lebanon, WeWorld actively participates in national and sectoral coordination mechanisms, including the **National Education Working Group** chaired by UNICEF and its related **Education Sub-Cluster** focusing on partners operating in North Lebanon and Akkar Governorates. In addition, we are a member of the **Education Working Group** led by the **Italian Agency for Development Cooperation (AICS)**, which brings together NGOs implementing education projects funded by the Italian Government. We collaborate with **Ana Aqra Association** – an accredited partner of the Lebanese Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MEHE) with a strong track record in delivering quality education, retention support, Basic Literacy and Numeracy (BLN), psychosocial and socio-emotional learning (PSS-SEL), and Community-Based Early Childhood Education (CB-ECE) programmes for both children and adults. Under this collaboration, combining expertise to deliver holistic education interventions in public schools, WeWorld has mainly been responsible for **infrastructure and WASH components**, including DRR, school rehabilitation, solar system installation, equipment provision, and menstrual hygiene kit distribution, as well as community engagement and sensitisation.

MALI

✓ OUR LATEST ACHIEVEMENTS

Child Protection Committees

(CPCs) led awareness sessions encouraging dialogue and behaviour change on different topics, such as girls' access to education and gender-based violence prevention.



In 2024, in Commune VI of Bamako, **890 young people** have been involved in **technical and vocational skills training**, personalised support and scholarships to facilitate their access to employment.



Our **advocacy efforts** targeted decision-makers to promote the endorsement and implementation of key **child rights frameworks**, as well as the inclusion of **trainings on child rights for teachers**.



Children had the opportunity to convey powerful **messages** through creative formats such as **skits and poems** during **community awareness sessions** focused on the importance of child-friendly safe spaces, child rights and violence prevention.



Psychosocial Support (PSS)

in Bandiagara and Douentza Regions was provided to children who carry the heavy burden of war: former child combatants, survivors of violence, and those deeply affected by trauma.



PSS sessions took place in **"Children's Friends Spaces"**, where they engaged in **one-to-one listening sessions** and **group discussions**. Since October 2024, more than **400 children** have attended these spaces.



Since October 2024, more than **10,000 children** took part in the activities organised in our **3 child-friendly spaces** in Douentza Region.

FRAMING THE CONTEXT

We have been active in Mali since 2019. Over the past decade, the country has faced a complex socio-political crisis that has escalated into a prolonged conflict, severely affecting the northern and central regions. Chronic insecurity has resulted into over **378,000 internally displaced persons (IDPs)** by the end of 2024 (OCHA, 2025), while the number of refugees and asylum seekers surged to 199,500 people, a 215% increase compared to 2023 (UNHCR, 2025). Additionally, **major floods** affected **more than 450,000 people**, further destabilising livelihoods and prompting a national disaster declaration (IMF, 2025).

The convergence of armed conflict, climate shocks, and restricted humanitarian access continues to disrupt learning continuity and erode the protective role schools play for children across Mali. As of April 2025, **2,036 schools remain closed**, leaving 610,800 **children and 12,216 teachers without access to formal education** (Education Cluster, 2025). Only 10% of 10-year-olds can read and understand a simple text. While enrolment in school has increased, almost half of children aged 6-14 and **44% of lower-secondary-aged children** are out of school (GPE, 2025). These challenges, compounded by poverty, gender inequality, disability-related barriers, teacher shortages, and poor infrastructure, are undermining both access to and quality of education.



"I am 23 years old and I hold a bachelor's degree in finance and accounting. In May 2024, I had the opportunity to participate in a training organised by WeWorld through the ALIS project, aimed at helping young people enter the workforce. This two-day training allowed me to develop essential skills such as writing a CV and a cover letter, as well as preparing for a job interview. Thanks to this training, I was able to write my own CV and start applying for internship opportunities. In June 2024, I got a six-month internship at the Tax Directorate of Commune VI in Bamako. This experience marked an important turning point in my professional journey, and I am very grateful to WeWorld for the support and guidance I received."

Fatoumata Traoré,
trainee of the ALIS Project in Commune VI of
Bamako Capital District



WeWorld CARES about Child-Centred Education in Mali

In Mali, we place children's needs and experiences at the heart of learning. We recognise each child as a unique individual, with the right to express their views, feel safe and respected, and learn in an inclusive, supportive environment. This means actively listening to children's voices, involving them in decisions that affect their learning and well-being, and ensuring that schools are safe spaces where their rights are respected and upheld. We design curricula that reflect their realities, use participatory and trauma-sensitive teaching methods, and create classrooms where children feel protected, valued, and supported. By equipping teachers with specialised training in child safeguarding and psychosocial support, we ensure that child protection is prioritised, allowing children to thrive, rebuild trust, and grow into active, responsible members of society, free from violence, fear, and neglect.



COMMUNITY

Engaging Communities
in Promoting Children's Agency

Through various initiatives, children in Mali have been placed at the centre of educational and awareness-raising activities, particularly those focused on child rights, the creation of safe spaces, and violence prevention.

- At community level, **Child Protection Committees (CPCs)** composed of community representatives led awareness sessions encouraging dialogue and behaviour change on **girls' access to higher education, birth certificates** - as a right and a requirement for schooling - and the **prevention of gender-based violence**, including early marriage and psychological abuse.
- Moreover, **local radio stations** broadcasted **messages** on these topics three times daily in three local languages, ensuring broad outreach.





ACCESS

Unlocking Access to Inclusive, Quality Learning

- ◆ As part of the “[Multi-Year Resilience](#)” Programme (MYRP) funded by Education Cannot Wait (ECW), [school canteens](#) were established in [30 schools](#) across the Mopti Region⁵², contributing to improved student retention and learning conditions.
- ◆ Under the “[Accesso al Lavoro e Inclusione Sociale per i giovani maliani](#)” (ALIS) Project, funded by the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation (AICS), young people in Commune VI of Bamako have received [technical and vocational skills training](#), personalised support and scholarships to facilitate their access to employment. In 2024, [890 young people were reached](#). Moreover, [18 vocational training centres](#) have been selected to ensure the delivery of quality education and skills development.

These combined efforts aim to strengthen socioeconomic inclusion and resilience among vulnerable urban youth, directly addressing the pressing challenges of unemployment, insecurity, and migration.



RIGHTS

Advancing and Protecting Children's Rights

Across all components of our interventions, we place strong emphasis on the recognition and exercise of children's rights through inclusive education and meaningful participation. Indeed, our [advocacy efforts](#) in 2024 targeted [decision-makers](#) to promote the endorsement and implementation of key [child rights frameworks](#), as well as the inclusion of [trainings on child rights for teachers](#).

At the same time, we provided children with practical tools to understand and claim their rights, such as [child-friendly educational materials](#) and [interactive games](#). Through school-based advocacy and peer-to-peer learning, children are empowered not only to exercise their own rights but to support others in doing the same.



EXPRESSION

Amplifying Children's Voices and Perspectives

Children's participation is not an add-on but a core element of our approach, that recognise them as capable of shaping the decisions that affect their lives.

- ◆ Local advocacy efforts have enabled children to convey powerful messages through creative formats such as [skits](#) and [poems](#) during community awareness sessions focused on the importance of child-friendly safe spaces, child rights and violence prevention.
- ◆ In 2024, we launched a global consultation involving children and adolescents worldwide to explore their hopes, dreams, and fears about the future.. The consultation, part of the broader “[ChildFund Alliance World Index on the Rights of Women and Children](#)”⁵⁵, involved a total of [51 children](#). Although the number of children involved – mainly from Bamako – was small, due to the complex and violent conflict situation at the time, we believed it was crucial to engage with them, listen to their expectations and let them claim their rights. What emerged most clearly was a deep sense of mistrust toward the future, shaped by the ongoing instability in the country.
- ◆ Children are actively involved throughout the project cycle. During the planning phase, we conduct [participatory consultations](#), including focus group discussions (FDGs) and input sessions, particularly when it comes to our child-friendly spaces. During implementation, children are engaged in [educational games](#) and awareness-raising activities designed to promote their active involvement. For evaluation, we regularly collect [feedback](#) from them, allowing us to adapt our interventions to better meet their needs. While challenges remain, particularly in addressing the diversity of age groups and overcoming language barriers, looking ahead we aim to [formalise spaces for children's expression and strengthen their role in community-based monitoring](#). This includes establishing children's clubs and effective complaint mechanisms and promoting more structured opportunities for children's leadership and dialogue.



SAFETY

Safeguarding Children's Protection and Well-Being Through Education

Under the SURE 2 Project, [Psychosocial Support \(PSS\)](#) in Douentza Region was provided to children who carry the heavy burden of war: former child combatants, survivors of violence, and those deeply scared by trauma.

- ◆ PSS sessions took place within “[Children's Friends Spaces](#)”, safe and welcoming environments where children are able to play and express themselves freely.
- ◆ After engaging in role-playing games, sports, theatre, painting, and other creative activities, such as spelling contests, children were invited to [one-on-one counselling sessions](#), where they could share their stories, fears, and hopes. For adolescents, [group discussions](#) were organised to help break the silence and foster solidarity through shared experiences.
- ◆ Between October 2024 and May 2025, [more than 400 children](#) have accessed these spaces. Many of them bear the marks of recruitment by armed groups, gender-based violence, daily exposure to abuse, parental neglect linked to poverty, forced and early marriages, stigma, isolation, displacement and exploitation. [Step by step, children begin to regain a sense of safety, rebuild trust, and reconnect with the everyday experiences of childhood](#).

Child-Friendly Spaces in Douentza Region



As part of the “[SURE 2 - Projet d'urgence pour l'assistance et la résilience des populations vulnérables touchées par le conflit à Douentza, Mali](#)” Project⁵⁴, funded by AICS, we manage [3 child-friendly spaces](#) located in different centres or schools in Douentza Region. These spaces are open to all children and serve as safe environments where educational and recreational activities are facilitated by teams of [3 social workers](#) and [2 animators](#) per centre. From October 2024 to May 2025, more than [10,000 children](#) accessed these spaces. These activities not only promote learning and play but also help identify children affected by trauma or violence, who are then provided with individual psychosocial support.

52 As part of Mali's territorial reorganisation initiated in 2023, the former Mopti Region has been subdivided into three distinct regions: Mopti, Bandiagara, and Douentza. This reform is part of a broader national effort to improve governance, decentralisation, and access to public services. The process is ongoing, with administrative structures still being implemented. Currently, WeWorld is no longer active in the Mopti Region.

53 Access to Work and Social Inclusion for Malian Youth. For more information, visit: <https://www.weworld.it/en/what-we-do/global-projects/alis-accesso-al-lavoro-e-inclusione-sociale-per-i-giovani-maliani>

54 SURE 2 – Emergency Project for the assistance and resilience of vulnerable populations affected by Conflict in Douentza, Mali. For more information, visit: <https://www.weworld.it/cosa-facciamo/progetti-nel-mondo/sure-2-emergenza-e-resilienza-per-le-popolazioni-vulnerabili-coltipe-dal-conflitto-a-douentza>

55 ChildFund Alliance World Index on the Rights of Women and Children – Focus. Children's Voices on Their Right to The Future. For more information, visit: <https://ejbn4fjvt9h.exactdn.com/uploads/2024/11/INDEX-2024-7-web-pagine-affiancate-1.pdf>



OUR PARTNERS AND ALLIES

At the national level, we collaborate closely with government institutions and actively engage in coordination mechanisms, including the **Education, WASH, Food Security, and Protection Clusters**, particularly the **Child Protection Sub-Cluster**. This consistent involvement has enabled the organisation to build strong, long-term partnerships with both national and local authorities. Each cluster has a dedicated focal point within our team, ensuring effective participation in regular meetings and strategic discussions. We also developed solid relationships with a range of national and local partners, such as the **Agence pour la Promotion de l'Emploi des Jeunes (APEJ)**⁵⁶ and the **Organization for an Integrated Development in the Sahel Region (ODI-Sahel)**, as well as public institutions. Over the past year, we strengthen our collaboration with the Malian **Ministry of Education**, as well as with the **Ministry of National Entrepreneurship, Employment, and Vocational Training**. In the future, we would like to expand our network and presence and work with other national NGOs.

THE VOICE OF

Viviana Bianchessi

Country Representative

"Mali is currently developing a new national strategy for the education sector. Within this framework, WeWorld's added value lies in identifying niche areas of intervention that complement the work of well-established actors in formal education programmes across the country. Rather than duplicating existing efforts, our strategic direction focuses on creating synergies and addressing critical gaps that remain under-served. One key priority is strengthening the link between basic education, non-formal learning, and vocational training, with particular attention to children attending Koranic schools, who are often excluded from formal education and face risks such as marginalisation, child labour, or recruitment by armed groups.

Beginning with literacy in French and numeracy, followed by remedial classes, life skills trainings, and transition into vocational training, to equip children with practical competencies and support their integration into safe and sustainable livelihood opportunities. Vocational training, indeed, is not treated as a standalone intervention, but as part of an integrated approach that connects learning to future livelihoods. This includes short technical courses, apprenticeships with local artisans, support for job placement or micro-entrepreneurship and align school curricula with local labour market opportunities."

MOLDOVA

✓ OUR LATEST ACHIEVEMENTS⁵⁷

From April 2024 to July 2025, **84 awareness-raising sessions** on Menstrual Health and Hygiene Management (MHMH), Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH), child protection and gender-based violence were conducted in **12 schools** in Chisinau.



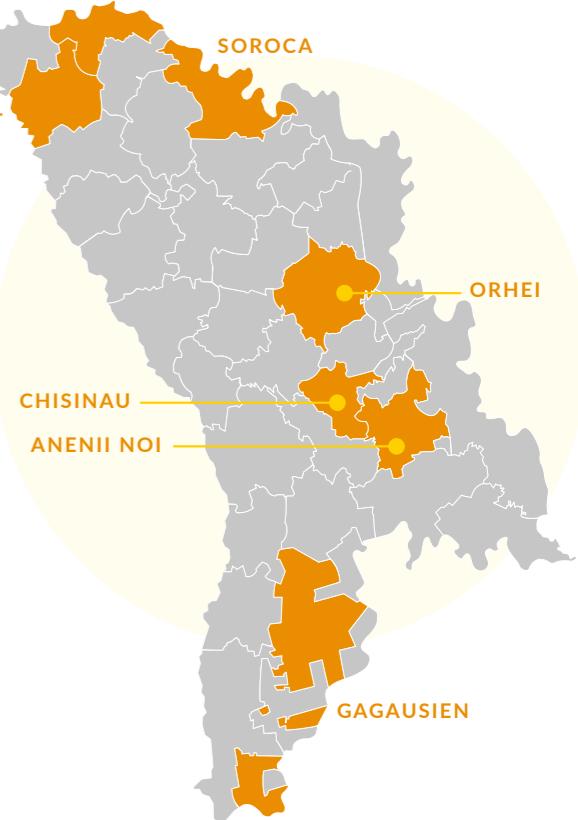
The **"Mihail Lomonosov" high-school canteen** in Orhei was renovated through **construction work**, the provision of **essential kitchen facilities and dining equipment**.



600 children and adolescents, 120 teachers and 120 parents in Chisinau were reached through **awareness-raising sessions** on Menstrual Health and Hygiene Management (MHMH).



Around **70 speech therapy sessions per month** were provided for children with communication challenges, supporting their cognitive, emotional, and social development through individualised interventions.



4 community centres in Edinet, Otaci, Soroca and Chisinau were rehabilitated to serve as inclusive learning hubs with digital equipment and educational materials to facilitate Non-Formal Education (NFE) activities reaching **around 1,300 people**.



Over **1,200 PSS sessions** were conducted across the 4 community centres in Chisinau, Edinet, Otaci, and Soroca, reaching **4,740 individuals**.



Recreational activities involved **8,476 individuals** through creative and skill-building workshops.



Capacity building training sessions for **20 field staff members** equipped them with knowledge and tools to identify protection risks, respond to emotional distress, and implement inclusive, child-centred approaches.

⁵⁷ Moldova remains a challenging context for development work, due to a combination of factors such as heavy dependence on international donors, weak grassroots engagement in rural areas, and political instability. These systemic challenges, coupled with chronic underfunding for gender-focused programmes, currently prevent WeWorld from maintaining an active operational presence in the country.

FRAMING THE CONTEXT

We have been active in Moldova since 2022. The country continues to face systemic challenges in ensuring equitable access to quality education, particularly for vulnerable children from low-income households, rural areas, and with disabilities. In 2023, UNICEF reported that **27% of children under 18 were living in monetary poverty**, contributing to reduced school participation (National Bureau of Statistics of the Republic of Moldova, 2022). The ongoing mass-scale invasion by Russian forces in Ukraine has added further strain to Moldova's education sector, with **over 25,000 Ukrainian refugee children of school age arriving in the country** (Ministry of Education and Research of the Republic of Moldova, 2025). As of February 2025, **only 2,534 were enrolled in schools** (48% girls and 52% boys) and **986 in kindergartens**, leaving thousands without access to formal education (ibid.). Key barriers include language differences, psychosocial trauma, legal uncertainty, and parental preference for Ukrainian curricula.

Despite efforts by the government and development partners to simplify enrolment procedures and promote integration, major structural challenges persist. **Teacher shortages, outdated infrastructure, and limited inclusive education services** continue to hamper learning outcomes, particularly for children with disabilities. Widespread dissatisfaction with online schooling and the urgent need for enhanced language support and psychosocial resources further compound this issue (REACH, UNHCR & UNICEF, 2023). The risks of remaining out of school are significant: **exploitation, early marriage, and social isolation remain pressing concerns**.



WeWorld CARES about Child-Centred Education in Moldova

In Moldova, where displacement and emotional upheaval disrupt childhood, our child-centred approach begins with safety, trust, and healing. Through play, creativity, and consistent care, we create safe, welcoming spaces where children can reconnect with themselves and others. Our model is rooted in teamwork – educators, psychologists, and speech therapists collaborate to meet each child's unique needs with empathy and precision. Beyond learning, we focus on emotional resilience, expression, and inclusion, empowering children to feel understood and valued. Education becomes a pathway to recovery and connection, not just academic success. We ensure systems respond to children's needs – especially those navigating trauma and uncertain situations – while protecting their dignity and hope.

"I have been attending WeWorld's Community Centre for speech therapy sessions for the past nine months. I love dancing and joining lots of different activities! However, I was having some difficulties when it came to pronounce sibilant sounds, such as [SH], [ZH] and [CH], and the sounds [R] and [R']. I also felt very shy and unsure of myself, so I used to speak quietly and hesitantly.

Thanks to the amazing speech therapists at the Community Centre, I have made big progress. I can now say sibilant and whistling sounds clearly. We practice a lot using poems and tongue twisters, and it is really fun! Now I feel much more confident, I smile a lot more, and I'm not scared to speak up. I love going to dance and acrobatics classes – and I always raise my hand when someone asks who wants to join a new activity!"

Anastasia Kobets (6 years old),
user of the Chisinau Community Centre



COMMUNITY

Engaging Communities in Promoting Children's Agency

We actively engage children, parents, teachers, and local stakeholders to foster the involvement of the entire community in children's education.

- As part of the "**EDU-PRO Quality education and protection for conflict-affected people and vulnerable groups in Moldova**" project, funded by the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation (AICS), we conducted **84 awareness-raising sessions** on Menstrual Health and Hygiene Management (MHMH), Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH), child protection and gender-based violence, involving students, teachers and parents in **12 schools** in Chisinau from April 2024 to July 2025. A strategic document titled "*Awareness Raising Campaign Strategy*" was developed to provide a clear framework for the intervention.
- In all communities, including Roma communities, awareness activities began with dedicated sessions for parents to obtain their consent before addressing these topics with their children. We think it is essential to discuss these issues at the community level, because even though they are often seen as sensitive, they actually concern health and rights, so they must be addressed not only with children, but also with adults.

As part of our joint efforts with institutions, we collaborated closely with the Ministry of Education and Research to pinpoint schools in need of canteen rehabilitation. Indeed, very often, school is the only place where children can have a complete and nutritious meal. A similar approach was used to select public spaces suitable for future community centres.



ACCESS

Unlocking Access to Inclusive, Quality Learning

In 2024 and 2025, we implemented a variety of activities aimed at improving access to quality learning for vulnerable children and youth, particularly in the northern and central regions of the country.

- As part of the EDU-PRO Project, we aimed to improve access to education and protection for **children and youth from vulnerable backgrounds, including Roma communities**. The core objective was to transform schools and community centres into welcoming, inclusive spaces where girls and young women from marginalised groups can learn and grow in safety.
- Under this project, we worked for the **rehabilitation of 3 Russian-language high schools** and the **reconstruction** of the "**Mihail Lomonosov**" high-school canteen in Orhei. The renovation included not only **construction work**, but also the provision of **essential kitchen facilities and dining equipment** to ensure a functional and hygienic environment for students.
- As part of the projects funded by AICS, ChildFund New Zealand (CFNZ), Radiohjälpen, Barnfonden, the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (AECID), and Aktion Deutschland Hilft (ADH)⁵⁸, we also worked for the **rehabilitation of 4 community centres** in Edinet, Otaci, Soroca and Chisinau, to serve as inclusive learning hubs with digital equipment and educational materials to facilitate **Non-Formal Education (NFE) activities** for children who are often excluded from formal education systems, especially Ukrainian refugees and Roma communities.

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This activity was conducted as part of several projects: the EDU-PRO Project, funded by AICS run from April 2024 to July 2025; the "ChildFund Regional Refugee Response in Moldova" Project, Phase II (from June 2023 to May 2024) and III (from July 2024 to June 2025), funded by ChildFund New Zealand and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade of New Zealand; the "Ukraine-Moldova CrossBorder Project: A Multi-Sectoral Approach for Children and Adolescents Affected by War" initiative, funded by Radiohjälpen and Barnfonden, run from July 2023 to June 2024; "Education in emergency and psychosocial support for people affected by the conflict in Ukraine and Moldova, especially girls, boys, adolescents and women" Project, funded by AECID (from July 2022 to March 2024); "Emergency response to meet the basic needs of refugees and host communities affected by the Ukraine crisis in Moldova through provision of basic needs, education, protection & MHPSS services" initiative, funded by ADH, run from February 2024 to September 2024.

"Growing up as a Roma girl, I've often felt judged unfairly – not for who I am, but for how I look, speak, or dress. In school, some teachers and classmates treated me differently from the start, as if I was somehow "less." Comments about my clothes or accent made me feel like I didn't belong, even when I tried to fit in. But through WeWorld, I found a space where I could truly be myself. Through their creative activities and the open discussions, I made new friends, learned to speak up, and felt heard. In their sessions, no one laughed at me or interrupted me. They listened and respect me, making me feel safe. Feeling safe means being able to show who you are without fear. And that's what WeWorld created for me: a space of respect, support, and growth. Their work helped me see that I matter."

A 18-year-old girl,
user of the Soroca Community Centre

- ◆ The activities, which reached around **1,300 people**, included recreational sessions, language classes, digital literacy and introductory robotic courses involving 350 students, with a specific focus on Ukrainian refugees and Roma communities.
- ◆ To support these efforts, **spaces were equipped with educational furniture, books and learning materials, games and other supplies such as stationery and cleaning essentials**. Additionally, snack distribution during educational sessions helped maintain children's attendance and engagement.

Our MHHM strategy in Moldova under the EDU-PRO Project

As part of the **awareness raising-sessions on Menstrual Health and Hygiene Management (MHHM)** under the EDU-PRO Project, brochures and flyers were created to inform parents about the importance of educating children on MHHM topics, to encourage them to take an active role and participate more meaningfully in the sessions. Teams in charge of conducting the sessions were trained and supported by WeWorld's Gender and Protection Officer. By the end of the project, menstrual hygiene kits were distributed, including samples of sanitary pads. **The activity reached 600 children and adolescents, including young boys and girls from Roma communities, 120 teachers and 120 parents.** Alongside the awareness-raising sessions on MHHM, we distributed the "**Jurnalul Mariei**"⁵⁹: developed in Italy as "Luna's Diary" and then translated into both Romanian and Russian to be adapted to Moldova's context. The diary was created to support girls' well-being, self-expression, and body awareness by combining cycle tracking, journaling, and stigma-breaking activities through a playful and interactive approach.



RIGHTS

Advancing and Protecting Children's Rights

In Moldova, we integrate children's rights across all interventions, ensuring that every child becomes aware and feels empowered to claim and defend them. Through both **formal and informal activities in our community centres**, children learn about their rights using **interactive, age-appropriate tools** such as educational board games, role-playing exercises, storytelling sessions, and creative workshops focused on rights such as protection from violence, access to education, freedom of expression, and the right to play. All these activities aim **to bring together Roma, Moldovan and Ukrainian children and families** to promote social cohesion.

- ◆ In 2024, **group sessions addressing bullying and peer pressure** were also delivered within a rights-based framework.
- ◆ Moreover, we worked with caregivers through **parental education sessions**, group therapies, and trainings on positive parenting, fostering a shared understanding of children's rights within the family environment. The idea was to strengthen the recognition of adults as duty-bearers and children as rights holders, fostering a safe environment where children's rights are understood, respected, and actively upheld through informed caregiving and positive parenting practices.



EXPRESSION

Amplifying Children's Voices and Perspectives

In our **4 community centres**, children are regularly consulted through **focus groups, feedback forms, and informal discussions**, which help shape the design of recreational and psychosocial support activities. **Written feedback** is collected monthly, allowing children to share their thoughts on past activities and suggest improvements or new ideas. To ensure accessibility and inclusivity, especially for younger children or those with limited literacy, we use **adapted tools such as emoji-based forms and visual stickers**, making it easier for them to express how they felt about an activity or environment. Their preferences, concerns, and suggestions are then carefully reviewed and **integrated into the planning and scheduling of workshops, group sessions, and other activities**, ensuring that programmes remain relevant, engaging, and child-centred. We provide **direct support to Roma girls** through educational activities by creating safe, friendly spaces where they can express themselves, learn and connect with others. The daily interaction among Roma, Moldovan, and Ukrainian youth in our centres, where they participate together in educational and recreational workshops. These interactions help **break down stereotypes and build social cohesion**.

- ◆ In 2024, we launched a global consultation involving children and adolescents worldwide to explore their hopes, dreams, and fears about the future. The consultation, part of the broader "**ChildFund Alliance World Index on the Rights of Women and Children**"⁶⁰, involved a total of **24 children**.

In our educational projects, mainstreaming children's expression, consultation, and involvement is a core component across every phase of our project cycle. During planning, we organise **consultations and creative workshops** to gather their views and experiences. During implementation, we encourage active engagement through **peer-led activities, and awareness initiatives**. For evaluation, we collect feedback through **suggestion boxes, emoji-based forms, and group reflection sessions**, ensuring children's voices are heard and integrated into future programming. Some of your younger staff members, close in age to the adolescents targeted by our projects, designed and led sessions specifically tailored for youth, such as career orientation discussions, or creative arts sessions. Their proximity in age helps built trust, encouraged participation, and created a more relatable learning environment.



SAFETY

Safeguarding Children's Protection and Well-Being Through Education

- ◆ As part of the project funded by AICS, CFNZ, Barnfonden, AECID and ADH, we focus on ensuring children and their families a safe environment, through a variety of education activities focused on Psychosocial Support (PSS).
- ◆ **Over 1,200 PSS sessions** were conducted across the **4 community centres** in Chisinau, Edinet, Otaci, and Soroca, delivered both in presence and online to ensure accessibility and continuity. Skilled psychologists worked with children, adolescents, and caregivers, creating safe and nurturing spaces for emotional expression and healing. The sessions reached **4,740 individuals**.
- ◆ **Speech therapy sessions** were provided for children with communication challenges, supporting their cognitive, emotional, and social development through individualised interventions led by licensed therapists. Initially piloted in one community centre, the programme offered both individual and small group sessions, with a capacity of **around 70 sessions per month**. Due to its positive impact and high demand, the practice was later replicated in the other centres, expanding access to children facing speech and language difficulties.
- ◆ **Recreational activities** were regularly organised to engage children and youth in creative expression and skill development, reaching **8,476 individuals**. These include a variety of **workshops such as quilling, drawing, sewing, embroidery, eco-printing, and clay modelling**. These sessions not only stimulated children's creativity, but also encouraged fine motor development, concentration, and social interaction.
- ◆ The **4 community centres** host **child-friendly spaces** designed to restore a sense of normalcy among children. Dedicated "**Mother and Child**" **activities**, led by skilled educators, offered a supportive environment where mothers and young children could bond, play, and participate in guided early learning activities, strengthening attachment and early childhood development.

- ◆ We also organised **educational and social activities** for children, youth, and families from vulnerable communities, especially the Roma one. We facilitate active dialogue between girls, their families and local institutions to create more favourable conditions for the **participation and empowerment of young Roma girls**.

- ◆ In addition, we invested in **capacity building training sessions for 20 field staff members**, equipping them with knowledge and tools to identify protection risks, respond to emotional distress, and implement inclusive, child-centred approaches. Training sessions have included topics such as child safeguarding, psychological first aid, inclusive education practices in community settings, and STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics) & Art Therapy as Educational and Emotional Resources.

THE VOICE OF

Lucie Ménard
Head of Programmes

"WeWorld Moldova's education strategy takes an integrated and context-responsive approach, promoting inclusive and equitable access to learning for vulnerable groups – particularly Ukrainian refugees and Roma communities. Grounded in a rights-based, child-focused methodology, it places education at the centre of empowerment and social cohesion. Our approach aims to ensure inclusive, equitable, and responsive education, while also addressing the wider social factors that influence learning, integration, and well-being. Our non-formal education programmes support children aged 4-11 by creating safe spaces where they can engage in recreational activities that nurture emotional, social, and cognitive development. To close learning gaps and ease the transition to formal schooling, we offer homework assistance and remedial classes. This is especially important for displaced and marginalised children, and supports vulnerable families in managing educational needs more effectively. Skills development is provided for all ages – children and adults alike – through digital literacy training, Romanian and English language courses, and basic education programmes."

Gender and protection themes are systematically integrated across our educational activities. Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) services include individual and group therapy, guidance for parents, and tailored support for children with cognitive or developmental needs, such as speech therapy and assistive devices. We also provide sexual and reproductive health education targeting youth, with a strong focus on menstrual hygiene management and broader awareness of sexual health. These initiatives empower young people, especially girls, promoting bodily autonomy and gender equality. Referral pathways are embedded throughout all our activities, connecting children and caregivers to medical, legal, and social protection services when needed. This holistic system ensures access to broader support networks beyond the classroom."

OUR PARTNERS AND ALLIES

In Moldova, WeWorld is an active participant in **national coordination spaces**, including the Child Protection Sub-Working Group, the Education Working Group, the Protection Working Group, and the Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) Network, which WeWorld co-chairs. In 2024, WeWorld signed a **Memorandum of Understanding with the Ministry of Education and Research** to enhance education programming and institutional collaboration. The organisation works closely with **local stakeholders to deliver complementary and sustainable interventions**, including with the National Employment Agency, the National Congress of Ukrainians in Moldova, the "Alexei Mateevici" Pedagogical College, the **Asociația Femeilor Antreprenoare (AFAM)**⁶¹, the **Association of Entrepreneurs with Disabilities "European Skills without Borders" (AEFL)**, the NGOs **Copii, Comunitate, Familie (CCF Moldova)**, **Ave Copii**, Partnerships for Every Child (P4EC) Moldova, "Ion Creanga" National Library of Children, and the Ukrainian **Women Refugee Network Female Support Force (FSF)**.

MOZAMBIQUE

✓ OUR LATEST ACHIEVEMENTS

1,245 children and **574 adults** participated in Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) educational sessions in Chiúre, which **empowered children to understand their rights and express safety concerns.**



In Pemba and Chiúre, **1,602 children** in 10 schools participated in **remedial classes**, while **581** in **catch-up classes**.



The "Children With Disabilities and Back to School" campaign run in Chiúre engaged **848 community members**, raising awareness on **inclusive education and school reintegration**.

A **Training of Trainers (ToT) on Peace Education** was conducted with **30 teachers from 15 schools** in Cabo Delgado and Nampula, equipping them with tools for conflict resolution, inclusive pedagogy, non-violent communication, and arts-based peacebuilding.

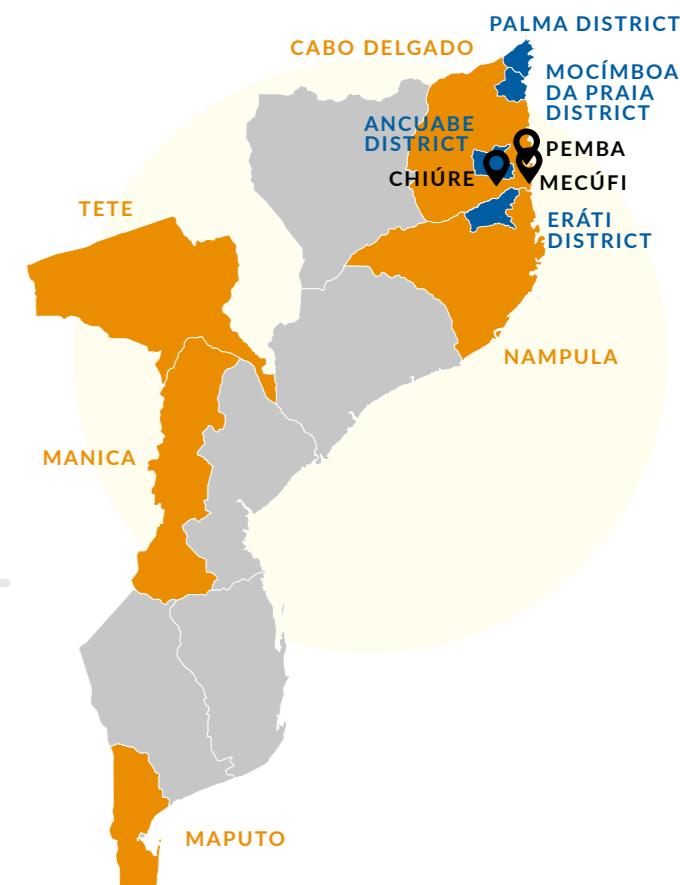
In Cabo Delgado, **recreational activities** for psychosocial support reached **1,602 children**.



66 teachers in Chiúre, together with facilitators and activists, **received specialised training** on gender equality and citizenship, inclusive classroom practices and children's protection and rights.



In Mecúfi and Pemba, a total of **35 teachers** were trained to foster intellectual, social and emotional development by promoting **creative and engaging pedagogies**.



FRAMING THE CONTEXT

Mozambique's education sector remains deeply affected by conflict, climate shocks, and systemic inequalities, demanding urgent, integrated responses. **WeWorld has been active in Mozambique since 2000**, working across provinces including Maputo, Tete, and Cabo Delgado to promote the rights and well-being of vulnerable communities. Over the past two decades, its programming has focused on education, child protection, gender equality, and emergency response, particularly in fragile and conflict-affected districts.

Mozambique faces critical educational challenges driven by **rapid population growth, limited public investment, and stark urban-rural disparities**. The situation is exacerbated by climate change, recurrent natural disasters, and armed conflict, especially in Cabo Delgado, where **over 200,000 people were displaced in 2025 alone and 633 violent incidents were recorded, many targeting schools and health facilities** (OCHA, 2025). Cyclone Jude, the third major storm in early 2025, affected **over 1 million people**, further disrupting education and protection services (UNICEF, 2025).

Currently, an estimated **3 million children are out of school, with 968,300 girls representing 18% of all school-aged girls nationally** (Malala Fund, 2025). The **primary school student-teacher ratio stands at 68:1**, contributing to poor learning outcomes and limited foundational skills (Ministério da Educação, 2024). The **adult literacy rate remains stagnant at 38.3%**, severely restricting lifelong learning and employment opportunities (World Bank, 2025).

Curriculum relevance, language barriers, and lack of qualified educators continue to undermine quality. **Girls face lower completion rates than boys – 56.2% in primary and 33% in lower secondary education – due to early marriage, adolescent pregnancy, and gender-based violence** (Malala Fund, 2025). **Children with disabilities remain disproportionately excluded** due to stigma, inaccessible infrastructure, and insufficient inclusive training for teachers (Save the Children, 2025).

"Before October 2023, our Mahurunga Basic School faced a silent crisis. Nearly 30% of students had abandoned their studies between June and December. Early marriages, especially among adolescent girls, were heartbreakingly common. As teachers, we often felt limited, struggling to engage students and adapt. The passion was there, but tools and ongoing training were missing. Then, WeWorld arrived with the READY Project. At first, we were apprehensive, since a new organisation had arrived in our country. But their approach was different, inclusive and innovative. They didn't just tell us what to do; they partnered with us, understood our challenges, and offered community-based solutions. The idea of remedial classes, reintegration, and accelerated learning immediately resonated with us."

This project didn't just change our school; it transformed the future of our children. We saw a major drop in school dropouts. Seeing children return to class, eyes bright with hope, is immeasurable. Games and group work became part of daily lessons. Classrooms are now full of energy: students participate, ask questions, and grow in confidence. Teachers are adapting, fostering critical thinking, and responding to diverse learning paces. Trust between teachers and students has deepened. Beyond lessons, the READY Project brought our community closer. Parents are more involved, vulnerable children, especially those displaced by conflict, received materials, psychosocial support, and a sense of belonging. We received training, resources, and even uniforms. Sustaining all these initiatives will be challenging, but the spirit that WeWorld instilled in us will endure. The Mahurunga Basic School is now a place where every child is seen, valued and empowered."

Abel João Cardoso,

Director and Teacher of the Mahurunga Basic School in Chiúre, Cabo Delgado Province



WeWorld CARES about Child-Centred Education in Mozambique

In Mozambique, where children face layered vulnerabilities, from poverty and displacement to social exclusion and conflict, our child-centred approach places their voices, rights, and lived experiences at the heart of education. We actively listen to children, understanding their fears, hopes, and learning preferences, and engage them as co-creators of their learning journey. Education, for us, goes beyond literacy and numeracy; it is a transformative process that empowers children to think critically, express themselves confidently, and become agents of change in their communities. Through inclusive, learner-friendly methods and psychosocial support, especially in crisis-affected districts like Cabo Delgado, we help children not only attend school, but thrive, heal, and adapt. Our approach is rooted in a rights-based framework, informed by global best practices, and grounded in local realities through strong community participation.



COMMUNITY

Engaging Communities in Promoting Children's Agency

In Chiúre district, we implemented key community engagement activities, such as awareness campaigns, to promote dialogue on education access, inclusion, and child protection.

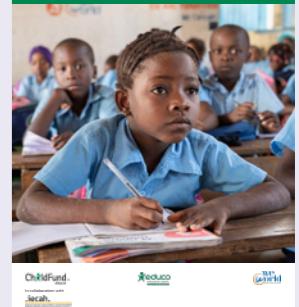
- ◆ In November 2024, we launched a campaign on **Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA)**, reaching **1,245 children** – 633 boys and 612 girls – and **574 adults**. Educational sessions supported children in understanding their rights and provided space to express safety concerns.
- ◆ The "**Children With Disabilities and Back to School**" campaign, conducted in December 2024, engaged **848 community members** – 349 men and 499 women. The initiative promoted inclusive education, encouraged enrolment and retention of children with disabilities, and highlighted the need for increased participation of men in community-based efforts.
- ◆ In parallel, we strengthened local education systems by supporting PTAs and school committees, engaging in education policy dialogue and providing technical assistance to local authorities, particularly in Chiúre, to ensure alignment with local priorities and contribute to curriculum development.

Applying the HDP Nexus in Education: Promoting Sustained and Equitable Access in Fragile and Crisis Contexts



Between 2024 and 2025, ChildFund Alliance members WeWorld and Educo, in collaboration with IECAH, conducted research in Mozambique and Burkina Faso on how **the Humanitarian-Development-Peace (HDP) Nexus⁶²** can strengthen crisis-affected education systems. The study explored integrated, locally led approaches linking emergency response, development, and peacebuilding. Findings were presented at the Humanitarian Talk "Integrated Approaches to Education in Times of Crisis: Ensuring Protection, Building Resilience, Inspiring Hope" on 19 May in Brussels, during the 2025 European Humanitarian Forum⁶³.

Results show that in Mozambique, particularly in the conflict-affected area of Cabo Delgado, the HDP approach improved access, quality, and inclusion. Accelerated and remedial programmes helped out-of-school children regain foundational skills and return to formal education, while teachers received training in inclusive pedagogy, conflict-sensitive methods, non-violent communication, and psychosocial support. **Community engagement was a key pillar: school-level governance bodies – including PTAs and school councils – began to take more active roles** in planning and implementation, reinforcing ownership and sustainability. The research demonstrates that flexible, multi-year HDP strategies can improve learning and support long-term stability.



⁶² The Humanitarian-Development-Peace (HDP) Nexus, also known as the "Triple Nexus", refers to the interlinked and complementary work of humanitarian, development, and peacebuilding actors. It emphasises the need for these three areas to work together more coherently to address the complex needs of people affected by crises, mitigate risks, and promote sustainable peace (ICVA, 2018; UNDP, 2024).

⁶³ The event was co-organised by ChildFund Alliance, the Global Education Cluster, the Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS), Save the Children, UNICEF, WeWorld, and World Vision. For more information, visit: <https://www.weworld.it/en/news-and-stories/news/we-world-at-the-european-humanitarian-forum-advocating-for-integrated-education-in-crisis>.



ACCESS

Unlocking Access to Inclusive, Quality Learning

- From January to April 2024, in the districts of Pemba and Chiúre, we conducted remedial and catch-up classes through two initiatives: the **READY Project**, supported by UNICEF, and the **Oficina de Arte Project**, co-funded by the Swiss Co-operation. These classes provided crucial support to students facing academic challenges, disruptions in schooling, and the risk of dropping out.
- The **remedial classes** were focused on providing additional support to students who are struggling academically or at risk of falling behind. The programme has reached a total of **10 schools**, including **1,602 children**, of which 680 boys and 922 girls, including 34 internally displaced children and one child with disability.
- The **catch-up classes**, aimed to help students recover learning losses caused by school disruptions. They reached **581 children** – 292 boys and 289 girls. Additionally, through the READY Project, more catch-up classes were run during the same period, **reaching an additional 168 students**.



RIGHTS

Advancing and Protecting Children's Rights

Through our activities, we champion children's rights by creating meaningful opportunities for them to learn, take action and engage as active participants in decisions that affect their lives. Looking ahead, **significant opportunities exist to further strengthen children's role in promoting and defending their rights**.

To ensure that programmes are truly responsive to children's needs and priorities – especially in conflict-affected regions like Cabo Delgado – **greater integration of their perspectives in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of education initiatives is essential**. In contexts marked by displacement, trauma, and disrupted schooling, children's lived experiences offer critical insights into what safety, dignity, and learning mean to them.

Expanding child-led advocacy, particularly through peer-to-peer learning, psychosocial support networks, and formal platforms for intergenerational dialogue, can foster more meaningful and sustained participation. These mechanisms not only amplify children's voices but also help rebuild trust and social cohesion in fractured communities. **Moreover, leveraging inclusive and conflict-sensitive technologies can enable children to exercise their right to education, share their stories, and connect across geographic and social divides**. This enhances their agency as rights-holders and active contributors to shaping resilient, equitable educational systems in Mozambique.

- In 2025, as part of the *Kujenga Amani Pamoja (KAP) Project*, co-funded by the European Union and implemented in Mozambique, Kenya, and Tanzania, the **child-friendly booklet "Peace Starts With Us! A little guide for young peacebuilders"** was created to foster active participation and peaceful conflict resolution among children. Through engaging activities and colorful illustrations, it helps young readers understand their rights, resolve conflicts constructively, and contribute to safer, more inclusive schools and communities. The booklet introduces key concepts like democracy, good governance, and civic engagement, encouraging children to express themselves and become changemakers from an early age.⁶⁴

⁶⁴ For more information, visit: <https://www.weworld.it/en/what-we-do/publications/peace-start-with-us>



EXPRESSION

Amplifying Children's Voices and Perspectives

- In November 2024, **girls' and citizenship clubs** in Chiúre were revitalised or created. Held across **5 primary schools**, the initiative selected **25 participants** – 16 girls and 9 boys – from 75 dignity kit beneficiaries to take part in training sessions.
- Through these clubs, girls were given space to express themselves, build confidence and speak out challenges they face – particularly in relation to protection, inclusion and education.

While challenges persist – especially cultural norms limiting the participation of girls and children with disabilities – these efforts have shown the potential of children, particularly girls, to **take on meaningful roles in shaping safer and more inclusive communities, gain leadership experience and engage more active in community dialogue**. To enhance children's future role, we are working on deepening their participation across all project phases, expand the club model to implement more child-led initiatives and create platforms for them to **interact with decision-makers and influence policy**.



SAFETY

Safeguarding Children's Protection and Well-Being Through Education

In Mozambique, our education programming adopts a holistic, child-centred approach that extends far beyond classroom instruction. It integrates Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR), Mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS), the creation of safe and inclusive learning spaces like child-friendly space and temporary learning space, and continuous capacity building for teachers in TiCC and frontline staff. In conflict-affected regions like Cabo Delgado, where children face displacement, trauma, and heightened protection risks, education becomes a critical platform for healing, resilience, and social cohesion.

We work closely with communities to embed culturally relevant practices, strengthen referral pathways, and promote intersectoral coordination with child protection, health, and WASH actors. By anchoring our efforts in a rights-based framework and adapting to evolving security realities, we safeguard children's well-being and reinforce their role as agents of change in rebuilding their futures.



Arts-based Learning for Dialogue and Peacebuilding

As part of the **Kujenga Amani Pamoja (KAP) Project**⁶⁵, co-funded by the European Union, we are supporting local authorities in creating spaces for youth to participate in peace and security discussions, through school events and community gatherings. In August 2024, we led a **Training of Trainers on Peace Education with 30 teachers from 15 schools** in Cabo Delgado and Nampula. The training equipped educators with tools for conflict resolution, inclusive pedagogy, non-violent communication, and arts-based learning, while exploring **how children can become active peacebuilders within their schools and communities**. Following the training, teachers worked with students to co-develop arts-based peacebuilding projects that responded to specific school conflict dynamics. Two schools were selected to implement their proposals: in Mecúfi (Cabo Delgado), the secondary school launched the **Os da Paz**⁶⁶ **Project**, using theatre-based activities to foster creativity, emotional expression, and dialogue on school-based violence, and aimed to build social cohesion and student agency. In Erati (Nampula), the **Vozes de Paz: Poesia para a Convivência e Resiliência**⁶⁷ **Project** used poetry to help integrate displaced students and promote healing, emotional resilience, and peaceful coexistence among peers.

⁶⁵

For more information, visit: <https://www.weworld.it/en/what-we-do/global-projects/kujenga-amani-pamoja-building-peace-together>

⁶⁶

The Ones of Peace

⁶⁷

Voices of Peace: Poetry for Coexistence and Resilience

- Between March and November 2024, in Cabo Delgado, we carried out a set of **recreational activities** to support children's emotional and social well-being, particularly those affected by displacement, conflict and instability.
- These activities were designed to encourage reflection on daily experiences, address sensitive issues such as gender roles and environmental challenges, and foster critical thinking. In total, **1,602 children** took part in this initiative.
- In June 2024, we also conducted teacher capacity building sessions in Chiúre: **66 teachers** – 37 men and 29 women – together with facilitators and activists, **received specialised training** on gender equality and citizenship, inclusive classroom practices and children's protection and rights.
- Through the Oficina de Arte Project, we delivered a teacher training programme focused on the integration of arts into teaching and learning processes. A total of **35 teachers** – 15 in Mecúfi and 20 in Pemba – were trained, to foster teachers' intellectual, social and emotional development by promoting creative and engaging pedagogies.

THE VOICE OF

Aneta Jelinkova
Country Representative

Mozambique's education sector is being reshaped by the urgent need to recover from recurring crises while laying the foundation for inclusive, equitable and high-quality learning opportunities. Our strategy is to ensure that schools become not just places for learning but hubs of protection, inclusion and community resilience, able to withstand shocks and support every child to thrive. WeWorld's integrated approach – combining education, protection, DRR, and psychosocial support – is vital in rebuilding safe learning environments and restoring dignity for children affected by crisis. Its work aligns with Mozambique's SDG 4 commitments and the GPE 2025 Results Framework, which calls for inclusive, resilient, and rights-based education systems in fragile contexts.

Post-crisis recovery in Cabo Delgado has led to prioritising accelerated learning, remedial education, and reintegration of out-of-school children. Investments in teacher training, especially on inclusive practices and psychosocial support, reflect the broader goal of creating safe, equitable, child-friendly schools. Strengthening infrastructure, including classroom rehabilitation and provision of water and sanitation facilities, is also a priority.

At the same time, we are committed to ensuring that policies are geared toward keeping girls in school, preventing early marriage, and addressing gender-based violence. Inclusive education for children with disabilities remains a leading issue, though underfunded and under-implemented. Our strategy emphasises community engagement and the role of parents, school councils, and authorities in improving learning environments. With the government and local partners, we aim to improve access to and quality of education, while addressing disparities worsened by conflict, displacement, gender inequality and poverty, and to align the education system with resilience and peacebuilding objectives, including non-formal education, catch-up learning, Disaster Risk Reduction and citizenship education.

OUR PARTNERS AND ALLIES

In Mozambique, we collaborate with partners at national, district, and community levels to deliver coordinated, rights-based responses. Our participation in humanitarian coordination platforms ensures alignment with national priorities and enhances the impact of our work. At the national level, we are active in the **Education Cluster**, as a member of its **Strategic Advisory Group (SAG)**, and the Protection Cluster. In Pemba, we participate in the Education, Child Protection, Gender-Based Violence (GBV), Disability, and Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) Sub-Clusters, as well as the Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) Sub-Cluster, contributing to **strategic planning and inclusive programming**. We also work with institutional stakeholders such as the **District Service of Education, Youth, and Technology (SDEJT)**, providing **technical support** and contributing to education planning as part of the technical education group. In Chiúre, we partner with the Mozambican NGO **PROMURA** and collaborate closely with teachers, school directors, PTAs, and community leaders to foster safe, inclusive learning environments.

PALESTINE

This factsheet was produced with the financial support of Akelius Foundation

Akelius

✓ OUR LATEST ACHIEVEMENTS

In 2024, **21 schools** across Jenin, Nablus, Ramallah, Bethlehem, and Hebron Governorates **were rehabilitated**.



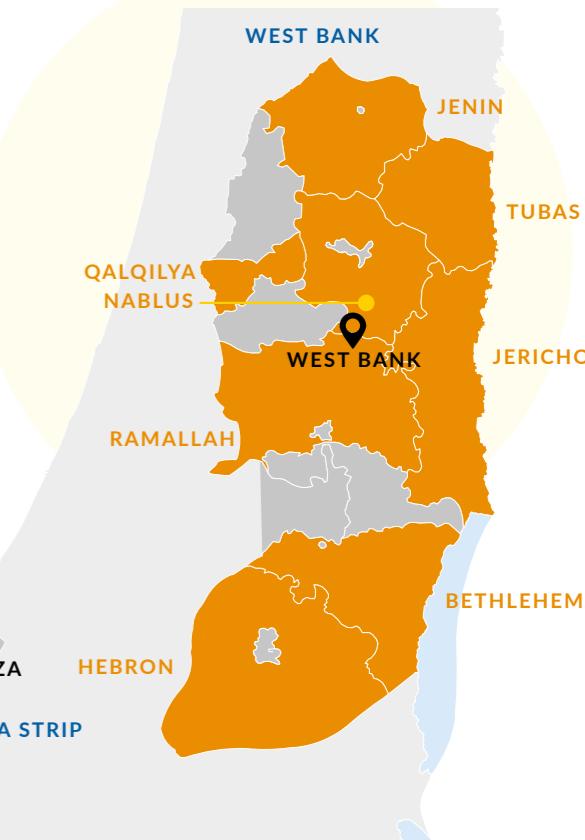
In summer 2025, **2,544 students** from the West Bank and Gaza participated in **summer camps** that fostered psychosocial well-being and social emotional learning.



1,300 individuals across Hebron, Bethlehem and Jenin Governorates, and the Jordan Valley, were offered **specialised training in Recycling and Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET)**, aimed at enhancing livelihood opportunities and resilience.

In 2024, a total of **24 teachers** from Jenin Governorate were trained in Psychological First Aid under the PONTE Project funded by the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation (AICS).

60 teachers are being trained in **Social-Emotional Learning (SEL)** and the **21st century skills**, as well as **on-the-job coaching**, across **10 schools** in the West Bank and **12 TLS** in Gaza.



We promote **children's awareness and participation** embedded within the **Community Protection Approach (CPA)**, through age-, disability- and gender-sensitive activities.



Children and youth were engaged through **focus group discussions (FGDs)** and **individual interviews (IIs)** designed to gather their views on the **protection risks affecting their communities**.



2,380 caregivers have been trained in **stress management and positive coping mechanisms**.

FRAMING THE CONTEXT

We have been active in West Bank since 1992, while in the Gaza Strip since 1997. The education system in Palestine has become increasingly fragile, shaped by a complex socio-political context, ongoing military activity, the pandemic, and persistent financial constraints. As of September 2025, school-aged children in the Gaza Strip are facing their **third consecutive year without sustained access to formal, in-person education**, a direct consequence of the devastating impacts of the ongoing war. The full blockade has further deepened the crisis, resulting in a severe shortage of essential supplies and teaching materials. As a result, **over 658,000 learners in Gaza were out of school in 2024** (OPT Education Cluster, 2025).

In the West Bank, over the academic year 2024-2025, **2,040 education-related incidents** were recorded, affecting **541 schools, 84,749 students and 4,711 teachers** (OPT Education Cluster, 2025a). Most of these episodes stemmed from ongoing and systematic restrictions caused by **checkpoints and heavy military presence** near schools. These conditions have severely hindered students, teachers, and staff from reaching educational facilities safely and on time, often involving intimidation and, in some cases, resulting in a complete denial of the right to education (ibid.).

In the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, schools continue to operate under increasing protection risks and severe movement restrictions, leading to significant learning loss, particularly among students in their foundational years. More than **780,000 learners have faced heightened restrictions and violations**, exacerbating an already challenging educational environment (OPT Education Cluster, 2024). This is especially evident in Area C, where there has been a noticeable rise in school demolitions and settler attacks (Education Cluster, Save the Children & UNICEF, 2025), and in the north of the West Bank, where UNRWA schools in refugee camps remain closed due to ongoing Israeli operations (OCHA, 2025).

The war has also had secondary implications on the education system, notably contributing to the fiscal crisis of the Palestinian Authority. This has **disrupted the regular payment of teachers' salaries**, resulting in a further reduction of school days and forcing many schools to adopt a **hybrid learning model** (OPT Education Cluster, 2024). Socio-economic pressures continue to push students, both male and female, out of the education system. **Many boys are compelled to seek employment, while girls are forced to resort to early marriage**.



WeWorld CARES about Child-Centred Education in Palestine

In Palestine, where children face daily protection risks that impact their access to safe and inclusive education, our multi-sectoral programmes and learning environments are designed to respond to individual needs, creating spaces where every child can thrive. Children are actively involved in shaping their learning experience, as we make sure that their voices are heard and valued throughout all our

activities. *Safeguarding principles are embedded across all stages of project design and implementation, ensuring that participation is meaningful and protected, even in high-risk settings. This integrated approach promotes well-being, agency, and access to quality education, supporting children's growth and potential in a context where their rights and safety are often at risk of being denied.*



COMMUNITY

Engaging Communities in Promoting Children's Agency

- From 2023 to 2025, **resilience activities** were delivered to vulnerable communities across Hebron, Bethlehem and Jenin Governorates, and the Jordan Valley. Funded by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) within the West Bank Protection Consortium⁶⁸, these activities reached **1,300 community members** who had ambitions to start their own business – men, women and young people – selected through an open application process. These people were offered **specialised training in Recycling and Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET)**, aimed at enhancing livelihood opportunities and resilience.
- In the Gaza Strip, we conducted several **hygiene promotion (HP) sessions** with children using the **Friendly Class Approach**, a child-centred method designed to empower children as hygiene and environmental leaders within their communities through interactive, inclusive, and context-sensitive learning methodologies. Community-based volunteers, selected to serve as HP facilitators, were trained on WASH-related health risks, safe hygiene practices and the socio-emotional learning (SEL) approach.

68

The West Bank Protection Consortium (WBPC) was established in 2015, and is funded by the European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO) and 10 bilateral donors, including Sweden through SIDA. The WBPC works to safeguard and support vulnerable Palestinian individuals and communities to reduce risks, strengthen resilience, and face protection threats. Its programming is built around three core components: Emergency Relief, Resilience Building and Advocacy. The objective of the second pillar, which is the foundation of the Resilience Programme, is to respond to the main needs of Palestinian people who are repeatedly exposed to rights violations, particularly those stemming from policies that promote forcible transfer. Through a protection-centred approach, the programme focuses on community-based protection, the development of basic and social infrastructure, livelihood support, and advocacy efforts that amplify the voices of affected communities and promote their rights. For more information, visit: <https://openaid.se/en/contributions/SE-0-SE-6-14571#description>.

THE VOICE OF

Basia Urban

Head of Programmes

We have maintained a longstanding and continuous presence in Palestine, particularly in the education, protection, WASH, shelter and food security sectors. Following October 2023 events, we have rapidly activated our emergency response programme to address the urgent needs of conflict-affected communities in the Gaza Strip, while simultaneously implementing robust operations in the West Bank, where active hostilities have escalated. Our strategic priorities are rooted in a community-centred approach that seeks to address both immediate needs and long-term development for children and young people.

In education, we are committed to working on infrastructure renovation in schools in the West Bank and in Temporary Learning Spaces (TLS) in Gaza, taking into account gender-sensitive approach and access for children with disabilities. We will continue to work under the umbrella of non-formal education, offering remedial classes, summer camps, remote learning and life-skills activities.

We will continue to focus on promoting children's well-being and inclusion, providing continuous psychosocial support, as well as recreational and sport-based activities. At the same time, we aim to work with our partners to organise capacity-building trainings for school administrators, counsellors and teachers on child protection, safety and the use of referral mechanisms. As an active member of the Education Cluster, WeWorld will expand cooperation with the Ministry of Education and Higher Education through joint campaigns and initiatives to amplify the voices of marginalised children and communities and ensure that education remains a priority on the national agenda.



ACCESS

Unlocking Access to Inclusive, Quality Learning

- ◆ In 2024, with support from the oPt Humanitarian Fund, under the “[Emergency Rehabilitation of Schools: Restoring Safe and Inclusive Learning Environments for Vulnerable Communities in the West Bank](#)” Project funded by OCHA, and as part of the “[Prevention and response to the forcible transfer of Palestinians in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, through humanitarian assistance and evidence-based advocacy](#)” Project, supported by the West Bank Protection Consortium (WBPC) and funded by ECHO, **21 schools** across Jenin, Nablus, Ramallah, Bethlehem, and Hebron Governorates **were rehabilitated**.
- ◆ The interventions prioritised improvements in **safety standards** and **WASH services** in both elementary and secondary schools, as well as emergency response mechanisms. As a result, **4,225 children**, 1,600 boys and 2,625 girls, managed to access safer and more inclusive learning environments.
- ◆ In 2024, as part of 8 different Projects⁶⁹, a total of **2,886 students, teachers and school staff** were given **safe, well-equipped and inclusive educational facilities**.

69 [Emergency Rehabilitation of Schools: Restoring Safe and Inclusive Learning Environments for Vulnerable Communities in the West Bank](#), funded by OCHA; [Prevention and response to the forcible transfer of Palestinians in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, through humanitarian assistance and evidence-based advocacy](#), funded by ECHO; [Preservation of the physical and normative space for a two-state solution through the prevention of the forcible transfer of Palestinians in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem](#), funded by the General Federal Foreign Office (GFFO); [For safer and more inclusive access to quality education](#), funded by OCHA; [Promoting Opportunities for NEXUS-oriented Territorial Empowerment and Economic Resilience](#), funded by the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation (AICS); [Prevention of the forcible transfer of Palestinians in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, through humanitarian assistance and evidence-based advocacy](#), funded by ECHO; [Preservation of the physical and normative space for a two-state solution through the prevention of the forcible transfer of Palestinians in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem](#), funded by GFFO. Support for West Bank Protection Consortium (WBPC), funded by Denmark Development Cooperation (Danida).

- ◆ As part of the Project “[Resilient, Inclusive and Safe Education for children affected by conflict in Palestine](#)” (RISE) Project⁷⁰, launched in 2025 and funded by the Akelius Foundation, **5 schools** in Jenin and Tulkarm Governorates, along with **12 Temporary Learning Spaces (TLS)** in Gaza (Khan Yunis, Middle Area, and Gaza Governorates) **are being rehabilitated**. In summer 2025, **2,544** students from the West Bank and Gaza participated in **17 summer camps** focused on remedial education, recreational activities and socio-emotional learning (SEL), to foster children’s psychosocial well-being and development.
- ◆ Under the RISE Project, **learning tools and education kits** are being provided to children, such as flow masters, notebooks, boards, board erasers and papers.
- ◆ In Gaza, children received **personal hygiene kits** containing essential items to promote safe hygiene practices, which include basic items such as soap, toothpaste, toothbrush, shampoo and nail clippers. In the West Bank, **family hygiene kits** containing the same items were distributed to meet household-level needs, prioritising internally displaced families from northern refugee camps currently lacking basic hygiene supplies.
- ◆ We are planning to distribute **Menstrual Hygiene Management (MHM) kits** to girls in TLS in Gaza, containing items such as sanitary pads, underwear, soap, and a discreet pouch.

70 The RISE Project, in alignment with the Akelius Foundation’s “100 Schools for Gaza” campaign, is designed to address the severe learning loss caused by Israel’s occupation and promote psychosocial well-being among children aged 7-14 in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, while supporting the rehabilitation of education infrastructure and strengthening the resilience of school communities. The intervention will target approximately 15,760 children over a one-year-period, with a focus on gender equality and the inclusion of children with disabilities.



RIGHTS

Advancing and Protecting Children’s Rights

As part of our work in the occupied Palestinian territory (oPt), we have been **collecting children’s and youth perspectives on their rights**, as well as their perceptions of the protection risks affecting their communities. These are not just temporary needs, but rights and opportunities that many children have been systematically deprived of, including access to basic education, food, clean and safe water, transportation, healthcare, and other essential services that are critical for their development.

In this context, where the act of claiming rights can often lead to increased risks to children’s physical and psychological well-being, it is essential to ensure that **any intervention is grounded in protection principles and tailored to the realities they face**.

We should strive to create **more structured and meaningful opportunities** for children and youth to engage in the promotion and defence of their rights within their communities, especially for adolescent girls and boys, whose voices are often underrepresented. This engagement must be facilitated through **safe and appropriate mechanisms** that empower them without exposing them to further harm.

“The most beneficial part of the summer camp was games, sports, and the way the teachers interacted with us in such a fun and meaningful way.”

“I loved coming to camp because my teacher made us truly enjoy every moment and made learning exciting.”

“I loved learning about cooperation, tolerance, forgiveness and positive approaches to dealing with others.”

Testimonies from children involved in the summer camps



EXPRESSION

Amplifying Children’s Voices and Perspectives

- ◆ In the West Bank, we promote **children’s awareness and participation** embedded within the **Community Protection Approach (CPA)**⁷¹, through several age-, disability- and gender-sensitive activities.
- ◆ As part of this approach, children and youth were engaged through **focus group discussions (FGDs)** or, when more appropriate, **individual interviews (IIs)** designed to gather their views on the protection risks affecting their communities and to ensure their voices are meaningfully included in the analysis and response planning.
- ◆ Specific tools, such as **Risks and Resources Maps**, are used to facilitate these discussions and to capture the solutions children propose in response to the challenges they face.
- ◆ Under the RISE Project in Gaza, we have established several **Hygiene Promotion (HP) Youth Clubs**, each composed of 8 children aged 11-14. With guidance from HP facilitators, members will discuss hygiene-related challenges observed in their communities, explore solutions through awareness-raising and community mobilisation and develop youth-led initiatives to promote safe hygiene practices. To empower young leaders, the project will provide a small seed fund for each club to design and implement local initiatives, such as open days, theatre performances, clean-up campaigns and global day celebrations.

71 The Community Protection Approach (CPA) is a people-centred methodology developed by WeWorld, created to better understand and reduce protection risks by placing communities at the heart of the process, combining data with lived experiences to build responses that are both evidence-based and grounded in local realities. Developed through years of field experience and first piloted in Palestine, the CPA has become a practical and adaptable tool for working in complex humanitarian contexts. Through the CPA, we work side by side with communities, listening to their stories, exploring the challenges they face, and identifying the strengths they already have. Together, we map out the threats, vulnerabilities, and capacities that shape their protection environment, using both qualitative and quantitative data, which we analyse and visualise through a digital dashboard that helps us and our partners coordinate more effectively and design responses that are integrated across sectors. Linking protection with education, health, livelihoods, legal support, and infrastructure, we work with communities to co-create solutions, advocate for their rights, and lead the way in shaping their own response. For more information, visit: <https://protection.interaction.org/case-examples/embracing-all-the-key-elements-of-results-based-protection-to-reduce-risk-experienced-by-the-palestinian-population-weworld-gvcs-community-protection-approach/>; <https://www.weworld.it/en/news-and-stories/news/cpa-as-best-practice-on-result-based-protection>.



SAFETY

Safeguarding Children's Protection and Well-Being Through Education

- ◆ In 2024, a total of **24 teachers** – 12 men and 12 women – from Jenin Governorate were trained in Psychological First Aid under the “**Promoting Opportunities for NEXUS-Oriented Territorial Empowerment and Economic Resilience**” (PONTE) Project funded by the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation (AICS).
- ◆ As part of the RISE project, **60 teachers are being trained in Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) and the 21st century skills**⁷², as well as **on-the-job coaching**, across **10 schools in the West Bank and 12 TLS in Gaza**, with the aim of delivering remedial education, SEL, and psychosocial support (PSS) to children.
- ◆ In the same schools, we are working to establish **Emergency Cells** and organise training sessions for teachers on protection and emergency preparedness, to help mitigate potential future hazards. In addition, **2,380 caregivers** have been trained in **stress management and positive coping mechanisms**.
- ◆ As part of the hygiene promotion programme, we are implementing targeted Menstrual Hygiene Management (MHM) activities to safeguard adolescent girls' dignity, health, and ability to continue learning. A special focus will be given to girls aged 13–14, as they are more likely to have reached menarche, particularly under the stressful conditions of displacement. The intervention includes **consultations with MHM specialists** across all education cycles to guide the design and implementation of contextually appropriate MHM messaging.
- ◆ Moreover, psychosocial support (PSS) kits are being provided to children, including coloured crayons, colourful papers, toys, painting materials, puppet dolls and other tools allowing children to relieve trauma through play.
- ◆ **Feedback** collected from students, teachers, and school staff has shown that **90% of individuals** reported these activities were delivered in a **safe, accessible, accountable, and participatory manner**.

⁷² 21st century skills refer to a broad set of knowledge, skills, work habits, and character traits that are considered essential to succeed, particularly in education and work settings. These skills go beyond traditional academic subjects and focus on preparing learners for a rapidly changing, interconnected, and technology-driven society. They include critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, communication, information, media and technology literacy, flexibility, leadership, initiative, productivity, and social skills. For more information, visit: <https://www.icevonline.com/blog/what-are-21st-century-skills>.

SYRIA

This factsheet was produced with the financial support of the European Union. Its contents are the sole responsibility of WeWorld and do not necessarily reflect the views of the European Union.



OUR PARTNERS AND ALLIES

We are an active member of the **occupied Palestinian territory (oPt) National Education Cluster** and the **West Bank and Gaza Sub-Clusters**, supporting the annual Back-to-School campaigns that promote access to education and raise awareness on the challenges faced by students and educators.

We also contribute to these platforms through key initiatives such as the “**Construction of Schools in Area C**” and the “**Contingency Planning**” taskforces, as well as the “**Continuity of Learning in WB – October 2023 crisis**” Working Group established to develop an Emergency Response Plan together with the **Palestinian Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MoEHE)** – whom we collaborate with on school infrastructure rehabilitation projects and the provision of educational materials – and other international stakeholders. In recognition of our strong field presence and rapid response capacity, **we have been selected by the Education Cluster as the focal point for the OCHA “48 Hours Response Mechanism in the West Bank” for 2024**, reinforcing our role in emergency education interventions.

In partnership with the NGO **Teachers Creativity Center (TCC)**, we implement remedial education programmes such as summer camps and extra-curricular activities focused on foundational literacy and numeracy. These initiatives also integrate Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) for students and teachers, alongside Psychosocial Support (PSS) and trauma-relief activities including drama, music, and sports sessions. On issues related to PSS, we also collaborate with the **Palestinian Counseling Center (PCC)**. In 2025, we started working with the **Akelius Foundation** through the RISE Project.

At the local level, we are one of the few organisations operating in Area C, supporting schools and kindergartens in marginalised communities, and working in and around **Refugee Camps**, helping Internally Displaced People (IDPs) through school rehabilitation and infrastructure development.



OUR LATEST ACHIEVEMENTS

Through **Back to Learning (BTL) campaigns, awareness sessions in schools and communities, and support to community-level committees**, our efforts focus on encouraging school enrolment and retention, while addressing key education and child protection concerns. A total of **25,816 individuals** were reached through these activities.



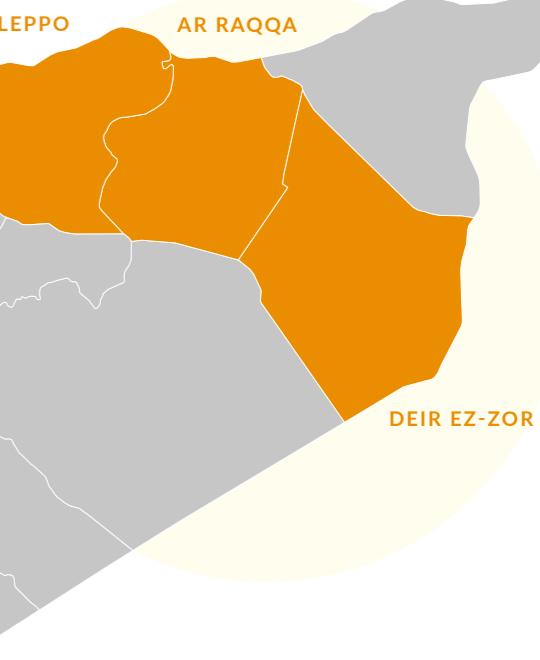
Across selected schools, rehabilitation works focused on improving safety, accessibility and inclusivity of educational infrastructure, reaching a total of **2,308 children**.

Between 2023 and 2025, **vocational training** reached **500 vulnerable women and persons with disabilities, especially youth**.



To strengthen teaching quality, **1,357 educators** involved in both formal and non-formal education participated in **professional development training**.

1,717 student kits and 106 teaching kits were distributed to support inclusive learning and ensure access to essential materials in crisis-affected areas.



To improve learning conditions, **34 school buildings**, including formal schools, non-formal education centres, and other high-need facilities received essential **classroom furniture**.



Non-formal education (NFE) programmes reached **12,481 children aged 6 to 18**, offering accelerated learning and supporting re-enrolment in formal education, particularly in underserved areas.



Child protection awareness campaigns reached **2,557 children**.

FRAMING THE CONTEXT

We have been working in Syria since 2011. The country's education system continues to face severe structural challenges, deeply exacerbated by years of conflict, economic instability, and natural disasters. The prolonged war has critically damaged the education infrastructure, while the 2023 earthquake and regional displacement in 2024 have further disrupted access to learning. As of mid-2025, an estimated 7.8 million people, including **6.9 million children, require educational support** (OCHA, 2025). **Over 2.45 million children are currently out of school, with an additional 1 million at risk of dropping out due to poverty, child labour, and early marriage.** More than **5,200 schools are damaged and in need of rehabilitation**, significantly limiting the system's capacity to host students (ibid.). Access to education is particularly restricted in areas such as Aleppo and Deir ez-Zor, where displacement and economic hardship are most acute (OCHA, 2024).

The school environment is widely perceived as unsafe and un-conducive to learning. Severe overcrowding, lack of furniture, inadequate learning materials, and insufficient WASH facilities are common across the country. In rural areas, access to electricity is frequently non-existent. These conditions have led to **increased dropout rates, absenteeism, and poor learning outcomes** (OCHA, 2024; UNICEF, 2025). A critical shortage of qualified teachers further undermines the education system. The conflict has triggered a significant "brain drain", and extremely low salaries have made it difficult to retain and train educators. Many teachers lack adequate professional development, affecting the quality of instruction (ibid.).

Children with special educational needs face additional barriers due to the absence of inclusive education practices. Without specialised support, children with disabilities remain among the most excluded from learning opportunities (Mounzer et al., 2022). With a projected increase in returnees, the pressure on Syria's education system is expected to intensify. Persistent barriers to access and quality of learning continue to threaten the future of millions of children across the country (UNICEF, 2025a).

"I had to leave school after 9th grade. At that time, I felt my future was uncertain. But everything changed when I enrolled in the vocational training course in electronics maintenance, and then in the business management course, both organised by WeWorld. Honestly, my life changed significantly after the training. I feel I have a reason to live now."

"I trained in a mixed-gender class, which sometimes made me feel overwhelmed. But I stayed determined and practiced daily at home on small devices. With my trainer's support and my own persistence, I gained both technical and entrepreneurial skills, as well as the confidence to start a small electronics repair project in my neighbourhood. Today, I am earning my own income, and I try to inspire other young women to pursue vocational training. I truly benefited a lot from these trainings and now I am proud to work in this field."

Maryam (18 years old),
a young woman who attended our vocational training programme in the Aleppo Governorate



WeWorld CARES about Child-Centred Education in Syria

In Syria, where the protracted crisis continues to disrupt children's access to education, our child-centred approach prioritises inclusive and non-formal learning pathways that respond to the diverse realities children face. Our interventions, supported by different donors such as ECHO, the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation (AICS), OCHA, ChildFund Korea (CFK) and Plan International, place children with disabilities at the heart of education planning, ensuring that inclusive education is not an add-on but a foundational principle of our work. Through tailored teacher training, community sensitisation, and accessible learning environments, we foster schools where every child feels seen, supported, and empowered. Non-Formal Education (NFE) programmes offer flexible, adaptive solutions for children who have missed years of schooling, enabling them to re-engage with learning in safe, nurturing spaces. By combining psychosocial support, participatory feedback mechanisms, and inclusive infrastructure, we aim to build an education system that reflects children's voices and meets their needs holistically.



WeWorld



COMMUNITY

Engaging Communities in Promoting Children's Agency

We actively engage local communities to support children's access to education and promote their continued learning in safe, inclusive and protective environments. Through **Back to Learning (BTL) campaigns, awareness sessions in schools and communities, and support to community-level committees**, our efforts focus on encouraging school enrolment and retention, while addressing key education and child protection concerns. A total of **25,816 individuals** were reached through these activities.

◆ **Back-to-Learning campaigns** are conducted at the start of each school year to raise awareness on the right to education and identify out-of-school children. These campaigns engage families and communities, sharing key messages on access to education while collecting names of children to be enrolled in non-formal education programmes and, eventually, transitioned into formal education.

◆ **School - and community - based awareness campaigns** have addressed a range of topics including the right to education, inclusive education, child protection, school safety, and risk education. Children are encouraged to reflect on these issues, share their perspectives, and engage their peers in discussions. Hygiene promotion and Menstrual Health Management (MHM) have also been integrated into these campaigns to support health and dignity in learning spaces.

To foster inclusive school governance, we supported the establishment and strengthening of **Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs) and school committees**. Future plans aim to expand their role in decision-making and deepen community engagement in education.

In parallel, we contribute to strengthening the education sector by providing **technical training** to ministry personnel, with a focus on inclusive education. A key milestone was the organisation of a workshop in Damascus in May 2023, which convened 35 people (national and local authorities, UN and AICS representatives) to explore strategies for improving access and equity **for children and youth with disabilities**.



ACCESS

Unlocking Access to Inclusive, Quality Learning

- ◆ Across selected schools, rehabilitation works focused on improving safety, accessibility and inclusivity of educational infrastructure, reaching a total of **2,308 children**. A total of **128 classrooms and WASH facilities** were renovated in line with our WASH in School Modality and according to Syrian Ministry of Education standards. Upgrades included disability-accessible infrastructure, gender-sensitive toilets, fencing, and debris removal to ensure safer and more welcoming learning spaces. In addition, we rehabilitated **4 vocational schools** and provided **10 schools** with the necessary **equipment** to support **practical learning**.
- ◆ To improve learning conditions, **34 school buildings**, including formal schools, non-formal education centres, and other high-need facilities received essential **classroom furniture**. **Solar energy systems** were installed in **6 schools** to ensure consistent access to electricity and lighting.
- ◆ Between 2023 and 2025, **vocational training reached 500 vulnerable women and persons with disabilities, especially youth**. Training topics included electronics maintenance, bartering, beautification, solar energy, handicrafts, and sweets-making. All participants received **start-up kits**, while **30 of them** managed to get **internships** with local businesses.
- ◆ **Non-formal education (NFE) programmes** reached **12,481 children aged 6 to 18**, offering accelerated learning and supporting re-enrolment in formal education and preventing drop-out of vulnerable children, particularly in underserved areas.
- ◆ To strengthen teaching quality, **1,357 educators** involved in both formal and non-formal education participated in **professional development training**. In addition, **1,717 student kits** and **106 teaching kits** were distributed to support inclusive learning and ensure access to essential materials in crisis-affected areas.



RIGHTS

Advancing and Protecting Children's Rights

In Syria, we promote children's understanding of their rights through a series of interactive and community-based initiatives. School- and community-based awareness campaigns have addressed a range of topics including the **right to education**, which children are encouraged to reflect on while sharing their perspectives, and engaging their peers in discussions.

In non-formal education settings, educational and interactive activities such as **Life Skills sessions, psychosocial support, and recreational learning** offer children safe spaces to express themselves and explore their rights. The life skills and psychosocial support sessions are designed to help children aged 6–18 develop essential social, emotional, and cognitive abilities that support resilience, self-awareness, and positive interaction. They focus on themes like **self-identity, emotional expression, communication, teamwork, coping with stress, and goal setting**, using interactive games and activities to make learning engaging. Each session aims to build confidence, empathy, and problem-solving skills, while fostering a sense of safety, responsibility, and hope for the future. At the same time, recreational learning sessions focus more on interactive games, sport and art activities. Overall, these activities are designed to be participatory and child-led, encouraging creativity and emotional expression.

Looking ahead, we plan to strengthen **rights-based education** in both formal and non-formal settings by introducing new tools to support children's psychosocial well-being and promote inclusive, creative learning experiences.



EXPRESSION

Amplifying Children's Voices and Perspectives

We are committed to placing children's voices at the centre of our education interventions.

- ◆ Throughout project implementation, children are regularly invited to **share their feedback**, helping shape activities to better reflect their needs and experiences. Feedback is collected through **participatory tools** such as **focus group discussions (FGDs)** and **post-implementation monitoring**, and plans are underway to expand the use of **child-friendly methodologies** across all phases of programming.
- ◆ To ensure children can safely and anonymously **express concerns**, a structured **Complaint & Feedback Mechanism (CFM)** has been integrated into all activities. This system provides a confidential space for children to raise issues, share suggestions, and contribute to the improvement of their learning environments.
- ◆ Awareness campaigns have also included **interactive sessions** on inclusive education, where children engaged in **games and discussions** that encouraged them to reflect on diversity and inclusion. These activities helped foster empathy and understanding, while allowing children to express their emotions and ideas in creative ways. One of the most preferred games was **Words May Hurt**, which is a classroom activity designed to help students reflect on the power of language and its impact on others. The exercise encourages children to identify words that make them feel valued and words that cause hurt or exclusion. Students anonymously write positive and negative words they have heard at school and place them in two separate boxes. The group then reviews these words together, discussing why certain language can be harmful and how respectful communication creates a safer, happier school environment. The activity concludes with a commitment to avoid hurtful words and promote inclusion.

While some challenges still persist, such as the limited direct involvement of WeWorld staff in sensitive activities, which are often required to be implemented by Ministry of Education (MoE) personnel⁷³, new approaches will be introduced to support children's meaningful participation, including **visual storytelling, suggestion boxes, and creative workshops**. These efforts aim to ensure that children are not only heard but actively involved in shaping the educational spaces and experiences that affect their lives.



SAFETY

Safeguarding Children's Protection and Well-Being Through Education

Our education programming in Syria prioritises children's safety and emotional well-being

- ◆ **Psychosocial Support (PSS) activities** have been integrated into both formal and non-formal education settings, reaching **700 children** through structured sessions that promote emotional resilience, self-expression, and social development.
- ◆ **Child protection awareness campaigns** reached **2,557 children**, while broader community sessions engaged **25,816 individuals** to strengthen understanding of child rights and protection principles. These campaigns focused on inclusion, gender sensitivity, and safe learning environments, encouraging dialogue and reflection across schools and communities.
- ◆ In response to the 2023 earthquake and its impact on children, we launched **summer clubs** that combined **recreational activities, life skills development, and psychosocial support**. These clubs created safe and engaging spaces where children could play, learn, and process their experiences in a supportive environment. In total, **2,137 children** were involved in the activities – 1,001 boys and 1,136 girls.
- ◆ To reinforce community-based protection mechanisms, we delivered **Training of Trainers (ToT) and capacity-building sessions** for **59 community volunteers** (19 males and 40 females) in Aleppo and Deir Ez Zor, with a focus on inclusive practices and gender-responsive approaches.

⁷³ While this approach supports long-term sustainability and local ownership, it also demands ongoing capacity building to ensure Ministry of Education staff are equipped to deliver activities effectively, particularly given the scale and complexity of the interventions. Looking ahead, WeWorld aims to increase its direct support in activity implementation while continuing to strengthen the skills and engagement of MoE personnel.



OUR PARTNERS AND ALLIES

We are an active member of the **Education Cluster** in former Government of Syria (GoS) areas, contributing to the ongoing transition toward a unified national coordination system that merges the Northwest, Northeast, and former Government of Syria (GoS) Education Sectors. This pivotal role has led us to join the **Education Cluster Strategic Advisory Group (SAG)** and the **Transition Advisory Body**. We also participate in key **Technical Working Groups (TWGs)**, including those focused on Non-Formal Education (NFE), Protection and Inclusion, and Community Engagement.

At the national level, WeWorld collaborates closely with the **Ministry of Education (MoE)** and the **Directorate of Education (DoE)** in former GoS areas, where direct implementation is not permitted. Through these partnerships, we support the delivery of formal and non-formal education programmes, awareness campaigns, capacity-building for educational personnel, and vocational training. Our collaboration with the **Syrian Arab Red Crescent (SARC)** has also facilitated the rollout of school-based awareness initiatives on hygiene promotion, Menstrual Hygiene Management (MHM), risk education, mine awareness, and Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR). Locally, we are expanding our network of implementing partners to enhance reach and impact.

In 2025, we initiated collaboration with the **St. Ephrem Patriarchal Development Committee**, strengthening our presence in underserved areas and improving the child protection referral system within NFE programmes. These strategic partnerships are instrumental in ensuring safe, inclusive, and quality learning environments for children affected by displacement and conflict.

THE VOICE OF

Lavinia Viglietti

Project Manager and Education Focal Point

"WeWorld in Syria has built a solid foundation of experience and technical expertise in the education sector. This strength is the result of the remarkable effort and creativity demonstrated by the Syria team, who have consistently transformed proposed plans into concrete actions to effectively respond to the country's ongoing emergencies. Today, Syria finds itself in a transitional phase, both in terms of its humanitarian context and broader national dynamics. This moment presents significant challenges, but also important opportunities for WeWorld and other humanitarian actors operating in the country."

WeWorld remains deeply committed to supporting children's access to quality and inclusive education within safe and protective environments even in hard-to-reach areas. For this reason, in the medium term, we will continue our interventions in support of non-formal education and the rehabilitation and equipment of school infrastructure, ensuring access to education for all. We will also contribute to improving the quality of education by continuing to provide training for teachers on key topics such as inclusive education and effective pedagogical practices.

WeWorld will continue to actively engage in the Education Sector and its Technical Working Groups to strengthen coordination and improve the quality of educational interventions. These efforts aim to build sustainability and national capacity by supporting Civil Society Organizations and the Ministry of Education. Through growing collaboration with local partners and community networks, WeWorld in Syria is increasingly designing flexible, adaptive responses to the evolving needs of a complex population and the country's broader changes. Looking ahead, our long-term vision is to gradually shift toward direct support for formal education, strengthening community-based services and reducing reliance on non-formal education."

TANZANIA



OUR LATEST ACHIEVEMENTS



In 2024, 66 members from 10 school committees and 7 child protection groups in Dar es Salaam were trained to gain the **tools and knowledge** necessary **to support children at risk**.



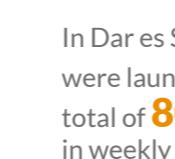
In Dar es Salaam, **200 three-seater desks and comprehensive teaching kits** – including dictionaries, charts, mathematics sets and globes – **were distributed**.



Therapeutic art sessions in 10 schools in Dar es Salaam supported the well-being of **403 children**, particularly those affected by trauma or emotional distress.



Suggestion boxes were installed in **29 schools** across Njombe and Dar es Salaam to provide a **safe channel for children** to express concerns, share feedback, and influence school-level decisions.



In Dar es Salaam, **8 school clubs** were launched **in 10 schools**, for a total of **80 clubs**, engaging students in weekly sessions fostering creativity, teamwork, and life skills.

This factsheet was realised in partnership with the Education Above All's Educate A Child Programme (EAC)

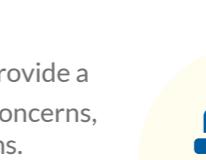


From April to November, **2,381 pupils attended remedial classes; 493 (21%) of them showed consistent academic progress** by the end of the cycle.

In Ludewa (Njombe Region), as part of the MAMMIE Project in collaboration with Southern Highlands Participatory Organisation (SHIPO), **school-based training on child rights and protection reached 4,111 participants**.



40 teachers in Ludewa were **trained to identify and support pupils' socio-emotional and behavioural challenges**, as well as **to establish school-based protection systems and monitor referrals**.



FRAMING THE CONTEXT

We have been active in the country since 2010. Tanzania's rapidly growing population, projected to reach 185 million by 2070, is placing significant pressure on the country's education system. Despite efforts to expand access to education, major challenges persist in terms of quality, infrastructure, and equity. The number of **primary school** pupils increased from 10.3 million in 2019 to 11.4 million in 2023, yet **net enrolment rates declined from 95.3% to 86%**, reflecting growing disparities and system strain (UNICEF, 2024).

Education spending has decreased over time, falling from 4.5% of GDP in 2010 to just 3.3% in 2023. This decline has constrained the availability of key resources such as teachers, classrooms, and learning materials. The **national pupil-teacher ratio stood at 55:1 in 2023** (MoEST, 2025), while severe shortages in basic infrastructure persist – averaging 1 desk per 4 pupils and 1 toilet for approximately 50 students (PO-RALG, 2022). Out-of-school rates remain high: an estimated 3.2 million children aged 7 to 17 in Tanzania are not attending school, with adolescent girls from rural areas facing the greatest barriers to learning, (World Bank, 2023). Dropout rates continue to be a concern, particularly at the secondary level. **Gross enrolment in lower secondary school is just 35.9% for boys and 37.9% for girls, while upper secondary enrolment dropped further to 6.8% and 5.1%, respectively** (NORAD, 2025).



WeWorld CARES about Child-Centred Education in Tanzania

In Tanzania, where systemic barriers and resource gaps persist, our child-centred approach places children's lived experiences at the heart of learning. We work directly with communities, listening to and amplifying children's voices, and shaping education to reflect their strengths, needs, and aspirations. Beyond basic skills, our model fosters resilience, curiosity, and agency, encouraging children to think independently, express themselves, and actively shape their futures. Education becomes a tool for inclusion and empowerment, not just attendance. We ensure that education systems respond to the needs of each learner – including their academic, social, emotional, and physical well-being—while protecting their rights and dignity.



COMMUNITY

Engaging Communities in Promoting Children's Agency

- In Dar es Salaam, we strengthen community engagement to promote children's agency, protection and well-being through the **Pamoja Tudumishe Elimu (PTE) Project**⁷⁴ implemented in partnership with Education Above All's Educate A Child (EAC) Programme, with support from QFFD, and through our Long-Distance Sponsorship (LDS) Programme.

"In Tanzania, WeWorld has established a strong partnership with teachers and school staff, helping the innovation of teaching methods, while leading to improved students' performance and increase engagement in the classroom. Extracurricular activities have made our school more attractive to students, creating a more dynamic and inclusive learning environment. Not only are these activities encouraging better attendance, but they are also helping students improve academically. Since the launch of the STEM Club, our students - who previously performed below ministerial standards - are now exceeding them. Remedial classes have been another major success. By offering students extra help and support, their motivation has grown significantly. I am thinking of one student in particular who had repeated a year: today she ranks among the top 20 in the entire school."

Josephine Raphael,

Headteacher at Kheri Missinga Primary School in Kinondoni, Dar es Salaam

⁷⁴ *Pamoja Tudumishe Elimu (PTE) - Promotion of quality and inclusive education for the retention and engagement of students at risk of dropping out in Kenya and Tanzania. For more information, visit: <https://www.weworld.it/en/what-we-do/global-projects/pamoja-tudumishe-elimu-promotion-of-quality-and-inclusive-education-for-the-retention-and-engagement-of-students-at-risk-of-dropping-out-in-kenya-and-tanzania>*

- In 2024, 10 school committees and 7 community-based child protection groups** – including **66 members** (38 women, 28 men) - **were trained to gain the tools and knowledge necessary to strengthen their capacity and support children at risk**. **Mentoring sessions** on school governance empowered **61 members** – 33 women and 28 men – to understand leadership and improve collaboration between school staff and parents, while encouraging inclusive, child-centred approaches to school management⁷⁵.

- In Dar es Salaam, 1,721 parents and caregivers** (1,214 women and 507 men) participated in **individual and group counselling sessions** as part of a broader outreach effort targeting 6,500 parents. They were involved in individual and group counselling sessions **to promote positive parenting practices, strengthen understanding of child development, and highlight the importance of education**.

- To enhance coordination between education and protection actors, **69 community stakeholders**⁷⁶ – 48 women and 21 men – **participated in meetings** focused on improving referral systems and children well-being. Moreover, **support to national and regional coordination mechanisms** included **2 meetings** involving **69 School Information Systems (SIS) users** – 50 women and 19 men – aimed at improving education management information systems and decision-making.

Each year, children's rights are spotlighted through the celebration of International Days and the Global Action Week for Education (GAWE)⁷⁷. Through a sub-granting scheme, four Tanzanian CSOs produced and disseminated **audiovisual content to raise awareness on education, children's rights, inclusion, gender equality, and menstrual justice**⁷⁸.

⁷⁵ In addition, through our **Kijani Pemba Project** – funded by the European Union and SASA Green and Smart Cities Programm - which aims to improve the living conditions of individuals and families in the main urban areas of Pemba Island, 4 school committees were trained in school administration, budgeting, and hygiene practices. For more information, visit: <https://www.weworld.it/en/what-we-do/global-projects/kijani-pemba-strengthening-urban-eco-resilience-in-chake-chake-and-mkoani>

⁷⁶ Municipal and ward education officers, school committees' representatives, police gender desk officer, committees for the protection of women and children's representatives, quality assurance officers, head teachers, civil society organisations, community focal points and social welfare officers.

⁷⁷ The MAMMIE Project engages target schools in key events aligned with International Days, with the objective of promoting awareness, encouraging student participation, and reinforcing key messages related to children's rights and well-being. Events such as Global Handwashing Day and the Day of the African Child are used as platforms to foster life skills, hygiene practices, and child empowerment through active involvement. Additionally, the project supports the TEN/MET network in organising the Global Action Week for Education (GAWE), aiming to amplify advocacy around inclusive and equitable education. In 2024, the theme "Transformative Education" guided activities focused on reimagining learning environments that are inclusive, child-centred, and rights-based.

⁷⁸ As part of our **Kujenga Amani Pamoja (KAP) Project** - funded by the European Union – from February to August 2024, 108 teachers from Kenya, Tanzania, and Mozambique participated in a three-day Training of Trainers (ToT) on Peace Education. The sessions aimed to equip teachers with skills in conflict resolution, non-violent communication, inclusive pedagogy, and arts-based peace-building methods. In Tanzania, a follow-up conflict analysis was conducted with 15 teachers from Tanga and Mtwara to identify school-based conflict drivers. For more information, visit: <https://www.weworld.it/en/what-we-do/global-projects/kujenga-amani-pamoja-building-peace-together>



ACCESS

Unlocking Access to Inclusive, Quality Learning

In 2024, our efforts contributed to child-friendly, inclusive learning environments while boosting school capacity and teaching improvement.

- In Dar es Salaam, through the PTE Project, **infrastructure upgrades** in Kawa and Mtambani schools **enhanced inclusion, accessibility and hygiene facilities**, with 3 classrooms, 6 latrines, and 2 water systems rehabilitated, together with the construction of 13 inclusive latrines and 6 hand-washing points⁷⁹.

- Across 10 schools, **200 three-seater desks and comprehensive teaching kits** – including dictionaries, charts, mathematics sets and globes – were distributed. Between March and December 2024, **a total of 3,585 textbooks and sports equipment were also provided**.

- From April to November, **remedial classes reached 2,381 pupils** – 1,249 girls and 1,132 boys – with **493 (21%) of them showing consistent academic progress** by the end of the cycle.

- Through a sub-granting scheme, we collaborated with our local partner Youth in Technology and Engineering (YITEISM) to introduce the **STEMIKA pilot Project**, aimed at promoting cognitive development and early in **STEM subjects**. Over three months, we reached **146 students** – 75 girls and 71 boys – in **9 schools**.

- Under the PTE Project in Dar es Salaam and the **Mawengi Mlangali and Milo Integrated Education (MAMMIE) Project** in Njombe, funded by our Long-Distance Sponsorship (LDS) Programme, teaching quality improved significantly: a total of **156 teachers** – 117 women and 39 men – in Dar es Salaam and Njombe regions **were trained** by the staff of the Vikindu Teachers' College **in Mathematics, Science, English and Kiswahili**.

⁷⁹ Through our **Kijani Pemba Project**, 26 latrines, of which 13 for girls and 8 for students with disabilities, were built in 4 schools in Pemba Island.



RIGHTS

Advancing and Protecting Children's Rights

- ◆ In 2024, starting from our "**Therapeutic Art Toolkit**", part of the PTE Project, we implemented **therapeutic art sessions in 10 schools, supporting the well-being of 403 children** - 190 girls and 213 boys - particularly those affected by trauma or emotional distress.
- ◆ An adapted version of our "**Games and Inclusive Sports Manual**", part of the Scale Project and originally developed in Lebanon, promoted inclusive and child-centred learning methods through **recreational and sport activities aimed at training teachers to implement play-based methodologies** while fostering children's well-being and active engagement in classroom.
- ◆ As part of our 2024 Menstrual Health and Hygiene Management (MHHM) activities, we introduced and distributed the "**Nuru's Diary**": developed in Italy and later contextualised in Tanzania, it was created **to support girls' well-being, self-expression, and body awareness** by combining cycle tracking, journaling, and stigma-breaking activities through a playful and interactive approach.

"The Roadmap to Human Rights in Tanzania" Booklet

Under the "**Sauti Mya. CSOs-media partnership for amplifying youth and women's voices**" Project, co-funded by the European Union and WeWorld in Tanzania, we created a play-based educational booklet titled "**The Roadmap to Human Rights in Tanzania**", to teach Tanzanian children and young people about human rights.



Its primary purpose is to inspire them to become advocates for their rights and responsibilities, using entertaining and colourful short comic images to depict and explain the 30 Articles of the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The booklet can be used in classrooms, at home, in community meeting halls and youth platforms to make children learn and understand human rights and initiate conversations on them. A complementary **board game** called "**Travel through Tanzania**" has been created, allowing children and young people to play while learning in a hands-on, playful activity to reinforce their understanding through play-based learning.



EXPRESSION

Amplifying Children's Voices and Perspectives

In 2024, efforts to amplify children's voices and agency were strengthened in Dar es Salaam and Njombe regions.

- ◆ We launched a global consultation involving children and adolescents worldwide to explore their hopes, dreams, and fears about the future. The consultation, part of the broader "**ChildFund Alliance World Index on the Rights of Women and Children**⁸¹", involved a total of **198 children**.
- ◆ **Suggestion boxes were installed in 29 schools to provide a safe channel for children** to express concerns, share feedback, and influence school-level decisions.
- ◆ In Dar es Salaam, **8 school clubs** - Environment, Art & Craft, Dance & Music, Drama, Culture, Reading, Young Farmers and Subject Clubs - were created in each of the 10 schools targeted by the PTE Project, for a total of **80 clubs, engaging students in weekly sessions fostering creativity, teamwork, and life skills**.
- ◆ Through our toolkit "**What Do the Children of Tanzania Imagine for Their Future? Rights to Be Listened to, Play, and Participate**", we combined peer dialogue and play-based methods to explore children's rights and participation, involving **200 children and adolescents**⁸².
- ◆ In collaboration with Tai Tanzania, we developed the "**Walinzi Wa Mazangira**⁸³" comic book to promote child-led advocacy, placing a young girl at the heart of an engaging narrative that inspires environmentally conscious actions and empowers children, especially girls, as agents of change within their communities.
- ◆ A **child-friendly perception survey**, co-designed with education and protection experts, captured children's views on safety, well-being, and sense of belonging in school, to ensure their perspectives can inform programme evaluation.

While barriers persist, especially for girls and children with disabilities, these initiatives highlight the transformative potential of child-led spaces and the need to expand participatory platforms that support children's rights, leadership, and meaningful engagement with adults and decision-makers⁸⁴.



SAFETY

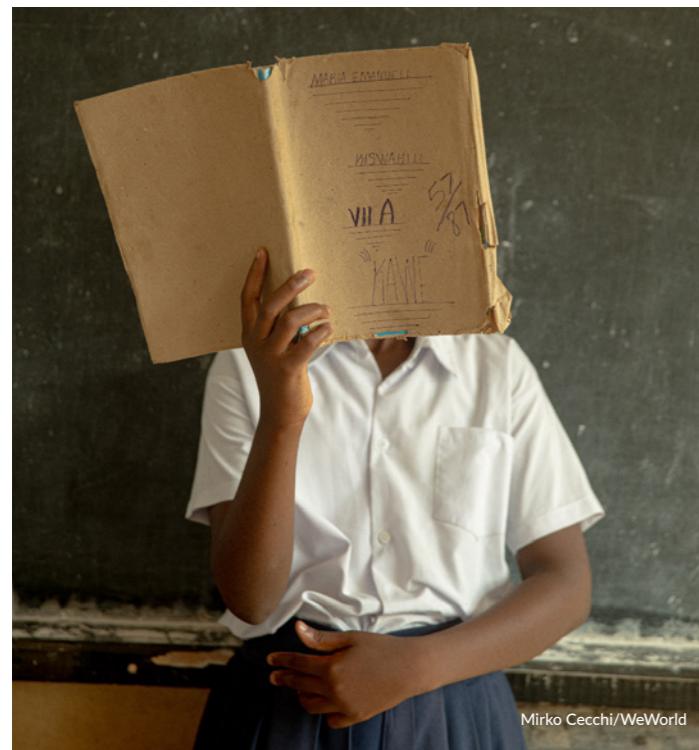
Safeguarding Children's Protection and Well-Being Through Education

Our education programming places children's safety and well-being at the centre, and includes Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR), psychosocial support, positive teaching practices, and child protection systems.

- ◆ In Dar es Salaam, through a sub-granting scheme, we collaborated with RAPID -Tanzania to pilot a **DRR initiative in 2 schools**, focused on theoretical instruction, risk mapping and practical simulations. The activity involved **221 participants - 164 students and 28 teachers**.
- ◆ **40 teachers** - 21 women and 19 men - in Ludewa **were trained to identify and support pupils' socio-emotional and behavioural challenges**, as well as to **establish school-based protection systems and monitor referrals**. The training enhanced academic engagement and reduced school dropout.
- ◆ In collaboration with KIWOHEDE, **92 teachers** in Dar es Salaam -74 women and 18 men - **were trained in positive discipline methodologies**, focused on promoting non-authoritarian approaches, including active listening, empathy, and positive reinforcement to foster supportive and respectful learning environments.

Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) on Menstrual Health and Hygiene Management (MHHM) were conducted in selected schools across Dar es Salaam, Njombe and Pemba Island, creating a safe space for children, especially for girls, to share their views and experiences on menstrual health and hygiene.

84 As part of the Kijani Pemba Project, a drawing contest titled "**The Pemba I Would Like**" was held in 2024 across 9 schools, collecting approximately 600 student submissions. The activity invited children to creatively express their vision of a child-friendly and inclusive urban environment - depicting how they imagine their ideal schools, communities, and public spaces. By placing children's perspectives at the centre, the initiative provided valuable insights into their needs, aspirations, and priorities. These contributions not only celebrated children's right to participation, but also aimed to influence future urban planning processes, reinforcing the importance of inclusive, sustainable development shaped by young citizens.



Mirko Cecchi/WeWorld

THE VOICE OF

Helenia Molinaro
Education Project Manager

"WeWorld Tanzania's education strategy for 2025–2027 is rooted in the principles of inclusive and equitable access to quality education, aligned with global and national frameworks such as SDG4 and the Tanzania Development Vision 2025. The approach adopts a rights-based and child-centred methodology to tackle persistent educational challenges, particularly for vulnerable and marginalised groups. Cross-cutting themes of child protection, gender equality, and climate adaptation are systematically integrated across all interventions. Our efforts are directed towards addressing gender-based violence, early marriage and harmful practices, alongside fostering behavioural change to support children's rights. Equitable access and retention are prioritised through initiatives that address economic, cultural, and logistical barriers, including tailored support for children with disabilities and vulnerable girls."



OUR PARTNERS AND ALLIES

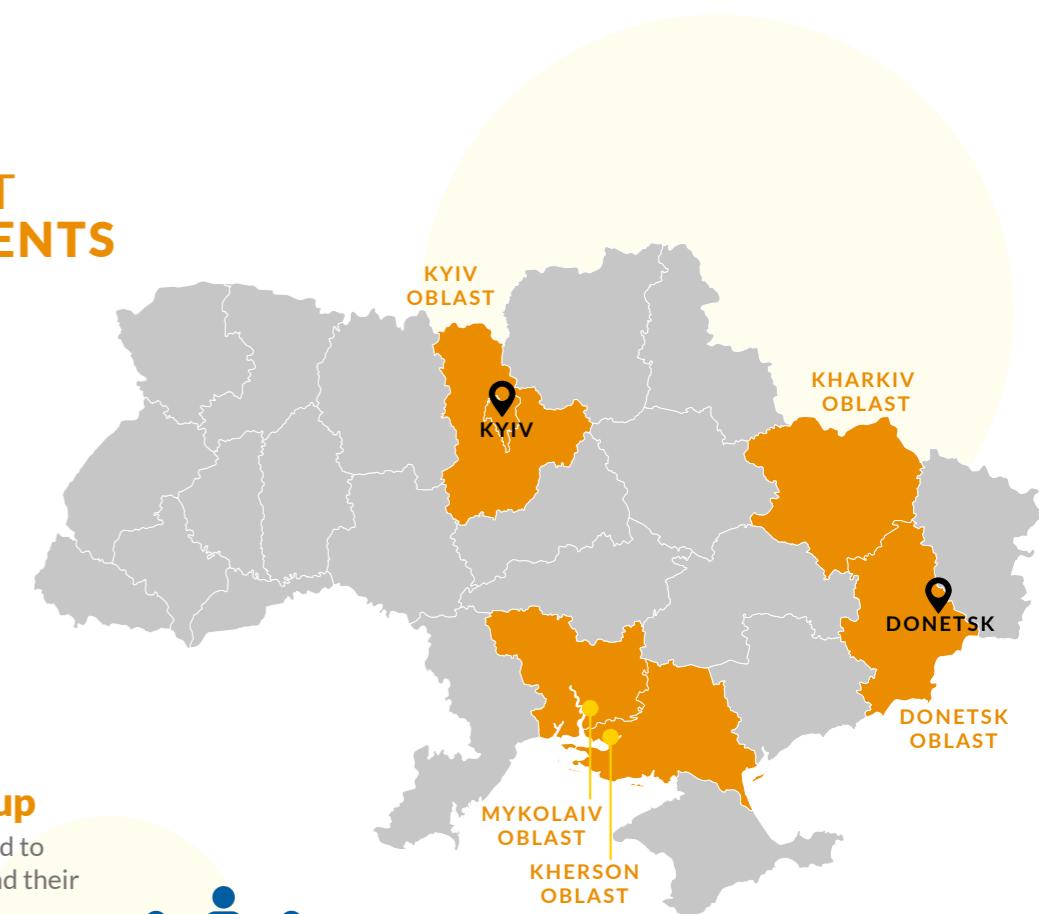
In Tanzania, WeWorld is a member of **Tanzania Education Network (TEN/MET⁸⁵)**, a national coalition of 245 civil society organisations (CSOs) working in the education sector. TEN/MET's main activities centre around coordinating CSOs efforts to **influence education policy and decision-making processes** at all levels, including through the creation and dissemination of **evidence-based best practices from local, regional and global contexts** to inform and shape education policies and practices.

It also focuses on strengthening its internal systems and organisational structures to effectively contribute to education improvement across the country. Moreover, TEN/MET advocates for gender mainstreaming within the education system to promote equitable, inclusive and high-quality learning opportunities for all learners, while also championing the integration of science, technology and innovation in the school curricula.

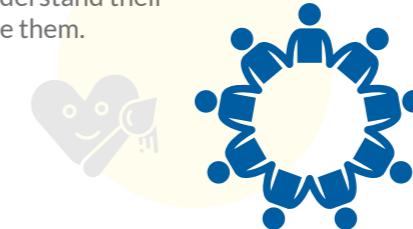
We also work with several **Tanzanian local partners**, especially for technical support and training, such as **Kiota Women's Health and Development (KIWOHEDE)**, **Youth in Technology and Engineering (YITEISM)**, **Response and Preparedness in Disaster – Tanzania (RAPID-Tanzania)**, **Tai Tanzania (Tai)**, **Young and Alive Initiative (YAI)** and the **Vikindu Teachers' College**.

UKRAINE

✓ OUR LATEST ACHIEVEMENTS



Educational games, art sessions, and group discussions were organised to encourage children to understand their rights and how to exercise them.



Safe and friendly spaces for children living in challenging circumstances were created, designed to support their emotional well-being, encourage learning, and foster social interaction.



MHPSS sessions were conducted in Kharkiv and Donetsk Oblasts with both adults and children, reaching a total of **7,344 individuals**.



Our **Mine Safety Awareness Programme** reached **6,363 adults and children**, strengthening community preparedness and contributing to the creation of safer environments.

FRAMING THE CONTEXT

We have been active in the country since 2022. Ukraine continues to face significant barriers to ensuring safe and quality education for children affected by war. As of July 2025, around **115,000 children are out of school** (UN News, 2025). Since the outbreak of the war, **3,745 educational institutions have been damaged**, and 394 have been destroyed due to ongoing military actions (Save Schools Ukraine, 2025). In frontline areas, in-person learning is impossible due to constant shelling, while in safer regions, many schools lack properly equipped shelters. Although nearly 80% of schools have some form of shelter (Institute of Analytics and Advocacy, 2023), **67% of parents report feeling persistent fear for their children's safety** (Save the Children, 2024). **Children with disabilities face additional barriers** due to a lack of inclusive infrastructure and limited teacher training on inclusive education (MESU, 2022).

Remote learning remains widespread, with **approximately 500,000 children and young people studying online** (Pravda, 2024). However, access is uneven due to device shortages, poor internet connectivity, and frequent power outages. These disruptions, compounded by the pandemic and war, have contributed to a severe decline in student performance: indeed, while 59% of students reached the basic level in reading, only 29% achieved higher levels (UNICEF, 2023). The **shortage of qualified psychological and social support staff** further exacerbates the situation. Teachers and students experience high levels of stress and anxiety, yet systematic mental health support is either unavailable or insufficient (Save the Children, 2024).

"I first heard about the programme through Peaceful Heaven of Kharkiv's Telegram channel. When I saw that there were activities for children, I decided to apply. I chose to involve my child because, right now, there are very few opportunities for children to socialise, and I am afraid he will grow up afraid to communicate with other kids. I cannot afford a private kindergarten or expensive psychologists to help him, but the programme gives us access to professional support and quality learning, completely free."

"Since joining, I have seen real changes in my son. Before the psychological sessions, he was afraid to sleep alone or stay in a room by himself – normal childhood fears, but made worse by the situation we are living in. After a while, he started sleeping on his own, became calmer, and began talking and playing with other children. As a mother, I am incredibly proud of him and deeply grateful for the support we have received."

"This programme has had a huge impact on our whole family. Programmes like this give us hope, they help us believe that our children will be okay. In today's world, that means everything. My child enjoys every session, always comes home with a smile, and has made new friends. For me, the most important benefit is knowing that my child is building a strong educational and emotional foundation. I believe that when he starts school, he will be ready to make even more friends, speak up, and succeed. Children are our future, and we must do everything we can to support them."

Mariia,
mother of a 11-year-old boy who participated in the RISE UP Project



WeWorld CARES about Child-Centred Education in Ukraine

In Ukraine, where children are deeply affected by the consequences of war, ensuring their safety and well-being is a central priority. Recognising the impact of conflict on their emotional and psychological health, as well as on their effective access to formal education, we focus on creating safe spaces where children can learn, play, and recover. These environments offer protection from violence and instability, while also supporting their social and emotional development. Educational activities are designed not only to ensure learning continuity but also to help children regain a sense of normalcy, confidence, and hope for their future. We work closely with educators to identify and respond to each child's individual needs, fostering resilience and personal growth. This approach is essential to helping children overcome trauma and regain a sense of stability.



COMMUNITY

Engaging Communities in Promoting Children's Agency

In 2022, we started working in Ukraine to respond to the urgent needs arising from the ongoing crisis, focusing on providing support where it is most needed. While many efforts are already underway to support children's education and ensure their protection and well-being, our work addresses the specific needs and challenges of the most vulnerable children, complementing rather than replicating existing initiatives.

Together with our partners, we integrate a **conflict-sensitive approach** across all interventions, aiming to support the right to the future for children in Ukraine and promote a vision of peace and stability. Our activities combine **psychosocial support (PSS)** with **peace education**, helping children to participate actively in their communities and contribute to long-term resilience.

Although the conflict is ongoing, we are committed to working alongside communities to **rebuild social ties and restore a sense of normalcy**, as we do through our interventions in other crisis contexts such as Mozambique and Lebanon. By placing communities at the heart of our efforts and engaging closely with local dynamics, we strive to strengthen social cohesion and inclusion, ensuring our actions foster long-term recovery.

Alessandro Parente/WeWorld





ACCESS

Unlocking Access to Inclusive, Quality Learning

In Ukraine, we engage in targeted interventions to avoid duplicating the large-scale efforts in the education sector carried out by strong local partners, some of whom we collaborate with. At the same time, we carry out significant **infrastructural work through our WASH in Health Programme**, ensuring that vulnerable populations, particularly women and children, have safe, inclusive, and sustainable access to essential WASH services.



EXPRESSION



Amplifying Children's Voices and Perspectives

Today, in Ukraine, one of the key challenges is creating spaces where children feel safe to participate. This requires a thoughtful and sensitive approach to adapt activities and methodologies to different age groups and cultural contexts, ensuring that **every child feels seen, heard, and respected**.

At the same time, this challenge presents valuable opportunities to explore and develop new, more effective forms of engagement. These approaches not only enhance participation but also contribute to making **initiatives more responsive and genuinely child-centred**.

- ◆ In collaboration with our partner *Peaceful Heaven of Karkhiv (PHK)*, we actively worked to create **safe and friendly spaces** for children living in challenging circumstances, designed to support their emotional well-being, encourage learning, and foster social interaction through activities such as psychosocial support and awareness raising-activities.

By fostering environments where children can express themselves freely, engage in meaningful activities, and connect with others, we enable active and empowered participation that can truly transform their lives, even in the most difficult settings.



SAFETY

Advancing and Protecting Children's Rights

In the Ukrainian context, where children face significant challenges due to ongoing conflict and political instability, promoting children's rights becomes even more vital. The strategies used to empower children must respond to the specific difficulties they encounter, including displacement, trauma, and limited access to basic services and education.

Through the creation of safe spaces in conflict zones, where children can gather, play, and learn in a protected and supportive environment, we not only offer refuge from the harsh realities of conflict, but also platforms for learning about **children's rights in an accessible and engaging way**.

We help children access vital information and participate in activities such as **educational games on Mathematics and Science, art sessions, and group discussions** that encourage them to understand their rights and how to exercise them. Creating spaces where children can share experiences and reflect on their rights empowers them to become active participants in protecting and promoting those rights.



SAFETY

Safeguarding Children's Protection and Well-Being Through Education

- ◆ As part of the "**Response for Integrated Support to Eastern Ukraine Population (RISE UP) Project**"⁸⁶ in the Kharkiv and Donetsk Oblasts, funded by the Italian Agency for Cooperation and Development (AICS), we carried out Psychosocial Support (PSS) activities aimed at fostering **emotional resilience** and **well-being** among students, school staff, and families affected by conflict.
- ◆ Field teams of trained specialists, in partnership with PHK, conducted **PSS sessions** in schools, creating safe and inclusive spaces for emotional healing and stress reduction. These activities are designed to help children adapt to challenging circumstances, build confidence, and promote a stable and supportive learning environment.
- ◆ During these activities, **art therapy sessions** played a central role, including drawing, modelling, and music therapy. These creative outlets allow children to express emotions, relieve tension, and improve their communication skills.
- ◆ **Individual psychological consultations** were offered to **children** who have experienced traumatic events, as well as to **teachers** seeking support in managing emotional stress and adapting to the demands of working in crisis-affected environments.
- ◆ Moreover, **group training sessions on emotional regulation, stress management, and psychological first aid** were organised for **educators** and **parents** to help them support their children in stressful situations.
- ◆ In 2024, **capacity-building sessions** for local actors and health workers involved in **Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS)** were implemented by PHK in Kharkiv and Donetsk Oblasts. Following the training, MHPSS sessions were conducted with both adults and children, reaching a total of **7,344 individuals**.

Together, these activities contribute to the creation of a nurturing and protective educational environment, ensuring that children and their communities are equipped with the tools they need to thrive emotionally and socially.



Our Mine Safety Awareness Programme

The war in Ukraine has left large parts of the country contaminated with **explosive remnants of war (ERW)** and **anti-personnel mines**, particularly in southern and eastern oblasts. These threats continue to endanger civilians, especially children, returnees, and rural populations, while also slowing reconstruction and recovery efforts. In many areas, limited access to reliable information and fragmented communication among mine action actors have contributed to **unsafe behaviours and confusion**. As part of the RISE UP Project, we are implementing a **Mine Safety Awareness Programme** in Mykolaiv and Kherson Oblasts, focusing on high-risk and newly accessible areas.

Through **interactive workshops and school-based activities**, the programme helps people identify and respond to explosive devices, reinforcing essential safety practices. Educational tools include posters, flashcards, mobile apps, and scenario-based exercises. Learning environments were integrated with **Explosive Ordnance Safety Corners**, while **teachers were trained** to deliver **Explosive Ordnance Risk Education (EORE)** sessions using posters, flashcards, mobile apps, and scenario-based training. In 2024, the programme reached **6,363 adults and children**, strengthening community preparedness and contributing to the creation of safer environments. By integrating education, local engagement, and coordinated planning, the initiative supports safe and long-term recovery in Ukraine.

Rebuilding Childhoods: Integrated Support for Vulnerable Children in Kyiv



Since Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, children – especially those unaccompanied or separated from their families – face severe risks of trauma, exploitation, educational exclusion, and lack adequate care, safety, and psychosocial support. The three-year project **"Rebuilding Childhoods: Integrated Support for Vulnerable Children in Kyiv"**, led by the **Taiwan Fund for Children and Families (TFCF)** in partnership with **WeWorld**, aims to rebuild safe, nurturing environments for these children. The intervention targets **130 children in 19 family-type homes and 200 children in 4 institutional facilities in Kyiv**, along with **200 employees** of the city and district Children's Services and institutional staff, including **social workers, psychologists, educators, and technical personnel**.

The project focuses on four strategic objectives: **enhancing psychosocial well-being and protection** through tailored mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS); **improving access to inclusive and quality education** in alternative care via blended learning and catch-up programmes; **strengthening the institutional capacity of Kyiv's Children's Services** through targeted training, IT equipment provision, and international peer exchanges; and **improving the safety and child-friendliness of institutional care facilities** through infrastructure upgrades, including shelter renovation and transport provision for family-type children's homes. All activities are implemented in close collaboration with local authorities to ensure alignment with national strategies, foster community ownership, and promote long-term sustainability.

OUR PARTNERS AND ALLIES

In Ukraine, we actively participate in several clusters and coordination spaces, such as the **WASH Cluster**, the **Shelter Cluster**, and the **Logistics Cluster**, as well as the **WASH in Health Technical Working Group** and the **Gender and Social Inclusion Thematic Working Group**. Our local partners are involved in the Protection Cluster, which allows us to coordinate efforts, exchange best practices, and stay informed on protection issues. Regarding mine action activities, our partner **Peaceful Heaven of Kharkiv (PHK)** coordinate efforts at the national level through the Mine Action Center and the Civil Protection Department of HOVA. At the local level, through our partnership with PHK, we implement a range of initiatives, including Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) and mine awareness programmes. In addition, we collaborate with two local NGOs, **Angels of Salvation** and **Rescue Now**, and we are planning to expand our collaboration with them in future projects.

THE VOICE OF

Piero Meda

Country Representative

"In alignment with the 2025 Ukraine Education Cluster Strategy and the Ministry of Education and Science's School Offline policy, we are working on a coordinated, multi-sectoral response to support war-affected children and their families. Our goal is to ensure access to safe, inclusive, and equitable learning environments, both online and offline, that promote psychosocial well-being and educational continuity, while being gender-, age- and disability-sensitive. We will continue delivering MHPSS, Social Emotional Learning (SEL), and Psychological First Aid (PFA) in our learning environments, while equipping teachers to act as first responders in emergency contexts. In collaboration with our partners, we will expand mine awareness activities, hygiene kit distribution, and our CASH for Repair programme to meet urgent needs and support recovery.

To facilitate the transition back to full-time education where possible, we will contribute to the rehabilitation of damaged schools and kindergartens, including the provision of emergency shelters, educational kits, and essential equipment. For children unable to return to school, we will facilitate access to distance learning through device distribution and tailored support, ensuring no child is left behind. All interventions are designed to be inclusive, locally grounded, and responsive to the evolving needs of children – especially those marginalised by conflict. By strengthening the capacity of educators, local organisations, and institutions, we aim to build a more resilient and equitable education system."

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CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS



CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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OUR CARES FRAMEWORK FOR A CHILD-CENTRED APPROACH TO EDUCATION

The global education landscape remains marked by deep and persistent inequalities. While millions of children are still out of school, many more are enrolled in systems that fail to guarantee safety, inclusion, or meaningful and quality learning. Education systems, particularly in fragile and crisis-affected contexts, continue to face chronic underfunding, rigid structures, and limited capacity to respond to the complex realities children experience every day. These challenges are not new, and they are becoming more urgent, as overlapping crises, including conflict, displacement, climate change, and economic instability, place further strain on already fragile systems. In many cases, education is still treated as a standalone sector, disconnected from the broader social and protection needs of children and their communities. As a result, **the transformative potential of education to drive meaningful and lasting change remains largely unrealised**.

In this context, the global education crisis is not only undermining children's rights today, but it is also threatening their **right to the future**. The inability of current education systems to provide safe, inclusive, and quality learning environments deprives children of the tools they need to imagine, shape, and realise a better tomorrow. For those living in marginalised and vulnerable conditions, the compounded effects of poverty, violence, displacement, and inequality further limit their opportunities, deepening the intergenerational impact of educational neglect.

As part of our strategic commitment to addressing these challenges, we have adopted our **CARES Framework** to guide our educational interventions. This framework was not conceived as a theoretical model, but as a **practical tool to support the design and implementation of programmes that place children at the centre of our education strategy**, reflecting our belief that education must be approached in a way that is **multisectoral, rights-based, and responsive** to the lived realities of children and their communities.

Since its adoption in 2024, the CARES Framework has been applied across a variety of contexts, informing both **emergency response and long-term development programmes**. While we recognise that our approach must be further strengthened and adapted to local needs, the evidence gathered, as shown in the section below, confirms its effectiveness in improving access to inclusive and quality education, strengthening community engagement, enhancing protection and well-being, and amplifying children's voices and rights.

In this section, we share the lessons learned, the good practices that can be recontextualised and scaled, and the areas where we see room for further improvement. This Atlas, therefore, is not only a reflection of our journey, but also an invitation to explore the added value of the CARES Framework. For us, it has proven to be an effective and meaningful approach, that has helped us respond to complex challenges and strengthen education systems in a way that is both holistic and grounded in children's right to education.



LESSONS LEARNED



COMMUNITY

Engaging Communities in Promoting Children's Agency



→ **COMMUNITY-LED SCHOOL GOVERNANCE IMPROVES ACCOUNTABILITY AND INCLUSION:** Experiences in Benin, Brazil and Cambodia have shown that when Parent-Teacher Associations, School Committees and Municipal Councils are designed as participatory spaces, they can become powerful tools for strengthening accountability and inclusion. These structures enabled communities to take an active role in monitoring school progress and shaping decisions that reflect local priorities. The involvement of families and educators in shared governance has helped build trust and ensure that children's voices are considered in everyday school life.

→ **PARENTAL ENGAGEMENT ENHANCES LEARNING AND PROTECTION WHEN ADAPTED TO CONTEXT:** Experiences in Lebanon have taught us that parental involvement becomes truly impactful when it is culturally responsive and rooted in local realities. School-based sessions focusing on communication and early childhood development helped foster stronger relationships between parents and teachers. Involving parents in remedial education and catch-up programmes supported children's attendance and retention. These approaches have shown that when parents are treated as co-educators and protection actors, their engagement contributes directly to improved learning and well-being.

→ **COMMUNITY MOBILISATION PROMOTES INCLUSIVE EDUCATION AND CHALLENGES HARMFUL NORMS:** Experiences in Syria, Mozambique, Kenya and Mali have demonstrated that community-led campaigns can effectively shift social norms and promote inclusive education. Efforts around disability inclusion and protection from sexual exploitation and abuse were strengthened by the involvement of local leaders, while mobilisation around girls' education and the abandonment of harmful practices such as FGM were driven by grassroots dialogue, showing that when communities lead awareness efforts, they become agents of transformative education, capable of challenging entrenched norms and beliefs and promoting more equitable access to learning.

→ **MALE PARTICIPATION IN EDUCATION AND CHILD PROTECTION REMAINS LIMITED:** While parental engagement has shown transformative potential, experiences across various contexts reveal that cultural norms continue to restrict the involvement of male community members. This gap limits the full impact of community-led approaches. There is a need for more intentional strategies that actively engage men—not only as supporters but as co-educators and protection actors. Creating spaces where male participation is encouraged and valued can help rebalance caregiving roles and strengthen family-school collaboration.

→ **INCLUSIVE OUTREACH TO MARGINALISED GROUPS MUST BE STRENGTHENED:** Efforts to promote inclusive education have made important strides, yet certain groups remain underrepresented in decision-making and programme participation. Children with disabilities, ethnic minorities, and families in remote or underserved areas often face barriers to community engagement. Building on successful community mobilisation and governance models, future activities must be more tailored and proactive in reaching these groups. This includes adapting communication methods, addressing stigma, and ensuring that engagement mechanisms are accessible and representative.

→ **COMMUNITY-LED MONITORING REQUIRES LONG-TERM INVESTMENT:** Community-led governance and monitoring have proven effective in fostering accountability and local ownership. However, their long-term impact depends on consistent support and integration into broader systems. Many initiatives risk losing momentum once project funding ends. Strengthening these mechanisms requires investment in local capacity, clearer institutional linkages, and ongoing support from education authorities. Embedding community monitoring within formal structures will help ensure that progress is maintained and scaled beyond individual interventions.



ACCESS

Unlocking Access to Inclusive, Quality Learning



→ **REMEDIAL AND CATCH-UP PROGRAMMES FOSTER ACADEMIC RECOVERY AND SCHOOL RETENTION:** Across contexts like Syria, Lebanon, Tanzania, Mozambique, Benin, and Moldova, remedial and catch-up programmes have provided additional support to children at risk of dropping out of school and have helped children re-engage with learning after periods of disruption. These initiatives worked best when they were delivered in small groups, adapted to local learning levels, and paired with psychosocial support. Teachers used playful methods and visual aids to support early-grade learners, while in crisis-affected contexts, remedial classes were embedded in post-crisis recovery strategies, showing responsiveness to the realities children face, such as poverty, trauma, displacement, or lack of parental support.

→ **CHILD-FRIENDLY RECONSTRUCTION IMPROVES CHILDREN'S SAFETY AND SCHOOL ATTENDANCE:** In several contexts, we have implemented infrastructure upgrades that go beyond basic construction to support inclusive and protective learning environments. These upgrades were not treated as isolated interventions, but rather as part of a broader strategy that connects other sectors of intervention. In Mali, school canteens were introduced as part of a resilience-building programme, helping children stay in school by addressing food insecurity. In Cambodia, infrastructure improvements included playgrounds and libraries, but were also accompanied by the creation of learning corners and visual teaching aids that supported children's active participation. In Ukraine, upgrades were integrated into alternative care settings, ensuring that children affected by conflict could access safe, blended learning environments.

→ **TEACHER TRAINING ENSURES THE DELIVERY OF QUALITY EDUCATION PROGRAMMES:** Training educators to deliver remedial and non-formal education has helped improve learning outcomes and support children at risk of dropout. Teachers were equipped with participatory methods and adapted materials to address learning gaps, while focusing on positive discipline, child-centred methodologies and inclusive practices. These efforts show that targeted training enables educators to respond more effectively to diverse learning needs and make alternative education pathways more inclusive and impactful.

→ **STRUCTURAL BARRIERS LIMIT INCLUSIVE ACCESS AND QUALITY EDUCATION:** Despite notable progress in expanding educational opportunities, deep-rooted structural barriers continue to hinder equitable access and quality learning outcomes. These barriers, ranging from physical limitations, such as inadequate infrastructure and inaccessible facilities, to economic constraints like poverty create persistent obstacles for many learners. Cultural and social factors, including gender norms, language differences, and discrimination, further compound these challenges, especially for marginalised groups. In many contexts, interventions remain fragmented or insufficiently coordinated, limiting their overall impact. This underscores the critical need for system-level planning, cross-sector collaboration, and inclusive policy frameworks that can address these barriers holistically.



RIGHTS

Advancing and Protecting Children's Rights



→ **PLAY-BASED METHODOLOGIES MAKE RIGHTS ACCESSIBLE AND MEANINGFUL:** Across multiple contexts, play-based methodologies have proven to be a powerful entry point for human rights education. Child-friendly tools – such as the menstrual diary in Moldova and Italy, and the *Therapeutic Art Toolkit* in Kenya, Tanzania and Lebanon – board games and interactive booklets were used to teach children about health, body awareness, and protection in a way that was both engaging and age-appropriate. These playful formats helped demystify sensitive topics and encouraged children to explore their rights through storytelling, journaling, and creative expression, embedding rights education into everyday learning, making it tangible and relevant for children.

→ **PLAYFUL AND INTERACTIVE TOOLS CREATE SAFE SPACES FOR ADDRESSING SENSITIVE ISSUES:** In crisis-affected and displacement contexts such as Syria, Lebanon, Mali, Mozambique, and Ukraine, the integration of art therapy, drama, and educational games into psychosocial support activities has created safe and inclusive spaces for children to become aware of their rights. These tools allowed children to express emotions, build resilience, and learn about protection in environments designed to foster trust and healing. The use of child-friendly spaces and visual materials ensured accessibility across age groups and literacy levels, combining protection and education, ensuring that rights are not only taught but experienced in safe, nurturing settings.

→ **INCLUSIVE TOOLS AND CREATIVE ACTIVITIES AMPLIFY CHILDREN'S VOICES:** In Lebanon, Mali and Moldova, playful and inclusive tools and activities such as mood boards, poems, sewing and modelling are enabling children to express themselves freely and creatively, fostering dialogue and raising awareness on issues that matter to them. By encouraging self-expression in formats that resonate with children, these activities amplify their voices and position them as active contributors and key actors within their communities.

→ **YOUTH-LED PROJECTS AND ACTIVITIES FOSTER CRITICAL THINKING AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT:** Youth-led initiatives, such as the ones we implemented in Italy or in the Swahili Coast, are increasingly empowering children and young people to engage actively in civic life and advocate for their rights. Through participation in community-driven projects, youth are gaining firsthand experience in democratic processes and community dialogue, that not only enhance their critical thinking and leadership skills but also foster a deeper understanding of civic responsibilities and human rights.

→ **TEACHER TRAINING IS ENHANCING INCLUSIVE AND RIGHTS-FOCUSED CLASSROOM PRACTICES:** Training educators in play-based and interactive methodologies is ensuring that classroom practices become more inclusive, engaging, and centred on children's rights. By using games, visuals, and child-friendly materials, schools become spaces where rights are actively taught and exercised.

BUILDING CHILDREN'S UNDERSTANDING OF THEIR RIGHTS REQUIRES CONTINUED FOCUS:

Despite progress, many children, particularly in fragile and crisis-affected settings, still have limited awareness of their rights. Strengthening this understanding requires a dual approach: empowering children as rights holders to recognise and claim their rights while supporting duty bearers, such as parents, caregivers, educators, and institutions, to fulfil their responsibilities in protecting and promoting those rights.

→ **TEACHER CAPACITY AND COMMUNITY ADVOCACY MUST BE FURTHER STRENGTHENED TO EMBED RIGHTS-BASED EDUCATION PROGRAMMES:** Targeted investment in teacher training and community-level advocacy is necessary to fully integrate rights-based methodologies into education systems. These efforts are supporting sustainable change and stronger community ownership.

CHILDREN ARE RECOGNISED AS ACTIVE PARTICIPANTS IN DECISION-MAKING:

Across contexts such as Lebanon, Benin, Cambodia, and Italy, children are increasingly recognised as active contributors to shaping their learning environments. Through child-led consultations and participatory workshops, children are invited to share feedback, express concerns, and influence school-level decisions.

→ **CHILD-LED GOVERNANCE STRENGTHENS LEADERSHIP AND ADVOCACY:** In Cambodia and Kenya, child-led councils, adolescent advisory committees, and girls' clubs are enabling young people, especially girls, to raise issues related to protection, education, and health. These platforms are strengthening leadership skills, promoting advocacy on sensitive topics like sexual and reproductive health and rights, and creating space for young people to influence decisions at community levels.

→ **YOUTH-LED PEACEBUILDING FOSTERS EXPRESSION AND PARTICIPATION:** Children in Kenya, Tanzania, and Mozambique took an active role in understanding peacebuilding and peace education within their schools and communities. They joined peace clubs where they met regularly to talk about their personal experiences like bullying, exclusion, and violence, working together to understand and apply peaceful conflict resolution. Through creative workshops, theatre, poetry, drawing, and storytelling, peace clubs became spaces for dialogue and collaboration, where children learned to listen and support one another, while adopting non-violent approaches.

→ **YOUTH-LED INITIATIVES ENHANCE OWNERSHIP AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT:** In Italy, Benin and Cambodia, participatory community campaigns led by students are allowing young people to actively shape their educational environments. These experiences are increasing youth confidence, civic engagement, and visibility of issues that directly affect the communities and the school environments.

SOCIAL AND STRUCTURAL BARRIERS MUST BE ADDRESSED TO ENSURE MEANINGFUL PARTICIPATION:

To overcome the social and structural barriers that limit meaningful child participation, particularly for girls and children with disabilities, restrictive cultural norms and systemic inequalities must be addressed, especially in fragile and crisis-affected contexts, where insecurity and instability further hinder children's possibility to engage freely, safely, and meaningfully in decision-making processes.

→ **CHALLENGING ADULTISM MUST BECOME A PRIORITY:** Too often, traditional power dynamics between adults and children limit children's ability to actively participate in and influence decisions that shape their lives. Challenging adultism means shifting these dynamics and creating spaces where children are not only listened to, but also empowered to lead, reflect, and shape their educational environments. To achieve this, children must be recognised as capable individuals, able to express their priorities, raise concerns, and co-create educational interventions alongside peers, teachers, and other stakeholders.

→ **CHILD PARTICIPATION MECHANISMS MUST BE STRENGTHENED AND EMBEDDED IN POLICY AND SYSTEM DESIGN:** While efforts are being made to listen to children and include their perspectives, participation mechanisms remain weak and inconsistently applied. In many cases, children are consulted only after key decisions have already been made, and their input is not systematically integrated into policies or institutional practices. To move beyond tokenism, we must strengthen and embed child participation mechanisms within broader systems and policy frameworks, ensuring they are grounded in the principles of Article 12 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. This means designing child-friendly structures that are not only inclusive and accessible, but also built with children's active involvement. Creating safe and consistent spaces for children to express their views, be heard, and influence decisions is essential to ensure their voices shape both present and future outcomes.

→ **CHILD PARTICIPATION MUST BE GUARANTEED DURING PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION, MONITORING AND EVALUATION:** While children are being involved, asked to share feedback and influence decision-making at different stages of the project cycle, their engagement is not always consistent across all phases or contexts of our interventions. In crisis-affected settings, meaningful child participation remains limited and often under-prioritised. To address this, we need to invest in culturally sensitive and age-appropriate tools that enable children's meaningful participation, even in challenging environments, to ensure children's voices truly inform decisions throughout the entire project cycle.



EXPRESSION

Amplifying Children's Voices and Perspectives





SAFETY

Safeguarding Children's Protection and Well-Being Through Education



→ **INTEGRATING CHILD PROTECTION INTO SCHOOL SYSTEMS IMPROVES CHILDREN'S SAFETY AND WELL-BEING:** Across different countries, embedding child protection into the education system has proved to strengthen the ability of children and teachers to prevent, identify, and respond to abuse, neglect, violence, and psychosocial distress. In Tanzania, school committees and child protection groups were trained to identify and support children at risk, while mentoring sessions helped school leaders adopt inclusive, child-centred management practices. In Kenya, Boards of Management received training on safeguarding and referral mechanisms, enabling schools to respond proactively to cases of abuse, neglect, or psychosocial trauma. In Syria and Lebanon, child protection was embedded into school rehabilitation, with inclusive infrastructure upgrades and teacher training on violence prevention and disability inclusion. In Brazil, restorative justice practices were introduced to reduce school-based violence and promote peaceful conflict resolution, positioning educators as facilitators of safe dialogue.

→ **SAFE SCHOOL ENVIRONMENTS PROMOTE SCHOOL RETENTION AND INCLUSION:** Creating physically safe school environments is a critical foundation for protecting children's rights and ensuring their continued access to education. Across contexts like Palestine, Syria, Tanzania, Ukraine and Mozambique, we have prioritised safety through targeted infrastructure improvements and emergency preparedness strategies. In Ukraine, safe spaces were established in conflict-affected areas, while mine safety awareness programmes equipped children and educators with life-saving knowledge and skills.

→ **CROSS-SECTOR INTEGRATION ENHANCES INCLUSION AND PROTECTION:** Upgrading water, sanitation, and hygiene facilities in schools has helped create physically safe and inclusive learning environments that support children's protection and dignity, aligning WASH rehabilitation with broader education and protection strategies. In Cambodia, toilet renovations and hygiene promotion were linked to life skills education and student-led campaigns. In Kenya and Tanzania, gender-sensitive latrines and handwashing stations were introduced as part of wider school safety efforts, improving attendance and reducing dropout, especially among girls and children with disabilities. In Lebanon, Palestine, and Syria, our Integrated Approach combined infrastructure upgrades with inclusive education programming. Schools were equipped with gender-sensitive, disability-accessible facilities, while hygiene promotion and teacher training helped embed health awareness into daily school life.

→ **PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT (PSS) STRENGTHENS CHILDREN'S WELL-BEING AND EDUCATIONAL RECOVERY:** Across crisis-affected and displacement contexts, embedding psychosocial support (PSS) into education is essential to help children recover from trauma, build emotional resilience, and re-engage with learning, combining structured activities, teacher training, and safe spaces tailored to children's emotional needs. In Ukraine, art therapy, individual consultations, and emotional regulation sessions supported thousands of children and teachers in managing war-related stress, while safe spaces and group activities helped restore a sense of normalcy. In Palestine, summer camps and school-based interventions blended remedial education with social-emotional learning (SEL), and teachers were trained in psychological first aid to better support students in high-risk environments. In Lebanon, play-based tools such as inclusive sports activities were adapted to support both Syrian refugee and Lebanese children, while retention support programmes embedded psychosocial care for those at risk of dropout. In Syria, PSS sessions are mainstreamed in all NFE programmes.

→ **STIGMA AROUND SENSITIVE ISSUES LIMITS ACCESS TO PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT:** Stigma surrounding sensitive topics, such as menstrual health and mental well-being, continues to limit children's ability to access support and participate fully in school life. Addressing these barriers requires inclusive, age-appropriate, and culturally sensitive approaches, and adequate spaces where children can express themselves and explore these issues through creative, peer-led and/or play-based methods.

→ **THE ABSENCE OF SAFE INFRASTRUCTURE AND EMERGENCY PROTOCOLS EXPOSES CHILDREN TO RISK AND DISRUPTS THEIR LEARNING:** Investing in protective school environments, through upgraded facilities, clear safety procedures, and preparedness training, is essential to ensure continuity of education, especially in fragile or high-risk settings. Coordinated interventions that combine infrastructure with capacity-building for educators and communities help create resilient systems where children can learn safely and consistently.

→ **CHILD PROTECTION MUST BE MAINSTREAMED ACROSS ALL EDUCATION INTERVENTIONS:** Ensuring children's access to school, safety and dignity requires that child protection principles are systematically integrated into all education activities. This means going beyond standalone protection efforts to embed safeguarding across programme design, implementation, and monitoring. Strengthening coordination with local actors and protection networks is also key to ensuring timely and appropriate responses to child protection concerns. However, true integration is not possible without meaningful child participation. Building safe, age-appropriate, and accessible channels for children to express their views and influence decisions helps create more responsive and accountable protection systems, grounded in their lived experiences and real needs.

To achieve lasting impact through these interventions requires more than well-designed programmes: it demands adequate resources, expertise in the context, a deep understanding of the realities children face, and cross-sectoral coordination mechanisms with partners to create inclusive, responsive education systems. As a cross-cutting issue, education demands strong collaboration among governments, donors, NGOs, and civil society to pursue shared goals efficiently and equitably. Such coordination helps reduce funding gaps and fragmentation, enhances transparency, and strengthens both learning outcomes and the resilience of education systems. This must be supported by flexible, sustained and long-term donor investment that recognises education not as an isolated intervention, but as a transformative force that intersects with protection, health, gender equality, rights, participation and social cohesion.



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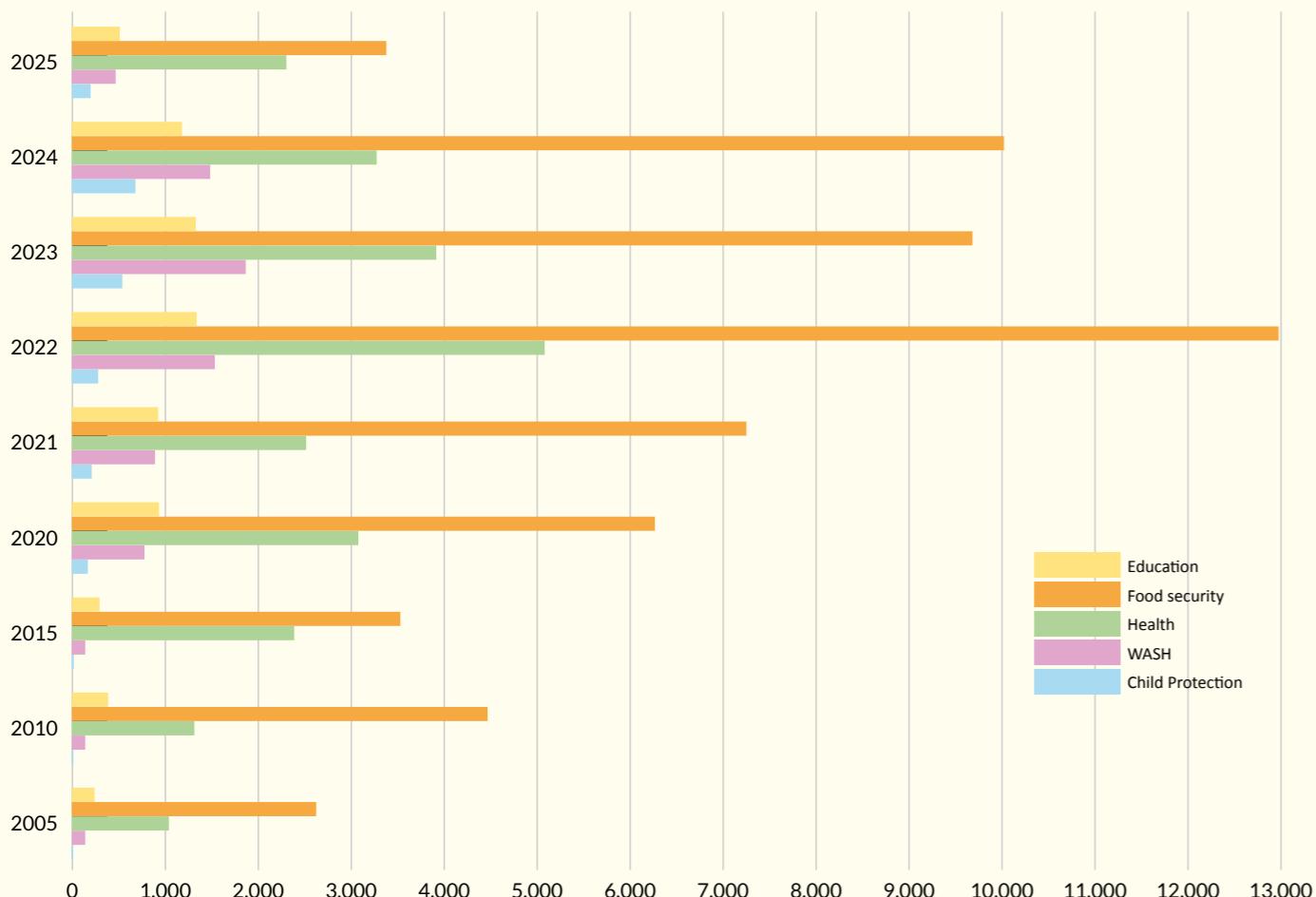
The Global Education Funding Crisis

Education is not only a basic human right, but a cornerstone for resilience and social cohesion. Yet, despite its transformative potential, **it remains consistently undervalued and under-funded in global financial flows**. This has made the education crisis one of the most urgent and least acknowledged challenges in international cooperation.

Looking at how humanitarian aid is distributed across sectors, over the past decade the share allocated to education has stayed stagnated or even declined, especially when compared to areas like health and food security (see table below). **This imbalance reflects a persistent failure to recognise education's cross-cutting role in improving health outcomes, ensuring children's protection, well-being and safety, strengthening livelihoods, and promoting gender equality.**

GRAPH 2: Total reported funding by sector inside and outside coordinated plans (2005-2025)

Data are updated to 2025. Source: Weworld's elaboration on OCHA Financial Tracking Service, 2025.



Treating education as a siloed issue undermines its capacity to drive progress across humanitarian and development agendas.



A DEEPENING CRISIS IN EDUCATION FINANCING

Still, education has long received limited support - and in 2025, deep budget cuts by key donors, including G7 countries, global organisations, the private sector, and philanthropic foundations, pushed its funding crisis to a critical point. According to OECD projections, **Official Development Assistance (ODA) is expected to decline by 17 to 9% in 2025**. Notably, 11 OECD DAC members⁸⁷ - collectively responsible for nearly three-quarters of total ODA in 2024 - have announced significant reductions for the 2025-2027 period. These cuts pose a serious challenge to international development cooperation and risk undermining progress in global education efforts (OECD, 2025). In countries like Chad and Mali, this could mean losing up to half of their external education funding (Education Cannot Wait, 2025). **The situation is especially alarming considering that 5 in 10 countries with the lowest Education in Emergencies (EiE) funding - Mali, Venezuela, Myanmar, Sudan, and Syria - are also among those with the highest numbers of people in urgent need of educational assistance, totalling around 45 million** (ibid.). Future prospects are equally concerning: international aid for education could drop by \$3.2 billion by 2026 - a 24% reduction - **potentially increasing the number of out-of-school children from 272 million to 278 million** (UNICEF, 2025). Of the 6 million children at risk of losing access to education, nearly one-third live in fragile settings affected by conflict, displacement, natural disasters, or famine (ibid.).



THE IMPACTS OF FUNDING CUTS ON LEARNERS

Across the Middle East and North Africa, 30 million children are out of school, including 645,000 in Gaza, where all schools have remained closed since October 2023 due to ongoing conflict (UNICEF, 2025a). More broadly, a consultation carried out by INEE with its members shows that the impact is widespread and already visible not only for students, but also for teachers and the overall school environment. **1 in 4 organisations has had to fully or partially close schools, and nearly 40% have reported**

⁸⁷ As of June 2025, the following members have publicly announced cuts in their ODA in 2025-27: Austria, Belgium, Finland, France, Germany, Netherlands, New Zealand, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, and the United States

International aid for education could drop by \$3.2 billion by 2026

- a 24% reduction - potentially increasing the number of out-of-school children from 272 million to 278 million

(UNICEF, 2025)



an increase in student dropouts. Support services like psychosocial care are being reduced, class sizes are growing, and teachers are facing salary cuts, unpaid wages, and heavier workloads. In some cases, they are being laid off entirely (Geneva Global Hub for Education in Emergencies, Global Education Cluster & Inter-agency Network for Education in Emergencies, 2025).



MOVING FORWARD: RETHINKING AND RECOMMITTING TO EDUCATION

To reverse this trend, governments and donors must not only increase funding for education but also ensure that investments are fair, inclusive, locally driven, and focused on the most vulnerable children⁸⁸. Looking ahead, promising practices are emerging to reshape financing approaches and include "non-traditional" donors. In some contexts, local communities have already intervened after aid groups scaled back - mobilising youth, parents, religious leaders, and civil society groups to ensure the continuation of learning. Their efforts range from providing materials and infrastructure to teaching and organising small income-generating activities to support students with supplies or meals (Geneva Global Hub for Education in Emergencies, Global Education Cluster & Inter-agency Network for Education in Emergencies, 2025). However, local leadership must be resourced and included in decision-making to ensure long-term sustainability (ibid.). Another key area for action is investing in multilateral funds such as Education Cannot Wait (ECW) and the Global Partnership for Education (GPE), which help coordinate efforts and ensure timely emergency funding. Innovative financing approaches - like blended finance and public-private partnerships - also offer promising ways to attract corporate investment while safeguarding public education systems. These are just some of the possible solutions to rethink the education funding model. What matters most is taking action, because without funding and support, an entire generation risks being left behind.

⁸⁸ For more information, visit: 10 Principles to Guide EiEPC Financing Approaches: Recommendations for Multilateral & Bilateral Donors

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WeWorld is an independent Italian organization engaged in development cooperation and humanitarian aid projects over the last 50 years, operating today in more than 20 countries.

Over the last year, WeWorld has carried out over 160 projects, reaching over 5.6 million people, in Afghanistan, Benin, Bolivia, Brazil, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cambodia, Jordan, Italy, Kenya, Lebanon, Libya, Mali, Moldova, Mozambique, Nicaragua, Niger, Palestine, Peru, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Syria, Thailand, Tanzania, Tunisia, and Ukraine.

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