

Syrian refugee children deserve chance for education

Written by Mariela Baeva on 28 April 2015



Mariela Baeva says the #UpForSchool campaign can provide a chance for Syria's next generation to build a better future.

In an exciting and important development world leaders have agreed a new pact to deliver education to hundreds of thousands of Syrian refugee children whose families have fled to Lebanon after the outbreak of civil war in Syria.

In February 2014, the Parliament Magazine ran a piece from me on the EU and international endeavour to avoid the crisis in Syria from creating a 'lost generation'.

Since then the Lebanese government and world leaders have agreed to provide education for a further 200,000 Syrian children in public schools this September. New efforts are being made to deliver early childhood and 'catch up' learning programmes to over 100,000, allowing more children to enjoy the support of NGOs and other stakeholders.

The breakthrough was achieved during the Washington Spring meeting of representatives from the Lebanese government, the international community and foreign ministers of donor countries, including EU member states.

This wouldn't have been possible without the support of the EU. The Barroso commission launched it - with former enlargement and European neighbourhood policy commissioner Štefan Füle's team strongly committed to the process - and the Juncker commission has kept on delivering.

As well as EU support, activists like me involved in the #UpForSchool campaign and petition are standing up and appealing for governments to dismantle barriers to education and prevent schools and universities from attacks, discrimination and terror.

Nearly five million of us have now signed the petition to show our solidarity with those who are being deprived of education and our firm will to demand action and achieve results. Each day thousands more join us in our belief that education can transform lives, open horizons, and even save communities from poverty.

Can you help make sure we top five million names on our petition? The support for it has been impressive, bringing people together from every part of the world. Victories and breakthroughs like this prove what we already know: nothing changes without concerted pressure and a proactive approach.

There are many situations and conflicts where public pressure is as important as in Syria, where the crisis has caused a cataclysm in the lives of communities, young people and children in just four years.

Now, there is a chance to help them turn the corner, and create the environment for bringing them back into school, so that as a new generation they may build a better future.

We have big ambitions for the #UpForSchool petition's potential for ensuring support for vulnerable Syrian and Lebanese children aged three to 18. With the combined efforts of the EU community, we want to create one of the world's largest petitions on education that will be impossible for any world leader to ignore.

Teams of activists, academics, teachers, students and celebrities all over the world are helping to make it happen - let this five million signature milestone acts as the proof that this cause has global backing.

About the author

Mariela Baeva is a former MEP, PEN International WWC and #UpForSchool campaigner

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