

Former MEP backs campaign to provide education for refugee children

Written by Mariela Baeva on 14 February 2014 in News
News

Action must be taken to avoid the crisis in Syria from creating a 'lost generation' of youth, writes Mariela Baeva.



As I write this article, a major crisis is taking place across the world. Around, 28 million out-of-school children are living in conflict zones.

Over two million children inside Syria have been forced out of school. We have all seen the news about the on-going conflict in Syria. Over one million of them are refugees living in Jordan, Iraq, Turkey, Egypt, and Lebanon. But there is a very important component that has not received the urgency that it deserves.

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Back in September 2013 a petition was delivered at the United Nations calling on world leaders to provide education for the Syrian children exiled in Lebanon.

Since then, leaders have developed a plan to deliver education in the worst refugee crisis since the second world war. The plan is now ready to go and support is asked for humanitarian relief to help the victims of the Syrian conflict, to make the plan reality and get the children back to school.

Schools will operate day and night in a two shift system. Registration fees for refugees will be waived and the plan will be carried out over three years.

Equitable access to educational opportunities will enable 65 per cent of the Syrian refugees, 20 per cent of the Lebanese vulnerable children, 10 per cent of the Palestinian refugees, and five per cent of the Lebanese returnees from Syria to return to school.

The per-pupil unit cost ranges between €150 and €450. 420 schools will be rehabilitated, 4200 classrooms will be equipped and 420 school libraries will be established.

Training for 60,000 teachers, school administrators, educators and facilitators will be provided. Life skills programmes for 15 to 18 year olds and community outreach initiatives to address local bottlenecks affecting enrolment and retention will be supported.

The issue is on the table and pressure is growing for immediate action. We need you to remind the world's leaders that they have to act now. You can make a difference by raising your voice and spreading the word.

If these children and young people do not have access to education, their fundamental human right, they will not only miss out on the skills to become productive citizens of their country and our world, but they will lose hope of a brighter future potentially resulting in a lost generation.

As one of the worst humanitarian crises in recent history, people everywhere need to think about the right response to a crucial question, being, 'What are we doing about the Syria crisis?'

That is why I am proud to stand with 'a world at school' to support 'education without borders', a global action campaign to support the children of Syria, their right to education and promoting a brighter future for refugee children in the world.

Sakharov laureate Malala Yousafzai supports the campaign and contributes to the plan for reaching all children with education in Lebanon. We simply cannot afford a lost generation. Not in Syria. Not anywhere.

The petition is calling on the international community to act now for Syrian refugee children in Lebanon. More than ever, your voice matters.

Please add your name to the petition at: <http://www.aworldatschool.org/page/s/syria> [1]

I would like to acknowledge Sarah Brown for raising the voice for action.

About the author

Mariela Baeva is a former member of the European parliament for Bulgaria

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