



# A FAIR SHARE FOR CHILDREN

PREVENTING THE LOSS  
OF A GENERATION  
TO COVID-19



LAUREATES & LEADERS  
- FOR CHILDREN -



# LAUREATES AND LEADERS FOR CHILDREN

Laureates and Leaders for Children is a growing movement of visionary leaders across diverse fields of expertise and influence, committed to working together to inspire the international community to globalise compassion for the world's most vulnerable children.

Initially convened by Nobel Peace Laureate Kailash Satyarthi, Laureates and Leaders for Children was formally established in 2016 following commitments and actions taken for the benefit of marginalised children by the Nobel Laureate Class of 2014. This included a written intervention made by 15 Nobel Laureates to the United Nations Secretary-General

calling for increased financing for global education. Their letter was referred to during the declaration by the Secretary-General during the 2015 Oslo Summit on Education for Development, which subsequently saw the establishment of the International Commission on Financing Global Education Opportunity, now known as the Education Commission.

After this initial impact, Laureates and Leaders for Children has grown its network of Nobel Laureates and world leaders to become an internationally influential platform for the rights of children to be free, safe, and educated, everywhere.

## RIPPLE EFFECT OF LAUREATES AND LEADERS FOR CHILDREN

- The International Labour Organization's Convention No. 182 on Worst Forms of Child Labour is the first ever universally ratified ILO Convention. (2020)
- Following strong advocacy and with the looming target of eliminating child labour in all its forms by 2025, the year 2021 has been designated as the International Year for the Elimination of Child Labour, putting the global spotlight on child labour and modern slavery. (2020)
- Laureates and Leaders for Children made a clarion call to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals with emphasis on the wellbeing of children, prohibition of child slavery and all forms of violence against children, during the 17<sup>th</sup> Nobel Peace Laureates' Summit in Mexico. (2019)
- His Holiness Pope Francis, Chancellor of Germany HE Angela Merkel, HE Erna Solberg the Prime Minister of Norway, HH Sheikha Moza bint Nasser of Qatar, and HE Mauricio Macri the former President of Argentina pledged their support to the Dead Sea Declaration's call for a legally binding UN convention against online child sexual abuse, commercial sexual exploitation, and child trafficking. (2019)
- The then-First Lady of Panama Lorena Castillo Garcia shared the 2018 Dead Sea Declaration (Laureates and Leaders' for Children 2nd Summit outcome document) with UN Secretary-General António Guterres. (2018)
- Kailash Satyarthi organised the Bharat Yatra, a 12,000km march across 22 states in India in the autumn of 2017 galvanised public support for strengthening laws against child rape and trafficking, resulting in the amendment of India's Criminal Law stipulating very stringent punishment for child rape. (2018)
- OECD's Secretary-General Angel Gurría committed to incorporating the wellbeing of children into OECD measures and indicators of inclusive growth. At the G20 Summit 2017, he called for the world's governments to support Laureates and Leaders for Children, reiterating the need for urgent action to end slavery and ensure all children are educated. The result was a report released in November 2019 by OECD and the ILO on child labour in global supply chains.<sup>1</sup> (2017, 2019)
- Former Prime Minister of Australia Julia Gillard and the Global Partnership for Education (GPE), of which she is the Chairperson, will examine the links between child labour, slavery and economic growth in a global study. (2017)
- Since the 100 Million campaign was formally launched in India at the culmination of the 2016 Laureates and Leaders for Children Summit, it has grown to 35 countries, with young people running local, national, and international events and campaigns calling for a world where all children are free, safe and educated. (2016 – present)

<sup>1</sup> OECD and ILO, accessed 26 August 2020. <https://www.oecd.org/fr/corruption/ending-child-labour-forced-labour-and-human-trafficking-in-global-supply-chains.htm>

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# 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The COVID-19 pandemic has affected the entire world, but far from being an ‘equaliser’, it has demonstrated that marginalised communities are the least able to practise protective measures against the virus and its impacts, and has exacerbated many of the inequalities they have long faced. This is being entrenched by the inequality of the world’s response to date, which has seen trillions announced for the richest parts of the world and very little for the most marginalised children.

More than one billion people live in informal ‘slum’ settlements and tens of millions of refugees and internally displaced persons live in overcrowded, makeshift camps – all situations in which it is impossible to social distance. Over one and a half billion people have no bank accounts, and hundreds of millions of them are daily labourers who have lost their income since the shutdown began. The UN’s World Food Programme has warned of a famine of ‘biblical proportions’ in the coming months,<sup>2</sup> yet there is enough food – people just cannot afford to buy it. Some social protection measures exist for almost half of the world’s population, but in practice the very poorest, those who need the help the most, do not have it.

How is this possible when there have been so many big policy responses to COVID-19?

An external analysis conducted for this report shows that US\$8.02 trillion<sup>3</sup> has been announced in COVID-19 fiscal relief by high-income countries in just six months of 2020. When monetary relief is included, this escalates to over US\$17 trillion, of which the G7 countries alone have announced over \$14 trillion.<sup>4</sup> Despite these unprecedented amounts allegedly intending to support the *global* economy, it will not touch the majority of the people who work in it. Just a fraction has been allocated to those whose lives are most at stake from the multidimensional impacts of COVID-19.

Before the pandemic, almost 20% of the world’s children were living in extreme poverty.<sup>5</sup> Yet far from receiving 20% of the bailout, our analysis demonstrates that only 0.13% of it has been allocated to multilateral COVID-19 appeals for those most vulnerable to the virus itself and the pandemic-induced economic crisis.<sup>6</sup> For the poorest countries, their share of the COVID-19 response has been smaller than many private companies, and even the little funding they have received has been predominantly through loans rather than aid.

2 United Nations, accessed 3 September 2020. <https://news.un.org/en/story/2020/04/1062272>

3 Elgin, C., Basbug, G., Yalaman, A. (2020). Economic Policy Responses to a Pandemic: Developing the COVID-19 Economic Stimulus Index. Covid Economics: Vetted and Real Time Papers, 3, 40-54., See Table 1 in this report. For the purposes of this report we have considered countries with a GNI per capita of over \$30,000 as high-income countries.

4 The G7 countries have announced \$14.6 trillion USD in fiscal and macroeconomic responses due to COVID-19 (Canada \$520 billion, France \$980 billion, Germany \$2,374 billion, Italy \$1,443 billion, Japan \$3,013 billion, UK \$1,000 billion and USA \$5,286 billion). Source: Elgin, C., Basbug, G., Yalaman, A. (2020). Economic Policy Responses to a Pandemic: Developing the COVID-19 Economic Stimulus Index. Covid Economics: Vetted and Real Time Papers, 3, 40-54.

5 The figure is 18.7%. This is based on a projection of the number of children living on under \$2 a day, using UNICEF data at <https://www.unicef.org/social-policy/child-poverty>, which is in itself based on World Bank data from the 2018 Biannual Report. The calculation was made using the latest available data (2015) and \$1.90 at 2011 ppp rates. The US\$2 amount has been calculated by increasing in proportion with the data for the number of children living on less than \$3.60 a day.

6 See Table 3, p48.

In many instances, governments have been working to protect their own citizens, as we would hope and expect they would. But that does not have to be at the exclusion or to the detriment of those struggling to survive, facing the same terrible disease but in extremely precarious situations.

The G20 could and should be playing a vital role, but instead of supporting the UN and the rights of all human beings, it has turned inward, failing to announce any significant support for low-income countries. Given there is only one of the 54 African countries which is a member, and no low-income member states in the G20, there is a serious flaw in its global decision-making.

The citizens of the world's poorest countries are being systemically discriminated against. These citizens are not different to those in wealthier countries; indeed, the lives of wealthier citizens are reliant on the labour of poorer citizens. They are agricultural workers who keep food on tables. They are miners who slake the global thirst for electronics. They are parents trying to keep their families healthy. They are children, struggling to deal with this new world in which we all find ourselves living.

The millions of children living in refugee camps, the half a billion women who cannot read or write, the families who have no bank accounts and little savings, and the parents who now cannot feed their children are the most vulnerable to the consequences of COVID-19, and they must not be left out of the world's response.

As this report shows, the realisation of a fair allocation of the global response to COVID-19 would be transformative. In March, the G20 countries announced

an initial COVID-19 economic response of US\$5 trillion. If our leaders allocated just 20% of this initial package to the 20% most marginalised children in the world, it would provide US\$1 trillion, which is enough to fully fund the UN COVID-19 appeals, provide two years of debt cancellation for the poorest countries, support two years of the financing gap for the SDGs on education and clean water and sanitation, establish a new global fund for social protection, and fund a whole decade of the health SDG financing gap. This could save over 70 million lives.<sup>7</sup>

Taking these actions represents an appropriate response from humanity to this terrible disease that has already killed over 850,000 people.

We have a right to demand action from our leaders, but we also have a responsibility to act ourselves. Almost 100 Nobel Laureates and international leaders have come together with youth organisations across the world to make the same demand: that the most marginalised children in the world get their fair share of the COVID-19 response.

The world is at a crossroads. How humanity responds collectively to the crisis today, will determine the future that we build for our children, and the future of our people and our planet.

As this report makes clear, it is not just COVID-19 that is exacerbating global inequality; the world's unjust economic response to COVID-19 will deepen global inequality for at least a generation. The most marginalised and vulnerable have been left to fend for themselves and millions of children will pay the price with their lives, unless we act now.

<sup>7</sup> World Health Organization, accessed 3 September 2020 <https://www.who.int/news-room/detail/17-07-2017-who-estimates-cost-of-reaching-global-health-targets-by-2030>

## OVERALL RECOMMENDATIONS

In the short term, we need immediate action to ensure the most marginalised have their fair share of the global response. At the United Nations, world leaders must review the dreadful damage done by COVID-19 to the world's poorest communities and realise they have faced the heaviest burden. Leaders must come together and agree a global package to help low income countries and ensure the most vulnerable to the crisis receive at least some support. They must:

- Fully fund all the COVID-19 UN and other multilateral appeals targeting the poorest countries, including the UN's Global Humanitarian Response Appeal and future WHO COVID-19 appeals.
- Cancel all external debt payments due from the governments of low-income countries in 2020 and 2021 to enable the extension of public services and social protections for the most marginalised children and their families.
- Close the financing gap for the health Sustainable Development Goal in all low- and lower-middle-income countries until 2030.
- Provide 2 years of the financing needed to achieve the SDGs on water and sanitation.
- Provide 2 years of the external funding gap to achieve good quality universal education from pre-primary to secondary education in all low- and lower-middle-income countries.
- Ensure all ODA is allocated to the countries in most need from 2021, as the impact of COVID-19 will hit the world's poorest children the hardest.
- Commit US\$100 billion to the start-up and initial costs for a global social protection fund which includes specific support measures for children in every low-income and lower-middle-income country. The establishment of a Global Social Protection Fund would be a big step forward and this funding would provide the entire estimated external financing costs for progressive universal social protection coverage until 2030.
- Allocate funding to cover manufacture and supply for a global COVID-19 vaccination programme.

## RECOMMENDATIONS ON CHILD LABOUR

- Legislation to prevent child labour must exist from end to end, across the global supply chain – to stop children entering work, to stop companies using child labour in their supply chains at the points of farming, mining, manufacturing and production, and to hold companies accountable for using child labour at any tier in their supply chain through due diligence regulations. Now the International Labour Organization Convention 182 banning the worst forms of child labour has been recently universally ratified, and Convention 138 has been ratified by the majority of members, it is imperative that enforcement and accountability become a priority.
- Where laws exist, they must be implemented, and they must have teeth. Investment must be made in labour inspectors, stronger policing and justice delivery systems, and again at the other end of the chain, governments should consider mechanisms to ensure small and medium-sized businesses are able to conduct robust due diligence in order to be able to compete with bigger companies.
- Fundamentally, there has not been enough effort to end extreme poverty, yet when social protection measures are put in place with conditionality to stop children working and ensure they are in school, families and their children are able to thrive and survive. The projected large-scale increase in extreme poverty as a result of COVID-19 calls for a social protection intervention at the global level, with equally large-scale contributions from donor countries in order to kickstart new, widespread, national schemes. The establishment of a Global Social Protection Fund would be a major development.
- Social protection measures, including cash transfers, work best when they go hand in hand with measures which tackle multiple forms of deprivation, such as improved access to healthcare and free, quality, public education.

## RECOMMENDATIONS ON CHILD HUNGER

- To protect the ultra-vulnerable, governments must fully fund the UN's COVID-19 humanitarian appeal to provide emergency aid for children living in the most perilous conditions, including children on the move.
- The establishment of a Global Social Protection Fund would help provide a safety net for the poorest families in the world and be a major step forward.
- While schools remain closed, feeding programmes should continue. Governments should follow the joint guidance from FAO, UNICEF and WFP to coordinate and maintain continuity of school feeding programmes despite school closures.
- Public and private lenders must cancel – not suspend – debt, to enable lower-income countries to provide direct support through social protection mechanisms. This is an effective means of quickly injecting meaningful amounts into the domestic budgets of the poorest countries.
- Conflict is both driver and result of food insecurity; heeding the UN Secretary-General's call for a global ceasefire would open up routes for emergency aid to get through to countries and conflict areas in the direst need.
- Without question, the world must commit to universal accessibility of COVID-19 vaccines which reach everyone. This could not only see an end to the virus, but it would also prevent the perpetuation of poverty and malnutrition. Action to deliver the UN Resolution on international cooperation to ensure global access to medicines, vaccines and medical equipment to face COVID-19 is critical.

## RECOMMENDATIONS ON CHILDREN ON THE MOVE

- Donor governments must fully fund the UN's COVID-19 humanitarian appeal to provide emergency aid for children on the move. This appeal is designed to provide targeted interventions to protect this group, and leaving it underfunded by 77% – or the equivalent of 0.01% of the US\$8 trillion fiscal rescue package – is a damning indictment of many donor governments' attitudes to children struggling to survive in the worst of circumstances.
- Working to strict measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19, hosting territories or countries must provide ongoing access to state or NGO-led child protection services for displaced and refugee children, especially for unaccompanied minors.
- Emergency corridors for the transfer of the most vulnerable refugee children to safe countries must be established, and the international community must act immediately to end unlawful barriers against children and families seeking asylum and safety.
- Another step which could make a huge impact would be the cancellation of debt owed by low-income countries which house refugee populations, for 2020 and 2021. At present, countries are suspending repayments; this just delays the problem.
- Every refugee child must have access to quality public education. When internally displaced children are included, more than 75 million are in urgent need of educational support, with an US\$8.5 billion gap which must be filled to deliver this fundamental right. In Jordan, providing cash transfers to refugee families to ensure children are in school have proven successful.
- Governments must build on the progress made in financing education for children in emergencies in recent years, and heed the call for US\$310 million additional funding to Education Cannot Wait.

- Longer term, as European leaders finalise a ‘New Pact on Migration and Asylum’, ensuring that every refugee child on European territory is guaranteed the rights outlined in European legal frameworks is essential. Since 2010, thousands of unaccompanied refugee children have gone missing from Europe, with the likelihood of many falling victim to trafficking. Dedicated efforts to protect this group are critical.

## RECOMMENDATIONS ON EDUCATION

- Governments must create definitive plans to re-open schools when it is safe to do so based on balanced and contextualised analysis, particularly at the local level. National and local authorities must ensure that established protocols and guidelines are followed, for example those offered by WHO, UNESCO/UNICEF, and Education International, on safe re-opening while COVID-19 remains a risk. This is the single biggest intervention that can be made to halt the erosion of learning, and to put back in place vital protection in terms of food security, violence and abuse, child labour and slavery, child marriage, and child trafficking.
- Social protection measures including cash transfers must be funded through aid and domestic budgets to provide targeted interventions which can enable the children most vulnerable to dropping out to return to school.
- Public and private lenders must cancel debt to free up budget to be spent on quality national education plans which continue to reduce out-of-school numbers and increase retention and completion.
- Donor governments must fully fund the Education Cannot Wait US\$310 million appeal for education in emergencies, and the Global Partnership for Education to enable the maximum possible grant-making capacity for the lowest-income countries.
- Donor governments must commit to retaining or increasing aid commitments to education over the next two years in order to close the education financing gap.
- Low- and lower-middle income countries must meet or continue to meet the 20% target for domestic financing to be allocated to education.



## 2. COVID-19: A PERFECT STORM FOR A CHILD RIGHTS DISASTER

### 2.1 COVID-19 IS EMERGING TO BE THE MOST SIGNIFICANT PANDEMIC OF THE LAST 150 YEARS

The world has undergone unprecedented change due to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. No country has been left untouched by its impact, and governments have been forced to confront new challenges posed by COVID-19 to immediately protect citizens and ensure viable futures for their countries. These dual objectives have seen equally unprecedented measures being taken, from national lockdowns to trillions of dollars being committed to bailing out the global economy.

COVID-19 has already infected ~25 million<sup>8</sup> people worldwide; while fewer than the 1918-1919 Influenza outbreak (Spanish flu) and the 2009 H1N1 influenza outbreak<sup>9</sup>, it has only been ~6 months since the outbreak. The death count is already ~853,000<sup>10</sup> globally, second only to the Spanish flu. However, what makes it the most dangerous modern-day pandemic is its high rate of infectivity ( $R_0$ ), estimated to be between ~3.8 and ~8.9, compared to 1.5-1.8 for the Spanish flu and 1.3-1.7 for the 2009 H1N1 Influenza outbreak,<sup>11</sup> and the lack of vaccines and knowledge around treatment, making lockdowns inevitable. Governments across the world are battling with difficult choices to balance economic, health and social impact in these unprecedented circumstances.

By the end of March, the G20 countries alone had committed over US\$5 trillion to efforts to protect the global economy.<sup>12</sup> That has since increased, with commitments to date from high-income countries<sup>13</sup> topping the US\$8 trillion mark. However, the largest component of support is intended to protect businesses; there has been little movement at the national and

international levels to address the non-health impacts of COVID-19 on the most marginalised citizens. To date, little is being actively spent on targeted interventions to support the almost 20% of children living on US\$2 or less per day.

Beyond the direct health impact, the pandemic is inflicting multiple disadvantages on the world's most marginalised children, exposing them to severe risk of exploitation, and distancing them ever further from a reality in which all of their rights are realised. The world must act now to prevent a child rights disaster of an unprecedented scale.

### 2.2 GLOBAL ECONOMIC OUTLOOK

Lockdowns worldwide have imposed a massive shock on the global economy as production and consumption almost came to a stand-still. The global scale of the pandemic means it is has effected one of the worst economic downturns of the last 150 years. The world economy is expected to contract by 5.2% this year, representing the deepest recession since World War II.<sup>14</sup>

Hard-won gains by countries which have progressed from low-income to lower-middle income, and from lower-middle- to upper-middle-income look likely to be lost, with potentially huge implications. With a transition upward comes an expectation that countries will become more reliant on loans than official development assistance (ODA) or concessional loans, which could leave countries now transitioning downward in a trap of having higher-cost loans but with greatly reduced income to pay these back. Despite repeated calls by civil society,<sup>15</sup> the World Bank and International Monetary Fund,<sup>16</sup> and developing countries themselves, there is no sign so far of any significant debt relief on offer by bilateral lenders to the world's poorest countries, let alone those in higher brackets. The G20/World Bank's

8 World Health Organization (a), accessed 3 September 2020. <https://covid19.who.int/>

9 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, accessed on 24 August 2020. <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/pandemic-resources/2009-h1n1-pandemic.html>

10 *Op. cit.* WHO(a)

11 Bain Macro Trends Group

12 <https://www.csis.org/analysis/breaking-down-g20-covid-19-fiscal-response>

13 See Annex 1

14 World Bank Group, accessed 3 September 2020. <https://www.worldbank.org/en/publication/global-economic-prospects>

15 Eurodad, accessed 17 August 2020. <https://www.eurodad.org/debt-moratorium>

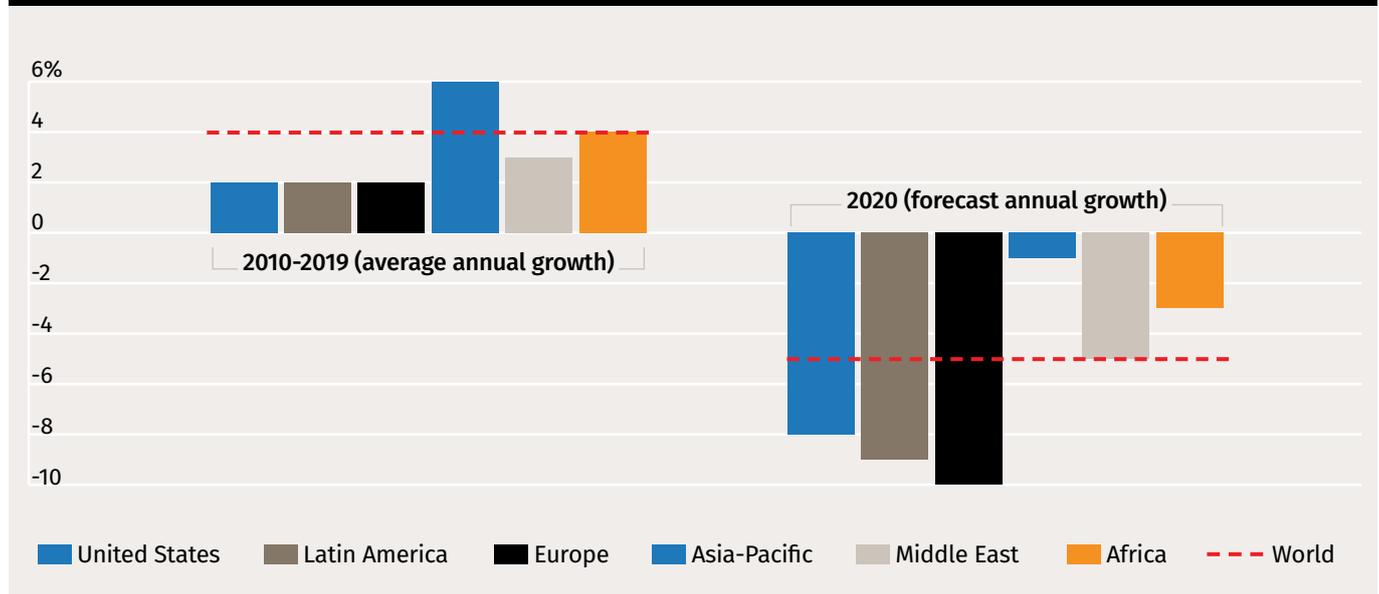
16 International Monetary Fund, accessed 17 August 2020. <https://www.imf.org/en/News/Articles/2020/03/25/pr20103-joint-statement-world-bank-group-and-imf-call-to-action-on-debt-of-ida-countries>

Debt Suspension Service Initiative, while welcome as a temporary respite from bilateral debt burdens, is in effect a sticking plaster over an amputated limb; the DSSI offers only a short-term suspension of repayments, not a cancellation, and excludes multilateral and external private debt.<sup>17</sup> The debt burden will inevitably lead to massively reduced financing for both infrastructural and on-costs of the public services which are critical to preventing a child rights disaster: education, healthcare, water and sanitation, food security, and social protection.

For the countries with the most fragile economies, economic contractions are a matter of life and death, pushing millions of people into extreme poverty. This could perpetuate intergenerational poverty for decades to come.

This new global recession is unprecedented not only in its scale but also because it is twinned with the potential loss of future earnings from a generation of young people because they have missed out on months of education, at every level; some children may never return to education at all. A World Bank simulation estimates that lost learning time, reduced levels of learning, and potential drop-out could result in US\$10 trillion of future earnings being lost to the economy through this cohort of learners over their lifetimes.<sup>19</sup> This is based on the same simulation's estimate of 6.8 million children dropping out of learning; however, Save the Children has estimated that 9.7 million children may never return to school due to increased child poverty,<sup>20</sup> and UNESCO has a projection of 10.9 million.<sup>21</sup>

**FIGURE 1: GLOBAL REAL GDP GROWTH TO DECREASE BY ~10%**



Source: IMF World Economic Outlook<sup>18</sup>

17 World Bank, accessed 29 August 2020. <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/debt/brief/covid-19-debt-service-suspension-initiative>

18 International Monetary Fund. <https://www.imf.org/en/Publications/WEO/Issues/2020/06/24/WEOUpdateJune2020>

19 Azevedo, J. P., Hasan, A., Goldemberg, D., Iqbal, S. A., & Geven, K. (2020) Simulating the potential impacts of COVID-19 school closures on schooling and learning outcomes: a set of global estimates. New York: World Bank Group.

20 Wagner, E. & Warren, H. (2020) Save Our Education: Protect every child's right to learn in the COVID-19 response and recovery. London: Save the Children International.

21 UNESCO Global Education Monitoring Report. (2020) COVID-19 education response: how many students are at risk of not returning to school? Advocacy paper. Paris: UNESCO

## 2.3 UNEMPLOYMENT AND POVERTY

The pandemic has devastated the world of work, causing massive human suffering, and laying bare the extreme vulnerability of many millions of workers, and – ultimately – their children.

At the projected rate of economic growth, poverty is expected to rise to 8.8% in 2020 from 8.23% in 2019 under the baseline scenario, or 9.18% under the downside scenario, the first increase in poverty since 1999.<sup>22</sup> Using these figures, the number of people entering extreme poverty (\$1.90 per day or less) ranges from 71-100 million. If the pandemic endures beyond 2020 and the global economy contracts further, up to 400 million people could be at risk of slipping into extreme poverty.<sup>23</sup>

In the first quarter of 2020, mandated or recommended workplace closures worldwide impacted around 81% of all employers, severely limiting jobs and incomes.<sup>24</sup> The latest ILO estimates are that large-scale workplace closures in response to COVID-19 have led to a 14% reduction in hours worked worldwide in the second quarter of this year.<sup>25</sup> That translates into the loss of 400 million jobs – calculated on the basis of a 48-hour working week.<sup>26</sup>

With household incomes greatly reduced – or disappearing entirely – unemployed parents are facing a reality in which they cannot feed their children. For the poorest families, there are no savings to rely on or other relatives who can help out. While in wealthier countries, some of the economic bail-out funds are being spent on

emergency social protection measures, this rarely applies to workers and children living in lower-income countries.

Social protection varies sharply across countries, with lower-income countries and workers in insecure jobs facing a disproportionate burden of this crisis. The informal economy is where over six out of ten working people make their living from day to day;<sup>27</sup> of these two billion workers, 1.6 billion were impacted by lockdowns, putting their livelihoods at immediate risk, and the average income in the informal economy shrunk by 60% in the first month of the pandemic.<sup>28</sup> These workers have little or no access to social protection, regardless of any emergency measures put into place due to the pandemic.

While migrant workers are the backbone of many sectors and in many countries are frontline workers in healthcare and essential services, those who have remained in work are finding themselves excluded from government income protection, health, and social protection programmes which have been implemented in response to the pandemic. They remain confronted by structural discrimination, including poor living and working conditions, and are in all likelihood stigmatised with the risk of importing diseases. They are also more likely to lose employment.

Migrant workers and their families have been particularly vulnerable to the crisis. The economic impact of migrant workers being locked out of work or access to means of transfer is likely to see a massive reduction in remittance flow – estimated by the World Bank to be almost 20% in 2020, dropping by an equivalent of more than US\$100 billion to US\$445 billion.<sup>29</sup> This will have a direct effect on the vast number of families reliant on international remittances to survive, with children bearing the long-term brunt of this impact.

22 World Bank Group, accessed 17 August 2020. <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/poverty/brief/projected-poverty-impacts-of-COVID-19>

23 Sumner, A., Ortiz-Juarez, E. & Hoy, C. (2020) Precarity and the pandemic: COVID-19 and poverty incidence, intensity, and severity in developing countries. WIDER Working Paper 2020/77. Helsinki: UNU-WIDER.

24 ILO Monitor: COVID-19 and the world of work. Third edition: Updated estimates and analysis (29 April 2020). Geneva: International Labour Organization.

25 ILO Monitor: COVID-19 and the world of work. Fifth edition: Updated estimates and analysis (30 June 2020). Geneva: International Labour Organization.

26 ILO C001 – Hours of Work (Industry) Convention, 1919 (No. 1) states that the working week shall not exceed 48 hours.

27 Bonnet, F., Vanek, J., & Chen, M. (2019) Women and Men in the Informal Economy – A Statistical Brief. Manchester, UK: WIEGO.

28 ILO. (May 2020) COVID-19 crisis and the informal economy: Immediate responses and policy challenges. Geneva: International Labour Organization.

29 World Bank Group, accessed 17 August 2020. <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2020/04/22/world-bank-predicts-sharpest-decline-of-remittances-in-recent-history>

### MIGRANT WORKERS – NO MORE WORK, NO WAY HOME

Too many governments and employers have left migrant workers stranded in their countries or workplaces with impunity. Abrupt lockdowns, disrupted international and national travel, and redundancies in almost all economic sectors have already left millions jobless and stranded, many in host countries, and internally in host localities.

In Thailand, migrant workers from Myanmar and Cambodia have been left unemployed without access to government aid due to their informal status and not being registered under the social security system, yet they are unable to go home due to a strict border closure.<sup>30</sup>

In the Gulf states Indian, Bangladeshi and Pakistani workers are stranded with little help from their home governments, along with around 127,000 Nepali citizens

who have lost their jobs but have been denied the right to return home by the Nepali government<sup>31</sup> due to border closures.

In Brazil, an estimated 500,000 migrant workers from Paraguay and Bolivia, working in the garment and textile industry, have lost their jobs and are desperately seeking a way home despite border closures.<sup>32</sup>

In Russia, an estimated 2.4 million migrant workers from Central Asia have lost their jobs and cannot return home as no airlines are operating due to border closures.<sup>33</sup>

In India, more than 40 million internal migrant workers<sup>34</sup> have experienced a severe lack of support systems in their different host states.

## 2.4 FOOD INSECURITY

COVID-19 has increased food insecurity around the world, particularly among already vulnerable populations. However, despite pre-existing threats including climate change, conflict, disasters, and the locust invasion across East Africa, this is not due to a global food shortage. The pandemic has impacted both the food supply chain and people's ability to purchase food.

The 2020 State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World (SOFI) report shows that even before COVID-19, more than 690 million people were hungry, which is up by 10 million people from the previous year, demonstrating a constant trend over the last five years, with 60 million more people going hungry since 2014.<sup>35,36</sup> The number of people affected by severe food insecurity, which is another measure that approximates

hunger, shows a similar upward trend. In 2019, close to 750 million, or nearly one in ten people in the world, were exposed to severe levels of food insecurity.<sup>37</sup> Since COVID-19, the United Nations World Food Programme has estimated 265 million more people could face acute food insecurity by the end of 2020, up from the estimated additional 135 million people before the crisis.<sup>38</sup> This could prove to be deadly for millions more children, especially children under the age of five: undernutrition is linked to 45% of deaths of children of this age group.<sup>39</sup>

Lockdowns, border closures, and restrictions on internal movement have severely impacted the global food supply chain by increasing delivery times and reducing the availability of basic food items, with crops and livestock going to waste as agricultural and food supply workplaces lie closed. In countries where crops are grown predominantly for export, produce has been

30 International Trade Union Confederation, COVID-19 and Migrant Workers' Rights, June 2020

31 *Ibid*

32 *Ibid*

33 *Ibid*

34 World Bank Group. (April 2020) COVID-19 Crisis Through a Migration Lens: Migration and Development Brief 32. Washington DC: World Bank

35 FAO, IFAD, UNICEF, WFP and WHO. (2020) The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2020. Transforming food systems for affordable healthy diets. Rome, FAO. <https://doi.org/10.4060/ca9692en>

36 The 2019 SOFI reported that 820 million people were suffering from chronic hunger. However, updates for many countries have made it possible to estimate hunger in the world with greater accuracy, particularly with data for China being updated across the last 20 years, resulting in a substantial downward shift of the series of the number of undernourished in the world.

37 *Op. cit.* FAO, IFAD, UNICEF, WFP and WHO. (2020)

38 *Ibid*

39 World Health Organization, accessed 29 August 2020. <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/malnutrition>

wasted due to border closures and little immediate local demand. Families dependent on food production for their livelihood have been prevented from generating income; while more than 26% of the world's working population is employed in agriculture, in sub-Saharan Africa it is almost double at 53%.<sup>40</sup>

To make matters worse, SOFI 2020 also presented evidence that a healthy diet costs far more than US\$1.90 per day, the international threshold for extreme poverty.<sup>41</sup> With the massive contraction in household incomes, and the fact that almost 20% of the world's children were living on US\$2 per day before the pandemic,<sup>42</sup> malnutrition and hunger are set to devastate the most marginalised families.

Pre-existing government feeding programmes are oversubscribed, many school feeding programmes remain suspended during school closures, and emergency food programmes are insufficient. Families which were already struggling to put food on the table and to keep their children healthy now face an impossible task.

Food insecurity, malnutrition, and hunger represent a maelstrom created collectively by unemployment, school closures, and the health threat of the virus itself: the loss of working hours representing 400 million jobs in Q1-2 of 2020; almost 370 million children missing out on their single nutritious school meal a day;<sup>43</sup> and underlying health conditions brought about or worsened by malnutrition making people in poorer countries much more vulnerable to the worst impacts of COVID-19.

## 2.5 VIOLENCE IN THE COMMUNITY AND AT HOME

As lockdown forces people to be confined to their homes, child abuse and gender-based violence have increased, and have become more frequent and more severe. Worse still, violence at home committed during the pandemic has been exacerbated as protection agencies became inundated during a time of reduced provision.

In India 2020, between March 25 and May 31, 1,477 complaints of domestic violence were made by women.<sup>44</sup> This 68-day period saw more complaints than those received between March and May in the previous 10 years.<sup>45</sup> Although there are currently few robust studies to date that have tracked the national trends in gender-based violence related to COVID-19, initial reports from UK support services such as the National Domestic Abuse helpline have already shown increases in service use, a pattern seen elsewhere (with notable examples in China, Spain, and France).<sup>46</sup>

In some countries where governments have stated they are implementing specific measures to tackle increased domestic violence and child abuse during the pandemic, anecdotally these have proven to be little more than lip service. In Kenya, Usikimye, a grassroots NGO working in sexual and gender-based violence, reported that calls to the new government helpline rarely resulted in any action and their own volunteers have been forced to undertake an escalating number of rescues themselves.

40 World Bank Group, accessed 19 August 2020. <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SL.AGR.EMPL.ZS>

41 *Op. cit.* FAO, IFAD, UNICEF, WFP and WHO. (2020)

42 The figure is 18.7%. This is based on a projection of the number of children living on under \$2 a day, using UNICEF data at <https://www.unicef.org/social-policy/child-poverty>, which is in itself based on World Bank data from the 2018 Biannual Report. The calculation was made using the latest available data (2015) and \$1.90 at 2011 ppp rates. The US\$2 amount has been calculated by increasing in proportion with the data for the number of children living on less than \$3.60 a day.

43 World Food Programme, accessed 19 August 2020. [https://cdn.wfp.org/2020/school-feeding-map/?\\_ga=2.63572263.982488836.1591373547-1890028486.1585930400](https://cdn.wfp.org/2020/school-feeding-map/?_ga=2.63572263.982488836.1591373547-1890028486.1585930400)

44 The Hindu, accessed 18 August 2020. <https://www.thehindu.com/data/data-domestic-violence-complaints-at-a-10-year-high-during-covid-19-lockdown/article31885001.ece>

45 *Ibid*

46 The Lancet, accessed 18 August 2020. [https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanpub/article/PIIS2468-2667\(20\)30112-2/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanpub/article/PIIS2468-2667(20)30112-2/fulltext)

They also reported that despite offering rescue services, the government has not created any safe houses or shelters for the people they say they will rescue. In Uganda, calls to the national toll-free child helpline went unanswered for the first two weeks of the lockdown, as the government failed to classify helpline staff as essential workers.<sup>47</sup>

In some countries reported incidents of child abuse have drastically increased. According to The Telegraph (UK), the Ugandan helpline's closure coincided with a sharp rise in community reports of child abuse. Between March 31 and May 15, 1,225 protection cases were handled by social workers – an average of more than 27 a day, almost nine times the average of 3.45 reports a day over a three-month period in 2019. The cases included neglect, gender-based violence and rape.<sup>48</sup> In Bangladesh, an assessment undertaken by a coalition of organisations including World Vision saw that reports of beatings by parents or guardians had increased by 42% and there was a 40% increase in calls to the child helpline.<sup>49</sup>

UNFPA has already estimated that lockdowns could see particular increases in violence against girls, including an additional 13 million child marriages on top of the projected 150 million over the next decade, and an additional 2 million cases of female genital mutilation and cutting (FGM/C).<sup>50</sup>

Violence is not just on the increase in homes. Even at the outset of the pandemic, multiple reports of harsh state enforcement of curfews and lockdowns emerged rapidly. On 1 April 2020 – just days after national lockdowns became widespread – The Guardian reported incidents of police brutality in curfew enforcements and the creation of emergency legislation to enable harsh crackdowns in India, Kenya, Paraguay, the Philippines and Hungary.<sup>51</sup> These have particularly targeted the most marginalised. In Kenya, reports suggest up to 15 people have been killed by the police since lockdowns began.<sup>52</sup> In India, migrant workers have been victimised by the police, with at least one incident seeing a group of workers being sprayed with bleach.<sup>53</sup> In Zimbabwe, there are reports a COVID-19 curfew has been used to quell opposition to the government.<sup>54</sup>

47 The Telegraph, accessed 18 August 2020. <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/global-health/science-and-disease/violence-house-children-living-africas-strictest-lockdown-risk/>

48 *Ibid*

49 World Vision. (2020) COVID-19 Aftershocks – A perfect storm: millions more children at risk of violence under lockdown and into the 'new normal'. World Vision.

50 UNFPA. (2020) Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Family Planning and Ending Gender-based Violence, Female Genital Mutilation and Child Marriage. New York: UNFPA.

51 The Guardian, accessed 18 August 2020. <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2020/apr/01/extreme-coronavirus-lockdown-controls-raise-fears-for-worlds-poorest>

52 Reports come from a variety of news outlets including Al Jazeera <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/06/kenyan-police-killed-15-start-coronavirus-curfew-200605184324568.html> and the Independent (UK) <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/africa/coronavirus-kenya-lockdown-curfew-police-brutality-deaths-a9468391.html>

53 Reports come from a variety of news outlets including CNN <https://edition.cnn.com/2020/03/30/india/india-migrant-workers-sprayed-intl/index.html> and the Times of India <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/migrant-workers-returning-to-up-sanitised-with-bleach-health-min-blames-over-zealous-officials-probe-on/articleshow/74903106.cms>

54 Al Jazeera, accessed 3 September 2020. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/07/zimbabwe-imposes-curfew-tackle-covid-19-200722191329068.html>

## 2.6 THE PERFECT STORM

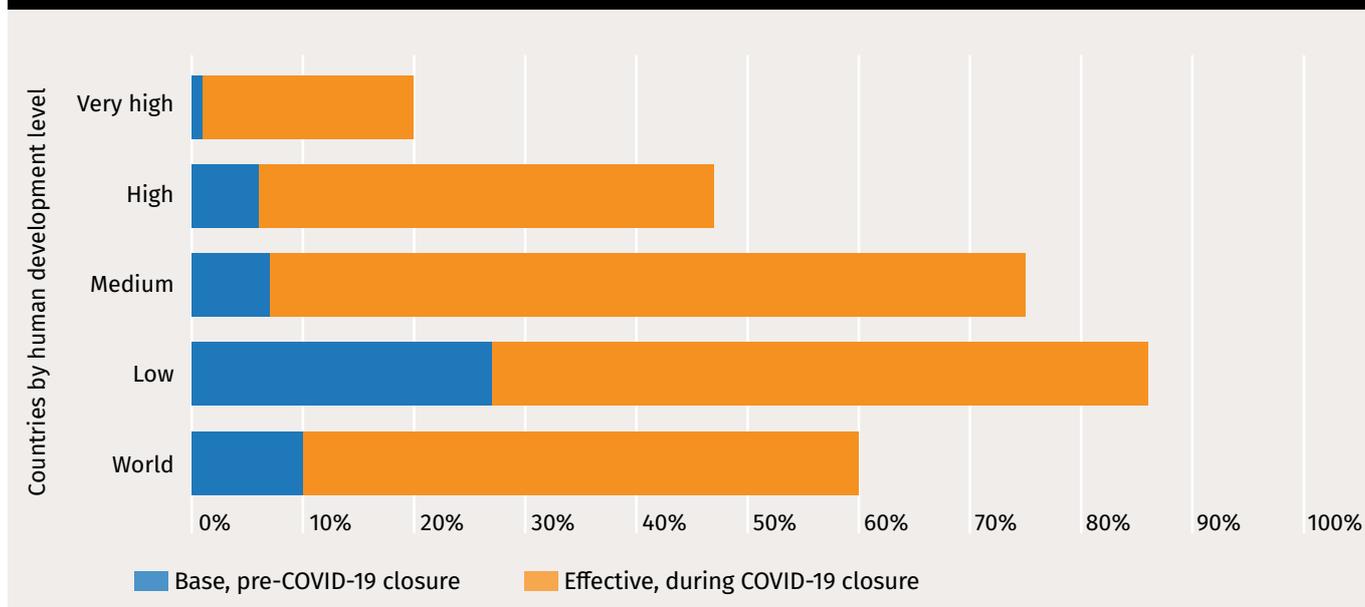
At the macro level, the impact of COVID-19 is already projected to reverse progress across a multitude of human development and poverty indicators, which will inevitably impact upon children the hardest and the longest.

The UNDP Human Development Index,<sup>55</sup> a combined measure of health, living standards, and – crucially – education, is expected to decline for the first time in 30 years due to the multi-faceted impact of COVID-19. For children, the impact could prove to have long-term impacts not only on learning and future potential, but also on their overall wellbeing. This analysis of the potential impact of COVID-19 by UNDP projects that the effective short-term rate of children out of primary school is likely to be the biggest reversal of the out-of-school indicator in history.<sup>56</sup>

The 2020 Multidimensional Poverty Index, the analysis for which was started before the pandemic hit, found that 47 countries were on track to halve poverty between 2015 and 2030, if observed trends continued. However, the analysis warns that progress across 70 developing countries could be set back by up to 10 years because of COVID-19.<sup>57</sup> Worse still, the pre-pandemic analysis found that half of the 1.3 billion multidimensionally poor have not yet turned 18. In fact, children were twice as likely to be multidimensionally poor than adults, and that progress out of multidimensional poverty is slower for children than for adults. While around 1 in 5 children worldwide is living on US\$2 or less per day, 1 in 3 children is multidimensionally poor.<sup>58</sup>

If the Human Development Index and the Multidimensional Poverty Index fall this severely, it will be children who will pay the price, and over a million children could pay with their lives, in the second half of 2020 alone.

**FIGURE 2: SUBSTANTIAL INCREASES IN THE SHORT-TERM EFFECTIVE OUT-OF-SCHOOL RATE FOR PRIMARY EDUCATION**



Note: Data account for 86 percent of students in primary school-age children worldwide.

Based on analysis by UNDP using data from the International Telecommunication Union, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization Institute for Statistics and the World Health Organization.

55 United Nations Development Programme, 2020. 2020 Human Development Perspective, COVID-19 and Human Development: Assessing the Crisis, Envisioning the Recovery.

56 *Ibid*

57 United Nations Development Programme and Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative, 2020. Multidimensional Poverty Index 2020: Charting pathways out of multidimensional poverty: Achieving the SDGs

58 *Ibid*

Already, 2.5 million children die before the age of 5, every six months. An analysis of UNICEF data by Johns Hopkins University projects an additional 1.2 million deaths could occur in just six months, due to pandemic-induced reductions in routine health services and an increase in child wasting. If this projection is close to accurate, it would represent a reversal of nearly a decade of progress on ending preventable child deaths.<sup>59</sup>

The pandemic is shining a harsh light on deep inequalities which, in practice, mean that some citizens are far better protected, and able to protect themselves and their families, than others. People reliant on casual and migrant work have little or no access to wage protection or job security if their countries have gone on lockdown, leaving them at serious risk of being unable to feed themselves or their children. Families living in overcrowded settlements, such as informal 'slum' settlements and refugee camps, have no space to distance themselves, let alone reliable access to sanitation and clean water. Unaccompanied refugee and displaced children living without the basic protection of family are increasingly being left to fend for themselves, with critical support services usually being provided by aid workers or volunteers who are no longer able to access these spaces. Children who depend on school feeding programmes or the relative safety of a school to protect them from abuse or violence at home have been left to protect themselves during mass school closures.

The deep global inequality before the crisis, the virulence and scale of the disease, the severe economic consequences of the lockdown, the absence of unemployment safety nets for the world's most vulnerable families, the impact on food supply and prices and the closure of school feeding programmes, and the increasing violence against children have all combined to create the perfect storm for a disaster for children's rights.

If we are to stop this disaster becoming a catastrophe, as has already happened for major companies and citizens in the richest countries, the most vulnerable children in the world will need support. The next chapter looks at the international economic response to COVID-19 so far, and particularly the level of support provided to those who are most vulnerable to this global crisis.

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59 Robertson T, Carter ED, Chou VB. Early estimates of the indirect effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on maternal and child mortality in low-income and middle-income countries: a modelling study. *Lancet Global Health*. 2020.



## 3. A FAIR SHARE FOR CHILDREN

### 3.1 HIGH-INCOME COUNTRIES PLEDGE US\$8.02 TRILLION IN BAILOUTS

The scale of action taken by high-income governments in response to the COVID-19 pandemic is unprecedented, with US\$8.02 trillion announced so far. If macro-financial contributions are also taken into account, the data

gathered for this report shows that US\$17.4 trillion has been committed in under 6 months (Table 1). This dwarfs the response to the 2008 global financial crisis and governments are to be commended for quick action.

**TABLE 1: PLEDGES PER HIC IN US\$ BILLIONS AND AS % OF GDP**

HIC	GDP (\$B, 2019) <sup>60</sup>	FISCAL RELIEF (% GDP) <sup>61</sup>	FISCAL RELIEF (\$B)	MACRO-FINANCIAL (% GDP) <sup>62</sup>	MACRO-FINANCIAL RELIEF (\$B)	TOTAL RELIEF ANNOUNCED (\$B)
Australia	\$1,376	12.4%	\$171	4.7%	\$65	\$236
Austria	\$448	17.3%	\$77	11.8%	\$53	\$130
Belgium	\$518	19.7%	\$102	11.8%	\$61	\$163
Canada	\$1,731	15.0%	\$260	15.2%	\$262	\$522
Cyprus	\$24	10.9%	\$3	12.7%	\$3	\$6
Czech Republic	\$247	7.3%	\$18	0.0%	\$0	\$18
Denmark	\$347	13.4%	\$46	7.8%	\$27	\$74
Estonia	\$31	11.3%	\$4	12.2%	\$4	\$7
Finland	\$270	16.2%	\$44	27.4%	\$74	\$117
France	\$2,707	10.4%	\$283	25.8%	\$697	\$980
Germany	\$3,863	17.7%	\$684	43.7%	\$1,690	\$2,374
Hungary	\$170	3.6%	\$6	17.6%	\$30	\$36
Iceland	\$24	9.9%	\$2	12.0%	\$3	\$5
Ireland	\$385	14.5%	\$56	11.8%	\$45	\$101
Israel	\$388	11.4%	\$44	5.6%	\$22	\$66
Italy	\$1,989	10.8%	\$215	61.8%	\$1,228	\$1,443
Japan	\$5,154	42.2%	\$2,175	16.3%	\$838	\$3,013
Kuwait	\$138	1.4%	\$2	0.0%	\$0	\$2
Latvia	\$35	16.3%	\$6	12.1%	\$4	\$10
Lithuania	\$54	17.9%	\$10	15.0%	\$8	\$18
Luxembourg	\$69	22.0%	\$15	11.8%	\$8	\$23
Malta	\$15	15.4%	\$2	20.5%	\$3	\$5
Netherlands	\$902	12.8%	\$116	16.2%	\$146	\$261
New Zealand	\$205	10.8%	\$22	25.0%	\$51	\$73
Norway	\$418	5.5%	\$23	0.0%	\$0	\$23
Poland	\$566	9.6%	\$54	7.8%	\$44	\$98
Portugal	\$236	15.3%	\$36	18.6%	\$44	\$80
Qatar	\$192	13.0%	\$25	5.7%	\$11	\$36
Republic of Korea	\$1,630	3.4%	\$55	11.3%	\$183	\$239
Saudi Arabia	\$779	-2.6%	-\$20	4.0%	\$31	\$11
Singapore	\$363	19.7%	\$71	3.9%	\$14	\$86
Slovak Republic	\$107	6.1%	\$6	14.9%	\$16	\$22
Slovenia	\$54	19.7%	\$11	11.8%	\$6	\$17
Spain	\$1,398	7.8%	\$109	21.1%	\$295	\$404
Sweden	\$529	16.0%	\$85	24.1%	\$128	\$212
Switzerland	\$715	10.4%	\$74	0.5%	\$4	\$78
UAE	\$406	2.1%	\$9	28.6%	\$116	\$125
United Kingdom	\$2,744	5.0%	\$137	31.5%	\$863	\$1,000
United States of America	\$21,439	13.9%	\$2,985	10.7%	\$2,301	\$5,286
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$52,665</b>	<b>15.2%</b>	<b>\$8,022</b>	<b>17.8%</b>	<b>\$9,379</b>	<b>\$17,401</b>

The high-income countries selected for this analysis are those currently defined by the World Bank as HICs (equivalent to a GNI per capita of over \$30,000 when measured in 2011 ppp), and with a population of over 2 million, unless they are members of the European Union.

60 IMF 2019 GDP Database (2018 where 2019 data not available)

61 Elgin, C., Basbug, G., Yalaman, A. (2020). Economic Policy Responses to a Pandemic: Developing the COVID-19 Economic Stimulus Index. Covid Economics: Vetted and Real Time Papers, 3, 40-54.

62 *Ibid*

### 3.2 A FRACTION OF THESE FUNDS ARE TARGETED TOWARDS THE 20% MOST VULNERABLE CHILDREN

Table 2 and Figure 3 show the share of the COVID-19 response that has been allocated to the least developed countries to date.

**TABLE 2: MULTILATERAL FUNDING PLEDGED OR RECEIVED FOR LOWER-INCOME COUNTRIES, INCLUDING COVID-19 APPEALS**

COUNTRIES	WHO COVID-19 RESPONSE FUND	UN OCHA COVID-19 GHRP	UN CERF	UNICEF	UN OCHA CBPF	GAVI CENTRAL FUND	TOTAL FUNDS ANNOUNCED (\$B)
Australia	\$0.01	\$0.005	\$0.008	\$0.007	\$0.014	\$0.21	\$0.25
Austria	\$0.003	\$0.001					\$0.005
Belgium		\$0.001	\$0.02		\$0.048		\$0.07
Canada	\$0.02	\$0.03	\$0.02	\$0.004	\$0.030	\$0.44	\$0.55
Cyprus	\$0.0001				\$0.0001		\$0.0002
Czech Republic	\$0.0003	\$0.0002					\$0.0005
Denmark	\$0.02	\$0.07	\$0.03	\$0.012	\$0.026	\$0.01	\$0.16
Estonia	\$0.0001	\$0.0003	\$0.0001		\$0.0001		\$0.00
Finland	\$0.001	\$0.004	\$0.009	\$0.001		\$0.003	\$0.02
France	\$0.003	\$0.008	\$0.001		\$0.007	\$0.39	\$0.41
Germany	\$0.09	\$0.15	\$0.05	\$0.04	\$0.152	\$0.79	\$1.27
Hungary							\$0.00
Iceland	\$0.0002	\$0.0001	\$0.0004		\$0.001	\$0.002	\$0.003
Ireland	\$0.007	\$0.007	\$0.01	\$0.002	\$0.031	\$0.02	\$0.08
Israel							\$0.00
Italy	\$0.0005	\$0.001			\$0.003	\$0.25	\$0.25
Japan	\$0.05	\$0.2	\$0.0003	\$0.11		\$0.30	\$0.68
Kuwait	\$0.06	\$0.04	\$0.001				\$0.10
Latvia	\$0.0001						\$0.0001
Lithuania					\$0.0001		\$0.0001
Luxembourg	\$0.001	\$0.003	\$0.005	\$0.004		\$0.01	\$0.02
Malta		\$0.00003		\$0.00003	\$0.00003		\$0.0001
Netherlands			\$0.08	\$0.008	\$0.05	\$0.32	\$0.45
New Zealand	\$0.001		\$0.01	\$0.003	\$0.003		\$0.01
Norway	\$0.003	\$0.03	\$0.05	\$0.0004	\$0.03	\$1.01	\$1.12
Poland		\$0.0003	\$0.0002	\$0.0004			\$0.001
Portugal	\$0.001	\$0.0003	\$0.0002	\$0.0001		\$0.0001	\$0.001
Qatar			\$0.001		\$0.01	\$0.02	\$0.03
Republic of Korea	\$0.003	\$0.001	\$0.006	\$0.003	\$0.008	\$0.03	\$0.05
Saudi Arabia	\$0.01	\$0.01					\$0.02
Singapore	\$0.001						\$0.001
Slovak Republic	\$0.0002	\$0.0001					\$0.0003
Slovenia	\$0.0001						\$0.0001
Spain		\$0.001				\$0.04	\$0.04
Sweden		\$0.02	\$0.06	\$0.02	\$0.07	\$0.19	\$0.35
Switzerland	\$0.001	\$0.01	\$0.02	\$0.003	\$0.02	\$0.01	\$0.07
United Arab Emirates		\$0.05		\$0.0001			\$0.05
United Kingdom	\$0.11	\$0.15	\$0.01	\$0.11	\$0.15	\$1.71	\$2.24
United States of America	\$0.03	\$0.62		\$0.09		\$1.16	\$1.91
<b>Total per fund (in USD billions)</b>	<b>\$0.4</b>	<b>\$1.4</b>	<b>\$0.4</b>	<b>\$0.4</b>	<b>\$0.6</b>	<b>\$6.9</b>	<b>\$10.2</b>

Data within the table sourced from the World Health Organization, UN OCHA Global Humanitarian Relief Plan, UN Central Emergency Response fund, UNICEF, UN OCHA Country-Based Pooled Funds, and GAVI.

Analysis of multilateral funding sources and emergency appeals reveals that just over US\$10 billion has currently been allocated in multilateral funding by high income countries – just 0.13% of the overall bailout funds allocated.

This is in stark contrast with funding made available to protect companies where the level of support has been so substantial and immediate that stock markets are a record high even though we are in the middle of a major crisis.<sup>63</sup> There are single industries which have received more COVID-19 funding than all of the low-income countries in the world put together. For example, the US airline industry alone received twice as much in grants as all of the multilateral grant funding to the world's poorest countries,<sup>64</sup> despite the fact that in recent years the *“boards/CEOs of the six largest airlines have spent 96% of their free cash flow on share buybacks, bolstering the share price and compensation of management.”*<sup>65</sup>

Even the corporate support in smaller countries dwarfs the global efforts to support for the most marginalised – for example, businesses in Austria have received more COVID-19 grants from the Austrian government than all the low-income countries combined have received in COVID-19 multilateral funding.<sup>66</sup>

Shamefully, some of those who have seen their profits skyrocket in the crisis have claimed millions in government support whilst those in need have been missing out. Public records from the United Kingdom demonstrate that companies owned by multi-billionaire individuals and families are claiming hundreds of millions in government support, rather than funding themselves from their own sizeable reserves or through commercial borrowing.<sup>67</sup> One UK company, owned by a billionaire, has seen business boom during the pandemic and is projecting a rise of a third in profits by the end of the year, yet it has claimed almost double the amount that the UK has allocated to the UN's Central Emergency Response Fund.<sup>68</sup>

A bankrupt company in the US claimed US\$9.7 million from the COVID-19 'carryback' change and then immediately tried to pay a bonus of US\$9.7 million for nine senior executives through the bankruptcy court.<sup>69</sup>

63 Washington Post, accessed 3 September 2020. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/2020/08/18/stocks-record-high-sp-500/>

64 Bloomberg, accessed 3 September 2020. <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2020-05-02/coronavirus-airline-bailouts-a-guide-to-85-billion-in-state-aid>

65 Scott Galloway, a professor at NYU and former investment banker, quoted in Forbes, accessed 30 August 2020. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/jackkelly/2020/04/13/billionaire-tells-cnbc-that-billion-dollar-bailouts-of-zombie-companies-serve-to-reward-their-bad-behavior/>

66 The Austrian government has provided over \$50 billion to businesses in COVID-19 support (<https://www.imf.org/en/Topics/imf-and-covid19/Policy-Responses-to-COVID-19#A&https://www.tmf-group.com/en/news-insights/coronavirus/government-support-schemes/>) and the multilateral COVID-19 appeals currently total as per Table 2.

67 The Times (UK), accessed 30 August 2020. <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/billionaires-and-foreign-firms-taking-bailouts-from-uk-taxpayers-c50sgd8j8>

68 Daily Mail (UK), accessed 30 August 2020 <https://www.thisismoney.co.uk/money/markets/article-8648453/MPs-demand-Mike-Ashley-hands-furlough-cash.html>

69 Bloomberg, accessed 3 September 2020. <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2020-05-15-stealth-bailout-shovels-millions-of-dollars-to-oil-companies?sref=vdNmoUvL>

**FIGURE 3: COMPARISON OF HIC COVID-19 RESPONSE PACKAGES AND MULTILATERAL FUND COMMITMENTS**



Bilaterally, there have been contrasting approaches from different countries. Some countries have allocated additional funding, which is welcome. For example, the German government has announced additional ODA funds of US\$3 billion for 2020 and 2021,<sup>70</sup> Switzerland has announced additional funds equivalent to US\$440m since the onset of COVID-19.<sup>71</sup>

However, it is too soon to be in a position to analyse the impact of COVID-19 and the global economic bailout across all bilateral donors and unfortunately we have already seen some countries move to reduce budgets that support the world's poorest in this time of crisis. The United Kingdom, one of the few countries to have achieved the 0.7% of GDP expenditure on ODA, has moved quickly to cut its foreign aid budget by US\$3.8 billion, and abolish one of the world's leading development agencies, the Department for International Development (DfID), in the middle of the pandemic.<sup>72</sup> Similarly, the Republic of Korea announced its extra COVID-19 domestic funding in the same budget as it reduced its ODA by US\$227 million.

For the majority of high-income countries, insular policies alongside indifference and inaction have meant the international aspect has been conspicuously missing from their responses to COVID-19. If the world's unprecedented COVID-19 response fails to consider the immediate needs of the most marginalised families, let alone acknowledge their critical role in the global economy, what chance do their children have of realising their most basic rights?

Unfortunately, it is clear that the US\$8 trillion expenditure has been distributed with little regard to either equality or equity. It is not just COVID-19 that is exacerbating global inequality; the world's unjust economic response to COVID-19 will deepen global inequality for at least a generation. In this crisis the most marginalised people in the world, those least equipped to cope with the impact of COVID-19, have so far received the least support.

70 Donor Tracker, accessed 3 September 2020. <https://donortracker.org/country/germany>

71 UN OCHA Relief Web, accessed 3 September 2020. <https://reliefweb.int/report/world/covid-19-switzerland-strengthens-international-cooperation>

72 Devex, accessed 3 September 2020. <https://www.devex.com/news/uk-aid-to-be-cut-by-2-9b-this-year-97766>



*Kenyan youth activists in Mathare informal 'slum' settlement, Nairobi volunteering at the outset of the pandemic.*

© Gerald Anderson

## 4. THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON MARGINALISED CHILDREN: THE POTENTIAL FOR AN ENDURING CRISIS

Though COVID-19 has already taken a terrible toll around the world, the bulk of its impact is still to come. The pandemic itself is ongoing and infections remain on the increase in lower- and middle-income countries in South Asia and Latin America; while few full lockdowns are still in place, most countries are still in partial lockdown, and we are seeing mixed results. Ultimately, for most of the population, the world is not back to business as usual, and the economic hardship will get significantly worse in the coming months.

Having considered the impact so far and the paucity of the international response, this section considers the likely impact on marginalised children in the coming months and years unless we see stronger action.

### 4.1 OVERALL IMPACT

Hundreds of millions of children have long been excluded from reliable access to quality public education, sanitation or public healthcare, or any kind of social protection measures or safety net. Since COVID-19, those numbers have skyrocketed.

- School closures – for the children who have access – have stopped around 370 million children having their only regular daily meal, and over 400 million enrolled children have been unable to access online learning.

- Lockdowns have proven that incidents of violence or abuse of children have risen steeply; victims are being left without respite from their abuser in the absence of the protection that school offers them, and they have suffered the double blow of limited or no access to protection services.
- Social distancing, quarantine or self-isolation are impossible to practise in crowded homes and informal settlements.
- Families that no longer have any income from work are already facing starvation – despite the availability of food.
- Millions of children are expected to drop out of school and could be forced into child labour to make up for lost household income. Where lockdowns have eased, child labourers are already being trafficked back to work.

Even though children do not seem to be the worst affected by the epidemiological impact of the pandemic, there are and will continue to be profound impacts on their wellbeing. At the most basic level, if a child's caregiver dies after contracting the virus, they will automatically lose their most fundamental protection against a lifetime of extreme poverty and suffering. Given that COVID-19 infections are still increasing, particularly in countries where primary caregivers are more likely to include grandparents, the direct impact of the virus could prove to be catastrophic. At the other end of the scale, the socio-economic impacts of the mitigation measures against COVID-19 are already pushing people into extreme poverty, exacerbating pre-existing inequalities to the point where turning the tide could be impossible.

COVID-19 will continue to exert further aggravating effects across low- and lower-middle-income countries, with the children in the poorest countries, the poorest households and the girls within these households facing the harshest and cruellest ill-effects of the pandemic.

**FIGURE 4: MULTIDIMENSIONAL IMPACTS OF COVID-19 ON CHILDREN**





© Aung Myo

## 4.2 CHILD LABOUR, SLAVERY, TRAFFICKING, AND COMMERCIAL SEXUAL EXPLOITATION

With the ILO estimating a 14% loss in working hours in Q2 of the year, equivalent to 400 million full-time jobs,<sup>73</sup> and with the most modest estimate of the number of people likely to be pushed into extreme poverty standing at 40-60 million,<sup>74</sup> it is self-evident that families will be forced to take drastic action to make up for lost income and to cut household costs in the wake of the pandemic.

An apparent reprieve in child labour at the outset of the pandemic,<sup>75</sup> particularly reported in India,<sup>76</sup> inflicted a new wave of cruelty upon children. When lockdowns impacting workplaces were hastily implemented, millions of abandoned child labourers were put at risk of other

forms of exploitation, particularly those who had been trafficked and were forced to embark on long, sometimes perilous, journeys home.

There is also evidence which demonstrates that child labour was still ongoing regardless of workplace closures. In India, from March to May 2020, the national emergency Childline for children in distress still conducted 3,653 interventions for child labour; nearly half of the children rescued were aged 11-15 years old, and 10% were children younger than 5 years old.<sup>77</sup> As lockdowns have eased, some children are already being trafficked back to work.

In the last 20 years, progress has been made to ensure 9 out of 10 of the world's children are not in child labour, slavery, or trafficking; however, ending this exploitation for the 1 child in 10 has proven to be a challenge, with the decline in child labour between 2012-2016 at a third of the rate of the decline for the 2008-2012 period.<sup>78</sup> With the vast economic impact of COVID-19 on the world's poorest families, the United Nations goal of eradicating

73 Op. cit. ILO (May 2020).

74 Op. cit. World Bank Group (CHECK DATE)

75 International Labour Organization and United Nations Children's Fund. (2020) COVID-19 and Child Labour: A time of crisis, a time to act. New York: ILO and UNICEF.

76 Various reports, including Thomson Reuters Foundation, accessed 30 August 2020. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-india-children-fea/lockdown-reveals-rampant-child-labour-in-india-as-kids-stream-home-idUSKBN23C1SR>, and The Times of India, accessed 30 August 2020 <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/blogs/voices/forced-by-the-lockdown-traffickers-sending-child-labourers-back-home/>

77 The Times of India, accessed 19 August 2020. [http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/articleshow/76335256.cms?utm\\_source=contentofinterest&utm\\_medium=text&utm\\_campaign=cppst](http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/articleshow/76335256.cms?utm_source=contentofinterest&utm_medium=text&utm_campaign=cppst)

78 International Labour Organization. (2017) Global Estimates of Child labour: Results and trends, 2012-2016. Geneva: ILO.

child labour by 2025 could be impossible to achieve. Projections based on progress for the 2012-2016 period, well before the pandemic, suggested that 121 million children would still be in child labour or slavery by this deadline.<sup>79</sup> In some countries a one percentage point increase in poverty could see at least a 0.7% increase in child labour,<sup>80</sup> and we know that an increase in poverty is extremely likely in the wake of COVID-19. UNICEF and ILO have already warned that 2020 could see a rise in child labour, slavery, and trafficking for the first time in two decades.<sup>81</sup>

Worse still is that COVID-19 is exacerbating the vulnerabilities of children to some of the worst forms of child labour, including commercial sexual exploitation. The closure of schools, for example, could heighten the risk of online sexual exploitation, with children spending more time online, possibly without the constant oversight of their parents, and within reach of exploiters. For children who were in child labour before the pandemic struck, closures of their workplaces could force them into commercial sexual exploitation, both online and in their host or home communities. The UN Special Rapporteur on Trafficking in Persons, Maria Grazia Giammarinaro, stated that law enforcement agencies including Europol had seen an increase in online commercial sexual exploitation of children as early as March.<sup>82</sup> In India, a report by the India Child Protection Fund found an increase in demand for child sexual abuse materials, and the first few days of the lockdown saw an increase in traffic to adult websites by 95% compared to previous averages.<sup>83</sup>

Rising poverty and resultant economic inequality is also a proven pre-condition for trafficking.<sup>84</sup> Furthermore, the financial strain being faced by governments due to the pandemic has resulted in a diversion of anti-trafficking resources, thus causing at-risk children to become even more vulnerable. UNODC reports<sup>85</sup> “Governments are diverting resources to address the pandemic and the police have new tasks for the enforcement of lockdowns and social distancing, affecting their normal operational capacity. Under these conditions, there is a looming danger that investigating trafficking in persons will become a lower priority.” A survey of organisations working in 102 countries by OSCE found that many fear the diversion of funding and attention away from anti-trafficking responses will force them to close their shelters, without which survivors risk homelessness and further exploitation.<sup>86</sup>

The rising number of deaths from COVID-19 is trailed by growing numbers of children left without one or both parents as well as other caregivers;<sup>87</sup> a study from Nepal indicated that paternal disability or death was the strongest predictor of children’s entry into the worst forms of child labour, a relationship also documented during the Ebola outbreak in West Africa.<sup>88</sup>

79 *Ibid*

80 International Labour Organization and United Nations Children’s Fund. (2020) COVID-19 and Child Labour: A time of crisis, a time to act. New York: ILO and UNICEF.

81 UNICEF, accessed 18 August 2020. <https://www.unicef.org/press-releases/covid-19-may-push-millions-more-children-child-labour-ilo-and-unicef>

82 Europol. (June 2020) EXPLOITING ISOLATION: Offenders and victims of online child sexual abuse during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Hague: Europol.

83 India Child Protection Fund. (2020) Child sexual abuse material in India. New Delhi: ICPF

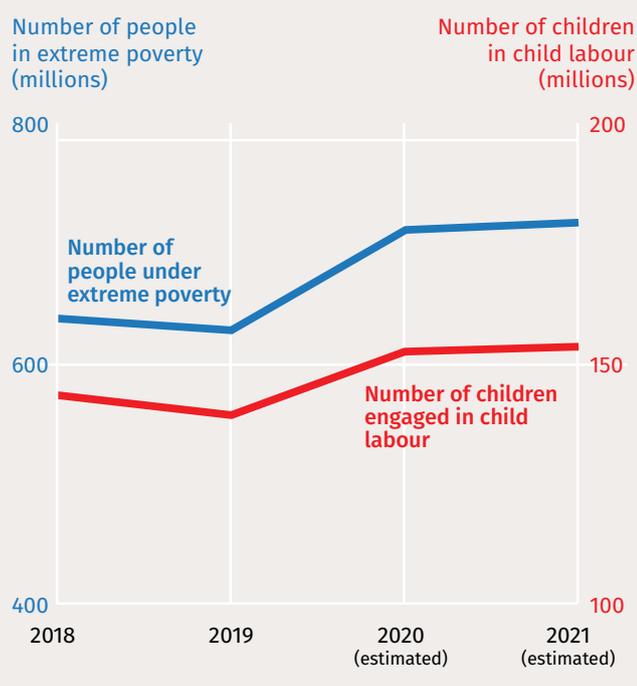
84 Global Education Philanthropists, accessed 30 August 2020. <https://globalep.org/2020/05/when-the-economy-tanks-what-happens-to-human-trafficking/>

85 United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime. (2020) Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Trafficking in Persons. Vienna: UNODC

86 Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe, OSCE, accessed 20 August 2020. [https://www.osce.org/files/f/documents/2/a/458434\\_1.pdf](https://www.osce.org/files/f/documents/2/a/458434_1.pdf)

87 *Ibid*

88 Edmonds, E. V., ‘Selection into Worst Forms of Child Labor’, Research in Labor Economics, vol. 31, 2010, pp. 1-33. & United Nations paper on ‘Assessing Sexual and Gender Based Violence during the Ebola Crisis in Sierra Leone’

**FIGURE 5: PREDICTED TRENDS FOR EXTREME POVERTY AND RISE IN CHILD LABOUR****5-10% rise in child labour to be driven by increasing poverty**

Source: Based on data from ILO and World Bank.

There is a triangular relationship between child labour, poverty, and education. When families do not have enough income to survive, children are forced to work; when a child is forced to work, they do not go to school; when a child does not go to school, they will never have the means to escape poverty. COVID-19 will serve to deepen this cycle of exclusion, not just in the immediate aftermath of the pandemic, but potentially for generations to come.

Pre-pandemic, the majority of child labour occurred within the family unit – usually agricultural or domestic work.<sup>89</sup> Now, when regular incomes have been drastically reduced, there is a high risk that children already in child labour will be forced into more dangerous work or slavery and trafficked away from home.

The families which were just about managing to keep their children in school and out of work before the pandemic are also likely to be the families of the potential 10 million children who will never return to the classroom due to the need to cut household expenditure, including costs associated with education. Again, they face the same risks of trafficking and commercial exploitation, with their families needing additional income to survive.

89 *Op. cit.* ILO (2017)

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The good news is that solutions to child labour already exist; with the pandemic, implementing these quickly and on a large scale is all the more critical.

- Legislation to prevent child labour must exist from end to end, across the global supply chain – to stop children entering work, to stop companies using child labour in their supply chains at the points of farming, mining, manufacturing and production, and to hold companies accountable for using child labour at any tier in their supply chain through due diligence regulations. Now the International Labour Organization Convention 182 banning the worst forms of child labour has been recently universally ratified, and Convention 138 has been ratified by the majority of members, it is imperative that enforcement and accountability become a priority.
- Where laws exist, they must be implemented, and they must have teeth. Investment must be made in labour inspectors, stronger policing and justice delivery systems, and again at the other end of the chain, governments should consider mechanisms to ensure small and medium-sized businesses are able to conduct robust due diligence in order to be able to compete with bigger companies.
- Fundamentally, there has not been enough effort to end extreme poverty, yet when social protection measures are put in place with conditionality to stop children working and ensure they are in school, families and their children are able to thrive and survive. The projected large-scale increase in extreme poverty as a result of COVID-19 calls for a social protection intervention at the global level, with equally large-scale contributions from donor countries in order to kickstart new, widespread, national schemes. The establishment of a Global Social Protection Fund would be a major development.
- Social protection measures, including cash transfers, work best when they go hand in hand with measures which tackle multiple forms of deprivation, such as improved access to healthcare and free, quality, public education.

In the immediate term, allocating a fair share of resources to education and social protection and implementing new legislation on child labour in the supply chain could prevent the first increase in child labour for 20 years.

## INDIA: TRAFFICKED CHILD LABOURER, JAMLO MADKAMI, DIES STRUGGLING TO GET HOME

© Kamlesh Painkra/People's Archive of Rural India



More than 100 million migrant workers across India were stranded when the government announced a nationwide lockdown in March in response to the pandemic, shutting down businesses big and small. Numerous business owners who were illegally employing millions of child labourers throughout India left these children to fend for themselves, stranded and helpless. Lacking money, food, and shelter, many took to the roads to try and find their way home.

12-year-old Jamlo (Jeeta) Madkami had been illegally employed in a chilli farm in Telangana. After the lockdown was declared, the farm owner closed everything, abandoning the children illegally working there. Jamlo and others waited on the farm for a month, not knowing what to do, and trying to survive on their own. The decision was finally made to walk to their village in Chhattisgarh.

A group of around a dozen children took to the road, walking day and night, on a 105km-long journey. Having survived for a month in Telangana without food and shelter, and having endured physical hardships on the road, Jamlo's body was injured and lacking enough sustenance to travel by foot. She died on the side of the road, 50km from her home, her body carried by others to her family.

Jamlo, along with millions of other child labourers, was particularly vulnerable to the knock-on effects of the pandemic. She was in dire need of support. However, the unequal and unjust COVID-19 response has meant those with the greatest vulnerability are getting the least support, and Jamlo is just one of the many children whose lives have been destroyed in the midst of this global pandemic.

*This story is taken from Indian and international media reports.*

Young boy in Bamako, Mali.

© Riccardo Niels Mayer



### 4.3 CHILD HUNGER

While progress had been made in nutrition in terms of reducing child stunting and wasting over the last two decades, the 2030 SDG targets remained off track and overall food insecurity and hunger were already on long-term upward trends before the pandemic.<sup>90</sup> The world is now facing a crisis on food security that may mean those falling victim to starvation could dwarf the number of people who have died from COVID-19 itself.

The impact of reduced access to nutritious food is particularly insidious for younger children, as they are more vulnerable to the consequences of malnutrition stemming from food insecurity. Nearly half of all deaths of children under five are attributable to undernutrition.<sup>91</sup> Before the pandemic, 144 million children under the age

of five were suffering from stunting, which can prevent their brains from developing to their full cognitive potential.<sup>92</sup> However, the Global Nutrition Report 2020 states that each percentage point drop in global GDP is expected to result in an additional 0.7 million stunted children; with the World Bank forecasting a potential 5.2% contraction of global GDP in 2020, this could prove disastrous for the world's poorest and youngest children.

A significant impact of the pandemic for school-aged children has been the lack of a daily nutritious school meal for 368 million children, following widespread school closures. To date, there remain 347 million children going without this meal, with the majority of the world still locking children out of school.<sup>93</sup>

90 *Op. cit.* FAO, IFAD, UNICEF, WFP and WHO. (2020)

91 UNICEF/WHO/World Bank Joint Child Malnutrition Estimates, March 2020 edition.

92 *Ibid*

93 World Food Programme, accessed 19 August 2020. [https://cdn.wfp.org/2020/school-feeding-map/?\\_ga=2.63572263.982488836.1591373547-1890028486.1585930400](https://cdn.wfp.org/2020/school-feeding-map/?_ga=2.63572263.982488836.1591373547-1890028486.1585930400)

## KENYA: NO SCHOOL MEANS NO FOOD FOR 12-YEAR-OLD LINET



Linet, aged 12, lives in Mathare, a sprawling informal 'slum' settlement in Nairobi, Kenya. When the government decided to shut down all schools across the country in March as part of their COVID-19 prevention response, with them went not only Linet's access to education, but also her only stable source of food.

Although the government introduced remote lessons using radio, television and YouTube videos, for the majority of children in poor or rural communities, having reliable access to the internet or electricity is a reality far from their own. Instead, Linet picks up revision papers every morning from the youth-led Billian Music Family Resource & Leadership Centre (BMF) run independently by young residents of Mathare. Every day since schools closed, the centre has been full of students taking classes over Zoom, and the space simply doesn't have enough room for primary school students like Linet.

Instead, Linet picks up her papers and tries to study at home. But with Linet's parents forced to leave the house every day to find work, just to have enough money for dinner that night, Linet is left alone for hours, without any food. For most of her life Linet was able to have lunch at school, yet during COVID-19 she has been studying a few hours in the morning and sleeping through the afternoon due to hunger.

Without community centres like BMF, where Linet and 500 other students every day are able to take home food for themselves and their siblings, children across Mathare would be left with no study materials and an empty stomach. With school closures set to last for an entire academic year in Kenya, provisions and funds must be made available for the poorest children like Linet to continue their education without worrying where their next meal will come from.

*Story and image courtesy of Billian Music Family Resource & Leadership Centre.*

Children living in informal settlements, from slums to refugee camps, are also finding their usual sources of nutrition are being cut off at home. Youth activists from the 100 Million campaign in Kenya spoke to children living in Mathare, an informal slum settlement in Nairobi, about their fears regarding the pandemic. They discovered that children would normally receive their meals from different neighbours, depending on who was able to provide them, but when social distancing and lockdowns came into force this and other community solutions were blocked off to them. In Uganda, the World Food Programme announced a 30% cut to refugee food rations, citing a shortfall of US\$137 million. With refugee camps becoming closed to aid workers and voluntary organisations during the pandemic, and trapping residents within them, critical sources of income or food were stopped. Several refugee camps remain closed, even where there have been few or no cases of COVID-19.

Long-term undernourishment weakens the immune system, and for the world's poorest children, this can start from birth. People with weakened immune systems are more susceptible to disease and death, and may be at greater risk of severe illness if they contract COVID-19. This double threat makes universal vaccination against COVID-19 critical if we are to eradicate it for good.

The impending global food emergency threatening to pushing millions more into extreme poverty and acute food and nutrition insecurity can only be stemmed with bold leadership and infusion of money from the world's rich nations.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

In the short-term, immediate action can be taken to give children their fair share now and prevent a generation of children entering or remaining in hunger:

- To protect the ultra-vulnerable, governments must fully fund the UN's COVID-19 humanitarian appeal to provide emergency aid for children living in the most perilous conditions, including children on the move.
- The establishment of a Global Social Protection Fund would help provide a safety net for the poorest families in the world and be a major step forward.
- While schools remain closed, feeding programmes should continue. Governments should follow the joint guidance from FAO, UNICEF and WFP to coordinate and maintain continuity of school feeding programmes despite school closures.
- Public and private lenders must cancel – not suspend – debt, to enable lower-income countries to provide direct support through social protection mechanisms. This is an effective means of quickly injecting meaningful amounts into the domestic budgets of the poorest countries.
- Conflict is both driver and result of food insecurity; heeding the UN Secretary-General's call for a global ceasefire would open up routes for emergency aid to get through to countries and conflict areas in the direst need.
- Without question, the world must commit to universal accessibility of COVID-19 vaccines which reach everyone. This could not only see an end to the virus, but it would also prevent the perpetuation of poverty and malnutrition. Action to deliver the UN Resolution on international cooperation to ensure global access to medicines, vaccines and medical equipment to face COVID-19 is critical.

Given that food insecurity and hunger were on slow, upward trends before the pandemic, and that deaths of children under five are projected to almost double due in part to pandemic-related wasting, only a serious rebuild of food systems can achieve serious progress on hunger. At one end of the scale, this would mean taking into account the need for financial support for small-scale food producers, who are responsible for over 70% of the food consumed in Asia and sub-Saharan Africa,<sup>94</sup> at the other, the impact of food production on the climate crisis must be tackled at national and international levels. If governments finally heed the warning signs, we can prevent generations of children succumbing to hunger in childhood or later life.



*Syrian Maram Baradan is 16 years old and lives in Za'atari Refugee Settlement in Jordan.*

© Moises Saman

#### 4.4 CHILDREN ON THE MOVE

By the end of 2019, the estimated number of internally displaced persons, refugees, and asylum-seekers was at an all-time high, totalling over 79.5 million people.<sup>95</sup> Of these, 13 million children were refugees – with 400,000 asylum applications made by children unaccompanied by any family member<sup>96</sup> – and over 18 million children were internally displaced by conflicts or disasters.<sup>97</sup> As borders and internal transportation routes remain closed in many parts of the world, it is still too early to predict the potential impact of COVID-19 on displacement and migration, but given the scale of economic disruption alone, the pandemic could force many millions of families from their homes in search of work or food in the months to come.

Child refugees and displaced young people are among the “ultra-vulnerable”<sup>98</sup> in the world. They are subjected to the same multiple deprivations as non-displaced poor children, but without the safety net of a secure home, and in many instances without the protection of family.

Refugee camps are neither designed nor equipped for pandemics of the nature the world is currently enduring. The minimum standards for a typical camp call for a maximum of 120 people to one water tap and 3.5 square meters of living space per person.<sup>99</sup> Most, if not all, refugee camps are operating beyond this capacity, making simple protective measures – such as hand washing and social distancing – next to impossible to achieve. Informal settlements house more displaced persons and refugees than camps, where there are few, if any, provisions for minimum standards.

Before the pandemic, only half of the world’s refugee children of primary-school age were receiving formal education, with just 22% of children of lower-secondary-school age in education.<sup>100</sup> With irregular access to the internet or in some situations even electricity, refugee children are particularly unlikely to access online learning in the wake of school closures. School feeding programmes and the protection of being in a safe space during the day are also critical support lines for refugee children as they not only provide nutrition and protection, they also offer a normality to their lives which

95 UNHCR. (2020) Global Trends, Forced Displacement in 2019. New York: UNHCR

96 *Ibid*

97 UNHCR Figures at a Glance, accessed 19 August 2020. <https://www.unhcr.org/figures-at-a-glance.html>

98 As described by UN Secretary General António Guterres at the launch of the global humanitarian response plan for COVID-19 on 25 March 2020.

99 <https://www.oxfam.org/en/press-releases/250-people-single-water-tap-refugee-camps-braced-arrival-coronavirus> accessed on 24 August 2020

100 Education Cannot Wait, accessed 30 August 2020. <https://www.educationcannotwait.org/the-situation/>

supports their overall wellbeing. Given that refugee camps usually do not offer the space required for social distancing, let alone sufficient access to sanitation, closing schools in these settings seems less appropriate.

The pandemic has not stopped conflicts or disasters. As borders are sealed between countries, children trying to flee conflict were put at even greater risk as they became stranded. Border closures as well as camp closures have disrupted the flow of humanitarian aid and relief workers' efforts at assistance. UN agencies have also had to suspend re-settlement procedures as (usually high-income) countries blocked the safe passage of those with accepted asylum claims, sometimes on tenuous grounds. By mid-April, 167 countries had closed their borders, and at least 57 States made no exception for people seeking asylum.<sup>101</sup>

Any displaced child is at increased risk of commercial exploitation and violence, but with school closures, lockdowns blocking the informal economy, and as child protection services became interrupted, COVID-19 is likely to emerge as a core driver of increased incidents of child marriage, labour, trafficking, and violence and abuse with unaccompanied minors at the most risk. As governments have slowed or halted the processing of asylum applications, refugee children are living in limbo for longer, which puts children further at risk.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Immediate interventions are possible and should be taken to protect this ultra-vulnerable group.

- Donor governments must fully fund the UN's COVID-19 humanitarian appeal to provide emergency aid for children on the move. This appeal is designed to provide targeted interventions to protect this group, and leaving it underfunded by 77% – or the equivalent of 0.01% of the US\$8 trillion fiscal rescue package – is a damning indictment of many donor governments' attitudes to children struggling to survive in the worst of circumstances.

- Working to strict measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19, hosting territories or countries must provide ongoing access to state or NGO-led child protection services for displaced and refugee children, especially for unaccompanied minors.
- Emergency corridors for the transfer of the most vulnerable refugee children to safe countries must be established, and the international community must act immediately to end unlawful barriers against children and families seeking asylum and safety.
- Another step which could make a huge impact would be the cancellation of debt owed by low-income countries which house refugee populations, for 2020 and 2021. At present, countries are suspending repayments; this just delays the problem.
- Every refugee child must have access to quality public education. When internally displaced children are included, more than 75 million are in urgent need of educational support, with an US\$8.5 billion gap which must be filled to deliver this fundamental right. In Jordan, providing cash transfers to refugee families to ensure children are in school have proven successful.
- Governments must build on the progress made in financing education for children in emergencies in recent years, and heed the call for US\$310 million additional funding to Education Cannot Wait.
- Longer term, as European leaders finalise a 'New Pact on Migration and Asylum', ensuring that every refugee child on European territory is guaranteed the rights outlined in European legal frameworks is essential. Since 2010, thousands of unaccompanied refugee children have gone missing from Europe, with the likelihood of many falling victim to trafficking. Dedicated efforts to protect this group are critical.

The number of children on the move has increased every year for at least a decade; the world must confront conflict and the climate crisis to have any chance of reversing this. But comparatively tiny amounts of money could protect millions of children on the move right now, and it is shameful that governments have failed to deliver.

101 UNHCR, accessed 30 August 2020. <https://www.unhcr.org/uk/news/press/2020/4/5ea035ba4/beware-long-term-damage-human-rights-refugee-rights-coronavirus-pandemic.html>

## UGANDA: REFUGEE GIRLS ALREADY ENDURING INJUSTICE IN BIDI BIDI REFUGEE SETTLEMENT



Girls in Bidi Bidi who work with refugee and youth-led community organisation I CAN South Sudan.

For vulnerable refugee children living in Bidi Bidi settlement in Northern Uganda, COVID-19 has already intensified many of the injustices they were already experiencing.

Janet, aged 17, lost both her parents during the civil war in South Sudan, and fled to Uganda with her uncle. School provided Janet not only with access to education, but critical psycho-social support from familial abuse. Janet explained that the people she lives with “force me to cook but deny me the food I have cooked.” She expresses her fears for the future: “[They] want me to get married against my will so they can get rid of me.”

Janet is not only worried about her own safety, but that of her friends in similar situations. “Since lockdown I have not seen my classmates and have heard that some have gotten married. They used to give me hope and joy, but I am worried that most will get pregnant during the lockdown, and I may never see them again at school.”

Janet’s concerns are based in hard facts. Between March and mid-July, one of the NGOs working on child protection in the camp, WorldVision, registered 19 cases of teenage pregnancy, 6 cases of child marriage,

5 defilement cases, 4 child-to-child sex cases and 2 cases of forced marriage. However, WorldVision noted that many incidents do not get reported.\*

Scovia is just 16, and she is the primary caregiver for her four siblings. She is one of many children solely responsible for their younger brothers and sisters in Bidi Bidi, and there is the potential for child-headed households to increase as food becomes scarcer. Despite increases in government expenditure in wealthier countries to deal with COVID-19, the World Food Programme was forced to cut its budget to Uganda’s refugee settlements earlier this year due to a funding shortfall, and rations were cut by 30%.

When schools closed in Bidi Bidi in March, Scovia found she had too many chores and responsibilities at home to find time to study. “I have a dream of one day becoming a pilot, but it seems my like my dream has drowned.”

As of July 2020, 150,000 children were living in Bidi Bidi, representing the majority of the 233,000 residents. Uganda hosts 1.4 million refugees, and over 40,000 of them are unaccompanied minors.

*Story and image courtesy of I CAN South Sudan.*

\* WorldVision, accessed 4 September 2020. <https://www.wvi.org/stories/uganda/covid-19-aftershocks-teenage-pregnancy-rise-refugee-settlements>



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## 4.5 EDUCATION

At the height of the pandemic, over 1 billion children were locked out of school; including university students, this figure tops 1.6 billion learners. With estimates of potential drop-out numbers ranging between 6.8 million and 10.9 million, and a low-end prediction of US\$10 trillion being lost in future earnings to this generation of learners, COVID-19 has already instigated a global education crisis, one which could endure for years to come if serious interventions are not taken.

Before the pandemic, the world was already facing formidable challenges in fulfilling the promise of education as a basic human right. Approximately 258 million children and adolescents were out of school in 2018, according to UNESCO Institute for Statistics data – a number which has remained stagnant over several years. The total includes 59 million children of primary-school age, 62 million of lower-secondary-school age and 138 million of upper-secondary age. Compounding this already bleak situation is that almost 400 million children of primary-school age who were enrolled lacked access to quality education, leading to a lack of basic reading skills.<sup>102</sup>

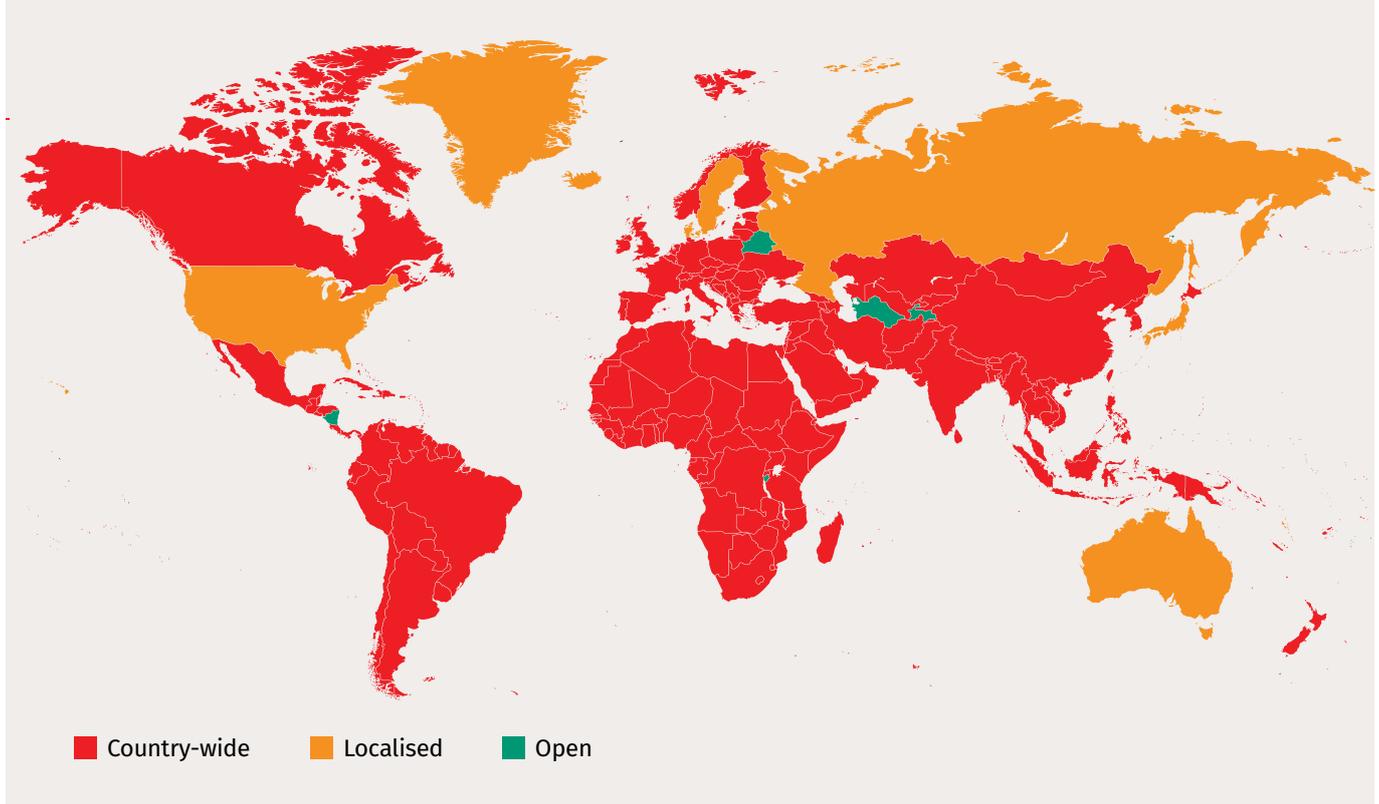
A direct consequence of national lockdowns has been school closures implemented in more than 190 countries; to date, more than 160 countries have continued to lock children out of school. At the peak of the pandemic 1.6 billion (about 91.3% of all enrolled students) were out of school or university, with the vast majority being under 18.<sup>103</sup> Although four out of five countries with such closures launched some form of distance learning programme, there is a high socio-economic gradient to access within and across countries. Almost 47 % of all primary and secondary students being targeted exclusively by online learning platforms do not have access to the internet at home.<sup>104</sup>

Quite apart from the lack of access and likely reversal of learning, school closures are having massive impacts across the breadth of child wellbeing. Quality education is life saving and life sustaining. It protects cognitive development and supports psychosocial wellbeing. In times of crisis, it offers children a sense of hope. But current school closures are exposing children to risks such as child labour, slavery, and trafficking; early

102 UNESCO Global Education Monitoring Report Team. (2020) Global education monitoring report, 2020: Inclusion and education: all means all. Paris: UNESCO

103 UNESCO, accessed 30 August 2020. <https://en.unesco.org/covid19/educationresponse/globalcoalition>

104 UNESCO Global Education Monitoring Report, accessed 30 August 2020. <https://gemreportunesco.wordpress.com/2020/05/15/distance-learning-denied/>

**FIGURE 6: GLOBAL SCHOOL CLOSURES CAUSED BY COVID-19 AT 19 APRIL 2020**

Source: UNESCO

marriage; separation from family; and other forms of abuse, neglect, exploitation and violence.<sup>105</sup>

Save the Children's projection of 9.7 million children potentially dropping out of formal education permanently was estimated from across just 40 countries,<sup>106</sup> and with the economic impact of the pandemic hitting these countries hard, this is likely to force families into abandoning their children's education in favour of work, including the worst forms of child labour.

School closures have put girls and young women at particular risk.<sup>107</sup> Staying at home makes them more vulnerable to domestic labour – particularly if they have younger siblings who are also locked out of school; child marriage; early pregnancy; and gender-based violence – all of which decrease their likelihood of continuing their education. A report by Plan International and the Overseas Development Institute from 2013, written in the wake of the 2009 global economic crisis, stated that

girls on average experience a 29% decrease in primary completion versus 22% for boys as a result of economic contractions. Indications from that particular period point to families typically choosing to send sons over daughters back to school given stretched household budgets, rising school fees, and increased transport costs.<sup>108</sup>

The long-term economic impact of the current short-term closures alone are enough to create a far-reaching catastrophe: as per the World Bank's modest estimates, five months of school closures would result in students forgoing US\$10 trillion in future earnings<sup>109</sup> in today's money due to the cumulative impact of reduced retention and graduation rates, along with eroded learning outcomes.

In almost all countries affected by COVID-19, the decision to close schools – and to keep them closed – has been based solely on public health considerations. Decision-making around when and why to reopen schools needs to be balanced; this includes assessing the negative

105 Alliance for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action and Inter-agency Network for Education in Emergencies. (2020), *Weighing up the risks: School closure and reopening under COVID-19*

106 *Op. cit.* Wagner, E. & Warren, H. (2020)

107 UNESCO, accessed 30 August 2020. <http://www.iiep.unesco.org/en/covid-19-school-closures-why-girls-are-more-risk-13406>

108 Stavropoulou, M. and Jones, N. (2013) *Off the balance sheet: the impact of the economic crisis on girls and young women. A review of the evidence*. London: Plan International and Overseas Development Institute

109 *Op. cit.* Azevedo, J. P., Hasan, A., Goldemberg, D., Iqbal, S. A., & Geven, K. (2020)

consequences that closing schools or keeping them closed may have on the overall wellbeing of children.<sup>110</sup>

Despite the stagnation in progress in recent years, the numbers of children out of school had been on a downward trend for decades – much of this attributable to serious injections in financing both from aid and high allocations in domestic budgets. However, the scale of the potential education crisis in the wake of COVID-19 is unprecedented and will require practicable and targeted interventions to prevent a catastrophic reversal in achievement.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

In the short-term, clear actions must be taken:

- Governments must create definitive plans to re-open schools when it is safe to do so based on balanced and contextualised analysis, particularly at the local level. National and local authorities must ensure that established protocols and guidelines are followed, for example those offered by WHO, UNESCO/UNICEF, and Education International, on safe re-opening while COVID-19 remains a risk. This is the single biggest intervention that can be made to halt the erosion of learning, and to put back in place vital protection in terms of food security, violence and abuse, child labour and slavery, child marriage, and child trafficking.
- Social protection measures including cash transfers must be funded through aid and domestic budgets to provide targeted interventions which can enable the children most vulnerable to dropping out to return to school.
- Public and private lenders must cancel debt to free up budget to be spent on quality national education plans which continue to reduce out-of-school numbers and increase retention and completion.
- Donor governments must fully fund the Education Cannot Wait US\$310 million appeal for education in emergencies, and the Global Partnership for Education to enable the maximum possible grant-making capacity for the lowest-income countries.
- Donor governments must commit to retaining or increasing aid commitments to education over the next two years in order to close the education financing gap.
- Low- and lower-middle income countries must meet or continue to meet the 20% target for domestic financing to be allocated to education.

The criticality of quality education to realising children's rights to be, at the very least, free, safe, and healthy is without question; what remains to be seen is governments' acceptance of this, now more than ever, and subsequent serious intervention to protect millions of children for generations to come.

All of the risks faced by marginalised children who have been locked out of education due to pandemic-induced school closures are the everyday risks faced by the 258 million children who were not in school to begin with. The warnings made about a global education due to COVID-19 – across UN agencies, multilateral funding organisations, and civil society – were already there for over a quarter of a billion children. Before COVID-19, projections suggested that over 200 million children would still be out of school by 2030. Given the measures that must be implemented to protect over 1 billion children now, it is not unreasonable to call for these measures to apply to every child, regardless of whether or not they were in education at the start of the pandemic. Action now should not simply take us back to business as usual.



#### 4.6 RISK OF REVERSING PROGRESS ON CHILD-FOCUSED SDGS

COVID-19 has severely disrupted progress towards the most important goals for children. In some cases, years of progress are already on track to reverse:

- the first rise in global poverty since 1999;
- reversal in progress in the fight to end child labour for the first time in two decades;
- a projected 50% increase in the number of children dying under the age of five in the next six months; and
- the biggest reversal in history on progress for out-of-school primary school-aged children.

However, these are all projections based on the data currently available, and on a pandemic that is still far from being under control. The rate of reported COVID-19 cases has barely slowed, and in some countries, including India, it remains on the rise.<sup>111</sup> The longer-term aftermath of the pandemic could well see far worse impacts than we are in a position to predict today, particularly for the most marginalised children.

All of this comes when the world is one third of the way between agreeing the UN Sustainable Development Goals in 2015 to the deadline for achieving them in 2030. It is already half-way to 2025 – the SDG deadline to end all forms of child labour.

While all of the SDGs are interlinked, there are several goals which particularly impact upon children.

111 World Health Organization, accessed 30 August 2020. <https://covid19.who.int/>

**FIGURE 7: IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON CHILD-FOCUSED SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS AND TARGETS**

KEY SDGS FOR CHILDREN	IMPACT OF COVID-19
 <p><b>SDG 1: No Poverty</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• COVID-19 set to cause the first increase in global poverty in two decades.               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extreme poverty set to increase: almost 20% of children already live on US\$2 per day or less.</li> <li>• A 1% rise in poverty could lead to a 0.7% increase in child labour in some countries.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Even emergency social protection measures induced by COVID-19 inaccessible to majority of the global workforce.</li> <li>• Lack of resilience of the poor and vulnerable to economic shock painfully evident.</li> </ul>
 <p><b>SDG 2: Zero Hunger</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hunger set to increase.</li> <li>• In 2020 alone, up to 132 million more people may suffer from undernourishment because of COVID-19; school feeding programmes still closed to over 300 million children.               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Progress on stunting and wasting among children set to reverse.</li> <li>• Immune systems weakened, making more people vulnerable to the worst suffering from COVID-19.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Agricultural productivity reduced in the short-term.               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reversal of progress creates more poverty for families and small-scale producers need massive support to recover.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
 <p><b>SDG 3: Good Health and Well-being</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maternal mortality in LICs/LMICs set to increase 8.3% to 38.6% per month, over a period of 6 months.</li> <li>• Deaths of children under five set to increase by 9.8% to 44.8% per month, over a period of 6 months.</li> <li>• Interrupted immunisation programmes in ~70 countries.               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Polio, measles, other diseases impacting children set to surge.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Increased financing for public health systems has emerged, but heavily reliant on loans.               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Disruption of other health services and increase in malnutrition likely to overwhelm still inadequate provision.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
 <p><b>SDG 4: Quality Education</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 258 million children out of school before the pandemic; over 1 billion enrolled children still out of school due to lockdowns.               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Online learning programmes out of reach for at least 465 million children who lack internet access.</li> <li>• Distance learning programmes need serious attention to be inclusive.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

KEY SDGS FOR CHILDREN	IMPACT OF COVID-19
 <p><b>5</b> GENDER EQUALITY</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation of girls including online likely to rise.</li> <li>• 2 million female genital mutilation cases may occur over the next decade that could have been averted, due to disruptions of FGM/C prevention programmes.</li> <li>• COVID-19 will disrupt efforts to end child marriage, potentially resulting in an additional 13 million child marriages over the next decade.</li> <li>• Girls more likely to drop out of school to enter child marriage or child labour, slavery or trafficking, reversing two decades of progress in girls' education.</li> </ul>
 <p><b>8</b> DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• COVID-19 expected to cause biggest global recession since WWII.</li> <li>• In Q2 of 2020 alone, the equivalent of 400 million full-time jobs expected to be lost.</li> <li>• Approx. 2 billion people in the informal economy impacted by 60% reduction in income. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children bear the brunt of the impact of lost household income.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Target 8.7 likely to be derailed with rising poverty, 0.7% increase in child labour expected for each 1% rise in poverty in some countries.</li> </ul>
 <p><b>10</b> REDUCED INEQUALITIES</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Income growth for the bottom 40% no longer a reality as household incomes contract.</li> <li>• Global fiscal policy on COVID-19 has not been designed to achieve greater equality; emergency social protection measures induced by COVID-19 inaccessible to majority of the global workforce.</li> <li>• Developing countries have had little or no voice in global international economic institutions during COVID-19.</li> <li>• 167 countries have closed their borders. At least 57 States are making no exception for people seeking asylum.</li> <li>• ODA already on a downward trend; global recession set to reduce ODA further.</li> </ul>
 <p><b>16</b> PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The world has seen a surge in reports of violence against children at home; online child trafficking set to increase during the pandemic; child trafficking set to increase after lockdowns ease.</li> </ul>
<p><b>SDG 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions</b></p>	

The Sustainable Development Goals represent a roadmap for humanity. It is shameful in itself that the world has long failed to deliver the basic rights of every child, and that even with this roadmap so many of the targets for children were off track for 2030 – pre-pandemic.

COVID-19 cannot be an excuse to avoid fulfilling the promises made to children. Especially when the cost to prevent this potential child rights disaster in the wake of COVID-19 is just a fraction of the amount already committed by governments to protect the global economy. The world's most marginalised children must get their fair share, because a child rights disaster is a catastrophe for humanity as a whole. The evidence for this is plain to see: the lack of a fair share for children over the last 70 years has allowed COVID-19 to force millions of children to live through it today.

#### 4.7 WHAT IMPACT WOULD A 'FAIR SHARE' HAVE?

As this report shows, the realisation of a fair allocation of the global response to COVID-19 would be transformative. If our leaders allocate just 20% of the initial COVID-19 economic response packages announced by the G20 in March to the 20% most marginalised children in the world, it would provide US\$1 trillion – enough to fund all of the following:

- The UN's Global Humanitarian Response Appeal,<sup>112</sup> the Global Alliance for Vaccinations (GAVI)<sup>113, 114</sup> for 2021-2025 and future WHO COVID-19<sup>115</sup> appeals (US\$19.7 bn).
- Cancellation of all external debt payments due from the governments of low-income countries<sup>116</sup> in 2020 and 2021 (US\$50.4 bn).

112 UNOCHA: UN Issues \$2 billion appeal to combat COVID-19 (25th March 2020)

113 GAVI: Global Vaccine Summit 2020

114 GAVI was fully funded at its 2020 replenishment summit, making this aspect of the target met.

115 World Health Organization, COVID-19 Response Fund

116 European network on debt and development: A debt moratorium for Low-Income Economies (24 March 2020)

- Closing the financing gap to help achieve the health Sustainable Development Goal (SDG 3) in all low and lower middle -income countries<sup>117</sup> until 2030 (US\$475 bn).
- Provide 2 years of the financing needed to achieve the SDGs on water and sanitation<sup>118</sup> (SDG targets 6.1 & 6.2) (US\$228 bn).
- Provide 2 years of the external funding gap to achieve good quality universal education from pre-primary to secondary education in all low- and lower-middle income countries<sup>119</sup> (US\$78 bn).
- Ensure all ODA is allocated to the countries in most need from 2021, as the impact of COVID-19 will hit the world's poorest children the hardest.
- Provide ODA to start-up and initial costs for social protection schemes which include specific support for children (US\$100 bn).
- Allocation for global COVID-19 vaccination costs (US\$25bn).<sup>120</sup>

This could save over 70 million lives.<sup>121</sup> This is the only appropriate response from humanity to this terrible disease that has already killed over 850,000 people.

117 This is 10 years (2021-2030) of the average estimated annual shortfall for meeting the Health related SDGs \$47.5bn (\$41bn-\$54bn) Table 4, The Lancet: Financing transformative health systems towards achievement of the health Sustainable Development Goals. A model for project resource needs in 67 low-income and middle-income countries (17 July 2017)

118 This is two years of the average estimated annual cost of meeting SDG 6.1. and 6.2 the global costs of achieving targets 6.1 and 6.2 are approximately US\$114 billion (range: US\$74 to US\$166 billion) per year. World Bank Group and Water and Sanitation Program: The Costs of Meeting the 2030 Sustainable Development Goal Targets on Drinking Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (January 2016)

119 This is calculated as two years of the annual financing gap. "The total annual financing gap between available domestic resources and the amount necessary to reach the new education targets is projected to average \$US39 billion between 2015 and 2030." UNESCO: Pricing the right to education: the cost of reaching new targets by 2030 (July 2015)

120 Estimated by the Gates Foundation: <https://theprint.in/health/defeating-covid-doesnt-just-need-a-vaccine-but-also-rich-countries-to-not-monopolise-it/413222/>

121 World Health Organization, accessed 3 September 2020. <https://www.who.int/news-room/detail/17-07-2017-who-estimates-cost-of-reaching-global-health-targets-by-2030>

If a more compelling argument were needed than the saving of millions of lives, the simple fact is that the money governments are already committed to spending on the COVID-19 economic bailout will ultimately be paid back by younger citizens, over the coming decades. But unless children get their fair share now, how will governments ever generate the income they need to do this?

Each country will have a choice in the coming months: whether to fulfil their obligations to support the poorest and most marginalised children in this world or whether to stand by and watch as millions go without food, basic public services, or access to quality education, allowing a generation of children to be lost to a crisis they had no role in creating.

This will only change if countries commit to supporting a fair share for the most marginalised children. High-income countries have a crucial role to play in supporting the most marginalised children and there is a strong moral argument as they have been the beneficiaries of global inequality. There is also a strong self-interest for high-income countries: until the virus is defeated everywhere, the world will always be at risk. The instability and human tragedy that abandoning the most vulnerable children will cause will have a major long-term effect on even the richest countries. Table 3 shows how the 'fair share' of the COVID-19 response would be split across high-income countries if it was based on their proportion of GNI per person over US\$30,000.

**TABLE 3: 'FAIR SHARE' CONTRIBUTIONS (OF US\$1 TRILLION) BY HIGH-INCOME COUNTRY**

COUNTRY	GNI PER CAPITA, PPP (CURRENT INTERNATIONAL \$) 2019	POPULATION, TOTAL	GNI PER CAPITA (MINUS \$ 30,000)	% OF FAIR SHARE OF HIC GNI	FAIR SHARE ALLOCATION (\$B)
Australia	\$51,560	25,364,307	\$21,560	2.05%	\$20,459
Austria	\$59,060	8,877,067	\$29,060	0.97%	\$9,651
Belgium	\$54,730	11,484,055	\$24,730	1.06%	\$10,625
Canada	\$50,810	37,589,262	\$20,810	2.93%	\$29,265
Cyprus	\$39,830	1,198,575	\$9,830	0.04%	\$441
Czech Republic	\$40,660	10,669,709	\$10,660	0.43%	\$4,255
Denmark	\$61,410	5,818,553	\$31,410	0.68%	\$6,838
Estonia	\$38,010	1,326,590	\$8,010	0.04%	\$398
Finland	\$51,210	5,520,314	\$21,210	0.44%	\$4,380
France	\$50,390	67,059,887	\$20,390	5.12%	\$51,156
Germany	\$57,690	83,132,799	\$27,690	8.61%	\$86,121
Hungary	\$32,750	9,769,949	\$2,750	0.10%	\$1,005
Iceland	\$61,170	361,313	\$31,170	0.04%	\$421
Ireland	\$68,050	4,941,444	\$38,050	0.70%	\$7,034
Israel	\$42,140	9,053,300	\$12,140	0.41%	\$4,112
Italy	\$44,580	60,297,396	\$14,580	3.29%	\$32,891
Japan	\$44,780	126,264,931	\$14,780	6.98%	\$69,819
Kuwait	\$59,720	4,207,083	\$29,720	0.47%	\$4,678
Latvia	\$31,770	1,912,789	\$1,770	0.01%	\$127
Lithuania	\$37,010	2,786,844	\$7,010	0.07%	\$731
Luxembourg	\$77,570	619,896	\$47,570	0.11%	\$1,103
Malta	\$41,690	502,653	\$11,690	0.02%	\$220
Netherlands	\$59,890	17,332,850	\$29,890	1.94%	\$19,383
New Zealand	\$42,710	4,917,000	\$12,710	0.23%	\$2,338
Norway	\$69,610	5,347,896	\$39,610	0.79%	\$7,925
Poland	\$32,710	37,970,874	\$2,710	0.38%	\$3,850
Portugal	\$35,600	10,269,417	\$5,600	0.22%	\$2,152
Qatar	\$94,170	2,832,067	\$64,170	0.68%	\$6,799
Republic of Korea	\$43,430	51,709,098	\$13,430	2.60%	\$25,981
Saudi Arabia	\$49,400	34,268,528	\$19,400	2.49%	\$24,872
Singapore	\$92,020	5,703,569	\$62,020	1.32%	\$13,234
Slovak Republic	\$33,680	5,454,073	\$3,680	0.08%	\$751
Slovenia	\$40,070	2,087,946	\$10,070	0.08%	\$787
Spain	\$42,300	47,076,781	\$12,300	2.17%	\$21,663
Sweden	\$57,300	10,285,453	\$27,300	1.05%	\$10,505
Switzerland	\$72,390	8,574,832	\$42,390	1.36%	\$13,599
United Arab Emirates	\$70,240	9,770,529	\$40,240	1.47%	\$14,709
United Kingdom	\$48,040	66,834,405	\$18,040	4.51%	\$45,108
United States	\$65,880	328,239,523	\$35,880	44.06%	\$440,614
<b>TOTAL</b>				<b>100%</b>	<b>\$1,000,000</b>



## 5. CALL TO ACTION

The citizen response to COVID-19 has been remarkable: millions of healthcare workers are still risking their lives to save patients, and many millions more people are actively supporting their neighbours and communities through volunteering and other grassroots initiatives. But this is in stark contrast to the international community's response to the pandemic, which has been unequal, unjust, and immoral. The world has never faced such a common enemy, yet the global response by our leaders has been to leave the most vulnerable children on earth to fend for themselves.

World leaders of the class of 2020 are facing the crisis that will define their place in history. The pandemic is an act of nature, but if millions of children are forced out of school and into child labour, and millions more children starve, it will not be the virus, but our unequal and unjust response that will be to blame.

Longer term, a wider reflection is needed on the structural inequality that has enabled the poorest to be left out of the global COVID-19 response. If the G20 is to be the forum where COVID-19 and responses to future crises are developed, then the world's low-income countries must be represented. One African country out of 54 is not enough. Other financial institutions that help guide the global economy and international tax rules must also have equal participation from low-income countries.

Urgent consideration needs to be given to minimum global safety nets. The poorest children are suffering the most in countries where there is no social protection – or if there is, it is focused on older persons rather than the youngest.

Companies can be prosecuted for using child labour in their own countries, but not if they use child labour in other countries. In an integrated global economy that has global supply chains in almost every industry we can no longer ignore the responsibility we all have to our children.

## OVERALL RECOMMENDATIONS

In the short term, we need immediate action to ensure the most marginalised have their fair share of the global response. At the United Nations, world leaders must review the dreadful damage done by COVID-19 to the world's poorest communities and realise they have faced the heaviest burden. Leaders must come together and agree a global package to help low income countries and ensure the most vulnerable to the crisis receive at least some support. They must:

- Fully fund all the COVID-19 UN and other multilateral appeals targeting the poorest countries, including the UN's Global Humanitarian Response Appeal and future WHO COVID-19 appeals.
- Cancel all external debt payments due from the governments of low-income countries in 2020 and 2021 to enable the extension of public services and social protections for the most marginalised children and their families.
- Close the financing gap for the health Sustainable Development Goal in all low- and lower-middle-income countries until 2030.
- Provide 2 years of the financing needed to achieve the SDGs on water and sanitation.
- Provide 2 years of the external funding gap to achieve good quality universal education from pre-primary to secondary education in all low- and lower-middle income countries.
- Ensure all ODA is allocated to the countries in most need from 2021, as the impact of COVID-19 will hit the world's poorest children the hardest.

- Commit US\$100 billion to the start-up and initial costs for a global social protection fund which includes specific support measures for children in every low-income and lower-middle-income country. The establishment of a Global Social Protection Fund would be a big step forward and this funding would provide the entire estimated external financing costs for progressive universal social protection coverage until 2030.<sup>122</sup>
- Allocate funding to cover manufacture and supply for a global COVID-19 vaccination programme.

In addition, the vaccine developed for COVID-19 must be made patent-free, rapidly produced and distributed, and free for all, and it should be a priority to end COVID-19 in the communities it will damage the most.

These initiatives alone would save more than 70 million lives in the next decade, and are an appropriate response to the tragedy of the pandemic. How humanity responds collectively to the crisis today, will determine the future that we build for our children, and the future of our people and our planet.

It is not just COVID-19 that is exacerbating global inequality; the world's unjust economic response to COVID-19 will deepen global inequality for at least a generation. The most marginalised and vulnerable have been left to fend for themselves and millions of children will pay the price with their lives, unless we act now.

122 ITUC, accessed [https://www.ituc-csi.org/IMG/pdf/ituc\\_campaign\\_brief\\_-\\_a\\_global\\_social\\_protection\\_fund\\_en.pdf](https://www.ituc-csi.org/IMG/pdf/ituc_campaign_brief_-_a_global_social_protection_fund_en.pdf)

# ANNEX 1: HIGH-INCOME COUNTRIES DEFINED FOR THIS REPORT

The high-income countries selected for this analysis are those currently defined by the World Bank as HICs (equivalent to a GNI per capita of over \$30,000 when measured in 2011 ppp), and with a population of over 2 million, unless they are members of the European Union.

- Australia
- Austria
- Belgium
- Canada
- Cyprus
- Czech Republic
- Denmark
- Estonia
- Finland
- France
- Germany
- Hungary
- Iceland
- Ireland
- Israel
- Italy
- Japan
- Kuwait
- Latvia
- Lithuania
- Luxembourg
- Malta
- Netherlands
- New Zealand
- Norway
- Poland
- Portugal
- Qatar
- Republic of Korea
- Saudi Arabia
- Singapore
- Slovak Republic
- Slovenia
- Spain
- Sweden
- Switzerland
- UAE
- United Kingdom
- United States of America

# ANNEX 2: COSTING FOR OVERALL RECOMMENDATIONS

## Fully fund all the COVID-19 UN and other multilateral appeals targeting the poorest countries, including the UN's Global Humanitarian Response Appeal, Education Cannot Wait emergency appeal, and future WHO COVID-19 appeals.

- The UN's Global Humanitarian Response Appeal called for US\$10.31 billion <https://fts.unocha.org/appeals/952/summary>
- Education Cannot Wait has recently called for US\$310 million for emergency response <https://www.educationcannotwait.org/stronger-together-in-crises-education-cannot-wait-reaches-3-5-million-children-and-youth-in-humanitarian-crises-worldwide/>
- The World Health Organization's COVID-19 Response Fund called for US\$1.7 billion <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/donors-and-partners>
- GAVI's 2020 replenishment target was US\$7.4 billion; this target was exceeded and US\$8.8 billion was pledged, comprising the lion's share of multilateral funding already provided by HICs for COVID-19 relief. <https://www.gavi.org/investing-gavi/resource-mobilisation-process/gavis-3rd-donor-pledging-conference-june-2020>

**TOTAL: US\$19,720,000**

## Cancel all external debt payments due from the governments of low-income countries in 2020 and 2021 to enable the extension of public services and social protections for the most marginalised children and their families.

- Figure estimated by the European Network on Debt and Development in: A Debt Moratorium for Low-Income Economies [https://www.eurodad.org/debt\\_moratorium](https://www.eurodad.org/debt_moratorium)

**TOTAL: US\$50,453,000**

## Close the financing gap for the health Sustainable Development Goal in all low- and lower-middle-income countries until 2030.

- This is 10 years (2021-2030) of the average estimated annual shortfall for meeting the health-related SDGs \$47.5bn (\$41bn-\$54bn). Table 4, The Lancet: Financing transformative health systems towards achievement of the health Sustainable Development Goals. A model for projected resource needs in 67 low-income and middle-income countries. [https://www.thelancet.com/journals/langlo/article/PIIS2214-109X\(17\)30263-2/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/langlo/article/PIIS2214-109X(17)30263-2/fulltext)

**TOTAL: US\$475,000,000**

## Provide 2 years of the financing needed to achieve the SDGs on water and sanitation.

- This is two years of the average estimated annual cost of meeting SDG 6.1. and 6.2. The global costs of achieving targets 6.1 and 6.2 are approximately US\$114 billion (range: US\$74 to US\$166 billion) per year. World Bank Group and Water and Sanitation Program: The Costs of Meeting the 2030 Sustainable Development Goal Targets on Drinking Water, Sanitation and Hygiene <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/water/publication/the-costs-of-meeting-the-2030-sustainable-development-goal-targets-on-drinking-water-sanitation-and-hygiene>

**TOTAL: US\$228,000,000**

**Provide 2 years of the external funding gap to achieve good quality universal education from pre-primary to secondary education in all low- and lower-middle-income countries.**

- This is calculated as two years of the annual education financing gap. *“The total annual financing gap between available domestic resources and the amount necessary to reach the new education targets is projected to average \$US39 billion between 2015 and 2030.”* UNESCO: Pricing the right to education: the cost of reaching new targets by 2030 <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000232197>

**TOTAL: US\$78,000,000**

**Commit US\$100 billion to the start-up and initial costs for a global social protection fund which includes specific support measures for children in every low-income and lower-middle-income country. The establishment of a Global Social Protection Fund would be a big step forward and this funding would provide the entire estimated external financing costs for progressive universal social protection coverage until 2030.**

- Pre-pandemic, the ITUC estimated a global social protection fund would need \$99.6 billion by 2030 to close the financing gaps to meet SDG 1.3 in low-income countries. [https://www.ituc-csi.org/IMG/pdf/ituc\\_campaign\\_brief\\_-\\_a\\_global\\_social\\_protection\\_fund\\_en.pdf](https://www.ituc-csi.org/IMG/pdf/ituc_campaign_brief_-_a_global_social_protection_fund_en.pdf)

**TOTAL: US\$100,000,000**

**Allocate funding to cover manufacture and supply for a global COVID-19 vaccination programme.**

- This is an estimate from the Gates Foundation. <https://theprint.in/health/defeating-covid-doesnt-just-need-a-vaccine-but-also-rich-countries-to-not-monopolise-it/413222/>

**TOTAL: US\$25,000,000**

**Multilateral funding already provided (Table 2): US\$10,195,000**

**TOTAL STILL REQUIRED: US\$965,978,000**



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