IN COUNTRIES AFFECTED BY CONFLICT,
39 MILLION CHILDREN CAN'T WAIT TO GO TO SCHOOL.

The Future is Now

Save the Children

Rewrite the Future

REWRITE THE FUTURE

Every child has the right to education. And we have seen a big drop in the number of primary-age children who can't go to school – between 2006 and 2010 the global figure fell from 115 million to 72 million.

That's an impressive achievement, but there's still a long, long way to go – especially for children living in countries affected by conflict. The painful reality is that more than half of the children without a school to go to live in countries where conflict pushes the dream of education further beyond their reach – that's 39 million children.

How can we help these hardest-to-reach children get an education?

Save the Children's *Rewrite the Future* campaign has shown it can be done. *Rewrite the Future* was launched in 2006 as a global campaign to get 3 million children in conflict-affected countries into school. We asked governments, donors and international agencies to take action. Together we have achieved substantial improvements.

In countries like Afghanistan, Sierra Leone, Cambodia and the Democratic Republic of Congo – contexts where many believed it was too complicated to deliver education – we've already succeeded in enrolling 1.4 million more children in school, well on the way to our goal.

We also called for improved quality of education for 8 million children. In fact, we've surpassed this target – more than 10 million children are now getting a better quality education thanks to Save the Children's *Rewrite the Future* programmes.

"I've changed since I started my education. Many things that were done to me before, I know are wrong now. I have the right to live, to an education and to think for myself."

Abdul, 15, Afghanistan

THE CHALLENGE AHEAD

But with the number of highly violent conflicts in the world rising – up from 32 in 2007 to 39 by 2008 – this work is becoming more important, not less. Funding remains crucial if children are to get the education that is their right, even during conflict. Countries affected by conflict account for 60% of funding needs for education, but in 2008 only one-tenth of what they needed was pledged, and even less was actually given.

The economic crisis is squeezing government budgets, but the world's poorest and most disadvantaged children – who are least to blame for economic troubles – will suffer the most. In 2000, as part of the Millennium Development Goals, the world's leaders committed to ensuring a full course of primary schooling for all children by 2015. Without urgent action to help these hardest-to-reach children, that goal will not be met.

Save the Children wants children in countries affected by conflict to have the opportunity to go to school and get good-quality teaching that meets their real needs, with properly trained teachers working in a peaceful and secure environment. We want action to ensure children continue to receive the education they need, even in emergency situations. And we want education in countries affected by conflict to get the funding it needs.

We must not let poverty and conflict rob another generation of the education it so desperately wants and needs. There is more to be done. The future is now.

More than half of out-of-school children live in countries affected by conflict

MATS LIGNELL/SAVE THE CHILDREN



Girls in a tent-classroom in Gawarshad Begum Girls' School, Mazar-i-Sharif, northern Afghanistan. The school is part of a Save the Children pilot project to end abuse and violence in schools.

WHAT NEEDS TO HAPPEN NEXT?

Save the Children is calling on governments, donors and other organisations to:

- **increase educational opportunity for the poorest and most disadvantaged children in countries affected by conflict**
- **focus on teachers and the quality of teaching**
- **make education more relevant and purposeful**
- **protect education from attack**
- **address the increasing threat of emergencies**
- **increase financing of education in countries affected by conflict.**

BREAKING DOWN THE BARRIERS

Poverty, discrimination and a lack of schools and teachers deny children their education in many low-income countries. Add conflict to the mix, and the barriers can seem insurmountable. But Save the Children believes there are solutions that can increase children's access to education, even when conflict affects every aspect of their lives.

BARRIERS TO A BETTER FUTURE

The biggest barrier is poverty. On average, in countries affected by conflict, one child in three is out of school, and it's the children from the poorest families who fare the worst – in Somalia, for instance, the wealthiest families' children get an average of 6.6 years of schooling, but for the poorest it's just 0.4 years. Almost all countries affected by conflict still charge parents fees for primary education.

Discrimination can reduce some children's chances of schooling still further. Families send their sons to school but not their daughters. Governments invest in rural areas less than in towns. Schools teach in a language that children from minority ethnic groups don't speak.

Conflict destroys school buildings – in Afghanistan, 50% of classes are still held in tents or open spaces. When schools are a long walk from home, fear of landmines, attacks, rape and abduction keeps children out of education. Conflict means that teachers don't get paid, so have to take on other jobs to survive. Some are killed, others have to flee violence. The result is children who miss their chance of education.

Children themselves have to flee their homes because of conflict. In eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), most children displaced by violence have had no access to education since 1998.

"When I heard about the accelerated learning programme, I told my mother 'This is the opportunity of my life – I can't miss it!'"

Robert, 15, Liberia
(see picture below)



ANNA KARI

When Robert was ten he was captured by rebels in Liberia and forced to work for them. Now 15, he's catching up on years of missed schooling.



DAN ALDER/SAVE THE CHILDREN

A young student at school in San Jacinto de Cauca, Colombia.

SOLUTIONS

Save the Children has experience on the ground of tackling these barriers and getting the hardest-to-reach children into school. We've shown that there are effective solutions:

- **Starting early**. Promoting children's health, nutrition and care in the pre-school years makes a big difference – more children start school and stay in education, and their learning is improved.
- **Making schools safe**. A secure environment for education is essential. In Nepal, Save the Children introduced 'Schools as Zones of Peace', working with the local community and political groups to make schools safe from fear, violence and interference.
- **Supporting teachers**. Governments and international agencies need to work together to ensure teachers are properly trained, paid and motivated, so they can provide the education children need.
- **Catch-up schooling**. Accelerated learning programmes, as initiated by Save the Children with former child soldiers in Southern Sudan, help older children to catch up on education they've missed because of conflict.
- **Supporting families and children's health**. Programmes that provide small cash benefits to poor families can help them pay school fees – in Ethiopia 43% of households have been able to keep their children in school for longer. Providing a midday meal at school helps boost children's health and keeps them in education.
- **Overcoming divisions**. Save the Children's experience shows the value of getting children, parents and communities involved. We've successfully worked with local communities in various conflict situations to reduce divisions and tensions, and to boost access to education.
- **Building back better**. Short-term action is vital to keep children in education – in conflict zones in Côte d'Ivoire, Save the Children has set up temporary education centres and provided teacher training and free school kits for students and teachers. Helping communities to rebuild school systems, especially after a crisis, is an opportunity to build in more equality.

On average, in countries affected by conflict, one child in three is out of school.

INVESTING IN QUALITY

The quality of education is vital. If what children are learning is not seen as relevant and useful they are less likely to stay in education. Schools need adequate buildings and facilities – but above all, children need teachers who make them feel safe and encourage them to learn.

Teachers must be given training and support. Group work, discussion and critical thinking are key to real learning. But the skills required to facilitate this are new to many teachers. Save the Children's research in Nepal, Afghanistan, Angola and Southern Sudan – all countries affected by conflict – found that fewer than half of teachers (42%) had even been to secondary school, let alone received teacher training.

In countries affected by conflict, where children face barriers such as poverty, hunger or poor health and may have experienced violence, the need for child-friendly teaching is all the more important. In Côte d'Ivoire, Save the Children worked with teachers, students and education officials to develop a code of conduct for teachers: 1,800 schools have now adopted it. One child said, "Since Save the Children has been working with our school, teachers don't hit the students."

Save the Children has helped improve the quality of education for millions of children. Our experience points to a number of ways to improve the quality of education in conflict-affected countries:

- **Make teaching relevant**. The school curriculum must be relevant to the children's specific needs – for example, the needs of students who are catching up missed years of education, or children from different ethnic, religious or language groups. In western Uganda, a Save the Children accelerated learning programme got 800 young mothers aged from 12 to 22 back into school.
- **Increase use of local languages**. Education is often restricted to the official state language, for political reasons. But children learn much better if they start in their mother tongue, then learn a second language later. In Haiti, Save the Children has worked with the Ministry of Education to encourage the use of Creole in schools until children are fluent before introducing the official language, French.
- **Focus on learning**. Literacy and numeracy skills are vital. But in countries affected by conflict, children especially need to gain a broader set of skills, such as critical thinking, practical skills, emotional and social development, and values and attitudes that reflect human rights. Teachers must be trained and supported to deliver this.
- **Serve community needs**. When schools are clearly meeting local needs and priorities, parents and the community as a whole are much more willing to support them. Schools should provide services to children and young people from all parts of the community.

"Our school is beautiful and now I always want to come to school. I thank Save the Children for this."

Dah Ini, 12, Afghanistan

In Nepal, Afghanistan, Angola and Southern Sudan fewer than half of teachers had even been to secondary school, let alone had teacher training.

TERI PENGILLEY



Save the Children arranged for Apolonia from Uganda to go on a teacher training course. "It was the first time I'd ever been taught how to teach – not just how to deliver the programme, but also classroom management and lesson planning."

WHAT MAKES A GOOD-QUALITY EDUCATION?

Save the Children defines good-quality education as:

- ***relevant* to children's needs, both present and future**
- ***appropriate* to their age, experience, abilities and language**
- ***participatory* – involving children, families and communities in learning**
- ***flexible* – to meet changing social, environmental and technological conditions**
- ***inclusive* – seeing children's diversity as a resource to support learning, not as a problem**
- ***protective* – safeguarding children from exploitation, abuse, violence and conflict.**

AGENTS OF PEACE

Conflict puts children's education, their schools and their lives at risk. Save the Children wants to stop schools being sites of conflict and help them become agents of peace.

COUNTERING POLITICAL MANIPULATION

In countries affected by conflict, the school curriculum can become particularly politicised – for example, as governments try to indoctrinate young people through the education system. It can even be used to incite ethnic, religious or other violence. But it can also be used to promote peace. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, Save the Children's violence prevention project has been adopted by the Ministry of Education.

PROTECTING SCHOOLS FROM ATTACK

When armed political groups in Nepal targeted schools, children and teachers were afraid to attend. Save the Children's 'Schools as Zones of Peace' (SZOP) process reduced political interference and made schools safer places. One teacher said, "The process helped make our schools free from fear."

Violence is used to intimidate children and teachers, and to disrupt education. In the DRC and some other countries affected by conflict, armed groups attack schools to kidnap children to serve as child soldiers or militia 'wives'. In Afghanistan, Save the Children has helped to set up local child protection committees, resulting in a rise in school attendance, particularly of girls.

RESISTING THE MILITARISATION OF AID

The established dividing line between humanitarian aid and political agendas has become blurred as military forces increasingly undertake development activity as an instrument to win 'hearts and minds' in conflict-affected areas. There is evidence that schools built in this way are more likely to be attacked, putting children's and teachers' lives at risk.

MAKING EDUCATION PART OF THE PEACE PROCESS

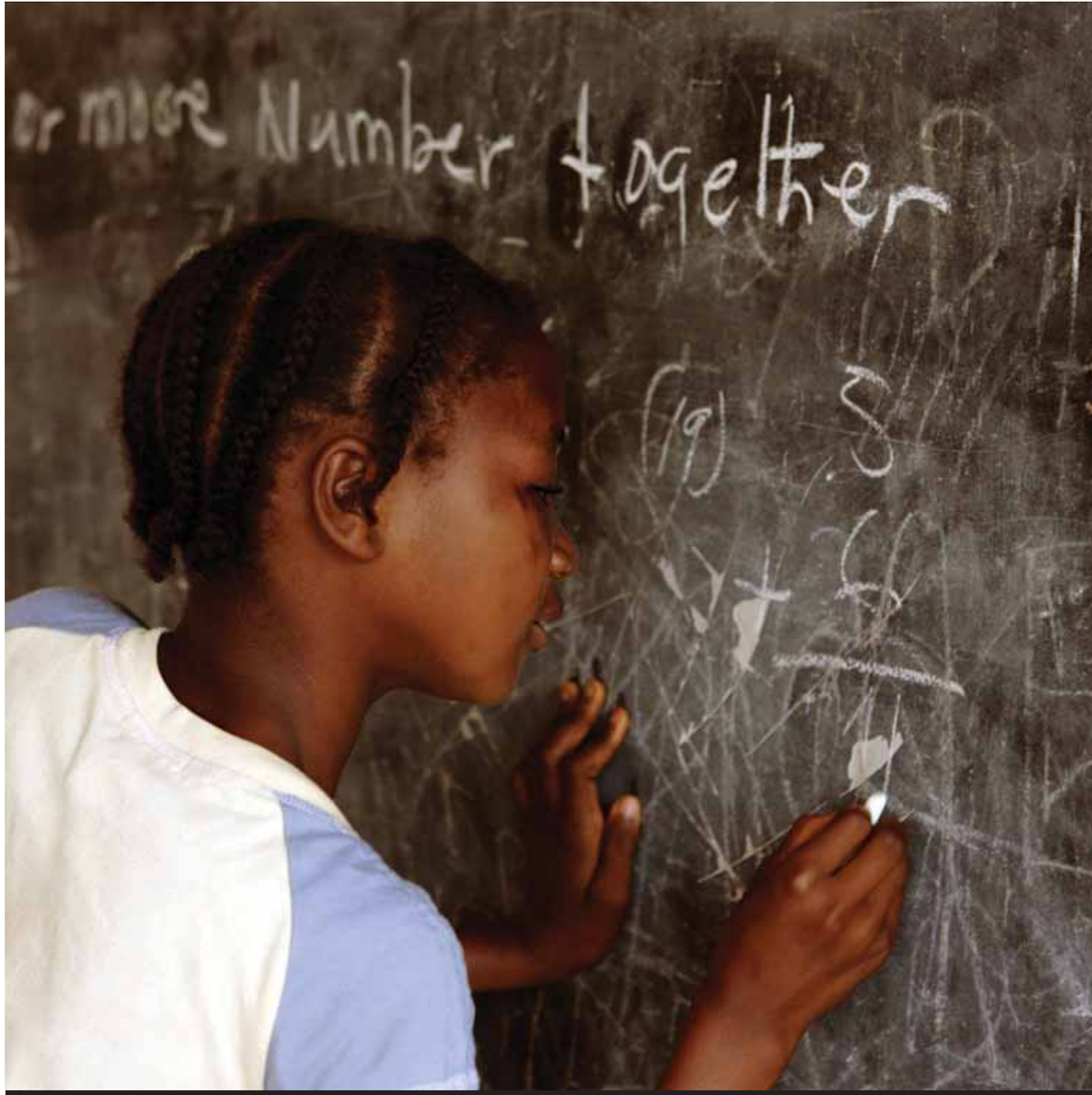
When countries emerge from conflict, there is often an important opportunity to improve education – which is central to building social cohesion and peace. Yet, out of 37 peace agreements signed between 1989 and 2005, 11 made no mention of education at all. Countries affected by conflict can face a downward spiral of declining access to education and continuing conflict – or a positive effort to strengthen education and build a more peaceful future. It is vital that all peace agreements include education, with a commitment to universal access, improved quality and political neutrality.

"During the war, the fighters burned our houses and killed my father and my uncle... I still think about them and I feel sad. But when I'm at school, I feel very happy about learning new things."

Mary, 12, Liberia
(see picture opposite)

In the DRC and other countries, armed groups attack schools to kidnap children to serve as child soldiers or militia 'wives'.

ANNA KARI



Mary, 12, is doing catch-up classes at Zeah Town school, Liberia.

TARGETS FOR ATTACK

"UN humanitarian actors on the ground and their partners have constant discussions with combatants to secure schools so that children can be protected, but this has been increasingly difficult with schools becoming targets for attack. This is a very disturbing phenomenon calling for international action to demarcate schools as safe zones and to protect the right to education during emergencies."

Radhika Coomaraswamy, UN Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict

EDUCATION IN EMERGENCIES

In every emergency, whether caused by conflict or natural disaster, children tell Save the Children that what they most want – alongside medicines, food and shelter – is to get back to school. It's vital for them to continue their education, but school is also a familiar environment that can offer comfort and stability amid the chaos of the crisis.

Damaged or destroyed schools need to be re-established as quickly as possible. In the meantime, setting up temporary schools or 'child-friendly spaces' where they can learn and play provides urgently needed protection for children.

"My biggest dream is to find my dad and be able to start school again."

Antonetta, 10, the Democratic Republic of Congo

GETTING BACK TO SCHOOL

Save the Children has found that enabling children to continue with their education as soon as possible is an essential part of the response to emergency situations. When Cyclone Nargis hit Myanmar (Burma) in 2008, we immediately set up 165 centres to care for more than 35,000 children. Forty-six of these centres are now permanent early learning centres run by volunteers trained by Save the Children. We also worked with local parent-teacher associations to repair or build more than 650 schools – getting nearly 145,000 children back to school.

Post-election conflict in Kenya in 2007 forced 300,000 people to flee their homes and seek refuge in temporary camps. Save the Children supplied furniture and textbooks and trained volunteer teachers so that the children could continue their education. In the longer term we also worked to encourage nearby schools to integrate children and teachers from different tribal groups, to help prevent further violence.

COORDINATION

The importance of education in emergencies has been increasingly recognised in the last five years. A recent initiative, jointly led by UNICEF and Save the Children, now ensures an 'education cluster' is set up to make sure education needs are included from day one of an emergency response. The cluster ensures different aid agencies coordinate their efforts, making for a more strategic and effective response.

Following the earthquake that struck Haiti in 2010, the country's Education Minister said the education system had "totally collapsed". The education cluster led by Save the Children and UNICEF moved swiftly into action, developing a strategy to address the most urgent needs and get children back into education.

ACTION

Emergency situations – both natural and conflict-related – force children out of school and threaten to undo the progress made in education in poor countries. Governments, donors and international organisations must take on board the importance of addressing emergency education needs. Yet currently only 2.3% of humanitarian aid goes to education. The Millennium Development Goals for education will not be met unless we make education an integral part of every emergency response and a high priority for funding.

After the Haiti earthquake, the Education Minister said the education system had "totally collapsed".

LOUISE DYRING NIELSON/SAVE THE CHILDREN DENMARK



Following the earthquake that struck Haiti in January 2010, classes at this school are being held outside until the school building is certified as safe.

YOUNG MINDS

Save the Children and colleagues in the Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies were pivotal in persuading the UN General Assembly to hold a debate in March 2009 highlighting the crucial role of education in emergency and post-crisis situations.

Opening the meeting, Miguel d'Escoto Brockmann, President of the Assembly, said, "Let us find ways to assure that we are feeding young minds as well as bodies, creating safe havens for learners as well as their larger communities."

Schools, and education, can play a vital role in preparing for emergencies and reducing the risks to children. With the increasing number of disasters, particularly those due to climate change, education has an important role in disaster risk reduction.

FINANCING SOLUTIONS

Lack of funding, infrastructure and personnel in countries affected by conflict leaves millions of children out of school. These countries receive only about 10% of the basic education aid they need, and their governments have nothing like the resources required to meet educational costs.

Countries affected by conflict depend on a number of sources for funding:

- **Taxation** – but revenue is low because the economies are weak and informal. Countries rich in natural resources don't always have the systems to collect taxes on foreign trade.
- **Remittances** – families rely on money sent by relatives living abroad, but this funding is unpredictable and insecure.
- **Households** – where government support is lacking, poor families and communities have to fund their children's education themselves.
- **Aid** – millions of children are in school because of foreign aid, but significantly more is needed for government institutions in the longer term and to ensure teachers are paid.

It's estimated that low-income countries need $16.2bn a year to meet their basic education needs. But in 2008, basic education aid reached only $4.6bn, leaving a gap of nearly $12bn. Countries affected by conflict are disproportionately hit. They account for 60% of the $16.2bn requirement, but in 2008 just one-tenth of what they needed was pledged ($1bn), and even less – only $113m – actually reached them. There is an urgent need for donors to live up to their commitments and fund education, especially in countries affected by conflict.

As countries emerge from conflict, levels of aid may dip just when they need it most. This can be particularly tough on education needs – the onset of conflict often curtails development aid (including for education), and during the conflict emergency humanitarian aid usually provides little support for education (just 1.8% of humanitarian aid on average in 2007–09). When development aid picks up again after the conflict, it can take years to get the education system running again.

A viable international aid system for education must be put in place. In an encouraging move, new reforms of the Fast Track Initiative – a global partnership between donor and developing countries to ensure accelerated progress towards the Millennium Development Goal of universal primary education by 2015 – include addressing the needs of conflict-affected countries and fragile states.

For countries in conflict, maintaining education funding is critical to building future peace and stability.

"The happiest day of my life was when I received my school equipment. I wanted everybody to see me on my way home, and to know that I go to school."

Mungwakonkwa, 10, Democratic Republic of Congo (see picture opposite)

In 2008 $1 billion education aid was pledged to countries affected by conflict – just one-tenth of what was needed. Only $113m actually reached them.

AMADOU MBODJ/SAVE THE CHILDREN



Mungwakonkwa, 10, from the Democratic Republic of Congo, is in the first year of an accelerated learning programme for children who have missed out on education. He attends school for free as part of Save the Children's Rewrite the Future project.

A NEW FRAMEWORK FOR EDUCATION AID

Save the Children believes that a new framework for global education aid must now evolve from the Fast Track Initiative, based on the following principles:

- **democratic governance**
- **independence**
- **education for all, not just primary education**
- **ambitious and adequate funding**
- **inclusion of countries most in need – countries affected by conflict.**

WHAT SAVE THE CHILDREN IS CALLING FOR

It is now only five years until the target date for achieving the Millennium Development Goals, including Goal 2 – to ensure that children everywhere, girls and boys, are able to complete a full course of primary schooling. There have been some impressive achievements in reducing the global number of out-of-school children – but not enough is being done to overcome the particular barriers facing children in countries affected by conflict.

All children have the right to a good-quality education – regardless of the situation they are born into. They also have the right to grow up free from fear. Save the Children is calling on all those with responsibility or influence to make a concerted effort to get children in conflict-affected countries into school by 2015. We also want them to provide the measures and resources to help children grow up in a safe and stable environment.

For many children, the world is becoming a more dangerous rather than a safer place, and the global financial crisis will force many into even deeper poverty. Education is one of the greatest drivers of peace and economic development. It is an investment the world cannot afford to miss.

Save the Children is therefore calling on governments, donors and other NGOs to…

… increase educational opportunity for the poorest and most disadvantaged children in countries affected by conflict

… focus on teachers and teaching quality

… increase the relevance and purposefulness of education

… protect education from attack

… address the increasing threat of emergencies

… increase the financing of education in countries affected by conflict.

For a full set of recommendations, please refer to the full report The Future is Now *available at www.savethechildren.net/rewritethefuture*

WHAT'S BEEN ACHIEVED – SO FAR

- **Between 2006 and 2009, Save the Children's Rewrite the Future campaign saw 1.4 million more children into school in countries affected by conflict – that's the equivalent of two new schools opening a day**
- **Some governments – for example, the Netherlands, the UK and Spain – have made significant steps in increasing the money for education in countries affected by conflict.**
- **The campaign has also helped more than 10 million children get a better quality education.**
- **In 2009 luxury jeweller Bulgari raised more than €6 million for Save the Children's Rewrite the Future campaign.**
- **Our programmes include accelerated learning programmes with former child soldiers in Southern Sudan to help them catch up on education they've missed because of conflict; setting up temporary education centres in Côte d'Ivoire; and setting up local child protection committees in Afghanistan that have resulted in a rise in school attendance, particularly of girls.**

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Registered charity no. 1076822
This publication is based on the report *The Future is Now: Education for children in countries affected by conflict*, Save the Children, 2010.
Some names of children have been changed to protect identities.

Save the Children is the world's leading children's rights organisation, with members in 29 countries and operational programmes in more than 100. We fight for children's rights and deliver lasting improvements to children's lives worldwide.

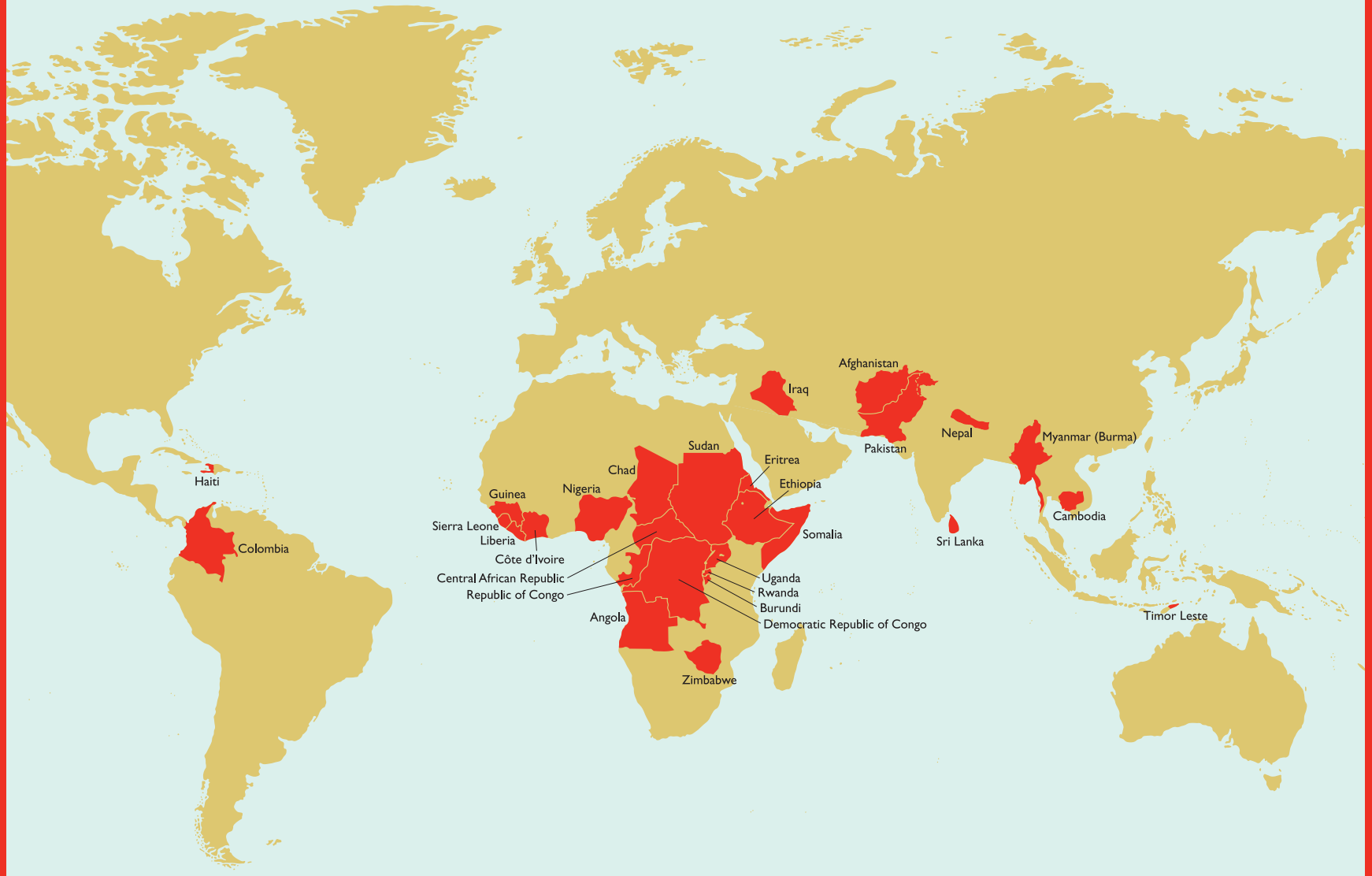
www.savethechildren.net/rewritethefuture

AMADOU MBODJ/SAVE THE CHILDREN



Children play outside their newly built school in Masisi, the Democratic Republic of Congo.

CONFLICT-AFFECTED FRAGILE STATES



Conflict-affected fragile states

For a definition of 'conflict-affected fragile states' and sources for the table on children out of school, please see the full report, *The Future is Now: Education for children in countries affected by conflict* (2010) available at www.savethechildren.net/rewritethefuture

Country	Number of primary-aged children out of school – 2010
Afghanistan	1,816,000
Angola	824,000
Burundi	244,000
Cambodia	220,000
Central African Republic	310,000
Chad	1,186,000
Colombia	413,000
Côte d'Ivoire	1,164,000
Democratic Republic of Congo	5,203,000
Eritrea	349,000
Ethiopia	3,721,000
Guinea	362,000
Haiti	706,000
Iraq	508,000
Liberia	447,000
Myanmar (Burma)	16,000
Nepal	714,000
Nigeria	8,221,000
Pakistan	6,821,000
Republic of Congo	244,000
Rwanda	88,000
Sierra Leone	285,000
Somalia	1,280,000
Sri Lanka	51,000
Sudan	2,798,000
Timor Leste	71,000
Uganda	341,000
Zimbabwe	281,000
TOTAL	**38,684,000**