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## ***BEYOND 2015 - SETTING UP A RAPID RESPONSE MECHANISM FOR HIGHER EDUCATION IN EMERGENCIES***

### **WHY A RAPID RESPONSE MECHANISM FOR HIGHER EDUCATION IN EMERGENCIES ?**

For two main reasons:

- Higher Education is a neglected area of international cooperation and humanitarian aid – i.e. :
  - The current Sustainable Development Goals Agenda for the coming 15 years that will be approved in September seems to have largely overlooked higher education;
  - Humanitarian aid is mainly focused on meeting basic needs and mostly focused on primary education.
  
- Humanitarian Emergencies arise at any time anywhere – natural disasters and/or man-made conflicts affect vulnerable populations who are unable to withstand the negative consequences by themselves. A total number of 78.9 million people (refugees and forcibly displaced) are estimated to be in need of humanitarian aid in 37 countries and the average duration of civil wars is 8 to 10 years and of displacement is now 17 years.

The failure to prioritize higher education in humanitarian response renders entire generations uneducated, developmentally disadvantaged, and unprepared to contribute to their society's recovery.

## WHAT DOES IT STAND FOR?

It is proposed to set up a ***Rapid Response Mechanism for Higher Education in Emergencies*** in order to support Higher Education among refugees and displaced people.

This Rapid Response Mechanism aims at creating a fast track response for the specific target-group of Higher Education students and scholars who belong to communities and/or countries in need of humanitarian assistance.

The vision behind is underpinned by three main principles:

- Avoid creating a "lost generation" with so many young people cut off from their studies and the promise of their future;
- Prioritize higher education in humanitarian response since its failure renders entire generations uneducated, developmentally disadvantaged, and unprepared to contribute to their society's recovery.
- Save lives and give a sense of hope for the future in the context of emergencies because it is higher education that will produce the leaders and skilled workforce that countries need to move forward, in particular after crisis and conflict

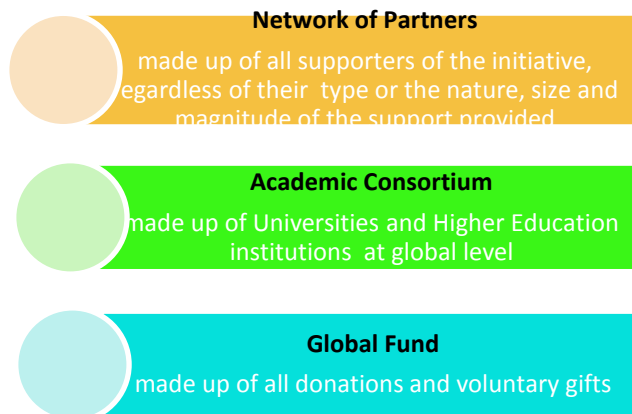
The central objective of this Rapid Response Mechanism is therefore threefold:

- Ensure that students are able to pursue their higher education and that they are offered an academic opportunity of graduating over wartime or during the conflict;
- Provide scholars and researchers at risk the possibility of continuing their jobs and improving their qualifications;
- Protect higher education communities at risk and ensure that they can cooperate with the global education community and create safe havens for scholars and academics affected by emergencies and where possible to protect valuable resources from collateral damage.

## HOW DOES IT WORK?

The core component of this Rapid Response is a **Global Fund for Higher Education in Emergencies**. As a 21st century financial institution, the Global Fund will support effective emergency programs to provide Higher Education to refugees and displaced people and ensure that money goes to supporting the students and scholars in need. The role of the Global Fund is to provide the financial support needed to make it happen.

The two other components of the Rapid Response Mechanism are: **an Academic Consortium** and a **Network of Partners**.



For an initial period of two years it is proposed to implement this Rapid Response Mechanism through the existing **Global Platform for Syrian Students**, a Portuguese registered NGO that has also been certified as equivalent to a US public charity (its ED certificate is available with NGOsource) and run a pilot focused on the Syrian crisis.

The **Global Platform 4 Syrian Students** is a non-profit multi-stakeholders organization, founded in November 2013, by Jorge Sampaio, former President of Portugal, with the support of a core group of institutional partners, namely the Council of Europe, the League of Arab States, the International Organization of Migrations (IOM) and the Institute of International Education (IIE). This initiative is unique in that it effectively brings together the efforts and the contributions of the various stakeholders willing to back an emergency mechanism to support Syrian students: governments, international and regional organizations, donor agencies, universities, foundations, NGOs of different cultural backgrounds, the private sector and individuals. Through a Network of Partners, an Academic Consortium, and a Special Emergency Fund, the Global Platform 4 for Syrian Students works in a collaborative way.

## PROPOSED TIMELINE

**26-29 September 2015** - The concept of the Rapid Response Mechanism for Higher Education in Emergencies is featured at the Clinton Global Initiative (CGI) 2015 Annual Meeting in New York and the Global Fund for Higher Education in Emergencies is launched

**26-29 September 2015** – Launching the Global Fund for Higher Education in Emergencies at CGI and announcement of commitments by a core group of Donors

**30 September 2015** – Further discussions on the concept of the Rapid Response Mechanism for Higher Education in Emergencies are held at a UN High Level Event on the “Right to Education in Emergencies” in New York

**October 2015**– Implementation of a strong advocacy plan for the Global Fund for higher Education in Emergencies in order to make it known to the global education community, enlarge the core group of partners and enhance sustainable sources of funding.

**November 2015** – A complementary consultative Task Force to the Board of Directors of the Global Platform for Syrian Students will be set up in order to follow up the preparations of the implementation of the future Rapid Response Mechanism for Higher Education in Emergencies and advise on the pilot focused on the Syrian case

**December 2016** – First meeting of the newly set up Advisory Board of the Global Platform for Syrian Students to be held (host country to be identified)

**January 2016** – announcement of the Action Plan of the Global Fund for Higher Education for 2016

**February 2016** – Launch of a global “one dollar campaign” among the education community around the world.