

Reaction to the EU Global Europe Proposal: Investing in Children to achieve EU's long term objectives

A new instrument - an opportunity to invest in what matters

The proposed Global Europe Instrument (GEI), worth nearly **€200 billion**, is the EU's most ambitious reform of external action funding to date. It promises greater flexibility, faster crisis response and simplification. These investments in international partnerships are an **essential ingredient for global security and prosperity**, particularly in light of growing fragility and rising needs.

As child focused organisations, we welcome the increased financial commitment to the EU's external action, in particular the European Commission's reaffirmed commitment to humanitarian aid with a dedicated envelope of **€25 billion**. At the same time, we recommend that:

1. *Children's specific needs must be explicitly addressed within the GEI*
2. *Humanitarian action must remain needs-based, neutral, and principled*
3. *The EU's external action must maintain a human rights based approach, while also eradicating poverty and strengthening human development*
4. *The EU must ensure that its processes remain equitable and transparent*

Investing in children - a long term strategic investment

If the GEI sidelines children, the EU misses its chance to show its leadership in building a safer, more equitable world:

- Children are the **largest group affected** by poverty, conflict, and climate change.
- Children are at the **center of humanitarian crises**: One in four children globally lives in or near a conflict, and half of the displaced people are children, often denied education and protection.

Children are not only beneficiaries of aid; they are **rights holders and the future leaders** of their communities and countries. Every euro spent—or not spent—shapes not only their own present and future, but also that of their communities and countries.

The achievement of the **EU's long term objectives** requires investment in children, who will be the educated and skilled society of tomorrow, contributing to the empowerment of future generations and the prosperity of their communities. This has a lasting impact on all investments in partner countries.

Our Recommendations

1- Children's specific needs must be explicitly addressed within the GEI

- Build explicit linkages to the **EU Strategy on the Rights of the Child** and the **UN Convention on the Rights of the Child** to showcase the EU's commitment to advancing children's rights outside the EU.
- Include specific allocations for **education, child protection, health, and nutrition**.

2- Humanitarian action must remain needs-based, neutral, and principled

- Ringfence the **€25 billion humanitarian budget line** as a minimum funding commitment within Global Europe, by including it in the text of the regulation.
- Guarantee principled and transparent allocation based on **needs**, ensuring impartiality, neutrality, and independence.
- Dedicate a minimum **10% of humanitarian aid to Education in Emergencies**, protecting children's right to learn and thrive even in crisis.

3- The EU's external action must maintain a human rights based approach, while also prioritising eradicating poverty and strengthening human development

- Reinststate the **20% ODA target for human development**, with a clear child rights dimension.
- Remove the possibility to suspend development funding or programme implementation based on **migration control readmission cooperation**, or return-related conditions.
- Meet the longstanding target of 0.2% GNI to ODA to **Least Developed Countries (LDCs)**

4 - The EU must ensure that its processes remain equitable and transparent

- Ensure that greater flexibility in EU financing instruments and processes is not attained at the expense of **transparency and predictability** in decision-making and earmarking.
- Champion the added value of **CSOs** and partners in reinforcing the legitimacy, impact and reach of the EU's external action, especially in Fragile and Conflict Affected Settings (FCAS).
- Establish a **child marker**, similar to the gender marker, to track all EU external action spending on children and to show its impact on one of the most vulnerable population groups.

Conclusion: A Global Europe for Future Generations

The Global Europe Instrument can be a transformative tool for EU external action—but only if it reflects the reality that **children are at the center of today's crises and tomorrow's opportunities**.

By prioritising children, safeguarding principled humanitarian aid, and embedding accountability for child rights, the EU can show that its external action is not only strategic, but **deeply values-driven**. A **Global Europe instrument that invests in children's rights** is a political choice for a more just, stable, and resilient world.