**Press Release**

Vicques, 2. July 2025

**NGOs Raise Alarm as Swiss Budget Cuts Threaten Education Worldwide**

***RECI Education Forum: Swiss funding cuts jeopardise the education of 1.6 million children globally***

On 23 June 2025, the [**RECI Education Forum 2025**](https://reci-education.ch/en/event/reci-education-forum-2025/) was held in Bern, organised by the Swiss Network for Education and International Cooperation (RECI), the association of non-profit organisations, academic institutions and foundations committed to education in international cooperation.

Under the banner **‘Education in Turbulent Times – Building Resilience in an Age of Polycrisis’**,more than 180 experts from over 40 countries came together to explore the challenges and opportunities facing education today, amid a world shaped by intersecting crises.

Following the Federal Council's decision earlier this year to cut funding for basic education, the Education Forum is directing an urgent appeal to the Swiss government.

**"Education is essential – not only as a fundamental human right and an end in itself, but also as a key driver for achieving all Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and upholding human rights."**

The forum focussed on how education systems around the world are under immense pressure from interlinked crises such as armed conflicts, climate change, pandemics, economic insecurity, displacement and demographic changes. According to [UNESCO](https://world-education-blog.org/2025/06/26/global-aid-to-education-projected-to-fall-even-further/), more than 272 million children and adolescents are deprived of access to quality education as a result of these crises.

**"According to UNESCO, around 272 million children and young people are currently out of school. This already staggering figure has grown by 50 million in just two years – and the introduction of global austerity measures threatens to drive it even higher."**

The issue takes on particular urgency due to the global cuts in education funding: education itself is facing an increasingly severe crisis as a result of these austerity measures. And Switzerland shares the responsibility for this!

Despite a clear mandate from Parliament in December 2024 (item 24.049) to prioritise education in the 2025-2028 International Cooperation Strategy, the Federal Council decided in January 2025 to cut funding for basic education. This was done under the pretext stating that other countries would then bridge this gap. A few days ago, [UNESCO](https://world-education-blog.org/2025/06/26/global-aid-to-education-projected-to-fall-even-further/) revealed just how misguided this claim was: the forecast indicates that global funding for education will fall by a quarter by 2027 - twice as much as had been feared until recently.

**"By cutting funding for basic education, the Federal Council is effectively accepting that over** [**1.6 million children**](https://www.newsd.admin.ch/newsd/message/attachments/87824.pdf) **in the Global South will lose access to primary schooling – children who, over the past four years, were able to attend school thanks to Swiss support. In doing so, Switzerland is undermining the very foundations of long-term social stability and economic development in those countries."**

The RECI Education Forum served both as a valuable exchange of expertise and a urgent appeal to the Swiss government to stop viewing education, and especially basic education, as a potential saving measure, and instead recognise it as the key to achieving the global Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Alongside this, [a petition against these cuts](https://act.campax.org/efforts/total-de-fr-en) has been circulating for several weeks now.

**"If you believe that every child deserves the chance to go to school, sign the appeal: the Federal Council must be urged to reverse its decision to cut funding for basic education*."***

This week, the [4th International Conference on Financing for Development (FFD4)](https://financing.desa.un.org/ffd4) is being held in Seville, where international policymakers are discussing long-term funding strategies for development and education. The conference presents a key opportunity for Switzerland to take a clear stand against the cuts and to reaffirm its international responsibility and long-standing humanitarian tradition.

As a member of the Global Campaign for Education (GCE), the RECI provides the civil society 's position and calls on Swiss officials to significantly strengthen education as the foundation for humanitarian, social and economic development worldwide.

***"*Switzerland must lead by example, and the FFD4 conference in Seville offers a clear opportunity to do so. We urge the Swiss delegation to uphold the country’s humanitarian tradition and to champion stronger support for education on the global stage.*"***

**Education is not a luxury; it is the cornerstone of peace, justice, and sustainable development.** RECI calls on the media and the public to engage in this vital debate and to build political pressure for adequate long-term that recognises education as a key driver of sustainable development, both socially and ecologically.