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## **UNHCR AND ENEL: 20 THOUSAND SYRIAN CHILDREN IN SCHOOL, THANKS TO THE "EDUCATE A CHILD" PROJECT**

*Access to primary education guaranteed for refugee and displaced children in Syria. Since 2011, 2.4 million children from that country have been forced to leave school.*

**Rome, December 10<sup>th</sup>, 2015** – The UNHCR and Enel have joined forces to provide primary education to Syrian children. Enel was the first Italian company to respond to the appeal launched by the Secretary General of the United Nations, Ban Ki Moon, as part of the UN Global Compact, the largest network of businesses in the world engaged in meeting the major challenges of sustainability and the protection of human rights. Following the call to support the humanitarian efforts of the High Commissioner for Refugees in Syria, the Group has decided to support the UNCHR's "Educate a Child" project, which guarantees access to primary education for refugee and displaced children in the country between 2015 and 2018.

Enel, working through its non-profit organisation Enel Cuore, will help ensure access to education for more than 20,000 children in 2016.

According to the latest figures from the Syrian Ministry of Education, the war has forced about 2.4 million children out of school since 2011, with a 38% decrease in enrolment. The impossibility of continuing their studies is one of the most significant factors driving Syrians to seek asylum in other countries.

In the 2012-2013 school year, 9,164 refugee children in Syria who had left the school system were given the opportunity to attend school thanks to "Educate a Child". The UNHCR's objective is to continue to guarantee access to education for these 9,164 children and expand the programme to an additional 200,000 displaced children in Syria in between 2015 and 2018.

The project seeks to fill the existing gaps in educational services, expanding capacity in the midst of this dramatic emergency, providing the necessary school materials, hiring teaching staff, improving quality standards and involving local communities.

The programme is divided into five main areas of action:

- Direct economic support for the neediest families to cover their children's annual school costs;
- Counselling and educational guidance services;
- Courses to recover lost school years;
- Teacher training;
- Restoration of school buildings.

Ensuring the right to education means not only guaranteeing a future for Syrian children, but also supporting families in guiding the education of their children. This is a message that Enel has selected on the basis of its principles of supporting communities, in particular their most vulnerable members like children, to whom the company seeks to provide an immediate response.



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The theme of education is in line with one of Enel's key projects in Italy. Through Enel Cuore's "Fare Scuola" project, which was recently launched by Enel Chairman Patrizia Grieco, in the next three years a series of educational and structural initiatives will be carried out at 60 pre-schools and primary schools across Italy. Added to this are Enel's global commitments as part of the UN Sustainable Development Goals, which were highlighted by CEO Francesco Starace at the Global Compact last September.

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