

A young girl with short dark hair, wearing a blue school uniform with a light-colored collar, is sitting at a wooden desk in a classroom. She is smiling and looking towards the camera while holding a black pen over an open notebook. In the background, other students are seated at their desks, and a chalkboard with colorful decorations is visible.

EDUCATION CANNOT WAIT

a fund for education
in emergencies

INVESTING IN HUMANITY

Understanding the Fund's Added Value

A NEW WAY OF WORKING: HUMANITARIAN SPEED WITH DEVELOPMENT DEPTH

Education Cannot Wait (ECW) is a key outcome of the World Humanitarian Summit (WHS), for the first time placing education as a central and non-negotiable priority in emergencies and protracted crises. Deprived of their childhood, education and preparation for a productive adulthood, an estimated 75 million children and youth are currently denied the opportunity to transform their suffering and resilience into productive lives. Yet, education in emergencies falls between the cracks in humanitarian aid, leaving education dramatically underfunded, while development aid alone cannot cope with emergencies and protracted crisis. This has to change: investing in humanity means investing in human capital.

The World Humanitarian Summit (WHS), launched under the banner of the **Agenda for Humanity**, marked a shift in global, strategic, political and financial approaches to humanitarian crises. Despite increased spending, strengthened response capacities and technologies and greater access to political actors, humanitarian crises were increasing, protracted crises saw no end and recovery/development was slow to take hold.

The WHS committed to a new way of working in emergencies and protracted crises:

- Cooperation and collaboration instead of competition;
- Coordination to end fragmentation;
- Adopting holistic approaches, joint programming and multi-year frameworks;
- Closing the gap between the humanitarian, development, peace & security pillars;
- Placing women and girls at the forefront;
- Leaving no one behind;
- Localization and national ownership; and
- Financing for humanity.

In line with the WHS transformative Agenda for Humanity, ECW's added value and the meaning of **Humanitarian Speed with Development Depth** can be summarized under the following 3 headings:

1. Less Bureaucracy - More Accountability
2. Bridges Relief to Development during Emergencies and Crises
3. Translates WHS Vision into Action

1. LESS BUREAUCRACY – MORE ACCOUNTABILITY

HERE IS HOW:

- ECW is **uniquely lean and agile**. Its secretariat is composed of twelve staff with the combined capacity of crisis, recovery and development expertise in emergencies. The team of senior staff brings together long experience from across the multilateral system, such as the UN humanitarian, development, gender, human rights and peace & security arms, the World Bank, NGOs and bilateral donor partners. The combined expertise in crisis and development, the familiarity with the pillars of the emergency coordination architecture, the knowledge of UN rules and regulations, the lean organizational set-up and business processes and the immediate connection to the field, allow ECW to implement the UN reform agenda in the spirit of “Less bureaucracy - More accountability.”
- ECW is **field-driven** and maintains a close and direct connection with both the field and the multilateral coordination architecture in crisis and post-crisis situations. In order to translate global commitments at the field-level, the ECW staff must regularly undertake rapid assessment missions to: (a) familiarize in-country host-governments, UN leadership, implementing and bilateral partners with ECW’s core-objectives; (b) facilitate collaboration and coordination and the adherence to a holistic approach to education; and (c) offer technical support in programme development, alongside strengthened monitoring of results.
- **ECW’s design is geared towards value for money.**
A lean and cost-effective structure, it focuses on implementation and impact. All functions of the ECW secretariat are inextricably linked under a strong due diligence framework geared towards results. Given its small size and agility, performance is measured on an individual basis at frequent intervals. Result-based management mechanisms are linked to individual performance reports, which are directly connected to ECW’s objectives and targets. Similarly, ECW’s results-and-resource frameworks (RRF) are based on strong data analysis, which is reflected in indicators designed to report on outcomes. The global RRF is directly connected to the national RRFs. Performance and results are monitored through external audits and transparently shared with stakeholders through annual reports.

- ECW is **crisis-sensitive** and focuses on crisis-affected children and youth: refugees, internally displaced, crisis-affected and host communities. At the same time, ECW ensures that linkages are made to national planning efforts and national ownership, taps into local resilience and is driven by capacity development towards sustainable solutions. In pursuing a crisis-sensitive development response, ECW pays particular attention to the challenges faced by communities affected or displaced by sudden onsets of natural disasters, epidemics and systematic and widespread violations of international law in armed conflict, hence emphasis on protection and 'do-no-harm-principles.' In the same vein, ECW is mindful of the challenges faced by national systems and institutions, which are either unable or unwilling to offer protection and ensure the basic right to education.
- ECW has **flexible funding modalities**. This allows ECW to invest in a wide range of partners, including governments, UN agencies, international and local NGOs that have undergone HACT assessment. This enables ECW to fund partners at grassroots level. As a result, ECW plays an instrumental and catalytic role in supporting the WHS localization agenda – **the Grand Bargain** – geared towards resilience, empowerment and inclusive national ownership.



2.

BRIDGES RELIEF TO DEVELOPMENT DURING EMERGENCIES AND PROTRACTED CRISES

HERE IS HOW:

- ECW provides **rapid First Response at the onset or escalation of crisis** (armed conflict, natural disasters and epidemics) and **speedily deploys Multi-Year frameworks in protracted crises**. As such, ECW ensures that SDG4 and the right to quality education is delivered without delay to crisis-affected populations in a practical and measurable manner at the local level during the crisis. In parallel, ECW works with partners in driving implementation of SDG4 at the institutional and system-level through the recovery phase until development takes hold.
- Rapid First Responses adopt a UN Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF)-like **response for the most immediate and urgent needs as an emergency or crisis suddenly occurs or escalates**. The First Response is invoked immediately at the outbreak of a crisis, aligned with the Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) and funds are delivered within three to four weeks of its onset. For protracted crisis, Multi-Year frameworks are rolled out within eight weeks. Designed to link with national education sector plans and the UNDAF, multi-year frameworks are **tailored to address immediate and urgent needs through the HRP alongside recovery and development needs** in a mutually reinforcing fashion to build back better and ensure sustainability.
- Bridging the relief-development gap also requires bringing humanitarian and development actors together around the same table to jointly conduct assessment, planning and implementation. It warrants a shared set of principles, a common coordination structure, the consolidation of expertise, and a clear division of labour at the outset to ensure accountability. In this vein, ECW actively supports the established humanitarian coordination structures that ensure complementarity and mitigate overlap. In the same spirit, ECW also works closely with the established development coordination structures, led by the host-government. As such **ECW promotes a whole-of-system approach of cooperation, coordination and complementarity**.
- ECW recognizes the comparative advantages of both humanitarian and development actors. By situating ECW within the broader multilateral coordination structures, such as the cluster system in the humanitarian response for the HRP and the government-led development response for the UNDAF, which normally includes all national and international development actors. ECW taps into in-country expertise and experience during a humanitarian response and protracted crisis. Thanks to its agile structure, field-experienced staff and connection to the on-the-ground humanitarian and development partners, ECW is able to **move and work across the humanitarian/development system to achieve both humanitarian speed and development depth**.

- ECW leverages the multilateral coordination architecture through Multi-Year frameworks for joint programming. As the WHS concluded, traditional humanitarian responses based on a one year-cycle of funding have failed to address the root-cause, bridge relief to development and create predictable and sustainable financing for protracted crises. Conversely, traditional development approaches have proven ineffective amidst crisis situations marked by armed conflict, forced displacement and other widespread violations of international law, as well as weakened state- and other institutions. ECW's crisis-sensitive multi-year frameworks enable an interdependent approach, creating a vehicle for pooled funding, and ensuring that **the immediate humanitarian crisis-response is designed as a stepping stone for recovery towards development.**



3.

TRANSLATES WHS VISION INTO ACTION

Education Cannot Wait (ECW) was established against the backdrop of the World Humanitarian Summit (WHS). The goal for ECW is to cater to an estimated 75 million children and youth living on the margins of crisis-affected societies. ECW adopts an approach that is aligned with the **WHS responsibilities** for change and a new way of doing business.

HERE IS HOW:

WHS GOAL #1

POLITICAL LEADERSHIP TO PREVENT AND END CONFLICT:

By mobilizing collective commitment and unified determination through the ECW High-Level Steering Group at ministerial and heads of agency level, the multilateral coordination leadership in-country, UN Member States and the UN secretariat, regional organizations and national partners, ECW works systematically and strategically to draw attention to education for what it is: a very real investment in human capital. Quality education is central to achieving all the other SDGs; good governance, the rule of law, conflict prevention, peace & security and economic development. Indeed, neglecting education has a direct bearing on the most compelling challenges of our time, and thus requires leadership.

WHS GOAL #2

UPHOLD & RESPECT THE RULES OF WAR:

Education is a basic human right. Education and educational institutions are protected under a comprehensive international legal framework. The deprivation of this right is often connected to systematic violations of international law in crisis environments. ECW takes a rights-based approach to education and advocates for the right to education, as well as the protection of students, teachers and schools. ECW investments also recognize that

protection cuts across access to education, such as the legal and physical security of children and adolescents. ECW pays particular attention to gender and the protection of girls, whose loss of education render them particularly vulnerable to domestic and gender-based violence, and further violations and marginalization. This makes it virtually impossible to successfully recover and rebuild a country from crisis, let alone reverse the damage made on a generation of girls and young women.

WHS GOAL #3

LEAVE NO ONE BEHIND:

According to the UN Secretary-General's report, **One Humanity: Shared Responsibility**, about half of the world's refugee children are missing out on primary education, and three quarters have no access to secondary education. Considering that the average time for displacement amounts to 17-20 years, young refugees fleeing brutal conflict can easily lose hope in the absence of productive opportunities to shape their future, and risk being exploited. Furthermore, gender disparities are found to be particularly high in refugee settings, and these inequalities tend to widen with every additional year of conflict. ECW, therefore, prioritizes countries in which the Global Compact for Refugees and the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework are being piloted by UNHCR.

WHS GOAL #4

WORK DIFFERENTLY TO END NEED:

through Multi-Year frameworks, ECW finances and supports joint programming that brings together humanitarian and development actors, empowers national governments, civil society and communities, and transcends the humanitarian-development divide. By applying development principles of the grand bargain and national ownership, capacity-development, multi-year investments and sustainability during a crisis with greater speed and humanitarian principles of humanity, impartiality and independence, ECW serves as a catalyst for humanitarian and development actors to strengthen cooperation and coordination, and jointly address the full spectrum of needs at grass-roots level and at national levels.

WHS GOAL #5

INVEST IN HUMANITY:

ECW pursues the recommendations of the **High-Level Panel on Humanitarian Financing**. To this end, ECW's Multi-Year frameworks provide a vehicle for pooled funding against inclusive and clearly designed objectives, outcomes and robust results-frameworks, which leverage the multilateral humanitarian/recovery coordination architecture. ECW also works with emerging and non-traditional donors, and has dedicated capacity to engage specifically with these stakeholders. Private sector organisations and foundations are engaged through strategic partnerships with the Global Business Coalition (GBC-Ed) and Dubai Cares, and are expanding to include philanthropists and other forms of innovative financing.

ECW brings education to the heart of the multilateral humanitarian/recovery system and mobilizes action towards the WHS core responsibilities, which in turn impact humanitarian reform, as envisaged by WHS. Investing in ECW is thus a game-changer for the larger multilateral system operating in emergencies and protracted crisis. With this mandate, ECW and its partners work with humanitarian speed and development depth to deliver transformative changes through education for the estimated 75 million children and youth in emergencies and crises.



**INVESTING IN THEIR EDUCATION MEANS
INVESTING IN OUR SHARED HUMANITY.**

ECW RESULTS

THE FUND IN ACTION

PROMOTING GIRLS' EDUCATION

Girls are more likely to be out of school than boys in countries affected by conflict and natural disasters. Letting girls drop out and gender disparities widen in times of crisis comes at a heavy price for their wider community, fostering a vicious circle of vulnerability. This is why ECW calls for a stronger investment in gender-focused education programmes in emergencies and protracted crises. To address the root causes of gender disparities in the targeted communities, ECW and its partners focus on training both male and female teachers, ensuring safer access to school and learning environment for girls and a stronger involvement of parents and communities in gender equality advocacy efforts, notably through mothers' associations. ECW aims to reach 1.4 million girls through its ongoing programmes in the Central African Republic, Chad, Madagascar, Somalia, Syria, Ukraine and Yemen – which represents 44 percent of the total number of children targeted by ECW globally, more than the proportion of schoolgirls in the targeted countries. ECW's ongoing programmes will also support 11,677 thousand female teachers and staff.

IMPROVING PROTECTION AND LEARNING IN SYRIA

The priority in times of crisis is to make sure that children go to school and stay in class. But access to education is not the only challenge; quality is another key issue addressed by ECW and its partners, following small-scale studies suggesting learning outcomes have significantly deteriorated. In addition, nearly 3 million children suffer from psychosocial distress from witnessing the horrors of war. The ECW programme in Syria, managed by the Whole of Syria (WoS) co-focal points UNICEF and Save The Children in coordination with civil society organisations, aims at strengthening the education system inside Syria towards sustainable delivery of equitable, quality and protective education services for all children. The programme is driven by an integrated approach to learning geared towards human rights, employability, empowerment and active citizenship. Teachers will be provided with pedagogical training and support, psychological first aid training and child safeguarding training to better respond to both the learning and emotional needs of their students. New measurement tools will be piloted to assess literacy and numeracy progress and adjust the content of the trainings delivered to teachers and the pedagogical support offered to children.

BUILDING RESILIENCE IN THE CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

In the Central African Republic, ECW is joining forces with Intersos, the Norwegian Refugee Council, Plan International and UNICEF to ensure safe access to quality education to over 66,000 children and youth affected by the conflict. From pre-school, up to adolescence, students will be offered the chance to learn and grow in a protective environment and acquire solid educational foundations to fulfil their real potential and live their dreams. The programme also aims at promoting peace and resilience by enrolling children in drama and dance classes, recreational activities and sports competitions and involving their parents. In the Kabo sub-prefecture, the four "Kabo Youth Games" will include inter-school sport competitions, cultural events and awareness campaigns promoting peace and social cohesion. Knowledge and attitudes will be evaluated before and after the programme to assess the effectiveness of the planned interventions.
