



The global fund for education in emergencies

Executive Committee Meeting – Minutes

Wed-Thurs, 26- 27 February 2020, Dubai, UAE

For list of participants, please see the Annex

Day I

Summary of the outcomes of the meeting

1. Welcome

- The Chair opened the meeting, welcomed newcomers and observers including representatives from Porticus, introduced Kari Hauge Riisøen representing Norway, Astrid de Vries representing The Netherlands and Diane Kepler representing UNICEF Funds Support office in the ExCom. She also highlighted some of the positive messages raised through a series of pre-ExCom bilateral calls as well as some important thoughts for ExCom members to consider:
 - That ExCom members keep their ECW ‘hat’ on during the meetings as much as possible;
 - The ExCom begin thinking about the operational stages of the MYRP considering the maturity of ECW as a fund;
 - That consideration be given to balancing the voice around the table in terms of representation while keeping a strategic level to the conversations.

The Chair went on to outline the items on the Agenda and key decisions of the meeting:

- 1) The approval of Year II seed funding for the ongoing ECW-facilitated Multi-Year Resilience Programme for Afghanistan;
- 2) The clearance for the Approval of the Operational Manual by the High-Level Steering Group on 17 April.

2. Director’s Remarks

- The ECW Director gave an update on strategic developments, results, and priorities. She highlighted the following:
 - Girls’ education, children with disabilities, and speed & learning outcomes were top priorities for ECW in 2020. ECW was keen to maintain speed and efficiency in the work and to ensure that real learning, which was sustainable, inclusive, continued and holistic, was taking place.
 - Since becoming a member of HLSC, the OCHA Emergency Relief Coordinator had urged all humanitarian coordinators to prioritize education. OCHA also ensured that education was embedded in the terms of reference for humanitarian coordinators as a performance indicator. As a result, humanitarian appeals had increased substantially in prioritizing education. This upward trend now required matching funds.
 - The [USAID white paper](#) on the humanitarian-development coherence served to drive and ground the humanitarian-development coherence discussions in relation to the operational manual. ExCom members were encouraged to read the document.
 - The Decade of Action “calls on the world to mobilise everyone and everywhere. It demands urgency and ambition”.

- On the results dashboard, she stressed that, it was essential to ECW's commitment to inclusive quality education to focus on outcomes rather than outputs. In terms of outreach, ECW was committed to including 60% girls in all its multi-year resilience investments to advance on girls' education, increasing Secondary education towards at least 20% and moving up to 10% for Early Childhood Education. She also stated an aspiration for ECW to reach 2.9m children by the end of the year. Maurits Spoelder reiterated that ECW was keen to go beyond output-oriented results dashboard and would consider outcomes measurements.

3. Deputy Director's Financial Overview

- The ECW Deputy Director provided an update on contributions ECW received from a diversified group of donors, its investments within the respective funding windows, with figures on disbursement and relevant countries, and highlighted the resource mobilization target.
- ExCom members including Sweden, GPE and Norway noted the impressive shift in relation to contributions to education from humanitarian funding but also acknowledged the gap between needs and available funding. There was still a need to mobilize funding for the coming years. They added that it would be useful if the expenditure could be compared with budget for future presentations. GPE stated that bureaucracy is an impediment and does not equal accountability. Donors should prioritize flexibility over bureaucracy.
- Nagi explained that the later presentation on Resource Mobilization would elaborate how the resource mobilization strategy was moving forward to reach the target for 2021.

4. MYRP Approach - CSO Interventions

- Graham Lang gave a presentation on ECW's evolving approach to the design of MYRPs. The presentation highlighted the need to move towards more strategic level MYRPs which would draw more heavily on existing in-country strategies and would necessitate closer involvement of the ECW Secretariat on seed fund allocations and selection of grantees. The presentation followed the structure outlined in the MYRP paper which was circulated prior to the meeting [refer to presentation circulated with minutes]. Left ExCom with two main questions: 1) how to engage ExCom representation at country level to support the processes? 2) what other aspects of the MYRP process could be easily enhanced to support their development?
- Emma Wagner and Kathleen Spencer Chapman provided an update from ECW civil society implementing partners on the successes & challenges of implementation, localisation efforts, and highlighted how civil society and the Secretariat were working together to innovate and improve implementation. In particular, the presentation focused on a proposed feedback and learning mechanism to improve the way that issues at the country level were received, dealt with and learned from [refer to presentation circulated with minutes].

During the discussion, the following points were highlighted:

- Widespread support was expressed for the enhancements outlined in the paper and the associated presentation, particularly on the need to move towards shorter, more strategic level MYRP documents which should be quicker to develop with in-country partners.
- With the MYRP approach being a collective one and requiring that all types of partners come around the table and contribute their information, ideas, analysis, and innovations, the question as to how could ECW incentivize partners to join and contribute even without direct access to resources from the seed funds, was raised. This also included partners who were involved in MHPSS and disability who may not be part of the cluster or EiE groups.

- Partners on the ExCom and the ECW Secretariat needed to ensure that sufficient resources were invested to enable the development of the MYRP process as outlined in the paper including the needed investments in quality education and comprehensive support for children in crisis. These developments in the MYRP approach and the required tasks needed to be included in the ECW annual workplan.
- The need to align the new GPE funding for the Accelerated Facility with the ongoing and planned MYRPs: GPE representative stressed the importance of aligning the newly approved acceleration resources by GPE Board behind the MYRPs.
- UNESCO and UNHCR welcomed the planned focus on ECE and secondary education in addition to primary education and expressed the willingness to support ECW in the formulation of the MYRPs, coordination, and related system strengthening in-country.
- The European Union, GPE, Save the Children and the Global Education Cluster stressed the importance of investing more in technical assistance for countries to support the development and formulation of the MYRPs and guide the in-country partners. This could be a combination of several elements including technical assistance from donors in country, the cluster, a roster of MYRP experts, etc.
- Several ExCom members stressed the need to rely more on the External Review Panel to conduct the review of MYRPs on behalf of ExCom to reduce the multiple layers of feedback that may be time-consuming and an extra burden on ExCom members.
- On in-country resource mobilisation, several donors stressed that they had their own direct support to countries where ECW was starting or had started MYRPs and that their representatives in country needed to be involved to maximise the opportunities for alignment between the global and in-country funding.
- In relation to engaging ExCom members at the country-level, several ExCom donors including Sweden, Switzerland and Ireland recognised the importance of ExCom involvement at country-level as well as the need to engage different offices in the process. ExCom members could contribute through enhancing internal coherence between HQ and in-country. Additionally, it was important to remember that countries may not have a seat at the table in-country as they were not bilateral donors.
- UNICEF, UNHCR and Global Education Cluster underlined the need to communicate to all that the content of the MYRP as a program are and should continue to be aligned with sector plans, cluster strategy, existing risk analyses and other frameworks addressing the nexus in education in the beneficiary country and that MYRPs didn't present a duplicate framework to existing ones. The engagement of in-country partners was the best guarantee to ensure that the MYRP as a program echoed the existing plans and responded to the most priority gaps in current response.
- It was stressed by several ExCom members, including USAID, Sweden, UNHCR, Dubai Cares, Ireland, Save the Children and Plan International and UNICEF, that sub-agreements with partners within the MYRP should also be multi-year where applicable to also bring the advantage of predictable financing and development thinking in emergency further down the chain.
- ExCom members highlighted that the cost per child was an issue that required analysis based on specific conditions in each country and determined accordingly.
- On the proposed feedback mechanism presented by CSOs, INEE welcomed the discussion and pointed out that the feedback mechanism would require resources and staffing to conduct the analytical segment and it should also adhere to "Do no harm" principle. The Global Education Cluster noted the need for increasing efforts at the designing stage to ensure local partners are able to access this mechanism. Australia recalled the priorities of the World Humanitarian

Summit and the Grand Bargain and indicated their priority of making humanitarian action as local as possible and as international as necessary. INEE and ECW to take forward the proposal and give an update at the next ExCom meeting.

ACTION and DECISION

The Chair summarized the discussion and concluded this session by noting that the proposed approaches outlined by ECW to enhance the MYRP processes were highly welcomed by consensus by the ExCom. In addition, the ExCom looked forward to the activation of the MYRP Reference group to help support the implementation of these changes. Discussions around the feedback and learning mechanism would continue. Furthermore, the proposed changes implied additional work and thus ExCom requested that the Annual Workplan be revisited with some actions prioritised and others omitted in order to ensure the workload corresponded to ECW Secretariat's capacity.

5. Decision on the MYRP Afghanistan Year II Seed Funding

- Graham Lang provided a briefing on the results and progress achieved under the Afghanistan MYRP. He noted that the Steering Committee was functioning well and that there was good synergy between the HRP and MYRP. Further, there is good momentum behind the MYRP as additional funding will be coming from Sweden with potential further contributions from Switzerland and EU. The Afghanistan three-year MYRP was approved in April 2018. The overall MYRP budget was \$157m and ECW seed funding totaling \$36m was proposed. The ExCom approved the first-year budget of \$12m. The ECW Secretariat requested ExCom's approval for year II seed funds. The Decision Paper and Year 1 Performance Review report were circulated prior to the meeting.
- The Chair noted that one of the key strengths of the Afghanistan programme was the high level of government ownership and noted that the main reasons for bottlenecks to date were in fact due to conditions imposed by donors. The ExCom Chair raised the fact that the budget line on "Secretariat and Grant Agent Costs" had increased substantially and requested an explanation for this rise.
- The European Union highlighted the need to continue to coordinate the Community-Based Education (CBE) efforts. The EU was unaware that its funds were being used to support the MYRP and this information was subsequently supplied by its implementing partners. This highlighted the need to strengthen in-country resource mobilization tracking efforts. The EU also raised the fact that teacher training was now under the responsibility of the Higher Education Ministry and this should be taken into account moving forward.
- UNHCR welcomed the fact that the MYRP was linked to the Humanitarian Response Plan. The number of returnees to Afghanistan was increasing and UNHCR recommended that the MYRP ensured it remained flexible to deal with this fluid situation.
- Denmark welcomed the continued strong focus in the Afghanistan MYRP on girls' education. Strong coordination, particularly in the field, needed to remain a priority and Denmark recommended that further work needed to be undertaken to boost efforts in this regard. Also noted that in the future, it would be useful for the progress against specific targets from the original proposal to be included in reports circulated to the ExCom.
- United States suggested that it may be preferable to deepen service delivery in some provinces before expanding into other areas. The lack of qualified teachers, and in particular female teachers, would need affirmative action to address this issue, for example integrating contracted teachers into the formal civil service. USAID also requested consideration for an increase in the budget of the child safeguarding component. USAID requested clarification on the substantive increase on outcome five of the proposed budget which has gone from \$513,668 in year I to \$956,256 in year II.

- Switzerland highlighted the fact that Afghanistan raised the need to better clarify in practical terms how ECW and GPE were working together at country level.
- GPE highlighted that they were unclear exactly how the Steering Committee worked and reiterated the ExCom Chair's request to clarify why the administration costs had increased so substantially in Year II.
- Graham Lang responded on the two questions relating to the increases in budget lines for Year II and explained that the ECW Secretariat would request explanations from the MYRP Steering Committee and would also provide further information on the results framework.

ACTION and DECISION

The Chair summarized the discussion and noted that the ECW Secretariat would revert with clarifications/explanations on the budget after having consulted with the in-country Steering Committee. With no objections, the Chair concluded ExCom's approval of

- a) The Seed funding for year II of the MYRP for Afghanistan in the amount of US\$ 12M subject to responses from the Afghanistan MYRP Steering Committee on the questions raised on the increases of budget lines for Year II.**

6. Briefing on Lebanon: Refugee and host-communities

- Mr. Fadi Yarak briefed ExCom on the status of education in Lebanon and the impact of the Syria refugee crisis on the Lebanese education system and learning for both Lebanese, Syrian and Palestinian children. He emphasized the importance of working with systems to ensure they are resilience to shocks and are able to flex accordingly. He also updated ExCom on the status of the ECW funded project for supporting Francophone education in public schools. He stressed the need for the international community to step up its commitments to support education in Lebanon to bridge a large annual funding gap, called on more support for Lebanon as part of the First response and MYRP modality and encouraged donors to continue supporting similar initiatives to improve the quality of education in all languages in Lebanese public schools.
- Theirworld stressed that part of the reason that ECW existed was because of Lebanon and the lack of systematic response from the international community for the country at the time. UNHCR was keen on ensuring that these efforts in Lebanon continued to be supported.

7. Chair's Summary of Decisions and Action Points

The Chair summarised the decisions and action points from today's meeting (Day -1):

1. Approval of the Year II seed funding for Afghanistan subject to satisfactory explanations on the increases in Outcome 5 and administration costs from the Afghanistan MYRP Steering Committee.
2. Noted the endorsement from ExCom on the proposed ways forward to enhance the MYRPs, particularly the suggestion for lighter, more strategic MYRP documents in the future.
