



The global fund for education in emergencies

## Executive Committee Meeting – Minutes

Tuesday 23 June (2 hours and 45 mins) – Wednesday 24 June 2020 (3 hours)

Please find the list of participants in the attached Annex

### DAY 1

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## Summary of the outcomes of the meeting

### 1. Welcome

- The Chair opened the meeting, welcomed newcomers and observers including representatives from France, and introduced Anna Darling, representing Plan International UK on the ExCom through to November. She thanked Kathleen Spencer Chapman for her dedicated support to ECW and stressed that CSOs' partnerships were critical to the mission and success of the fund.
- The Chair also took the opportunity to thank Norway for originally offering to host the June ExCom meeting in Oslo and advised that the second in-person meeting will take place in fall, with dates and options to be confirmed once the crisis was over.
- The Chair was pleased to announce Canada's additional funding of CAD 5.5 M to ECW as part of the COVID response, recently announced by Minister Karina Gould.
- Ahead of handing over to the ECW Director for a short introduction, the Chair outlined the items on the Agenda and the key decision of the meeting:
  - 1) the Replenishment of the First Emergency Response (FER) Reserve
- The ECW Director thanked the ExCom for their heartfelt support and for the positive and constructive feedback received on ECW's interventions. She especially conveyed her gratitude and appreciation to several strategic partners for their rapid and generous contributions, including, Canada, LEGO Foundation, DFID, Switzerland, Denmark, USAID, the Dutch Postcode Lottery and Theirworld, noting the value of their support.
- She proceeded to share two HR announcements with the ExCom:
  - The Gender & Development Manager position was now vacant following Aida's promotion to head up UNFPA's gender unit in Pakistan. The Director asked ExCom members to encourage strong candidates to apply. She also sought approval from the ExCom for this position to remain close to the Director in New York, as recommended by the Gender & Development Manager, since gender is an overarching priority in ECW's work. This was approved by non-objection.
  - The Deputy Director/Operations had now departed ECW following a review by UNICEF of the position itself. The Director sought approval from the ExCom to approve the Finance and Operations position at P5 level, focused exclusively on Finance and Operations, which was the rationale behind the original position. She commended Michael Corlin, Chief Advisor, for taking on this role until a successor was appointed. This was approved on the condition that the job description was to be shared with ExCom for review/inputs ahead of advertising the position and noted that current funds allocated to the Finance & Operations position would be utilized (which would also reduce the costs).

### 2. Update on ECW's COVID-19 Response



- Graham Lang, Chief of Education, provided an update on the second phase of the COVID-19 Response. He noted the focus of this second phase is on refugees and highlighted the programmatic emphasis on children and youth with disabilities, girls' secondary education and early childhood education. He then outlined criteria and steps taken leading up to this second round of FERs, ranging from the potential interventions and coordination mechanisms to the application package, countries/grantees selection and calculation of funding allocations [refer to presentation circulated with minutes]. He highlighted the following points:
  - All these processes have been driven by the feedback received from the first phase of the FERs and have relied on close collaboration between Clusters/Education in Emergencies Working Groups and Refugee Working Groups, supported by UNHCR.
  - Orientation webinars were delivered in English and French to country partners to help them understand the application process, the selection of grantees and the quality assurance undertaken by the ECW Secretariat.
  - As part of its commitment to the Grand Bargain and associated efforts to promote the localization agenda, ECW put a specific emphasis in this phase on encouraging applications from consortia of international organisations with local NGOs.
  - To conclude, Graham highlighted that ECW had received a much larger number of funding requests, however, it had not been possible to respond to all of these due to the current funding gap. He took the opportunity to thank DFID for their frontloaded payment for an earmarked contribution to the Sahel which has enabled ECW to launch another round of FERs in the region.

The Chair thanked Graham for the very comprehensive update and overview of the application process, noting appreciation for acting on lessons learned and acknowledging the yet again speedy timeline ahead. She then opened the floor for questions and comments:

- Porticus thanked Graham for the presentation and asked what learnings from the implementation of the first phase were relevant for the second phase in terms of the effectiveness of distance learning modalities to support learning and wellbeing.
- Save the Children commended ECW for the improvement on transparency and information sharing in the second round and welcomed the bi-lingual webinars organized for country partners. Save the Children suggested publishing the guidance on the ECW website for easy access. They also asked if the Secretariat could share the criteria for the selection of countries with the CSO constituency.
- The EC applauded ECW, under the Director's leadership for the significant achievements and welcomed the increased transparency, building on lessons learned in round one, the focus on the most vulnerable children and inclusive efforts made for country partners.
- DFID noted the importance of ECW acting with speed and commended ECW for the processes put in place and adaptability following the feedback received in the first round. DFID asked how the ECW Secretariat would ensure the target groups in the second round of FERs will be reached and if ECW intended on expanding the FERs beyond the current geographic focus.
- UNHCR echoed previous comments on ECW's speed and adaptability, especially in regard to the target populations, and recognised the importance of hosting orientation meetings in the working languages of local partners. UNHCR acknowledged the challenges in bringing together EiE and Refugee Protection coordination models yet highlighted the positive outcome and successful



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partnership. UNHCR finally noted that it was crucial to follow the same exercise of feedback in this round in order to become even more agile and much better prepared for future interventions.

- In response to the above questions, the Chief of Education and the Director advised that:
  - The Secretariat took note of Save the Children's suggestion of publishing the guidance on website and providing in different languages.
  - As the first phase of the FERs was currently still in its early stages of implementation (one and a half months), it was likely too soon to draw on any lessons learned. However, the Secretariat looked forward to building on lessons learned from both phases in due course, for example, those on distance learning, coordination mechanisms and managing different contexts.
  - There were existing mechanisms in place to ensure this phase achieved those target groups: the application form itself referencing specifically how focus groups would be targeted and then the quality assurance review counter-checking this process.
  - On geographic focus, the ECW Director advised that the African continent, Sub Saharan Africa and then the Middle East, where we have the biggest refugee populations and the highest numbers of conflicts/crises, were the top two geographical priorities for ECW. Lastly, there were low-income or middle-income countries where refugees fled to, although not under armed conflicts, but still living emergencies since they were not looked after by host countries where their needs were not met and therefore left further behind. The Director informed the ExCom that the second round of COVID FERs would be the last as the priority was now to provide much needed support and funds to the MYRPs.

### 3. MYRP Reprogramming and Recovery

- Graham Lang proceeded to provide an update on the reprogramming and recovery of the 10 MYRP countries that had been approved to date:
  - The Palestine MYRP had thus far been the only significant request received for reprogramming exclusively focused on adaptation as a consequence of COVID. This request was in fact submitted very early on in March. Country partners in close collaboration with the Ministry of Education had requested to rechannel funds into COVID-related work (awareness raising, preparedness for future pandemics, distribution of health and hygiene kits and MHPSS support).
  - Uganda and South Sudan had also submitted reprogramming requests, however, both reprogramming requests were only partially related to COVID.
  - Grantees in Bangladesh and CAR are in the process of submitting requests, although for Bangladesh these will likely be no-cost extensions rather than reprogramming requests. Requests from Afghanistan and Chad are expected to be received soon.
  - The 3 remaining countries had not submitted requests or expressed intention of doing so at this stage.

The Chair opened the floor for comments and questions:

- Germany expressed appreciation for the timely and needs based support provided through ECW's interventions. Germany asked how ECW planned to focus on longer term responses whilst engaging Ministries of Education to strengthen their longer-term resilience, and how scoping missions were foreseen in light of the continued travel challenges.



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- The EC and Save the Children raised a query on the planned MYRPS for both this year and next year.

In response to the above questions, Graham Lang advised that:

- The Secretariat was scheduled to meet in coming days to brainstorm and discuss the exact points raised by Germany and assured the ExCom the discussion was of high priority to the Secretariat.
- As a crisis sensitive organisation, the Secretariat had unanimously agreed to maintain targets and continue planning for the 2021 MYRPs as support was most direly needed in times of crisis.

#### 4. Financial Overview

- Michael Corlin, Chief Advisor, provided a briefing on the overall financial position and raised a decision point in relation to the replenishment of the First Emergency Response Reserve:
  - The Financial Report and Overview, circulated ahead of the ExCom, provided an overview of the historic transactions that formed the basis of ECW's current financial position as well as planned investments for the fund. The latter were periodically balanced against the Resource Mobilisation projections to ensure that these remain in balance.
  - ECW currently maintains a solid financial position with sufficient resources to meet all planned investments in 2020 and current commitments for 2021. However, for the full realization of MYRPs and targets in the strategic plan, additional donor commitments would be needed within this strategic period amounting to USD 300 million. In financial terms, the main risk for ECW pertained to possible delays of new donor commitments, which was included as an identified risk in the corporate risk framework.

The Chair opened the floor for questions and comments:

- Denmark commended ECW for the recent improvements in the second round of the FERs and for the rapid disbursements across both phases. Denmark also highlighted the funding gaps from 2020-2022 and asked for further information around the envisaged strategy to address these gaps.
- Germany inquired on how the FER replenishment impacted on the MYRP funding.
- GPE requested clarification on the deficit of USD 11 million and asked if the Secretariat foresaw any delays or lowering of the 2020 disbursement targets due to the slowing down on MYRPs. GPE also stressed the importance of timely pledges for predictability and planning.
- DFID conveyed their support for the replenishment and noted that most funds available were not unrestricted as they had been earmarked. DFID asked if this would be a point of concern for ECW.
- Norway asked if the new MYRPs planned for 2020 would be initiated as scheduled considering the challenges brought on by COVID and followed up on the timeline to receive further information on the tracking of financing at country-level. On the in-country RM target, Norway also asked whether it was realistic to mobilise \$500 million for MYRPs in 2020.

In response to the above, the following advice was provided:

- As an ambitious fund, the Secretariat would likely always operate with a resource mobilisation gap. Of course, should this gap not be filled, some activities would need to be postponed.



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- The earmarking of funds, although welcomed, would not necessarily contribute to closing the resource mobilisation gap as the earmarked funding often corresponds to a new obligation of the same size; they would however increase the total funds raised. Earmarking is monitored on a monthly basis.
- ECW remained on target for the 2020 MYRPs as planned and would continue to remain so according to donor commitments. The Secretariat called on donors to follow suit and make the commitments needed for ECW to move at the speed agreed with the strategic plan and the resource mobilisation strategy,
- ECW was requesting the third replenishment of the First Emergency Response Reserve. It was important to bear in mind that the request for FER replenishment did not impact the MYRPs as funding for both windows was included in the resource mobilisation plans.

### **ACTION and DECISION**

The Chair thanked Michael for the overview and responses provided and proceeded to the approval of the decision paper. With no objections, the Chair concluded:

- a) **The ExCom's approval of the replenishment of the FER reserve for 2020 at USD 24.7 Million.**

### **5. Presentation: Annual Report 2019**

- The Chair handed the floor to Christian Stoff, Chief M&E and Global Reporting, for a presentation on the Annual Report 2019. The presentation of the annual results report 2019 provided a brief global reflection on the current state of affairs in EiE in 2019, the major results achieved, as well as the main lessons learned that would influence the way forward in 2020 and beyond [refer to presentation circulated with minutes]. Christian highlighted the following:
  - In comparison to last year's report, and based on ExCom's members' feedback, the Secretariat was able to include stronger analytical elements and present more contextual analytical narratives. The report featured detailed data and compelling case studies on ECW's investments and their results which were emerging in ECW's third year of operations and in its priority areas: access, continuity, quality, equity and gender, and protection.
  - It also delved into ECW's results as work had been conducted together with its wide range of partners in generating additional financing and inspiring political commitment for education in emergencies and protracted crises, advancing the humanitarian-development nexus to achieve SDG4, strengthening the capacity to respond and improving accountability of the sector.
  - The report captured the results of joint collective efforts and dedication to support about 2.6million children (48 percent girls) affected by crises in 29 countries throughout 2019, not including Yemen.
  - In line with ECW's mandate to invest in those left furthest behind in crises, 43 percent of the total children reached were either refugees or Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), and about 10,500 were children with disabilities. About five per cent of ECW beneficiaries reached, or 108,000 children, were in pre-primary education.

The Vice Chair thanked Christian for the very detailed presentation and opened the floor to comments and questions:



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- The EU and Save the Children thanked Christian for the comprehensive overview and requested further information on how in-country resources were tracked, preferably a document on the approach and calculations of leveraged resources. Save the Children further inquired on when and how the report would be launched.
- Germany applauded ECW's commitment towards refugee education and asked for further elaboration on how ECW was especially striving to include refugee children into national education systems.
- Denmark welcomed the cross-sectoral efforts and seconded Germany's question on including refugee children into national education systems. Denmark was keen to hear more on ECW's efforts and experience on this.
- Sweden noted the improvement from the 2018 Annual Report and conveyed some feedback regarding the layout and structure of this year's report. Sweden suggested the report follow the same structure of the Strategic Plan outcomes and have a clear connection between strategic results and indicators. Sweden also suggested integrating further comments relating to challenges encountered by the Secretariat.
- Norway thanked Christian for briefing on the report and asked for further information regarding the decrease in children with disabilities reached between 2018-2019. Children with disabilities was an important priority for Norway, and especially when it came to their education. Norway also asked if the updated results framework would be subject to clearance by the ExCom and tabled for approval by the HLSG, as it had been done in the past. Lastly, Norway asked about the actions that needed to be taken to ensure that more grantees were able to report learning outcomes in 2020.
- UNHCR commended on the comprehensive overview and highlighted the need and importance of coordinated partnerships to properly achieve the inclusion of refugees in national systems. UNHCR would require the same support as leveraged by ECW and highly valued the inclusion of national partners. Engaging Ministries of Education as early as possible in emergency responses was also crucial to succeeding. Lastly, UNHCR stated the importance of flexibility in accreditation.
- DFID welcomed the disaggregated results by gender and the high ambition of 60% of girls reached in all investments.
- Switzerland appraised the good practices and learnings for the EiE sphere and suggested the report could elaborate further on approaches in protracted crisis situations (nexus, policy work, collaboration between humanitarian and development actors as well as Cluster with LEG or other development bodies, complementarity of humanitarian and development funding). Switzerland wished to see a stronger focus on inclusion challenges of IDPs and not only refugees.
- USAID echoed Norway's call for additional grantees' reporting on learning outcomes in 2020 and suggested further reporting on learning outcomes in the 2020 FERs, with an emphasis on the COVID response, as this was welcomed from the case of the Nigeria FER. This would contribute to the global knowledge base as well as provide valuable information on ECW programming.

In response to the questions posed, the following advice was given:

- The methodology of in-country resource mobilisation was described in the presentation. More details can be provided upon request.
- The structure of the report mirrored ECW's strategic plan having the five strategic objectives and the beneficiary outcomes. The only difference was centred around Objectives 1 and 2, which were merged into one chapter due to the strong connections between them, enabling thus a common narrative to be drafted.



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- On the challenges encountered, these had been incorporated throughout the report, however, the Secretariat would seek to incorporate further messaging as lessons learned.
- On the inclusion of refugee children in national systems, both Uganda and Ethiopia, through their collaboration with national or regional refugee bodies, have proven to be successful examples with positive outcomes.
- James Thomas Vargas, the Chief of Forced Displacement Response highlighted ECW's commitment to including and advocating for the inclusion of refugee children in national systems. He added that one of the biggest challenges to this was the obtention of documentation and equivalency certificates. In this regard, through the Acceleration Facility window, ECW was supporting programs enabling countries to develop measures to harmonise equivalency systems in order to honour certificates obtained previously.
- The Secretariat proposed to draft a separate document providing further analysis on how more emphasis can be put on children with disabilities.
- The Secretariat will be in touch on the report and results framework questions with Norway and others as requested.

## 6. Update on the Acceleration Facility

- Graham Lang, Chief of Education, provided the ExCom with an update on how ECW was implementing the Acceleration Facility Strategy, including activities funded to date and those planned for the future [refer to presentation circulated with minutes]. He stressed that the Acceleration Facility provides a critical flexible financing mechanism to fund strategic initiatives tackling identified systemic barriers (insufficient funding, weak political will, lack of quality data and analysis, inadequate response and coordination capacities). He reported good progress on work addressing coordination capacities, political will, and lack of quality data but said more focus is required on innovative financing. Participants were also encouraged to contact Graham separately should they require more information on any of the initiatives discussed.

In response to questions from USAID and Save The Children on process and criteria used for deciding the acceleration facility funding, Graham explained:

- There are two funding modalities that ECW uses under the Acceleration Facility. The first is targeted support and the second one is calls for proposals. Both of these are set out clearly in the Operational Manual. As part of the annual workplan process, the ECW Secretariat establishes the key priorities to be funded by the Acceleration Facility and tries to ensure a balance between the two modalities. For specific organisations which support the implementation of the core objectives, such as the Global Education Cluster, INEE and the Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack, targeted approaches have been used. In other cases, such as work on youth advocacy and measurements of holistic learning outcomes, ECW launches calls for proposals. ECW also receives unsolicited requests for AF funding and always engages with these expressions of interest to ascertain whether they address a previously unaddressed need or strengthened an existing initiative.
- The ECW director's level of approval was of USD 500,000 for the activities under AF, which was very low in terms of the level of seniority within the UN system. The Secretariat would not seek to raise this threshold.
- There is a strong focus on data coordination, MHPSS and gender as strategic investments. The Acceleration Facility represents up to 5% of ECW's overall investments but it does take a disproportionate amount of time to manage.



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The Chair encouraged the ECW Secretariat to increase the emphasis on the open calls for proposals as much as possible to strengthen the transparency around the allocation of funds under this modality.

## **7. Chair's Summary and Closing**

The Chair summarised the day's presentations and discussions and thanked all participants for their valuable contributions.