



The global fund for education in emergencies

## Executive Committee Meeting – Minutes

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

### Day II

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#### Summary of the outcomes of the meeting

##### 1. Welcome

- The Chair opened the meeting, summarized day 1's discussions and decisions. She then outlined the items on the day's agenda and the key decision that would need to be made:
  - 1) The clearance for the Approval of the Operating Manual by the High-Level Steering Group on 17 April.

##### 2. Measuring Learning Outcomes in EiEPC

- This session focused on how to best measure learning outcomes in situations of conflicts and forced displacement. ECW formed a strategic partnership with Porticus in relation to this topic. The following points were highlighted in the presentation:
  - Maurits Spoelder gave an overview of key principles on how ECW saw holistic learning outcome measurement in EiEPC contexts across the ECW portfolio. He also highlighted actions taken by ECW thus far and presented the plans and approach moving forward.
  - Gerhard Pulfer and Jessica Hjarrand from Porticus, together with Maurits, explained the upcoming three-year partnership to conduct three holistic learning outcome measurements that were linked to selected MYRPs. Lessons on “what works to achieve quality and learning” were to be captured and brought together in a white paper to be shared with global and national partners.
  - Nina Papadopoulos summarised USAID's journey on provision of quality education and learning outcome measurement and stressed the need to design and sequence interventions with a holistic approach. She emphasized that without a proper focus on quality in education programming, measurement became redundant and both went hand in hand.
  - Emma Gremley from DFID presented findings, recommendations and actions taken from a DFID funded study in Syria that researched the correlations among teaching practices, learning environments, learning outcomes and child wellbeing. She also introduced the new 6-year GBP 26.5 Million Education Research in Conflict and Crisis (ERICC) study.
  - Dubai Cares presented on the Evidence for Education in Emergencies (E-Cubed) research fund, a response to the lack of evidence underpinning the work of practitioners in the EiE community. Dubai Cares called on actors to help replenish E-Cubed as a research fund for the entire EiE community, which was led by INEE through their ability to gather the communities in the field to inform what evidence we need to invest in for EiE. Collaboration and/or alignment between E-Cubed and ECW initiatives in this regard were to be explored.
- **Porticus made the pledge of EUR 1M to ECW to advance its work on learning outcome measurement, and at the same time emphasized the partnership above the funding.**

During the group work reflection session, the following points were highlighted by different groups:

- ECW could consider and promote tested approaches to achieve quality in EiEPC contexts such as Teach at the Right Level (TARL). ECW could focus investments on these types of models that we

knew had worked in the past. It was important to look at how to integrate this focus on learning outcomes measurement throughout the entire grant making process and ensure having right amount of M&E funding for it. A specific budget line might be needed in order to ensure the continuity of the measurement.

- It was important to consider how all the research and evidence would translate into policy dialogue, policy work, and feedback loops. Several ExCom members cautioned against evidence collection for the sake of evidence collection and stressed the need to design interventions that promote quality and learning, before a measurement was done. Maurits explained that ECW did not intend to conduct measurements in all projects. Measurements in 3 selected FERs were currently explored. Measurements for MYRPs were compulsory but differed between programmes based on context, existing resources, programmes design and capacity.
- Several ExCom members stressed the importance of standards setting. There was a need to agree on standards as there were only 10 years left for the SDGs, ensuring that all ongoing and incoming initiatives to come together around SDG4. The background of all discussions should always be agenda 2030 and the SDG4 indicators.
- Concerns were raised about the risks when learning assessments in crisis-affected contexts were done incorrectly. A potential opportunity would be to establish a help desk function for MYRPs as they developed their assessment tools, particularly in terms of Do No Harm and avoiding over-testing.
- It would be helpful for ECW to explore linking up with ERICC and INEE to create one support facility.
- It would be helpful to reflect more on how the Acceleration Facility was used and could be used to coordinate the different kinds of evidence currently being generated, how could ECW ensure it was part of producing global goods but also that the AF helped ECW inform the MYRPs. It was suggested to add this discussion to the agenda at the next ExCom meeting.

### **ACTION and DECISION**

The Chair summarized the discussion and advised on the way forward: ECW to use an appropriate part of its Acceleration Facility to further this work and share lessons with ExCom in the future.

### **3. Clearance for Approval of ECW Operational Manual**

- The Chair noted that the purpose of this agenda item was to endorse the revised Operational Manual and that work completed was based on the version sent to ExCom for the meeting in order to modify some language in the text & to respond to some outstanding concerns from ExCom members.
- The Chair handed over to Michael Corlin for a briefing. Michael recapped the extensive and consultative process which had been undertaken to get the Operational Manual to this stage for endorsement by the ExCom prior to being tabled for HLSG approval. As per previous agreements with the ExCom, the approval requested was for the core Operational Manual. There were over fifty appendices and the ECW Secretariat would come back to the ExCom within three weeks with a proposed plan for updating/producing these appendices accordingly.
- Michael also added that following the 22 January 2020 meeting, a Strategic Group was formed to finalize the Operational Manual in respect to Humanitarian Development Coherence and certain governance related issues. These included the balance of decision-making authority between the HLSG and the ExCom, as well as the tenure of the Director and Chair of the HLSG, respectively. The Strategic Group worked minutely to address all issues and shared an Excel sheet with 40 points where language describing the Humanitarian Development Coherence had been either maintained or strengthened. In relation to the governance issues, the Strategic Group conducted

due diligence based on rules and regulations, and then identified language and revisions to present to ExCom.

- Sweden asked if the Operating Manual had been reviewed by UNICEF's legal department to ensure it was legally sound and to address any inconsistencies.
- UNICEF Deputy Director DFAM - Funds Support Office highlighted that the Operational Manual needed to be finalized before the Standard Contribution Agreement (SCA), which outlines UNICEF's role as the host and the associated governance structures, could be finalized. This was to ensure alignment, harmonization and consistency between the Operational Manual and the SCA. There are thus some areas in the SCA which would benefit from a slight revision in order to ensure this coherence with the OM once finalized. For example, the UNICEF Comptroller was ultimately responsible for overseeing the ECW budget. In terms of FSO, as FSO sat in UNICEF, one of its main functions was to reassure donors that funds would be well-managed and invested in appropriate projects. In addition, it ensured other fiduciary aspects such as the fact that the interest on financial assets was invested back into fund. Reports of fraud or misuse of funds went directly to UNICEF's Office of Internal Audit and Investigation and UNICEF ensured ECW complied fully with human resource and supply regulations.
- In response to the above comment, the ECW Director advised that:
  - The current version of this Operational Manual was approved by the HLSG in 2017 and had gone through the UNICEF legal team. Any new comments received for the revision of the manual that might conflict with rules and regulations of the host-entity or in any other way depart from the legally cleared existing model had been addressed. Indeed, the Director and Vice-Chair has sought advice from UNICEF's legal department, including on human resources, child safeguarding and misuse of funds.
  - The existing operational manual was a robust document with a strong governance structure that had been developed by Boston Consulting Group (BCG) through extensive consultations in 2016 and 2017, subsequently approved by the HLSG. The purpose of updating the manual was based on lessons learned over the past years and these pertained mainly to the need to ensure stronger humanitarian-development coherence to make the manual more fit for purpose.
  - One area where the current manual had not been consistently applied was the rules regarding representation on the ExCom which explicitly stated that participation should be merit-based, at senior level, and nominated by the associated HLSG member. As a result, the level of seniority of ExCom members had varied. The majority of ExCom members, irrespective of levels, had retained the strategic level nature of their engagement and this had contributed to building a very efficient, trusted and forward-looking relationship. However, in some cases the discussions had become very engaged with details better placed in task teams or reference groups, and this has detracted from the function and efficiency of ExCom as a governance body.
- The ECW Deputy Director added that in terms of accountability and transparency, ECW operated under UN rules and regulations in all aspects of its work. He added that all reports from grantees relating to safeguarding and fraud were shared with ExCom donors and UNICEF instantly and on regular basis.
- Australia supported the shift within ExCom to focus less on details and more on higher strategic level issues. Australia mentioned however that this may not automatically be guaranteed by Senior Director-level representation, which entails different things in different organizations, and which cannot practically be expected of all organizations in ExCom as a requirement. Australia recommended that representation in ExCom be encouraged at as high a level as possible to support strategic dialogue.

- Ireland asked if, in addition to the list of appendices to be approved, it could also be stipulated at what level these will be approved.

### **ACTION and DECISION**

The Chair summarized the discussion and re-iterated that some last-minute drafting had taken place overnight prior to the ExCom meeting to sharpen some of the language. Further work would be needed in this regard relating to human resources and the issues raised by Diane Kepler on the role of FSO and the need to ensure consistency with the SCA. The ExCom chair pointed out that as the appendices were developed/revised, further updating of the Operational Manual may be necessary.

With no objections, the ExCom Chair concluded that ExCom endorsed:

- a) **The clearance of the Operational Manual for subsequent submission for approval to the HLSG subject to the changes outlined above and recirculation to ExCom on a non-objection basis.**

## **4. Resource Mobilization**

- Nasser Faqih thanked civil society organizations who have been integral in advocating to donors to support ECW, with significant results so far. He and Maarten Barends together made a presentation on the RM status and ways forward. They highlighted the following,
  - The ECW RM approach in 2020 would focus on engaging new institutional donors, deepening existing partnerships, diversifying the donor base by reaching out to non-traditional donors and in-country resource mobilization by leveraging and aligning new resources to MYRPs and FERs in the field.
  - ECW planned to organize advocacy and resource mobilization key moments, as well as one main event during the UNGA week in 2020 to allow donors to make new pledges for ECW in 2020 and beyond.
  - A tracking system has been put in place to decide on which ongoing initiatives could be considered to be aligned with ECW seed funding for MYRPs.
  - Design, Governance, Partnerships, Funding and Follow-up will be integrated in the MYRP development process to give in-country RM a good push.
- The session on non-traditional donors was opened by LEGO who explained why it was strategic to engage with a fund like ECW. LEGO mainly stressed that ECW was an important advocacy platform to achieve SDG4 and a solid mechanism to manage and program additional resources from the private sector. LEGO encouraged going beyond a 10% focus on ECD for ECW investments.
- ECW explained its approach to engage non-traditional donors in 2020, including
  - To reach out assertively to private sector partners and other nontraditional donors to bring their value added to EiEPC in the forms of additional funding, advocacy, leadership, in-kind support and technical expertise.
  - To work closely with its host and the private sector partners to make it possible for them to engage actively in ECW's investments and to find meaningful ways for this at both the global and country levels.

During the Q&A session, some recommendations were made to move forward:

- ExCom members expressed appreciation for the clear outline on how RM would be integrated as a priority in the MYRP and encouraged that approach to ensure more accountability and efforts for leveraging and aligning additional resources to the MYRPs.
- ExCom members expressed their support in investing more time and resources in advocacy and resource mobilisation at in-country level to ensure a more focused approach on the particular needs of each crisis and the opportunity to develop a case for investment per MYRP to guide RM efforts

at in-country, regional and global levels. At the same time, some partners expressed concern that in-country resource mobilization strategies duplicate already ongoing efforts; potentially creating circular advocacy whereby ECW funds are used to petition ECW donors.

- The ExCom members welcomed the strong focus on developing the approach for better engaging with nontraditional donors, especially private sector foundations and philanthropists whose financial and technical participation would strengthen ECW and enrich the dialogue and would help in fulfilling goals one and two for ECW. Dubai Cares highlighted that the current MYRP format is difficult for non-traditional donors to access or to see entry points. Therefore, the opportunity to revise MYRP structures may have the added benefit of increasing appeal to new donors by clearly identifying and costing gaps where they can step in (along with private sector).
- Several ExCom members stressed the important role of HLSG and the ExCom in supporting in-country resource mobilization by encouraging some of the new donors, particularly in the Gulf, to support specific countries where they had interests and ongoing investments. This could be done by pitching the specific country investments (MYRPs), and not only the ECW global level trust fund.
- Several foundations on the ExCom stressed that ECW needed to work closely with foundations and private sector who were not specifically humanitarian organizations (not part of the cluster or usual actors in humanitarian response) to facilitate the participation and engagement in ECW MYRPs and in-country investments. This required that ECW present options for how grantees could reach out to and collaborate with the private sector to attract them to engaging in the MYRPs.
- Several donors noted the importance of in-country resource mobilization to encourage a bottom-up process for fund raising from the donor representatives and embassies to their capitals and private sector. As such in-country donors could be important allies to help in advocacy for the MYRP.
- GPE had agreed to support ECW in their ask to the French government to support ECW investments with an additional 40 million EUROS during the current strategic cycle 20-22.

## 5. Chair's summary of Decisions and Action Points

The Chair summarized the decisions and action points from the meeting:

- Revising the work plan that had been previously approved in light of the next steps proposed with regards to the MYRP approach revision.
- With regards to the MYRP working group, Alice and Tyler would work with Graham and the ECW Secretariat to explore how to get expressions of interest and also how to manage the reference group in a way that supports the work of the secretariat.

The Chair also advised on the potential discussion points for future ExCom meetings including,

- The acceleration facility and how it could tie into the discussion around learning outcome measurement and evidence generation.
- The Global Refugee Forum, and specifically the GPE and ECW pledge.
- Findings from the MYRPs evaluation.
- An update on progress towards developing the learning and feedback mechanism

## 6. AoB

- 1) UNICEF (FSO) shared additional information about the Standard Contribution Agreement (SCA) and UNICEF's role as host. Diane noted that in the most recent revisions the language on SEAH has been strengthened.

- 2) Norway will share the SCA with donors for their comments on Monday, March 2nd. Norway aims at receiving all comments from donors by March 13th. A phone call with donors will be organized the following week.
- 3) The European Union shared that there was an ongoing audit within the European Commission of their EiE work. The audit primarily focuses on DG ECHO. The audit will also be looking at contributions to ECW.
- 4) The Chair will send out an email to the donor community to lay out the Chair selection process, share the job descriptions for Chair and Vice-chair, and provide a deadline for feedback. In the interests of full disclosure, DFID has expressed potential interest in the role of Chair. In June, the ExCom will be ready to approve and agree on a new Chair and Vice-Chair.
- 5) The next ExCom in-person meeting will be hosted by Norway on 24-25th June. The next HLSCG meeting will be conducted via teleconference and for 45 minutes, **from 08:00 -08:45 am on 17 April.**

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