



a global fund for education in emergencies

Executive Committee Teleconference - Minutes

Thursday, 5 December 2019 9:00-11:00am EST

Participants

Executive Committee Members: Nancy Smyth (Canada - EXCOM Chair), Yasmine Sherif (ECW Director), Alicia Herbert (DFID/UK - EXCOM Vice-chair), Robert Jenkins (UNICEF), Anna Rosendahl (Sweden/SIDA), Eline Ruisendaal (Netherlands), Joseph O'Reilly (SCF), Dean Brooks (INEE), Pdraig Power (GPE), Mamadou Dian Balde (UNHCR), Camilla Helgø Fossberg (Norway/NORAD), Kerstin Holst (UNESCO), Annina Mattsson (Dubai Cares), Rudolf Huber (BMZ/Germany), Line Baagø-Rasmussen (Denmark), Kathleen Spencer Chapman (Plan International), Maria Agnese Giordano & Anthony Nolan (Global Education Cluster), Sabina Handschin (Switzerland), Carol Hannon (Ireland), Fadi Yarak (Lebanon), Peter Darvas (WB, on behalf of Jamie Saavedra), Jenn Hobbs (European Commission, on behalf of Aida Liha Matejicek), Anjuli Shivshanker (USAID, on behalf of Nina Papadopoulos)

ECW Secretariat: Nagi Messiha, Zeinab Adam, Graham Lang, Michael Corlin, Christian Stoff, Maarten Barends, Malin Ljunggren Elisson, Nasser Faqih, Robert Edward Dutton, Li Peng, Matteo Valenza and Maurits Wilko Spoelder

Welcome and Roll Call

The Chair opened the meeting, welcomed participants, introduced Sabina Handschin representing Switzerland in the EXCOM and Carol Hannon representing Ireland, as new strategic donor partners to ECW. She outlined that there were seven items in the agenda and would be seeking approvals for:

- 1) The 2020 Secretariat Operating Budget package, including the relocation of five staff to Geneva, and the 2020 Annual Workplan
- 2) ECW Priority Countries for Multi-Year Resilience Programmes (MYRPs) 2020-2021
- 3) The Multi-Year Resilience Programme proposals of Ethiopia, Chad, South Sudan and Syria
- 4) Seed funding for Year II of the Multi-Year Resilience Programme of Uganda

The Chair stated that EXCOM documents were shared two weeks in advance of the meeting and the Secretariat had responded to the coordinated/consolidated comments from EXCOM donors sent through the Chair. Additional consolidated comments on the MYRPs were shared with the Secretariat to be taken into consideration during implementation.

1. 2020 Secretariat Budget including staff relocation and Annual Workplan

- The Chair advised that the 2020 workplan and Secretariat Budget were presented for approval to meet the 10 December deadline set by the Comptroller at UNICEF. A results-based Annual Workplan 2020 was presented, aligned with the ECW Strategic Plan 2018-2021 and the ECW Collective Results Framework reflecting high level results, indicators and baselines.
- The Chair noted that:
 - The overall budget constituted 4.3% of the planned disbursements in 2020
 - The budget increase over 2019 was a result of:
 - budgeting the amount of salaries for all the positions which were approved by the January 2019 EXCOM.
 - the cost of the evaluations of the MYRPs and FERs in 2020.

- the one-time cost for relocation of five staff to Geneva.

The Chair then invited the Director to present the budget and workplan.

- The Director stated the following:
 - Thanked the Chair for the coordinated approach to consolidate inputs from strategic partners on the EXCOM documents. This feedback enabled the Secretariat to address the comments and share with ExCom ahead of the meeting.
 - The 10th of December was the deadline set by the UNICEF Comptroller for submission of the approved Secretariat Budget and workplan. This was to ensure that the operating budget would be available as of 1 January and that ECW staff get their salaries on time. It had therefore been agreed with the EXCOM that approval of the annual budget and annual work plan should be featured as a standing agenda item at the EXCOM meeting in Q4.
 - The whole budget package had been cleared by the UNICEF Comptroller before submission to the EXCOM.
 - The increase in the budget included full year salaries for EXCOM approved positions and planned evaluations in 2020.
 - Despite the increase of the staff, the Secretariat had kept the budget for 2020 as low as possible.
 - The per capita cost had significantly decreased from 7% to 3%.
 - The total budget constituted 4.3% of planned disbursements which was a significant reduction from the estimated and agreed 6.6% as per the EXCOM agreement in January 2019.
 - ECW proposes to relocate five technical staff to Geneva, closer to the point of delivery to strengthen field support towards quality education and monitoring of results, as well as proximity to the majority of donors and operational partners. This move would allow for a geographical balance with 9 staff in Geneva and the remaining 19 staff and secondees in New York. In addition to the above, the move would also ensure reduction of carbon footprint and significant cost-efficiency on travel with a 46% reduction, as per the comparative table shared with ExCom
- EXCOM members voiced their support for the relocation of five staff to Geneva and appreciated the level of detail in the results-based annual workplan and annual budget documents.
- Norway asked for more information on the implication of splitting the Secretariat and cost-effective analysis. Norway also made inquiry on the finalization of the Operational Manual and the Standard Contribution Agreement (SCA).
- DFID stated the importance of proximity to Geneva and underlined the need to track any additional administrative cost associated with the move to Geneva. DFID also stressed the importance of keeping the budget balanced and the importance of ensuring sufficient technical capacity in the Secretariat.
- EU inquired about resource mobilization at country level and expressed expectations on the opportunities to review the Operational Manual with consolidated feedbacks.
- UNHCR expressed their readiness to approve the workplan, budget and staff relocation. UNHCR welcomed that quality education was reflected as an important component in the AWP and stated the need to leverage resources and capacities in the field to strengthen it.
- In response to the questions, the Director advised that:
 - Following best practices in addressing crisis contexts meant that ECW should have field staff based in Geneva close to the delivery point, while having the political presence based in New

York. The Secretariat operated through different platforms, such as skype and video teleconferences to ensure fluid communication between offices.

- On Administrative costs, as clearly outlined in the budget narrative, the staff relocation would be a one-time cost. The total rent was budgeted for a total of US\$90K per annum with the possibility that the Swiss government would make arrangement for a rent-free space in future. Furthermore, the move would bring more efficiency as it would mean 46% reduction in travel cost which would be used for a wider coverage of field visit by an increased number of staff.
- The Director took note of the point from DFID that keeping operational cost low must not compromise operational capacity in the Secretariat. She suggested that 2020 would be a test and should the budget be too low, this would be addressed in the 2021 budget.
- The RM Strategy approved by HLSG described in detail the in-country resources mobilization and provided best practices.
- On quality education, the upcoming evaluations would be instrumental to see where ECW made an impact and strengthened the quality of programmes.

Action and Decision:

The Chair summarized the discussion and noted that the Secretariat would provide further information on the Operational Manual in the new calendar year. The Secretariat should continue to monitor costs associated with the move and present as part of the analysis to EXCOM around the same time next year. The AWP 2020 would take onboard comments from partners, including those on RM and quality education. With no objections, she concluded that the EXCOM approved,

- a) The whole package of 2020 Secretariat Budget and the Annual Workplan 2020, including
- b) Relocation of five staff to Geneva.

2. ECW MYRP Priority Countries for 2020-2021

- The Chair noted that in April 2018, the High-Level Steering Group (HLSG), for the SP period, had approved 25 pre-selected countries affected by protracted crises and severe underfunding to education in emergencies. In its June 2019 in-person meeting, due to the evolving situation in several regions, the EXCOM had requested the Secretariat to provide a status update on the MYRP list and to recommend changes, as required.
- The Chair then handed over to Christian Stoff and Malin Ljunggren Elisson to give a brief overview on the analysis of the selection of updated MYRP priority countries as well as specific choices of countries.
- On the methodology, Christian Stoff explained that the analysis applied the original ECW priority country selection methodology presented to the EXCOM in 2018 with several new features such as the: 1) Global Severity Crisis Index (GCSI) to reflect a real-time – in addition to the forward-looking INFORM Risk Index – measure on the severity of a crisis based on the geographical and human impact, humanitarian conditions (people in need) and complexity (humanitarian access, society and safety, and operating environment) of the crisis and; 2) Education Sector Official Development Assistance (ODA) per capita. More detailed explanation of the methodology and the final scores for the 38 countries analyzed were provided in the country selection note which had been shared with the EXCOM ahead of the meeting. In addition, the MYRP selection also matched the OCHA Global Humanitarian Overview, which indicated that ECW was on target and aligned with the broader multilateral system.
- On the implications of recommended countries for 2020-2021, Malin Ljunggren Elisson emphasized that the recommendations were based on a balance between quantitative data and qualitative

assessment. The updated MYRP list showed strong consistency with 2018 approved list of priority countries, with the addition of the Venezuela Crisis affected countries and Burkina Faso. Given the magnitude of the Venezuela Crisis and the deterioration of the crisis in Burkina Faso in 2019, these countries were added to the list of priority countries for 2020-2021. It was recommended to remove Myanmar from the 2020-2021 list until the UN/UNHCR assessed that the conditions for “the safe return with dignity” of the Rohingya refugees ‘in-safety and with dignity’ to Myanmar were met.

- Sweden welcomed this discussion and suggested continuing this strategic discussion at the Dubai In-person meeting in February. Sweden also raised a question on the high number of countries for 2020 and whether it was realistic to cover them.
- UNHCR stated that the analysis and recommendations were aligned with the UN agencies. UNHCR agreed in removing Myanmar from the list.
- Germany asked for further clarification on why Jordan was replaced.
- Norway appreciated the methodology paper and echoed comments from Sweden on continued discussion in February as well as on the high number of MYRP countries for 2020.
- Save the Children appraised the enormous work done to get to this stage and noted the forgotten crisis. Save the Children raised the points of what it would mean in terms of overall model, the capacity in countries and crowding of resources. They also inquired on the hierarchy in the list of priority countries.
- European Union stated that the work was a valuable public good by filling the data gap. EU welcomed the analysis and expressed expectation of an annual update and circulation. EU echoed the suggestion by Sweden and Norway to have the discussion at more strategic level in February meeting. EU also sought further information on the qualitative considerations, relevant documentation and raised the question of why Myanmar was removed.
- Canada expressed strong support in adding Sahel region as well as Venezuela crisis, including Colombia, Peru and Ecuador.
- In response to the questions, ECW provided clarifications as following:
 - ECW developed MYRPs based on the approved list of priority countries by HLSG and EXCOM. All MYRPs were systematically developed as per approved country list and order, and no MYRP country was randomly selected by the Secretariat. ECW was operating in crisis context where allegations of international criminal crimes against humanity were the norm, so applying international law and UN agencies were imperative to guide ECW. In Myanmar, ECW stood firm on the principle that UNHCR defines the conditions on ‘safety and with dignity’ to return.
 - Jordan was ranked quite low in terms of the overall score in the country ranking table. It was therefore recommended not to be included in the list of MYPR priority countries for 2020-2021.
 - ECW Strategic Plan targets for 2018-2021 were to reach 25 countries, 9 million children and mobilizing 1.8 billion resources. ECW aimed to reach 8 countries in 2020 through a sequenced approach.

ACTION and DECISION

The Chair summarized the discussion and noted the need to have continued discussion in Dubai around the strategic approach, level of resources available and resource mobilization. With no objections, she concluded that the EXCOM approved,

- a) The revised MYRP priority countries list was follows:

- To include MYRPs for the Sahel region (Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso) with a regional component
- To include the Venezuela crisis affected countries (Colombia, Ecuador and Peru) with a regional component
- To continuously assess, through the UN, the conditions for the Rohingya refugees to return in 'safety and with dignity' to Myanmar during the remaining Strategic Plan period. Remove Myanmar from the 2020-2021 priority list.
- To remove Jordan from the 2020-2021 list based on the information provided.

2018	2019	2020	2021
Approved	Approved submitted	Planned	Indicative
Afghanistan	Ethiopia	DRC	Yemen
Bangladesh	Chad	Mali	Sudan
Uganda	South Sudan	Niger	Libya
OPT/Gaza	Syria	Burkina Faso (new)	Burundi
CAR		Nigeria	Haiti
Somalia		Iraq	Pakistan
		Colombia, Ecuador and Peru (new)	Lebanon
		Cameroon	

3. Multi-Year Resilience Programmes (MYRP)

The Chair reinforced that the MYRP proposals had gone through an extensive discussion and rigorous review process and had been cleared by the External Review Panel. The EXCOM members were on board on the composition of the External Review Panel. The EXCOM members shared with the Secretariat their comments and questions to be taken into consideration for the improvement of the documents, as needed, during the implementation stage.

MYRP Ethiopia

- Zeinab Adam confirmed the full ownership of the Ethiopia Multi-Year Programme by the Government. The Ministry of Education was in the driver's seat throughout the development and design process of the MYRP, and the process had been collaborative and transparent.
- EXCOM members welcomed the proposal and expressed their readiness to approve it.
- Denmark made inquiries on the latest development of the ongoing MoU between ARRA and the Ministry of Education (MoE).
- USAID noted the small seed funding vs. high cost for each MYRP and additional finance needed to fill in the resource gap.
- DFID echoed USAID and suggested a check-in on how ECW got additional finance to bring down the gap at February meeting.
- European Union asked for information about private sector engagement concerning innovation and technology.

- UNHCR endorsed the proposal, acknowledged the close work with ARRA and appreciated the support at field level. In view of the challenges in the field, MoU would make a difference. UNHCR would like to see how teachers training would benefit IDPs, but also refugees.
- Zeinab Adam confirmed that the MoU between the ARRA and the Ministry of Education was signed. The next step was to look at further details to ensure that the MoE did have full responsibility in providing education service delivery within the refugee context. There were on-going discussions in-country between partners, MoE and ARRA. On the private sector engagement, a Call-for-Proposals would be initiated following the approval of the proposal to allow for private sector Ed-Tech partners to contribute to ensuring positive education outcomes. A few of private sector firms were involved in the development of the proposals and would be interested in taking on initiatives. However, partners would not be determined until the transparent call for proposals process has been completed.

ACTION and DECISION

The Chair summarized the discussion with no objections, she concluded that the EXCOM approved:

- a) The MYRP proposal for Ethiopia.
- b) The year one and two seed funding in the amount of US\$ 8.9 million and US\$9 million respectively, with the first year to be disbursed upon approval and the second-year subject to satisfactory performance and availability of funds.

MYRP Chad

- Graham Lang introduced the Chad MYRP and highlighted that: 1) the government had been heavily involved in leading an inclusive and participative process of developing the MYRP and had ensured alignment with GPE financing which also covers MYRP target provinces; 2) the strategy outlined in the MYRP to provide quality, gender-responsive education promoted a holistic approach based on an essential package of interventions in each learning facility which could then be scaled up as more funds were secured. However, there was still some work to be done on the details of what this would entail and how it would be done. Thus, the MYRP document was therefore more of framework for action, with the first year set up as an inception phase to work out these details; 3) On the budget, Graham underlined that the overall budget of \$51 million deliberately only covered five provinces. It therefore presented a realistic estimate based on what could be achieved if these funds were mobilized and, given the challenges of resource mobilization in Chad, a funding gap of \$30m. Thus, although the \$21m seed funding amount appeared to cover a large percentage of the overall needs, this was because the ECW Secretariat encouraged EiE in-country partners to plan based on capacities and likelihood of additional in-country financing.
- In answer to the questions raised by EXCOM members in advance of the call, Graham Lang clarified that: i) the large school-feeding and cash transfer component was deliberately targeted to address the large numbers of out-of-school children in the two provinces to be targeted by ECW funds; ii) the selection of the provinces was based on existing analysis done by GPE together with the government, which looked at indicators on quality, access and poverty level to rank all the provinces. The top two provinces from this analysis were selected for ECW support.
- European Union welcomed the proposal and appreciated widespread level of consultations at country level. EU expressed readiness to approve the proposal and noted the need for the lessons learned from the inception phase to inform the further work.

- DFID welcomed the support to Chad and questioned the rationale for the substantive and direct support to school-feeding and stated the need of mapping this against the upcoming guidance to the grantees.
- Graham Lang emphasized that the school-feeding component was unanimously agreed at country level as a key approach to help address access and retention issues, especially in the context of so many out-of-school children and youth and a widespread food security and nutrition crisis. WFP was involved in the development of the MYRP and further discussions would be undertaken with the Government and WFP to obtain the most cost-effective approach.

ACTION and DECISION

The Chair summarized the discussion and with no objections, she concluded that the EXCOM approved:

- a) The MYRP proposal for Chad.
- b) The year one and two seed funding in the amount of US\$ 8.6 million and US\$ 7.4 million respectively, with the first year to be disbursed upon approval and the second-year subject to satisfactory performance and availability of funds.

MYRP South Sudan

- Michael Corlin emphasized the inclusive and consultative process in the development of the South Sudan MYRP, which included strong government leadership and involvement from donors and GPE. The political situation in South Sudan remained complex and the implementation of the peace accord was uneven, both of which affect the design of the MYRP and complicate geographical and thematic targeting. The need in South Sudan was immense and the country had the lowest literacy level and educational outcomes of any country in the world. The detailed analysis of the need had led the in-country partners to suggest a specific focus on Early Childhood Development and Gender (with an emphasis on girls' secondary education). The full budget of the MYRP is \$189 million, with a proposed seed funding allocation of \$30 million. When fully funded, the MYRP would reach approximately 500,000 boys and girls affected by crisis, or some 17% of the children most severely affected by crisis.
- Detailed responses to some of the written comments from the EXCOM had been shared ahead of the meeting.
- Norway welcomed the proposal and raised a couple of points to be aware of, including 1) limited impact on the ongoing teacher training by NGOs; 2) the high admin cost in the challenging context; 3) covering teachers' salaries and incentives. It would be good for ECW to elaborate and do some analysis on its positions in this matter.
- Save the Children stressed the need to ensure consistency throughout the ECW Operational Manual and procedures, reiterating the written comment from Save the Children regarding the alignment with ECW guidance on whether Grantees could act as Implementing Partners.
- DFID underlined the adaptive approach put on the ground given the changing situation in South Sudan.

ACTION and DECISION

The Chair summarized the discussion and with no objections, she concluded that the EXCOM approved:

- a) The MYRP proposal for South Sudan.

- b) The year one and two seed funding in the amount of US\$ 9.7 million and US\$ 10.2 million respectively, with the first year to be disbursed upon approval and the second-year subject to satisfactory performance and availability of funds.

MYRP Syria

- Nasser Faqih highlighted the engagement with stakeholders during the process and made two remarks on the Syria MYRP proposals. Firstly, he emphasized the importance of having a strong governance structure in place for managing the MYRP at the in-country and regional levels, specifically by having a well empowered Steering Committee; one that included the Regional or Syria HC, WoS Coordinators, UN agencies and donors' representatives, and maintained a strong connection with the Syria Education Development Forum. This would enable the Programme to stay agile and adjust to changes on the ground and better align/adapt to the humanitarian imperative and donor requirements. Secondly, the programme had undergone several rounds of revisions to amend and align the content with donor red lines. During the implementation of the first year ECW needed to explore the potential for expanding the scope of the program to address learning needs of all children in Syria was a way acceptable to all and in line with the humanitarian principles.
- Sweden raised the point of clear wording on the donor engagement at the MYRP designing phase.
- The Netherlands welcomed the proposal and noted the need to ensure the capacities of the sub-contractors and inquired on who would be doing the independent monitoring of the MYRP. The Netherlands also noted the importance of geographical focus, to work with subcontractors that can reach communities most in need mostly in north-east and north-west of the country.
- Denmark acknowledged the enormous work done to get the proposal to this stage and requested a separate document with refined language on the red lines be shared with donors as an official attachment to the Syria proposal. It would allow for Denmark to ensure the alignment with possible GPE financing.
- Germany seconded the point from Sweden of clear wording on the donor engagement in the designing phase and proposal. Germany was fine with the red lines in the document and welcomed the point of strong governance structure put in the place to follow up on the implementation. Germany further sought clarification on the Steering Committee mentioned by Nasser and whether it referred to ECW High Level Steering Group or the steering committee in country or region.
- European Union appraised the work done and would provide specific edits/suggestions to strengthen the proposal against EU restrictive measures, in terms of red lines.
- Norway expressed readiness to approve the proposal and appreciated the details gone into the work. Norway raised concerns on the financial gap of the proposal, expressed expectation to see the gender action points and finally asked for more information on the involvement with GPE.
- DFID echoed the importance of the refining the red lines document and raised the concern on capacities for the MYRP implementation in country.
- Nasser Faqih provided clarification as follows,
 - The alignment with donor red lines was well articulated in the MYRP document (please refer to the box on page 44 of the proposal). These were also incorporated in all relevant sections including program design, governance structure and the Risk matrix. This MYRP served as a vehicle to mobilize more resources and as such would invest in strengthening the capacity in-

country to advocate and fundraise for education in emergency and protracted crisis for children affected by the Syria regional crisis. It would also bring strong capacity in the team for RM. It would make a strong case to fill in the financial gap between the seeds funding and the large envelop of needs.

- ECW ensured the involvement of GPE in the design process and would continue to coordinate with GPE for any future opportunity to contribute additional resources into the MYRP.
- ECW would ensure that the engagement of EXCOM donors will be described correctly in the proposal.
- The proposed staffing for the MYRP implementation was sufficient with the assumption that the Whole-of-Syria coordination architecture was fully functional. The main functions for the proposed PMU would be to ensure the successful management and implementation of the program. The MYRP budget also allowed for mobilizing additional technical expertise for Quality Education, Gender, MHPSS, and protection as needed by the implementing partners, who were also assumed to come in with high level of technical qualification and capacity.
- Written comments provided by the European Union would be communicated to country team and would be integrated into the document. The final document would be reshared with all ExCom members.

ACTION and DECISION

The Chair summarized the discussion noted the need for further refinement of the document on red lines, with added language provided by EU, to be recirculated to the EXCOM. With no-objections, the Chair concluded that EXCOM approved:

- a) The MYRP proposal for Syria.
- b) The year one seed funding in the amount of US\$ 10 million.

MYRP Uganda Year II Seed Funding

- Michael Corlin provided a briefing on the results and progress achieved under Uganda MYRP. He highlighted the article published the day before on Uganda national newspaper by the first lady, who celebrated the partners coming together to help government of Uganda to deliver education to refugees. He stressed the need to work through institutions in Uganda to ensure the full target for funding of Uganda MYRP was met.
- DFID voiced their full support to Uganda and noted potential funding support for Uganda.
- UNHCR underlined the good practice from the Uganda context, including strong collaboration with ECW and strengthening capacities of authorities.

ACTION and DECISION

The Chair summarized the discussion and with no objections, she concluded that EXCOM approved:

- a) Seed funding for year II of the MYRP proposal for Uganda in the amount of \$ 11M.

4. AoB

The next EXCOM in-person meeting will be held on 26-27 February 2020 in Dubai.