



ECW INITIAL INVESTMENTS LESSONS LEARNED

AUGUST 2016 – MAY 2017

BACKGROUND

- Initial investments deliberate pilots, allowing ECW to learn by doing
- Two main objectives of initial investments:
 - Demonstrate an immediate contribution to increasing children and youth's access to safe, quality education
 - Illustrate the principles of greater coordination, strategy, and innovation in the delivery and catalytic financing of education in emergencies
- Ensuring lessons from this pilot phase
 - HLSG in Sept 2016
 - Recommendation Panel in Jan 2017

PURPOSE OF THE PAPER

- 1) Document the initial investments process
 - 2) Draw lessons learned from this experience for future proposal development processes – specifically how ECW could best organize and support them in order to achieve its objectives
- The paper is informed by ECW's operational model, which at the moment leaves room to determine how the grant process for multi-year investments will be operationalized at the country level

METHODOLOGY

- Interviews with a sample of informants from different stakeholder groups:
 - In-country partners (grantees, LEG and Education Cluster members)
 - Facilitators
 - Senior officials from Task Team on Initial Investments
 - Experts from independent technical review team
- Responses used anonymously to draw lessons from the experience
- Peer review in two stages, in total by five colleagues who worked closely on initial investments

GETTING TO INITIAL INVESTMENTS

- Challenge #1: Developed in parallel to the ECW operational and results framework, governance arrangements, and establishment and staffing of the ECW Secretariat
 - Summer 2016: Task Teams put together
 - August: Call for Applications
 - October: Request for Proposals
 - January/February: Approval of country proposals
 - February: Approval of ECW operational model and Results Framework
- Challenge #2: A desire to see ECW make an immediate contribution to expanding education opportunities AND illustrate principles greater coordination, strategy, and innovation
 - Tight timeframes given to partners – sometimes contradicting principles e.g. improved coordination
 - Process took longer than initially expected

LESSON #1: INITIAL ASSESSMENT

Challenge #1: No designation of pen-holder/convener or guidance on how to decide one at country level

Challenge #2: Ensuring that proposal development process was inclusive, particularly in contexts with high risks

- Initial assessment in order to:
 - Guide the development of context-driven guidance that minimizes the risk of tensions between partners
 - Provide a robust understanding of risks and opportunities of different partnerships, including whether and how to engage with government/political entities
 - Allow ECW to determine the level and type of facilitation support, if any
 - Connect with key education and humanitarian partners, particularly those with formal coordination roles, but also e.g. UN Resident Coordinators/ Humanitarian Coordinators

LESSON #2: CO-CREATION

Positive experience #1: Concrete benefits in terms of higher quality technical proposals and institutionalized collaboration

- 1-2 day consultative meetings for each investment
- In some cases facilitated by ECW Secretariat

Challenge #1: Steps to consultative process and who should take part at minimum

Challenge #2: No guidance on grantee selection

Challenge #3: Tight timeframe to submit proposal, same for all

LESSON #2: CO-CREATION

- Timeline suggested by the ECW operational model a good starting point for joint proposal development – but keep monitoring on this point
- Continue to build on existing structures for proposal development where possible
- Keep consultative meetings as a fixed feature of the proposal development process – beneficial to start it at the level of senior agency leads
- Provide more guidance on required steps to the process (if any), including on grantee selection

LESSON #3: FACILITATION

Positive experience #1: Feedback from country partners – facilitation was instrumental in bringing stakeholders together, pushing for new thinking, setting joint priorities, and in helping partners understand what ECW was trying to achieve

- Two types of facilitation: partnership facilitation and technical facilitation
- Sourcing expertise from partner agencies
- Working in teams of two, also allowing to match different skill-sets together

Challenges #1: Timing – mobilized late in the process

Challenge #2: Mismatch in type of facilitation required and skill-set (one case)

Challenge #3: Ensuring facilitators' understanding of ECW objectives (one case)

LESSON #3: FACILITATION

- Identify the type of facilitation needed and mobilize facilitators with the right skill-sets in a timely manner
- Facilitation could be organized in a number of ways – ECW staff, consultants, experts from partner agencies, or a mix of these
- Pre-accreditation of consultants/experts or pairing with an ECW Secretariat staff member?
- Keep monitoring – greater guidance around ECW expectations and principles in the future may mean that less support is required in some cases

LESSON #4: GUIDANCE

- Making ECW processes as lean and understandable as possible for partners

Positive experience #1: Reducing transaction costs for country partners by combining missions

Challenge #1: Insufficient alignment of proposals to ECW objectives, including inclusion and quality

Challenge #2: Partners had difficulty understanding what innovation and catalytic should look like in practice

- Develop further guidance to partners, e.g. examples of principles in practice
- Documenting lessons from implementation of initial investments and exploring good practices from other sectors

SUCSESSES

- Initial investments are demonstrating ECW added value:
 - Syria – humanitarian & development planning and coordination
 - Yemen – joint delivery of program between Sana'a and Aden
 - Ethiopia – institutionalizing collaboration between different Ministries
 - Chad – example of financial bridging between different programs to sustain gains
- Important to monitor and measure the impact of improved coordination and collaboration on beneficiary outcomes
- Some of the lessons described have already fed into First Response window