

## **EDUCATION CANNOT WAIT: OUR ADDED VALUE**

**Education Cannot Wait follows crisis-affected children and youth in need. Wherever they are.  
This is our added value.**

### **REACHING THOSE LEFT FURTHEST BEHIND, WITH SPEED, EFFICIENCY AND QUALITY**

Education Cannot Wait (ECW) is the global fund dedicated to education in emergencies and protracted crises. We reach those left furthest behind: refugee, internally displaced and crisis-affected children and youth, and their teachers and communities - all of whom are desperately holding on to hope in refugee camps and communities torn by war, forced displacement, climate-induced disasters and other crises. **This is our added value.**

Today, an estimated 128 million vulnerable girls and boys live in crisis settings where official or de facto authorities are either unable or unwilling to deliver their inherent human right: the basic service of an inclusive, equitable quality education. Their lives are a constant survival amidst conflicts, disasters, and systematic violations of human rights, humanitarian and refugee law.

To reach these girls and boys, ECW works directly through aid partners on the ground: United Nations (UN) agencies, and international and national civil society organisations. This allows ECW to act swiftly, strengthen accountability, and cut through red tape to deliver faster, better results in complex crisis situations, both in middle- and low-income countries.

The Fund's investments are aligned to existing government strategies, as well as to humanitarian and refugee response plans, and are targeted to fill identified funding and programmatic gaps so these girls and boys can benefit from the hope, safety and potential of a quality education.

ECW is established within the UN system and works closely with other multilateral stakeholders (e.g. European Union, African Union, World Bank/Global Partnership for Education, amongst others). The Fund works in partnerships - at the global, regional and national levels - to end siloed responses through joint programming, increase efficiency, and connect immediate relief and longer-term interventions; thus, achieving quality education outcomes and strengthening resilience amid crises.

***"As we enter 2021, education must be at the core of pandemic response and recovery efforts. Without resolute political commitment by global leaders, as well as additional resources for Education Cannot Wait, and its UN and civil society partners, millions of girls and boys may never return to school. Investing in the education of these vulnerable children and youth is an investment in peace, prosperity and resilience for generations to come - and a priority for the United Nations."*** ~ UN Secretary-General, António Guterres

As the world grapples to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic and to address climate change threats, ECW is uniquely positioned to answer the UN Secretary General's call for a 'New Social Contract and a New Global Deal' that creates equal opportunities for all and respects the rights and freedoms of all – with education and digital technology as the 'two great enablers and equalizers.'

### **LEAN, FIELD-DRIVEN CATALYST FUND TRANSFORMING MULTILATERAL AID**

***"With only 31% of refugee children enrolled at the secondary level, and just 27% of girls, Education Cannot Wait - which helps displaced children into school and has raised almost \$1 billion in its short existence - needs to be fully funded."*** ~ UN Special Envoy for Global Education and Chair of the ECW High-Level Steering Group, The Rt. Hon. Gordon Brown

ECW is a catalyst that brings together a wide range of partners (donor and host-governments, UN agencies, national and international NGOs, civil society, private sector, academics, foundations), placing education at the centre of the global public agenda.

As a lean, agile, cost-effective and field-driven structure with a Secretariat smaller than most classrooms (less than 30 staff), ECW is strategically positioned to advance the objectives of the UN Reform and transform multilateral aid. Through strategic partnerships, ECW enables in-country actors to respond rapidly in delivering quality education - all while leveraging critical resources and expertise, and by increasing collaboration and communication across all levels.

ECW advances Sustainable Development Goal 4 on inclusive and equitable quality education in crisis contexts, thus laying the crucial foundation for the achievement of all other Sustainable Development Goals.

ECW rallies host governments and all relevant partners to develop context-specific responses to reach the most vulnerable and marginalized children and youth - with a focus on girls, forcibly displaced children and youth, and children with disabilities.

The Fund also reaches out beyond the education sector for a holistic and cross-sectoral approach. It harnesses the capabilities of various stakeholders, developing creative solutions and leveraging the use of technology to get crisis-affected girls and boys back to learning in the world's toughest places. ECW's investments are bolstered by innovation and research to accelerate progress and impact. This approach is needed now, more than ever, as the COVID-19 pandemic further entrenches the digital divide and its impact on education provision.

***“Education Cannot Wait works with humanitarian speed and development depth to deliver results. There must be no compromise in acting with urgency to ensuring the right to a quality education for children and youth in emergencies and protracted crises. ECW has shown that it is possible to simultaneously act with both speed and depth.” ~ ECW Director, Yasmine Sherif***

- **#ECWResults:** Humanitarian funding for education grew five-fold since ECW's inception (from 2015 to 2019).
- **#ECWResults:** ECW is one of the founding members of the new global hub for education in emergencies and protracted crises in Geneva. Instituted by the Swiss government to help facilitate closer interaction between key education actors, the hub brings together ECW, the Global Education Cluster, the Graduate Institute, ICRC, INEE, the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, UNICEF, UNHCR, UNESCO and the University of Geneva.

#### **CRISIS-SENSITIVE, FLEXIBLE AND PREDICTABLE FUNDING**

ECW is designed with the flexibility and speed required to address crisis situations - wherever, whenever they occur. Its multi-year funding stream also provides the predictability required to support quality learning outcomes and sustained capacity development amidst a protracted crisis where education systems are either inexistent or too weak.

- **#ECWResults:** 26% of ECW's funding is allocated to local and national responders as directly as possible to improve outcomes for affected people and reduce transaction costs. This exceeds the 25% *Grand Bargain* target agreed by some of the largest donors and aid providers.
- **#ECWResults:** Multi-year grants account for over 65% of ECW's investment portfolio, providing a crisis-sensitive, reliable multilateral funding instrument to deliver quality education outcomes for vulnerable children and youth in protracted crises.

***“Education Cannot Wait was formed to mobilize a collective response to urgent needs in education in emergencies, bringing together traditional and new actors. The European Union was part of ECW's inception, bringing development funding to allow multi-year, predictable support. We are proud to be part of Education Cannot Wait's drive to improve coordination and joint planning for children affected by crises.” ~ European Union Commissioner Jutta Urpilainen***

Within ECW's multilateral pooled fund model, donors are considered strategic partners and exercise decision-making in the Fund's investments. In doing so, they share any risk burden as they join their efforts to invest in the education of children and youth caught in the world's most challenging crises. ECW also offers the agility and flexibility required to mitigate risks in volatile crisis situations.

Hosted within the UN system, ECW works through established coordination structures designed for crisis-contexts to advance SDG4. This ensures ECW's ability to work closely with partners (in-country host-government, communities, UN agencies, civil society and strategic donor partners), while operating quickly, effectively and efficiently in crisis environments, and providing ECW staff access to crisis-affected areas.

- **#ECWResults:** 40% of all children and youth reached by ECW's investments are refugees or internally displaced.
- **#ECWResults:** Girls already represent 50% of all children and youth reached through ECW's multi-year investments. Through its support to gender-responsive and inclusive responses, ECW aims to increase this to 60%. In Afghanistan, 57% of all children reached are girls, thanks to ECW's work with UN and NGO local partners in support of government strategies on community-based education and girls' education.

***“The LEGO Foundation forged our partnership with Education Cannot Wait to ensure children in conflicts and crises get psychosocial and developmental support, by securing ‘Learning Through Play’ in the classrooms of refugees and their host communities.” ~ John Goodwin, CEO, The LEGO Foundation***

### **EMERGENCY RESPONSES AND MULTI-YEAR INVESTMENTS READY TO DELIVER RAPIDLY AT SCALE**

ECW offers a unique combination of both rapid education responses in emergencies and multi-year investments for durable efficiency and long-term inclusive, equitable quality education opportunities in protracted crises. These two systems stand ready to absorb double or more the funding to deliver rapidly at scale for many additional vulnerable children and youth.

The Fund’s **emergency grants** provide immediate resources to implementing partners on the ground to roll out lifesaving and life-sustaining responses in new or escalating crises. ECW’s rapid disbursements to grantees have become the ‘proof of concept’ of the Fund, according to the independent international development consultancy firm *Mokoro*.

- **#ECWResults:** The speed of ECW’s emergency grants has constantly increased from the Fund’s inception in 2017 onward. In 2020, ECW announced its first COVID-19 response grants within 4 weeks of the declaration of the pandemic by the World Health Organisation.

***“With the support of Education Cannot Wait, Colombia has learned to innovate and create learning opportunities during multiple crises.” ~ H.E. Maria Victoria Angulo, Minister for Education for Colombia***

ECW’s **resilience seed funds** support multi-year efforts and rally multiple humanitarian and development aid stakeholders to assess, implement and monitor results through joint programming - thereby leveraging additional resources. Through this innovative approach, education stakeholders develop a common understanding of the situation and coordinate their efforts to meet priority needs and fill gaps across humanitarian and development interventions.

These context-specific, 3-to-4-year renewable programmes provide a comprehensive ‘whole-of-child’ approach, crucial to achieving quality education outcomes in crises. This is achieved by linking academic learning to protection, gender equality, human rights, disaster preparedness, mental health, psycho-social care and peace, among other key issues. ECW’s multi-year investments have proven effective in catalysing outstanding results in the most challenging contexts.

***“Education Cannot Wait is a crucial partner in these difficult times for our education system which is affected by the security crisis and the COVID-19 pandemic. As we jointly launch the ECW-supported multi-year resilience programme, we look forward for interventions to quickly be rolled out, obtain good results and attract more donors.” ~ H.E. Stanislas Ouaro, Minister of National Education and Literacy, Burkina Faso***

- **#ECWResults:** In Uganda, the ECW-supported refugee response plan - developed with the government and led by a consortium of NGOs - increased the refugee enrolment ratio from 53% to 75% in just two years (2017-2019).
- **#ECWResults:** In Ethiopia, ECW’s support increased the refugee enrolment ratio from 62% to 67% in just one year (2018-2019).
- **#ECWResults:** In Chad, ECW’s investments led to a decrease in the dropout rate from 23.7% to 17.9% in three years (2016/2016-2019) in supported communities.

***“Education Cannot Wait is an example of how the United Nations system delivers quality with speed to advance Sustainable Development Goal 4, leveraging the best from across the UN family.” ~ UN Deputy Secretary-General, Amina J. Mohammed***

**For more information:** [www.educationcannotwait.org](http://www.educationcannotwait.org)

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