



High Level Steering Group Meeting

19 September 2017, New York

Participants

HLSG members and representatives: Gordon Brown (United Nations Special Envoy for Global Education and Chair, Education Cannot Wait High Level Steering Group); Tariq Al Gurg (CEO, Dubai Cares); David Atchoarena (Director, Division for Policies and Lifelong Learning Systems, UNESCO); Marie-Claude Bibeau (Minister of International Development and La Francophonie, Canada); Dean Brooks (Director, Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies); Alistair Burt (Minister of State for International Development, United Kingdom); Julia Gillard (Chair, Global Partnership for Education); Filippo Grandi (UN High Commissioner for Refugees, UNHCR); Mark Green (Administrator, USAID); Anthony Lake (Executive Director, UNICEF); Stefano Manservigi (Director-General, International Cooperation and Development, European Commission); Yasmine Sherif (Director, Education Cannot Wait); Tone Skogen (State Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Norway); and Tove Wang (CEO, Save the Children Norway). Apologies: Marwan Hamadeh (Minister of Education, Lebanon); Jakaya Kikwete (Former President, Tanzania)

Special Guest: Janet Museveni, Minister of Education and First Lady of Uganda

Observers: Martin Bille Hermann (State Secretary, Development Policy, Denmark); Tarald Brautaset (Ambassador, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Norway and Chair of the ECW Executive Committee); Ewen McDonald (Deputy Secretary, Department of Foreign Affairs & Trade, Australia)

ECW Secretariat: Elise Bijon, Gabrielle Bonnet, David Hartstone, Johannes Kiess, Daria Ng, John Solecki, Emily Travis

Agenda

Welcome and introductions

1. Gordon Brown (United Nations Special Envoy for Global Education and Chair, ECW HLSG) welcomed participants, thanked UNICEF for hosting the meeting and welcomed Mark Green as the new USAID Administrator, and Australia and Denmark as observers. He thanked Australia for their recent \$10 million AUD contribution to ECW and Dubai Cares for hosting the successful private sector reception for ECW the evening before. The Chair welcomed Her Excellency Janet Museveni, Minister of Education and First Lady of Uganda, and commended Uganda's efforts in supporting refugees.

Uganda: ECW's approach to supporting refugees

2. H.E. Hon. Janet Museveni provided an update on the refugee situation in Uganda. Out of 1.3 million refugees, one million were from South Sudan and 86 percent were children and women. Refugees often crossed the border alone and arrived in terrible health and in desperate need of safety and protection. Uganda had a long history of being sensitive to others in need and education was especially important. ECW's comprehensive and long-term approach was critical for helping to empower children. The ECW team would be visiting Uganda again at the end of the month to facilitate a coordinated refugee and host-community response plan on education. On behalf of Uganda, she thanked ECW and all partners for supporting the education of refugee children and families.

ECW Director update

3. Gordon Brown handed over to Yasmine Sherif (ECW Director) and noted that Yasmine took up her position in May, but had already visited many countries and accelerated progress on ECW.
4. Yasmine Sherif provided the following update:
 - Uganda was a high priority for ECW, given the urgent needs outlined by the Minister of Education and First Lady. ECW completed a joint mission in Uganda with partners in July and a second mission would take place at the end of September with a broad range of stakeholders including the government, UN agencies, civil society and GPE – with UNHCR as coordinators. The priority would be to respond quickly and sustainably through a multi-year program aligned with the wider education sector plan for refugees and host-communities and to support UNHCR's delivery of the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework in Uganda;
 - ECW will provide first emergency response in Bangladesh, where over 100,000 Rohingya refugee children from Myanmar have had their education disrupted;
 - In Nepal, where flooding has affected over 78,000 children, ECW will work with colleagues on the ground to scale up support through a new allocation of first emergency response funds;
 - As of September 2017, ECW had invested in 11 countries through the First Response window (7 countries) and Initial Investments (4 countries) to support 3.2 million children, of whom 1.4 million were girls, and 17,000 teachers;
 - In First Response countries, funding had gone to a wide range of partners – UN agencies, international NGOs, and grassroots NGOs - for immediate support to put children back into schools, while also working on longer-term objectives such as risk management (in Peru), retention of children (in Madagascar) and promotion of girls' education (in Somalia);
 - In Initial Investment countries, ECW was not only focusing on access to education, but also on bringing all partners together for longer-term, improved learning quality and outcomes;
 - For example, in Syria, an ECW allocation of US\$15 million was bringing humanitarian and development partners together for the first time to improve education access, quality and protection in all 14 governorates and address systemic education challenges such as data collection, fragmentation of curricula and teacher stipends;
 - In Chad, an ECW allocation of US\$10 million was supporting refugees' and host communities' education, while building the capacity of affected communities to play a

- stronger role in increasing access to education and quality of teaching. This will improve the sustainability of education and resilience of affected communities;
- ECW programs were working across boundaries, bringing together warring parties and bridging humanitarian and development actors, as in Syria and Yemen;
 - ECW promoted country-level accountability and ownership from all implementing partners, with a strong emphasis on quality outcomes, not just outputs. This included learning assessments in Syria and measurement of teacher training results in Chad and CAR;
 - Gender parity and equity were additional priorities. The ECW program in Ethiopia was increasing the enrolment of girls in primary school and in CAR, special efforts were being made for children with disabilities. ECW partners also trained both male and female teachers and paid greater attention to protection issues;
 - ECW promoted peace, with support to active citizenship, peace education and mediation skills in countries like Syria and Yemen;
 - Over the next few months, ECW will focus on deepening results, ensuring that the focus was not just on disbursing funds, but also about improving field coordination and monitoring to ensure sustainable change and impact;
 - ECW's operational capacity had increased in the past three months, with Secretariat recruitment expedited and all ECW staff positions now recruited;
 - By mid-year, ECW had reached USD \$122 million or 80 percent of its resource mobilization target for 2017, with thanks to all donors, including Australia for their recent contribution. With additional announcements expected over the UNGA week, the 2017 financial target would likely be reached;
 - The Added Value paper, developed with inputs from the Executive Committee, will serve as a guide while ECW's three/four year strategy was developed. The paper emphasized the need to work with humanitarian speed and development depth, which required less bureaucracy and more accountability, deep engagement with the field and a fast, agile and crisis-focused approach, while ensuring consultation and collaboration amongst humanitarian and development stakeholders;
 - ECW aligned with the outcomes of the World Humanitarian Summit (WHS), which pointed towards a different way of working in crises. The High-Level Humanitarian Financing Report from WHS noted that the world's GDP was US\$78 trillion, so there were enough resources and no reason to compete, but the challenge was how to access it;
 - ECW was a movement, and the leadership and support provided by the HLSG were instrumental to ECW's success.

HLSG discussion and decisions

5. Gordon Brown noted the difference the ECW Director made since the last HLSG and emphasized that ECW could only be successful with everyone's cooperation. He thanked everyone for their collaboration, including the work done by the Executive Committee. Several HLSG members thanked and congratulated Gordon Brown and Yasmine Sherif for their leadership and progress in getting ECW set up and delivering.
6. HLSG members expressed support for the papers, with the following comments, steers and commitments:
 - It was critical to focus on education not just for refugees but for host populations and host communities as well;

- It was important for ECW to respond with an inclusive spirit so that interventions for children would extend beyond refugee camps and be part of existing structures, with the hope that refugees could one day return to their home countries;
- It was important for parents to see educational opportunities back in their home countries, or they would not bring their children back;
- Bangladesh was flagged as a fast-moving emergency with fluctuating numbers – over 600,000 refugees, half were children and many were unaccompanied minors;
- It was important for ECW to respond to the Rohingya crisis and to look at the education system in Myanmar to support eventual returns, as well as integration into national Bangladesh education systems;
- UNICEF was keeping track to ensure a firewall between ECW and UNICEF, as host of ECW; UNICEF was not involved in decisions about where resources would go;
- There should be caution to avoid competition between agencies competing for the same resources;
- ECW should demonstrate its added value to the education sector and not just the humanitarian agenda, which could be further highlighted in the added value paper;
- GPE would be providing a grant of US\$9 million to Bangladesh and were working on potential disaster risk insurance for GPE countries;
- Cooperation between GPE, ECW and others was working well on the ground, linking humanitarian to development, with Uganda an example of partners coming together;
- There was caution about the heavy workload for ECW Secretariat considering that both the strategy and fundraising strategies were to be developed by next April, alongside program delivery – the Secretariat and Executive Committee may need to look at amending the timetable;
- For ECW to deliver well, existing coordination systems needed to be strengthened;
- ECW should work further on prioritization of country response, which would be useful for donors and partners;
- ECW was filling a gap between humanitarian and development response, which for some donors was a critical reason for being involved, and should continue to work systematically on this;
- The European Commission would announce a contribution to ECW this week, and was involved in the Africa Summit in December and in policy dialogues in Bangladesh;
- Dubai Cares had five programs in Uganda, including one for South Sudanese refugees; was planning a mission to Uganda in November with media to raise awareness; and had started a new program in Iraq for displaced families to return to Mosul. Dubai Cares would be involved in the SDG4 Committee for the World Expo 2020 in Dubai, where they would be looking to promote education in emergencies;
- Dubai Cares announced US\$500,000 to ECW for the First Response window, earmarked for the Rohingya crisis and hoped it would be seed funding for other donors to commit;
- Education was central to women's empowerment, and would continue to be a priority for Canada, under its new feminist foreign policy;
- Canada was also working further on innovative financing, bringing in new partners;
- It was important for ECW to ensure greater transparency for future processes and investments;
- The UK would be providing over US\$30 million of humanitarian aid for refugees and host communities in response to the Rohingya crisis;
- There needed to be further work on broadening the donor base and on a resource mobilization strategy to see how the financial targets would be reached;

- ECW should continue to work on systems strengthening in emergency response;
- Education needed to play an increasing role in humanitarian action and there also needed to be a focus on national ownership and domestic budgets;
- It was important for ECW to focus on bridging quick response with long term development in its strategy and on measurement of results;
- Norway pledged their continued advocacy for education in emergencies, and confirmed that 8 percent of their humanitarian budget would go to education;
- Denmark would announce a contribution to ECW this week that would be larger than their last investment;
- ECW filled a gap in education in emergencies, which was the reason for funding ECW rather than other mechanisms;
- There were no objections from HLSG members to the papers.

Fundraising discussion

7. Tarald Brautaset (Chair, ECW Executive Committee), noted that the Executive Committee had met three times since the last HLSG meeting and served as a partner for the Secretariat. The Executive Committee supported the papers and ECW's role as a catalytic agent – encouraging and supporting what others were doing. The Resource Mobilization paper served as a basis for a first round of discussions on ECW's future fundraising, with further work and consultation to take place over the next few months.
8. Yasmine Sherif noted that ECW was close to reaching the financial target for 2017 – US\$153 million. For next year's target of US\$383 million, resource mobilization needed to be scaled up with everyone's support and collaboration.

AOB and conclusion

9. Gordon Brown noted that the report of ECW's permanent hosting review would be completed by 1st December 2017, with thanks to DFID for leading the process. The HLSG would discuss the recommendations, with the Executive Committee convening beforehand. The Chair noted that with more emergencies, it would be important to have a plan and clear priorities to address the gaps in education in emergencies. Close cooperation was required between all agencies.
10. Given there was no other business, the Chair concluded the meeting. The next face-to-face meeting of the High Level Steering Group will take place in April 2018.