

# MINUTES

## Executive Committee Meeting



Tue 18 November 2025, Virtual Meeting

### 1. Welcome and introduction

#### The Executive Committee (ExCom) Co-Chair:

- 1.1 welcomed all participants to the meeting and offered a special welcome to Daniel Toole at his first ExCom meeting as ECW Interim Director;
- 1.2 welcomed the new ExCom representatives attending for the first time:
  - (a) Denmark – Paul St. John Frisoli, Chief Technical Advisor – Education, MFA;
  - (b) Finland – Hanna Alasuutari, Senior Education Adviser, MFA;
- 1.3 announced that the Geneva Global Hub for Education in Emergencies (EiE Hub) will now sit on the ExCom as a permanent observer, represented by Executive Director, Petra Heusser;
- 1.4 informed members that Co-Chair Dominik Stillhart was unable to attend and that she would therefore moderate today's session alone;
- 1.5 sought consent from the participants for recording the meeting sessions for documentation purposes with no objections raised.
- 1.6 outlined the agenda, highlighting items requiring both discussion and approval, including:
  - (a) 2026 MYRP Investment Decision Paper;
  - (b) 2025 Annual Progress Report and 2026 Workplan;
  - (c) Update on the Replenishment Roadmap;
  - (d) Update on Director's Recruitment; and
  - (e) Update on the Hosting Review, including criteria and shortlist;
- 1.7 noted that the 2026 Operational Budget had already been approved through a non-objection procedure on 7 November due to the urgent need to initiate HR processes related to the organizational restructuring;
- 1.8 sought the ExCom's formal approval of the minutes of the 11 June and 21 August meetings, noting that finalized versions were included in the ExCom *Meeting Documents* shared on 4 November, and, with no objections received, confirmed that the minutes were approved;
- 1.9 invited members to raise AOB items, to which Canada's ExCom representative requested a short update on planned strategic dialogues.
- 1.10 confirmed that, with no objections raised, the agenda was adopted and the meeting would proceed to the next item.

## 2. Director's Update

### The ECW Interim Director:

- 2.1 thanked the ExCom and expressed deep appreciation for ECW staff, acknowledging the uncertainty and difficult personal circumstances many continue to face during the transition to a smaller Secretariat;
- 2.2 reported that ECW had met its 2025 disbursement target of US\$194.5 million, with all disbursements processed and forwarded to the UNICEF Fund Support Office; and highlighted this as a significant achievement, given operational and staffing pressures throughout 2025;
- 2.3 emphasized that the written update was structured to reflect ECW's identity as a fund, focusing on programmatic disbursements and strategic follow-through;
- 2.4 noted continued progress across Strategic Plan commitments and underscored the critical role of staff professionalism in maintaining delivery despite the ongoing restructuring;
- 2.5 acknowledged UNICEF's support to staff, including relocation assistance, internal mobility pathways, and well-being measures.

### In discussion, the ExCom:

- 2.6 expressed strong appreciation for the Interim Director's leadership and the staff's dedication throughout a challenging year;
- 2.7 valued the new written update format, noting it improved clarity and made it easier to track progress across multiple workstreams;
- 2.8 acknowledged the difficult context for staff and underscored the importance of maintaining stability, clear communication, and continuity of core functions during the transition;
- 2.9 enquired about the recruitment of new positions under the organizational restructuring, including timelines for advertisement, prioritization of critical posts, and how the Secretariat planned to ensure continuity of delivery during the transition period;
- 2.10 encouraged continued clarity on Strategic Plan consultations and timelines;
- 2.11 noted remarks of the UK's ExCom Representative regarding ongoing discussions on the education-in-emergencies architecture. She acknowledged that the *Genesis Report* may have appeared overly donor-driven and emphasized that the process must remain inclusive and informed by the perspectives of crisis-affected countries. She clarified that the UK has no pre-determined position and explained that FCDO facilitated the study simply because the UK had resources available at the time. She also noted continued interest among partners in progressing a second phase of the architecture analysis.

## 2026 MYRP Investment Decision Paper

### The ECW Chief of Education:

- 2.12 presented the proposed 2026 Multi-Year Resilience Programme (MYRP) investments and confirmed that all countries had been assessed against the approved MYRP criteria;
- 2.13 outlined the recommendations, noting conditional approvals for countries requiring earmarked funding;
- 2.14 summarized key findings and rationales for each recommended investment.

### In discussion, the ExCom:

- 2.15 welcomed the clear presentation and appreciated the inclusive and rigorous assessment process applied to the candidate MYRP countries;
- 2.16 acknowledged that elements of the qualitative assessment inevitably involve judgement and requested clarity on how the Secretariat ensures consistent and transparent application of these subjective criteria, including how equity considerations are reflected;
- 2.17 Encouraged the Secretariat to continue sharpening the qualitative narrative in future MYRP papers, clarifying how the seven qualitative criteria inform the final shortlist, and to provide a more structured summary and presentation of key findings and the incorporation of the Technical Advisory Group's (TAG) inputs.
- 2.18 highlighted the importance of sustainability and responsible exit strategies, and encouraged continued attention to government capacity, transition planning, and long-term viability in the MYRP design;
- 2.19 welcomed the strong focus on protracted crises and encouraged further articulation of ECW's added value and complementarity with other funding mechanisms;
- 2.20 expressed overall support for the proposed countries, welcomed the six recommended MYRPs, and took note of the conditional recommendations for Cameroon and Ukraine, emphasizing the importance of mobilizing the necessary earmarked resources.

### In response, the Secretariat:

- 2.21 reaffirmed that recommendations were grounded in evidence, feasibility, and programmatic need;
- 2.22 clarified that equity is explicitly embedded in the MYRP assessment framework and is considered alongside need, feasibility, and absorptive capacity;
- 2.23 explained that TAG inputs help ensure consistent application of these qualitative criteria across countries and that the final shortlist reflects both priority needs and equity considerations across crisis contexts;
- 2.24 confirmed that conditional MYRPs would proceed only when dedicated resources were secured.

**The following decision language was discussed and subsequently finalized at the end of the session:**

#### **Decisions (per official record)**

*The ExCom:*

- A1.** agreed with the outcome of the assessment of countries against the MYRP investment criteria;
- A2.** approved the recommendation for six new MYRP investments in 2026 in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Lebanon, Myanmar, South Sudan and Sudan;
- A.3** approved the recommendation for new MYRP investments in Cameroon and Ukraine only if ECW manages to secure additional dedicated earmarked funding for each country.

### **3. 2025 Annual Progress Report and 2026 Workplan**

#### **The ECW Chief of Strategy, Planning and Accountability**

- 3.1** reported that the 2025 Workplan implementation was projecting 80% completion despite operational and staffing constraints;
- 3.2** presented results and progress across programmatic, financial, policy, and strategic areas;
- 3.3** introduced the 2026 Workplan, noting its focus on readiness for replenishment, and laying the groundwork for the next strategic cycle.

#### **In discussion, the ExCom:**

- 3.4** welcomed the strong delivery of the 2025 Workplan despite a difficult operating environment and commended the Secretariat for maintaining momentum;
- 3.5** reiterated that localization remained a key area for improvement, and the upcoming strategic plan should be used as an opportunity to fully implement and strengthen localization efforts, address gaps, and advance progress in this area moving forward.
- 3.6** requested further clarity on the future of teacher-related initiatives, including next steps following the teacher call for proposals;
- 3.7** noted that reduced social media engagement should prompt reflection on how these channels truly support ECW's advocacy, given the past uncertainty on their measurable results. Raised concern about the idea that country-level communications will decrease, and emphasized that this moment is an opportunity to shift toward more decentralized, country-led advocacy, with ECW facilitating rather than centralizing communications.
- 3.8** raised concerns about Output 4.3 which did not seem to reflect ongoing efforts on the constituency support pilot;
- 3.9** emphasized the importance of balance and realistic prioritization, noting that the Secretariat is managing multiple parallel processes—including transition, replenishment, and strategic

planning—and therefore encouraged a focused approach that does not overload teams or dilute key priorities, while also building flexibility into the Plan.

- 3.10** asked for clarification on the revised approach to Protection, Gender and Inclusion (PGI), and recommended clarifying the design of the PGI reference group, ensuring lessons from previous groups (including refugee-focused one) are incorporated into its framing; suggested creating a separate workplan for PGI to ensure focused attention and avoid dilution, and offered additional UNHCR support to help address ECW Secretariat capacity constraints;
- 3.11** emphasized the need to anticipate updates to governance, guidance, and programme templates if the single investment window is approved; Noted that these revisions should be planned early to avoid past challenges.
- 3.12** encouraged clearer links between the Nexus endline report, and the investment window country selection, and broader strategic discussions, ensuring insights on ECW's role in the Nexus are fully integrated and useful;
- 3.13** asked about the changes regarding safeguarding reporting on non-SEA (sexual abuse and exploitation) incidents;
- 3.14** requested clarification on the decision to discontinue the risk assessment template and its potential impact on the Secretariat's ability to evaluate both grantee risk levels and capacity;
- 3.15** supported the overall direction of the 2026 Workplan and proposed that a light touch mid-year review be conducted in 2026 to look at progress and adjust priorities as needed.

**In response, the Secretariat:**

- 3.16** thanked members for their guidance and confirmed that inputs on localization, teacher initiatives, communications, risk, and prioritization would be reflected in the ongoing planning and the mid-year review;
- 3.17** clarified that the teacher Acceleration Facility (AF) grant has not been deprioritized – work will resume to launch this grant next year.
- 3.18** clarified that the constituency support AF grant is part of another AF grant already listed in the Annual Workplan and agreed to amend the wording to give greater prominence to the youth constituency component;
- 3.19** clarified that the Secretariat will maintain all existing processes and management of non-SEA cases, ensuring quality end-to-end case management. The only key difference will be the discontinuation of email updates to ExCom donors on the progress of non-SEA cases.
- 3.20** clarified that while the Secretariat has been using a risk template and maintaining core risk management practices, some aspects of reporting and documentation will be streamlined due to reduced staff capacity during the transition. The Secretariat stressed that although members may see fewer emails or lighter reporting formats, internal risk monitoring and mitigation processes remain in place;
- 3.21** conveyed that the new strategic plan will have a sharper approach to advocacy and confirmed its readiness to work more closely with youth networks, CSO partners, and

country-level actors to strengthen joint advocacy as well as leverage and further align national and global public advocacy efforts.

**The following decision language was discussed and subsequently finalized at the end of the session:**

#### **Decisions (per official record)**

*The ExCom:*

**B1.** approved the 2026 Annual Workplan, given a mid-year review in 2026.

## **4. Update on the Replenishment Roadmap**

### **The ECW Chief of Partnerships:**

- 4.1** delivered an update on preparations for the 2026 replenishment, including donor outreach, political engagement, advocacy milestones, and sector coordination initiatives;
- 4.2** noted that replenishment planning was progressing despite transition-related constraints and highlighted the need to accelerate the recruitment of key partnership and resource-mobilization roles;
- 4.3** framed the discussion with three guiding questions for ExCom reflection and feedback:
  - (a) What is your assessment of the overall approach?
  - (b) Where do you think the approach could be strengthened?
  - (c) How can you support the Road to Replenishment?

### **In discussion, the ExCom:**

- 4.4** welcomed the clarity of the roadmap and found the guiding questions helpful for orienting strategic engagement, noting strong support for ECW's value proposition and case for investment;
- 4.5** emphasized the need for ensuring coherence, speed, and consistent messaging among ECW and GPE, given that both funds will be conducting replenishment processes in the same year. Members called for intentional coordination and complementary narratives to avoid message fatigue and confusion;
- 4.6** encouraged the Secretariat to strengthen the political and financial framing of the replenishment by clarifying the implications of different hosting scenarios, as donors will require this to assess fundability and engage credibly;
- 4.7** stressed the importance of a compelling investment narrative, including stronger articulation of ECW's added value in protracted crises, the cost-effectiveness of multi-year investments, and clear, evidence-based messaging to demonstrate urgency and impact;
- 4.8** welcomed proposals to anchor advocacy around the "cost of inaction", noting this is a powerful way to shift narratives and citing ongoing studies—including those in crisis-affected contexts—that could support ECW's messaging;

- 4.9 encouraged broader donor outreach, including deeper engagement of non-DAC donors who contribute significantly to humanitarian assistance but may be underrepresented in current outreach plans;
- 4.10 Argued that private and philanthropic sector engagement would need to start soon to consider differing planning cycles.
- 4.11 underscored the importance of sector coherence, calling for close coordination with UNESCO, GPE, INEE, and other partners to ensure alignment and avoid fragmentation within the global education architecture;
- 4.12 highlighted the value of civil society, youth, and local partner engagement, noting that early coordination across constituencies would help avoid duplicated or conflicting asks during the 2026 replenishment cycles. Members encouraged ECW to provide platforms for youth advocates and CSOs to play visible roles during the campaign;
- 4.13 encouraged the Secretariat to explore context-specific advocacy opportunities, including leveraging France’s G7 Presidency in 2026 and Paris’s strong education ecosystem to elevate political visibility and mobilize partners based in France;
- 4.14 requested more explicit guidance on how ExCom members can actively support the replenishment, including priority bilateral engagements, coordinated political outreach, and key global forums where joint advocacy would be strategic;
- 4.15 acknowledged ongoing capacity constraints and encouraged realistic prioritization to ensure that the Secretariat can maintain momentum while managing multiple parallel processes during the transition.

**In response, the Secretariat:**

- 4.16 thanked members for their guidance and confirmed that replenishment efforts will prioritize coordinated political engagement, unified messaging, and continued alignment with key sector partners, including GPE and UNESCO;
- 4.17 acknowledged current capacity constraints and noted that activities are being streamlined and sequenced to maintain momentum, while also strengthening the political and financial framing of the roadmap as clarity emerges from the Hosting Review;
- 4.18 welcomed the emphasis on youth, civil society, local partner engagement, and strategic advocacy opportunities—including France’s 2026 G7 Presidency—and affirmed that these constituencies and platforms will be integrated into replenishment planning.

## **5. Update on the Director’s Recruitment**

**The Co-Chair:**

- 5.1 informed members that the recruitment of the Director had attracted approximately 500 applications;
- 5.2 noted that UNICEF HR had prioritized the process, with first-round interviews nearly completed;

5.3 explained the composition of the Selection Committee in line with the Operational Manual, including Abdullah Fadil (UNICEF representative), Sigrid Kaag (HLSG Chair), Faiza Hassan (ExCom representative) and Merete Lundemo (HLSG representative);

5.4 highlighted that no announcement would be made until due diligence was completed.

**In discussion, the ExCom:**

5.5 welcomed the update and underscored the importance of leadership continuity ahead of the replenishment period;

5.6 requested clarity regarding the sequencing of upcoming staff recruitment.

**In response the Secretariat:**

5.7 confirmed that four priority posts essential for replenishment were already forwarded to UNICEF HR and that additional posts would be staggered, based on budget availability.

## 6. Hosting Review

**The ECW Interim Director:**

6.1 thanked the ExCom for its guidance throughout the Hosting Review process and reaffirmed ECW's commitment to ensuring a transparent, evidence-based review aligned with the Operational Manual. He noted the extensive work completed during Phase 1, highlighted the strong engagement of stakeholders, and invited Dr. Tim Nielander, the independent consultant leading the review, to present the Phase 1 report and outline the proposed next steps.

**The Consultant:**

6.2 presented the Phase 1 report, providing an overview of the methodology, evidence base, and key themes emerging from stakeholder consultations, relevant external studies, and UN reform processes.

6.3 outlined the core hosting criteria and supporting capacities, reflected on the landscape of potential hosts examined in Phase 1, and highlighted main considerations related to value for money, fiduciary systems, operational flexibility, HR arrangements, governance independence, and brand integrity.

6.4 summarized stakeholder priorities—including agility, localization, safeguarding ECW's humanitarian identity, continuity, and accountability standards;

6.5 outlined the proposed next steps for Phase 2, which will involve a detailed analysis of the shortlisted potential hosts in preparation for an ExCom decision in February 2026.

**Following the presentation, a member from the designated Advisory Group represented by the European Commission:**

6.6 noted that the advisory group had regular check-ins with the consultant;

- 6.7 confirmed that the report is of high quality and fully aligned with the Terms of Reference;
- 6.8 clarified that views on required capacities and the weighing of criteria diverge and that further discussion will be needed to reach consensus;
- 6.9 emphasized that Phase 2 must be firmly grounded on what is viable.

**In discussion, the ExCom:**

- 6.10 thanked the consultant for the comprehensive presentation and welcomed the clarity and structure of the criteria and supporting capacities;
- 6.11 expressed reservations about hybrid or dual hosting models, noting that such arrangements could be overly complex for a fund of ECW's size, and several members stressed that ECW should move as a whole rather than adopt distributed or split hosting structures;
- 6.12 stressed the importance of engaging with private-sector and non-sovereign donors, given the growing importance of public-private partnerships in development financing;
- 6.13 reiterated a preference among several members to focus Phase 2 on multilateral hosts, noting governance legitimacy, fiduciary safeguards, and structural compatibility with ECW's mandate;
- 6.14 reflected on lessons emerging from the Genesis study, underlining the importance of ensuring coherence with broader education architecture discussions;
- 6.15 emphasized the importance of ensuring staff well-being, requesting careful analysis of HR frameworks, staffing requirements, and the implications of the transition;
- 6.16 thanked UNICEF for its continued support and cooperation, noting its adherence to conflict-of-interest safeguards and welcoming UNICEF's Deputy Director, Division of Financial and Administrative Management's reaffirmation of their commitment to ensuring a smooth transition to a new host.

**In response, the Secretariat:**

- 6.17 thanked the ExCom for its clear direction and confirmed that Phase 2 will prioritize multilateral options, consistent with members' expressed preferences;
- 6.18 committed to providing a list of all entities considered in Phase 1, along with the rationale for the narrowed shortlist;
- 6.19 affirmed that Phase 2 will focus on a thorough evaluation of fiduciary and operational capabilities, as well as the capacity of potential hosts to collaborate with private-sector partners, highlighting that this falls within the supporting capacity on innovative finance;
- 6.20 committed to presenting a detailed comparative assessment of the different hosting options as soon as possible to support an informed ExCom decision in February 2026.

**The following decision language was discussed and subsequently finalized at the end of the session:**

## Decisions (per official record)

*The ExCom:*

**C1.** approved the core hosting criteria:

- C1.1** value for money
- C1.2** hosting capacity (incl. speed/agility and adaptive contractual framework)
- C1.3** independence
- C1.4** branding
- C1.5** continuity
- C1.6** flexibility
- C1.7** conflict of interest framework;

**C2.** approved the list of additional supporting capacities, complementing the core hosting criteria:

- C2.1** operating in countries without presence of host
- C2.2** localization reach/capacity
- C2.3** operating in contested areas
- C2.4** potential for innovative financing
- C2.5** managing disputes/concerns quickly with hosted functions;

**C3.** approved a shortlist of potential hosts: UNOPS, UNDP/MPTFO, OCHA, the World Bank Group;

**C4.** requested the consultant to proceed to the next phase, conducting a detailed ‘deep dive’ analysis of the approved shortlisted hosts.

## 7. AOB and Close

**The Co-Chair:**

**7.1** invited Canada’s ExCom Representative to brief the Committee on the forthcoming Strategic Dialogues, during which she shared that:

- (a) three dialogues are planned to bring together key stakeholders and align the multiple reform processes underway in the education-in-emergencies space;
- (b) the first dialogue will take place on 2 December 2025 on the margins of the GPE Board Meeting in Brussels, with a second virtual session anticipated in January 2026, followed by a third in-person dialogue on 23–24 February 2026, aligned with the February ExCom meeting;
- (c) members will shortly receive an email outlining the core objectives of the dialogues and introducing the consultant who will facilitate the process;
- (d) the dialogues aim to provide an opportunity for ECW, partners, and additional stakeholders to collectively reflect on education-in-emergencies reforms and ensure coherence across the different strands of work informing the sector.

7.2 reminded members of the ExCom session scheduled for 25 November 2025, which will focus on discussing and approving the next steps on the Reflections and Aspirations Paper, serving as a key input to the development of the 2027–2030 Strategic Plan.

7.3 presented the 2026 meeting schedule, as follows:

<b>Date</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Venue</b>
24-26 February	In-person	Geneva
9-11 June	In-person	TBC
19 November	Virtual	N/A

7.4 thanked participants for their constructive engagement and timely discussions.

## **Annexes**

**Annex A:** [List of Participants](#)

**Annex B:** [Agenda and Supporting Papers](#)

**Annex C:** [Summary of Decisions](#)

**Annex D:** [Presentations](#)