



**Knowledge hub**  
-  
**Collection of best practices**

**Summary of the best practice**

1. Title of the best practice (e.g. name of policy, programme, project, etc.) \*

Education Cannot Wait (ECW) is the United Nations global, billion-dollar fund for education in emergencies and protracted crises. It supports holistic learning outcomes for refugee, internally displaced and other crisis-affected girls and boys, so no one is left behind. ECW is administered under UNICEF's financial, human resources, and administrative rules and regulations; operations are run by the Fund's own independent governance structure.

2. Country or countries where the practice is implemented \*

Afghanistan Bangladesh Brazil Burkina Faso Burundi Cameroon Central African Republic Chad Colombia Comoros Democratic Republic of the Congo Ecuador Ethiopia Greece Haiti Indonesia Iraq Kenya Lebanon Libya Madagascar Malawi Mali Mozambique Nepal Niger Nigeria Pakistan Papua New Guinea Peru Somalia South Sudan State of Palestine Sudan Syria Tanzania Uganda Ukraine Venezuela Yemen Zambia and Zimbabwe

3. Please select the **most relevant** Action Track(s) the best practice applies to \*

- Action Track 1. Inclusive, equitable, safe, and healthy schools
- Action Track 2. Learning and skills for life, work, and sustainable development
- Action Track 3. Teachers, teaching and the teaching profession
- Action Track 4. Digital learning and transformation
- Action Track 5. Financing of education

4. Implementation lead/partner organization(s) \*

Civil Society Organizations, Public Sector, Private Sector, United Nations , UNICEF, UNESCO, UNHCR and WFP

5. Key words (5-15 words): Please add key descriptive words around aims, modalities, target groups etc. \*

Education Finance; Holistic Learning; Financial Commitment; Internally Displaced Persons; Refugees; Sustainable Education

6. What makes it a best practice? \*

The following results make this initiative a best practice: 4.6 million children reached until December 2020 (48.2% female and 51.8% male) and 51,501 children with disabilities were reached. ECW has also responded to the pandemic successfully and swiftly in 2020, rapidly disbursing over US\$45 million in two rounds of COVID-19 funding, and was also able to reach over 29.2 million girls and boys who were already suffering from the impact of forced displacement and natural disasters. In doing so, ECW proved that its FER grants are an essential investment modality in crisis contexts.

## Description of the best practice

### 7. Introduction (350-400 words)

This section should ideally provide the context of, and justification for, the practice and address the following issues:

- i) Which population was affected?
- ii) What was the problem that needed to be addressed?
- iii) Which approach was taken and what objectives were achieved? \*

Education Cannot Wait (ECW) is the United Nations global, billion-dollar fund for education in emergencies and protracted crises. The fund and protect holistic learning outcomes for refugee, internally displaced and other crisis-affected girls and boys, so no one is left behind. ECW is administered under UNICEF's financial, human resources, and administrative rules and regulations; operations are run by the Fund's own independent governance structure.

Education Cannot Wait was established at the World Humanitarian Summit in 2016 by a group of international humanitarian and development aid actors, along with public and private donors, to ensure that every crisis-affected child and adolescent is in school and learning. ECW was created to reposition education as a top priority on the humanitarian agenda, mobilize additional funding for the sector, and usher in a more collaborative approach among humanitarian and development education actors.

The ECW mandate is articulated around four main functions:

1. Inspire political commitment so that education is viewed by both governments and funders as a top priority during crises.
2. Generate additional funding to help close the US\$8.5 billion funding gap needed to reach 75 million children and adolescents.
3. Plan and respond collaboratively, with a particular emphasis on supporting programmes that enable humanitarian and development actors to work together on shared objectives.
4. Strengthen capacity to respond to crises, nationally and globally, including the ability to coordinate emergency support.
5. Improve accountability by developing and sharing knowledge, including the knowledge of what works and what does not work, and by collecting more robust data to make better-informed investment decisions.

## 8. Implementation (350-450 words)

Please describe the implementation modalities or processes, where possible in relation to:

- i) What are the main activities carried out?
- ii) When and where the activities were carried out (including the start date and whether it is ongoing)?
- iii) Who were the key implementation actors and collaborators? (civil society organizations, private sector, foundations, coalitions, networks etc.)?
- iv) What were the resources needed (budget and sources) for the implementation?

\*

ECW works closely with civil society partners to build a global advocacy movement supporting education in emergencies and protracted crises. Civil society partners have been a driving force behind the creation of ECW's global movement and continue to be key stakeholders in ECW's global advocacy efforts. Civil society is represented in ECW's governance through three constituencies: the Civil Society Constituency, Teachers' Constituency and Youth Constituency.

A wide range of international and national civil society organisations are also implementing ECW's investments, ensuring the delivery of education in emergencies programmes to children and adolescents living in crisis-affected countries.

ECW is established within the UN system and works closely with other multilateral stakeholders, such as the European Union, African Union, World Bank/Global Partnership for Education, amongst others, as well as UN entities including UNICEF, UNESCO, UNHCR and WFP. The ECW Secretariat is hosted by UNICEF, while operations are run by the Fund's own independent governance structure. Together with its multilateral partners, ECW works at the global, regional and national levels to end siloed responses through joint programming, increased efficiency, and connecting immediate relief and longer-term interventions.

**Public Sector:** In line with the Grand Bargain, ECW encourages public sector donors to increase their public funding to education in emergencies from both development and humanitarian budgets, and provide multi-year flexible funding to ensure an efficient and effective response on the ground.

**Private Sector:** ECW offers several partnership opportunities with the private sector, through financial support including gifts and matching contributions, joint communication and advocacy, in-kind and technical support and co-creation of innovative solutions.

## 9. Results – outputs and outcomes (250-350 words)

To the extent possible, please reply to the questions below:

- i) How was the practice identified as transformative? (e.g., impact on policies, impact on management processes, impact on delivery arrangements or education monitoring, impact on teachers, learners and beneficiary communities etc.);
- ii) What were the concrete results achieved with regard to outputs and outcomes?
- iii) Has an assessment of the practice been carried out? If yes, what were the results? \*

### STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES 1 AND 2: Inspire political support and financing

- ECW mobilized US\$91.9 million in 2020 from both public and private sources, bringing the total amount of resources mobilized globally since 2016 to US\$684.5 million.
- ECW disbursed US\$138 million in 2020, of which US\$45.4 million was disbursed in response to education needs amid the COVID-19 pandemic, totalling US\$372.2 million since the fund's inception.
- In 2020, 95 per cent of humanitarian appeals included an education component; however, EiEPC appeals remain significantly underfunded. Only 39 per cent of EiEPC appeals were funded in 2020, an indication that the funding gap of US\$1.4 billion is getting larger.

### STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 3: Improve joint planning and timely response

- In line with 2020 targets, ECW developed eight new MYRPs in 2020, all of which encompass a more strategic focus and 'whole-of-child' approach.
- In 2020, ECW experienced its most timely deployment of funds yet, with 76 per cent of sudden-onset-crisis FERs (including COVID-19 FERs) and 58 per cent of all FERs disbursed within eight weeks. Timeliness of MYRP disbursement increased to 71 per cent in 2020.

### STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 4: Strengthen capacity to respond

ECW's financial absorption capacity increased to 95 per cent across its investment portfolio.

- Fifty-five per cent of second- and third-generation MYRPs had cash-transfer components for households, caregivers and schools, as a way of respecting the choices and dignity of affected populations.
- Twenty-three per cent of ECW funding was allocated to local and national responders, to build in-country response capacity.

### STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 5: Improve evidence and accountability

Sixty-three per cent (against a target of 60 per cent) of 2020 MYRP applications used good-quality evidence and data that were timely, cross-sectoral, disaggregated, conflict-sensitive and gender/equity-specific.

## 10. Lessons learnt (300 words)

To the extent possible, please reply to the following questions:

- i) What were the key triggers for transformation?
- ii) What worked really well – what facilitated this?
- iii) What did not work – why did it not work? \*

Lessons Learned:

In 2020, ECW commissioned an external evaluation of its FER programme design and implementation.<sup>86</sup> The evaluation identified several areas of strength as well as areas for improvement in relation to joint planning, coordination, and timeliness of response.

Among the recommendations are the following:

- Continue to use FER to respond rapidly to sudden-onset emergencies and clearly escalating crises.
- Do not default to using the FER in its current form to respond where it is unlikely to catalyse systemic outcomes in protracted crisis settings.
- Continue to align and rely on country-level coordination structures, plans and processes.
- Continue with an overall rapid timeline, high flexibility and light reporting requirements.
- Allow flexibility in the timeline to balance speed with quality programming and interest from international and national partners.
- Issue guidance on trade-offs across the FER portfolio regarding fragmentation and coherence of grants, localization, grantee diversity and coherence, and support the implementation of a minimum FER budget size.
- Strengthen FER coordination in response to the needs of refugees.
- Improve communication regarding country allocation and grantee selection.
- Award larger FERs when needed, keeping the approval process efficient.

## 11. Conclusions (250 words)

Please describe why may this intervention be considered a “best practice”.

What recommendations can be made for those intending to adopt the documented “best practice” or how can it help people working on the same issue(s)? \*

ECW’s COVID-19 response contributed to ensuring that some of the world’s most vulnerable girls, boys, and adolescents were able to continue their education after school closures via alternative forms of (distance) learning. Yet even amid the pandemic, it is important to recognize that there are ongoing conflicts, natural disasters, and other forms of violence that continue to disrupt education every day, posing threats to children’s learning and violating their right to education. ECW will continue to support those children, adolescents, and communities who have been double affected – by existing crises and the COVID-19 pandemic. Many of ECW COVID-19 investments are continuing in 2021 to prevent the reversal of decades of progress towards realizing every child’s right to education, improving access to schooling, promoting inclusion in the education sphere, and securing funding for these goals.

12. Further reading

Please provide a list and URLs of key reference documents for additional information on the “best practice” for those who may be interested in knowing how the results benefited the beneficiary group/s. \*

<https://www.devex.com/organizations/education-cannot-wait-ecw-111187>

<https://www.unicef.org/chad/education-cannot-wait>

<https://agendaforhumanity.org/initiatives/3825.html>