



**EDUCATION  
CANNOT  
WAIT**



**RIGHT HERE,  
RIGHT NOW**

**An Emergency Appeal to Support  
Education for Children and Adolescents  
Affected by Climate Hazards**

## ABOUT THIS APPEAL

This appeal was prepared in November 2023 by the Education Cannot Wait Secretariat based on estimates provided in ECW's Background Study: "[Futures at Risk: Climate-Induced Shocks and Their Toll on Education for Crisis-Affected Children.](#)"

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## ABOUT EDUCATION CANNOT WAIT

Education Cannot Wait (ECW) is the United Nations global fund for education in emergencies and protracted crises. We support quality education outcomes for refugee, internally displaced and other crisis-affected girls and boys, so no one is left behind. ECW works through the multilateral system to both increase the speed of responses in crises and connect immediate relief and longer-term interventions through multi-year programming. ECW works in close partnership with governments, public and private donors, UN agencies, civil society organizations, and other humanitarian and development aid actors to increase efficiencies and end siloed responses. ECW urgently appeals to public and private sector donors for expanded support to reach even more vulnerable children and youth.

Cover credit: © UNICEF/Ayene

Harko, 12, is no longer going to school as she is forced to go in search of water almost every day amidst historic drought in Ethiopia.

Layout and design: Svenja Greenwood

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# FOREWORD

'THE ONE international language the world understands' wrote Eglantyne Jebb, founder of Save the Children, 'is the cry of a child', and the evidence is accumulating that children are not only the innocent victims of conflict whose pleas need to be heard, but also the most vulnerable victims of climate change.

With global news these days telling us a tale of crippling climate shocks, unprecedented flooding, devastating typhoons, and seemingly never-ending droughts, it is children who are losing out the most. Last year, climate disasters again triggered more internal displacements than conflict and violence, uprooting the lives of millions of children and adolescents.

As we write, Tropical Cyclone Tej recently made landfall in Yemen, affecting thousands of people in a country where two out of three people already need humanitarian assistance.

Behind the news stories, you will find girls like Fatuma, a 9-year-old from the Somali region of Ethiopia, whose family income has been crippled by the worst drought in four decades. Successively failed rainy seasons have forced over 1 million people in Fatuma's region on the move and in dire need of food assistance.

You will find boys like Ahmed, an 8-year-old from Sindh province in Pakistan – he was nearly killed when his house collapsed during unprecedented flooding which damaged or destroyed over 26,000 schools last year.

The world promised children like Fatuma and Ahmed a right to an education. Sustainable Development Goal 4 set a vision for unhindered, universal access to learning. The scourge of climate change is brutally disrupting that vision.

The climate crisis is an education crisis. It is robbing millions of children and adolescents of their right to learn, of their right to play, of their right to feel safe and secure. New ECW analysis paints a clear picture: over 60 million crisis-affected children and adolescents have been impacted by climate shocks since 2020. Girls like Fatuma remain at most risk.

Education Cannot Wait, a pooled fund with a track record of work in over 40 countries, has proven its model. From Bangladesh to Burundi, Pakistan to Peru, we have provided children with a lifeline to keep learning in the wake of climate disasters. We have built the resilience of schools, communities, and government to meet the climate challenges of the future.



**The climate crisis is an education crisis. It is robbing millions of children and adolescents of their right to learn, of their right to play, of their right to feel safe and secure.**





© UNICEF/Grarup



With more funding, ECW can go even further and faster. The climate crisis is not abating. The news stories will not stop. We will advocate tirelessly on their behalf and react with lightning speed when disaster hits.

A girl holds her school bag up to keep it out of the floodwater on her way home from school in South Sudan. The country has seen years of severe flooding.

Fatuma – unlike her mother ever did – now attends school thanks to ECW support and completed a school readiness programme to identify letters of the alphabet and numbers. She is deeply excited to learn and wants to become a teacher.

With more funding, ECW can go even further and faster. The climate crisis is not abating. The news stories will not stop. Millions more like Fatuma and Ahmed live on the front line. Yet, in ECW, the world’s crisis-affected children and adolescents have found a champion for their rights. We will advocate tirelessly on their behalf and react with lightning speed when disaster hits.

In the eye of the storm, we are calling on new and existing donors to stand with us. We are appealing to you to act right here, right now. Will you take up this challenge?



*Gordon Brown*

**THE RT. HON. GORDON BROWN**

Chair of the High-Level Steering Group of Education Cannot Wait

United Nations Special Envoy for Global Education

Chair of the International Commission on Financing Global Education Opportunity



*Yasmine Sherif*

**YASMINE SHERIF**

Executive Director  
Education Cannot Wait

# APPEAL SUMMARY

New data published by Education Cannot Wait – the United Nations global fund for education in emergencies and protracted crises – reveals that 62 million children and adolescents affected by climate shocks are in desperate need of education support.



## \$150 million

initial funding requirements



## 2 million

children and adolescents targeted

Education Cannot Wait (ECW) urgently appeals to public and private donors to provide at least \$150 million in new and additional funds by the end of 2023. With these additional funds, ECW can scale up its work to respond to climate change throughout 2024 and reach an additional 2 million children and adolescents with a quality education.



ANTÓNIO GUTERRES  
UN SECRETARY-GENERAL

“Extreme weather is becoming the new normal. All countries must respond and protect their people from the searing heat, fatal floods, storms, droughts, and raging fires that result. Those countries on the frontlines — who have done the least to cause the crisis and have the least resources to deal with it — must have the support they need to do so.”



Tirig and her sister Saua collect water in drought-stricken Somalia. Their family was forced to leave their home in search of food and water, and Tirig has never been to school.

# CRISIS OVERVIEW

**The climate crisis is impacting the education of children and adolescents Right Here, Right Now.**

Cyclones, typhoons, floods, and droughts are increasing in severity and intensity. The number of disasters driven, in part, by climate change has increased five-fold in the past 50 years.

World Bank research shows that climate change could force up to 216 million people to move within their own countries by 2050.

Climate hazards are driving displacement directly but also driving competition over scarce resources and threatening fragile peace in many parts of the world. Over 70% of refugees and internally displaced people on the move due to conflict and violence originally came from climate change hotspots.

These intersecting crises of climate change, displacement and conflict are having a profound effect on education opportunities for millions of children and adolescents around the world.

Climate change is not gender neutral. Women and girls are disproportionately affected due to preexisting gender norms. It exacerbates risks of gender-based violence, school dropout, food insecurity, and child marriage.

New data published by ECW reveals that 62 million children and adolescents affected by climate hazards are in desperate need of education support.

Education is critical in the aftermath of a disaster. It creates a sense of normalcy for children and adolescents whose lives have been turned upside down.

Education provides a safe place for young people to continue learning, receive psychosocial services, protection, water and sanitation, and a nutritious meal.

A quality education is also critical for communities to recover and be better prepared for future disasters. It equips young people with the skills and knowledge to address climate change and advance climate justice.

In the most challenging circumstances, education offers hope and opportunity.



**In the most challenging circumstances, education offers hope and opportunity.**





# 224 million

TOTAL NUMBER OF CRISIS-AFFECTED CHILDREN IN NEED OF EDUCATIONAL SUPPORT



# 62 million

IMPACTED BY CLIMATE HAZARDS  
(27 countries)



**SEAN FLEMING TD**  
MINISTER OF STATE FOR  
INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT  
AND THE DIASPORA, IRELAND

Total number impacted by:



**DROUGHT: 25 million**

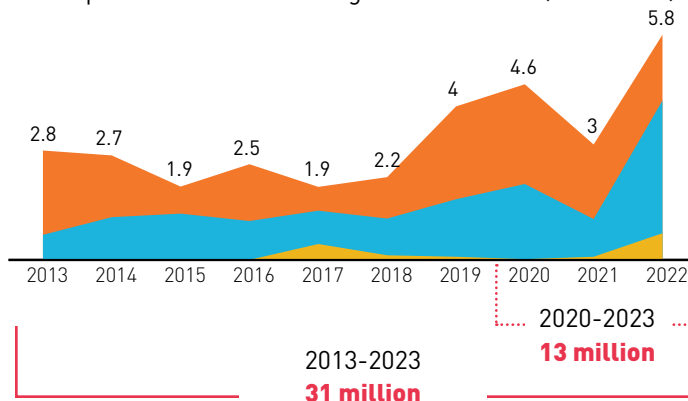


**FLOOD: 20 million**



**CYCLONE, STORMS AND SIMILAR WEATHER EVENTS:  
17 million**

In the 27 countries, where 62 million crisis-affected children impacted by climate hazards live, the number of forced displacements of school-aged children was (in millions):



“We are already seeing the severe impact of the climate crisis on education. Unprecedented storms, droughts and floods have destroyed school buildings and materials, devastated livelihoods and displaced millions, jeopardizing the rights of millions of children to quality education. All too often when a disaster strikes, education is the first service to be interrupted and the last to be resumed. Yet access to quality education will be critical in tackling the climate crisis, advancing gender equality and helping countries to achieve sustainable development.”



**HIS EXCELLENCY DR. TARIQ AL GURG**  
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER AND VICE-  
CHAIRMAN OF DUBAI CARES

“Children and youth in emergency contexts are disproportionately affected by climate change. From poverty to displacement, the impact of the climate crises on this vulnerable group poses a huge threat to their existence. As an equalizer, education has the power to safeguard their future, but we must invest in an ecosystem of partnerships to identify and invest in win-win solutions that can unlock concrete and actionable solutions at the intersection of education and climate.

RewirEd Summit at COP28 is where the education and climate sectors will convene under one roof to align strategies and agendas, to collectively champion education transformation for climate action and ensure that our education systems are not only resilient but also responsive to the climate crisis.”



**AMY CLARKE**  
CO-FOUNDER AND CHIEF IMPACT OFFICER,  
TRIBE IMPACT CAPITAL

“Over the past 6 years, extreme weather events have displaced 20,000 children every day. In many circumstances, these children won’t return to the land of their birth. The climate crisis is eroding the very fabric of what they call home. For some, the only home they may ever know, as a climate refugee, will be their passport. This is unacceptable. The investment decisions we make have a direct impact on the future these children face. It is crucial that we all understand the urgent need to support ECW in their work to address the intersection of education, displacement, and the climate crisis. No child should lose their home. No child should be denied the right to an education.”



Nadia, 13, dreams of becoming a doctor one day. She lives and attends school in an internally displaced persons camp in Niger after a flood destroyed her family's home.



# OUR NICHE

## WHY FUND ECW TO RESPOND TO THE CLIMATE CRISIS

As the UN global fund for education in emergencies and protracted crises, ECW is uniquely placed to finance education services for children and adolescents impacted by the intersecting crises of climate change, conflict, and displacement. We fund work in many of the most at-risk countries in the world.

- 1** ECW is the only global fund designed to invest in education, at record speed, on the front lines of conflict, natural hazards, and climate-induced displacement.
- 2** ECW responds to natural hazards to minimize the interruption to learning through First Emergency Response programmes and embeds preparedness and anticipatory action strategies to respond to climate shocks into multi-year resilience programming.
- 3** ECW catalyses political commitments and resources through advocacy and campaigning on the climate crisis.



© UNICEF/Haro

Children at a temporary learning centre in Pakistan. Almost overnight, millions of children in the country lost access to education after 26,000 schools were damaged or destroyed in devastating floods in 2022. The rapid response of ECW-supported partners ensured that crisis-affected girls and boys were able to continue their education.





**HON. AWUT DENG ACUIL**  
MINISTER OF GENERAL EDUCATION AND  
INSTRUCTION, SOUTH SUDAN

“As the Minister for Education, I see every day the impact that the climate crisis is having on the children of South Sudan. Floods and droughts are becoming more intense and more frequent, compounding the other challenges we face as a country such as conflict, displacement, and poverty. Through our new Multi-Year Resilience Programme with Education Cannot Wait (ECW), we are tackling this problem head on, reducing risks, anticipating shocks, and building resilience in our education system.

I urge our donor partners, including those from the private sector and foundations, to give generously to this important appeal so ECW can scale up its response to the climate crisis in South Sudan and around the world.”



**RT. HON. ANDREW MITCHELL**  
UK MINISTER FOR DEVELOPMENT

“For every step we take forward on education, climate change takes us two steps back.

Girls are disproportionately affected by the climate crisis – yet evidence suggests that every additional year of schooling for girls leads to significant improvements in a country’s overall ability to cope with climate-related disasters.

The UK is proud to be a leading donor to ECW. Our support has reached 130,000 children in drought-affected Ethiopia and Somalia, and 80,000 children affected by the floods in Pakistan.

Given the chance, women and girls do extraordinary things. And we are clearly in need of the extraordinary now, to save the one planet we all share.”

# SUPPORTING SCHOOL-BASED DISASTER RISK REDUCTION PROGRAMMES AND CLIMATE-RESILIENT PATHWAYS IN CHAD

In a sixth-grade classroom in southern Chad, a signal rings out: "Gondjé!" When students hear this word, everyone jumps to action. The call is a secret code that warns them of imminent danger such as flash flooding. This is an emergency evacuation drill, conducted as part of the school-based disaster risk reduction programme which aims to prepare students to get out quickly and safely during emergency situations.

Chad faces multidimensional crises, amplified by climate change. Lake Chad has shrunk by over 90% in the last 60 years, and drought, desertification and spiking temperatures are triggering displacements and fueling instability across the region. This classroom drill is a component of ECW's Multi-Year Resilience Programme in Chad that works to increase access to learning by making schools safer.

Along with providing teachers with training on disaster risk reduction and how to introduce it to students and the wider community, ECW also supports school feeding programmes and distance learning opportunities, provides mental health and psychosocial support services and strengthens climate-resilient school infrastructure.

ECW investments in Chad ensure that Rosine and other vulnerable children can continue their education in a safer, stronger and more resilient learning environment.



**In case of a dangerous situation, we now know what to do. The teacher and our [designated] classmate are there to guide us, help us not to be afraid and get us out safely."**

-Rosine, age 13

## CLIMATE PROOFING SCHOOLS IN CHAD – A PATHWAY TOWARDS RESILIENCE

ECW's 'disaster-resilient classrooms' boosted enrolment rates in Chad, under the First Emergency Response programme led by UNHCR. Initially, only 22% of primary-level classrooms in areas targeted by ECW interventions were permanent structures constructed with durable materials. The remaining 78% were made of straw, tarps and wood, rendering them vulnerable to storm damage and destruction. ECW-funded construction completed in March 2022 meant that 62% of classrooms became durable and accessible for children and adolescents with disabilities.

In late 2022, the heaviest rainy season in 30 years triggered widespread flooding across Chad and destroyed all the remaining classrooms built of straw, tarps and wood in ECW target areas. The ECW-funded disaster-resilient classrooms remained intact and proved essential, allowing children to continue their schooling in a safe and secure learning environment without interruption.



With this course, we are prepared. We are now able to guide the children if a disaster that requires evacuation happens.”

–Armand, sixth grade teacher at Gondjé Refugee Camp School

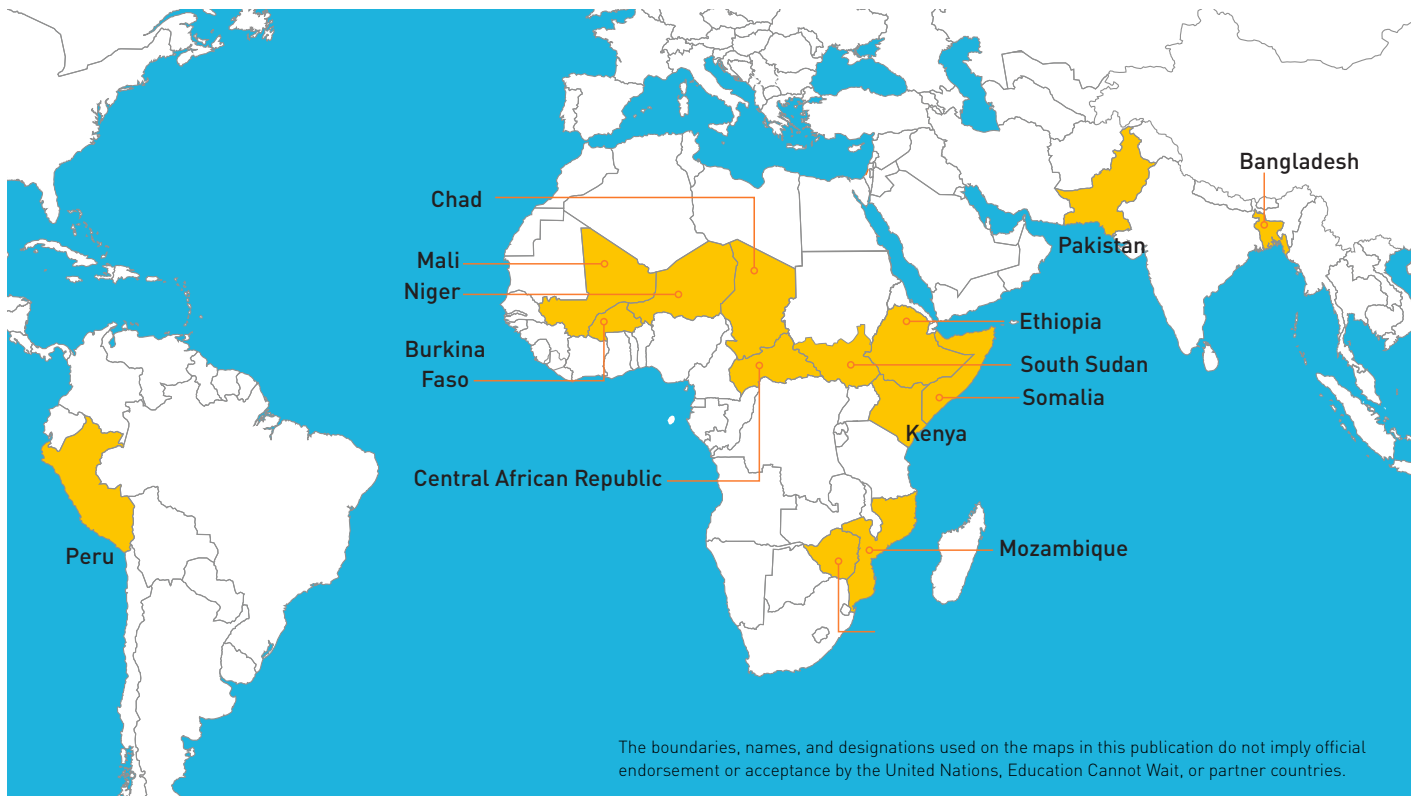


# ECW'S RESPONSE STRATEGY

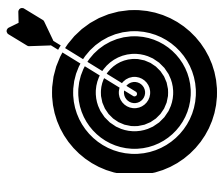
## HOW WILL FUNDS BE SPENT?

New and additional funds mobilised through this emergency appeal will contribute to ECW's 2023-2026 Case for Investment and support the implementation of ECW's 2023-2026 Strategic Plan by scaling up support to 2 million children and adolescents adversely impacted by climate hazards and shocks.

ECW's Investments To-Date For Which Addressing Climate Change Is Either A Principal Or Significant Objective







New funding will support ECW to accelerate its response and support holistic gender-responsive and inclusive education services for an additional 2 million children and adolescents adversely impacted by climate hazards and shocks.



## First Emergency Response

**\$32 per child -  
Cost to get a child back  
into education after an  
acute natural hazard for  
6-12 months**

- Minimise disruption to learning and loss of learning
- Protection and psychosocial support
- Teacher support
- Gender equality and disability inclusion
- Safe learning environments



## Multi-Year Resilience Programmes

**\$130 per child -  
Cost to keep a child  
learning for three years in  
a protracted crisis impacted  
by climate hazards**

All multi-year investments will be climate responsive. MYRPs generally include a mix of:

### 1. Direct delivery of education provision through:

- Sustained access to quality learning opportunities
- Protection and psychosocial services and support
- Teacher training and incentives
- Safe learning environments
- Sanitation and hygiene

### 2. System strengthening interventions such as:

- Disaster risk management and reduction
- Anticipatory action, including supporting systems to anticipate and prepare for recurring flood and drought cycles
- Improved learning outcomes and transitions between grades and from non-formal to formal education
- Gender equality and disability inclusion
- School management and administration support
- Inclusion of refugees in national systems
- School reconstruction and rehabilitation in line with climate resilient standards

## SPECIFICALLY, ECW WILL USE ADDITIONAL FUNDS TO SUPPORT:



### Learning continuity

When climate disasters disrupt education, the first priority is to ensure that children can continue to learn, even if their school is closed. Keeping children in school also helps to keep them safe. ECW supports a variety of programmes in the early stages of emergency response to minimise learning loss, such as accelerated learning programmes and catch-up classes for children who have missed school, and appropriate teaching and learning materials. We are also trialling evidence-based approaches such as Teaching at the Right Level for children displaced by climate related factors. ECW also supports the development of alternative learning spaces, such as community learning centers and mobile classrooms, so that children can continue to learn even if their school is damaged or destroyed.



### Mental health and psychosocial support

Climate disasters can have a significant impact on the mental health and well-being of children and teachers, sometimes inducing trauma, grief, and anxiety. ECW supports a variety of mental health and psychosocial support programmes to help children, teachers and families cope with the effects of climate disasters and rebuild their lives. These programmes can include counselling, support groups, play-based activities, and referral services to specialized care.



### School rehabilitation

Climate disasters such as floods, tropical cyclones, and associated landslides can destroy school infrastructure and teaching and learning resources. This can have a devastating impact on children's education, as they may be forced to miss school for weeks or even months while their school is being repaired or rebuilt. ECW's investments in school rehabilitation help to ensure that children impacted by climate hazards can continue to access education in a safe, protective and inclusive environment. In areas that are prone to recurring climate disasters, rehabilitation should help to make school buildings more resilient to these threats.



### Child protection and gender-based violence prevention and risk mitigation

Climate disasters can increase the risk of violence and exploitation against children, including gender-based violence (GBV). ECW supports education actors to refer children at risk or survivors of violence, abuse, exploitation – including GBV – to child protection and GBV specialized actors. ECW works on prevention of violence, including GBV, with children, teachers, and caregivers. ECW supports systematic GBV risk mitigation in all its investments.



## Water, sanitation and hygiene

Access to clean water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) is essential for children's health and well-being, especially for adolescent girls. Climate disasters can often damage or destroy water and sanitation systems, putting children at risk of waterborne diseases. ECW supports WASH programmes to provide children with access to clean water and sanitation, even in emergency contexts.



## Disaster risk reduction

Disaster risk reduction (DRR) is about reducing the risk of disasters and their impact on communities. ECW supports DRR programmes in schools and communities to help them prepare for and respond to climate disasters. These programmes may include the distribution of disaster preparedness kits as well as training teachers to deliver lessons on early warning systems, evacuation procedures, and environmental protection.



## Anticipatory action

Anticipatory action is about taking steps to reduce the impact of a disaster before it happens. ECW supports anticipatory action programmes to help schools, communities and education systems prepare for climate disasters, including slow on-set disasters like droughts. These programmes may include pre-positioning of emergency supplies, early warning systems, innovative approaches, and implementing other actions such as school feeding to act early and stop children from dropping out of school.



## Crisis modifiers

In South Sudan, ECW has built in a crisis modifier to its new multi-year programme. This means that ECW partners have money set aside to be able to respond quickly and flexibly to new emergencies – including those driven by climate change. ECW wants to scale up crisis modifiers to support partners to respond quickly to the rapidly unfolding climate crisis.



## Supporting education coordination systems to be ready to respond to climate disasters and displacement

ECW works closely with the education cluster and UNHCR at global and country level to strengthen the preparedness of education and protection systems to be prepared for future emergencies. This includes developing preparedness plans for the cluster – including national partners so everyone knows their roles and responsibilities in the event of a new climate emergency, pre-positioning emergency supplies, setting up contingency plans, and preparing governments and partners – especially in urban areas – for mass displacement.

**All of these interventions are essential for ensuring that children in contexts affected by climate disasters can continue to access education. By investing in these interventions, ECW is helping to support more resilient education systems that can withstand the challenges posed by climate change.**



Mariano Abdala, 13, stands inside the ruins of her school in Mozambique. Along with her school, her family home was also destroyed during Cyclone Gombe.





The Private Sector, Foundations and Philanthropists

# HOW CAN YOU HELP?



## MAKE A FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTION.

This is the most direct and effective way to support our work.



## EXPLORE INNOVATIVE FINANCING SOLUTIONS.

ECW is working with banks and impact investors to pioneer new ways for businesses to support children on the front lines of the climate crisis. For example, we have partnered with Zürcher Kantonalbank to manage a sustainable investment fund.



## SPREAD THE WORD ABOUT ECW.

Share our social media posts, attend our events, and talk to your friends and colleagues about our work. You can reinforce ECW's value and impact with industry peers, partners, government representatives, employees and consumers, and help us reach new audiences.

To learn more about the ways that your organization can support ECW's work, including how to make a financial contribution and align commitments with the OECD's Rio markers, please contact ECW Secretariat ([info@un-ecw.org](mailto:info@un-ecw.org))



ECW's support in Ethiopia ensures girls stay in school despite the worst drought in four decades. School meals, clean water and sanitation facilities, awareness campaigns, teacher training, and non-formal and remedial classes help out-of-school children return to learning and stay in school.





**About Education Cannot Wait (ECW):**

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Additional information is available  
at [www.educationcannotwait.org](http://www.educationcannotwait.org)  
Contact: [info@un-ecw.org](mailto:info@un-ecw.org)

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