GENDER EQUALITY AND EQUITY

FACT SHEET
JANUARY 2019

OVERVIEW

By 2021, Education Cannot Wait aims to reach 8.9 million children and youth living in areas affected by fragility, conflict and violence. Half of them will be girls. In all, this means reaching over 4.4 million girls living in some of the worst conditions on the planet with safe, reliable education, gender-responsive multi-year educational resilience programming, and the support and resources they need to thrive.

Education is a human right that often goes unfulfilled when crisis hits. While crises don’t necessarily ‘pick their victims’ based on gender, the effects of gender inequality are often magnified. Recent analysis indicates that worldwide around 39 million girls are out of school, or have had their education disrupted, because of war and disaster.

The social-cultural expectations and customs that already exist in these communities often heighten gender discrimination and continue to perpetuate unequal education opportunities. This means girls can’t go to school. It means girls are at increased risk of sexual violence and exploitation. It means girls lose their voice. And when girls lose their voice, our work to build a more equal, more peaceful world as outlined in the Sustainable Development Goals begins to unravel.

CHALLENGES AND LONG-TERM REPERCUSSIONS

Limited resources results in differential treatment. Conflict areas often lack the trained female teaching staff and teaching materials needed to enroll and retain girls and ensure their success. Limited resources at home – along with complex socio-cultural constructs – sometimes means boys are allowed to go to school while girls stay home.

Children and youth in crises are more susceptible to gender-based violence. With an increase in insecurity, girls and boys face an increased likelihood of human smuggling and trafficking as well as gender-specific violence. While girls are more likely to experience sexual assault, child marriage, early child birth and school attacks, boys are more at risk of being recruited as child soldiers.

Living in crisis settings has on-going psychosocial effects. For both girls and boys, lack of education and the scars of war undermine hope, skills training and future employability.

Perpetuating cycles of violence, poverty and inequality. Limited access to education – for both girls and boys – perpetuates poverty traps, undermines efforts to ensure gender equality, and can extend cycles of violence across generations.

"I fled my village, Niem Yelewa, when the war started there. I lost a lot of time and when I started school again here, I was late, the others had already been in school for a while, so I have to work hard to catch up".

—Adamou Rodina, 13, stands in front of her ECW-supported classroom in Bouar’s prefectureale school.
To empower girls and adolescent girls, Education Cannot Wait is strengthening equity and gender equality, increasing access to education, promoting safe and protective learning environments, improving learning and skills for teachers, and ensuring greater continuity and sustainability for gender-responsive education responses in crisis settings. This means:

- Collecting and analyzing data to identify gaps and opportunities, track progress and results, and act upon evidence to increase accountability.
- Supporting cash transfers, school feeding and other in-kind supports to remove barriers to girls’ education.
- Investing in preventing attacks on educational institutions, improving school infrastructure, safe transportation, and strengthening mechanisms of prevention and protection against gender-based violence, exploitation, bullying and corporal punishment.
- Investing in gender-responsive curricula and teaching practices including social and emotional learning and life skills; and supporting the training and hiring of female teachers.
- Supporting action that increases girls’ enrolment in secondary school, re-integrates girls and boys who have dropped out of school, reduces forced and early marriage and early pregnancy, and provides adolescent sexual and reproductive health services and resources.

### CONCRETE ACTIONS, CONCRETE RESULTS

#### Afghanistan – Increasing girls’ school enrolment rate

By developing community-based classrooms, recruiting female teachers, providing trainings on gender-responsive teaching, and building gender-sensitive school water and sanitation facilities, the Education Cannot Wait emergency response programme has focused on improving girls’ access to education. So far, 60 per cent of all children reached by Education Cannot Wait’s interventions are girls, while nationwide, girls represent only 39 per cent of primary level school enrolment. The approval of a US$150 million multi-year programme supported by Education Cannot Wait’s catalytic $15 million in seed funding is an opportunity for Afghanistan to continue to make positive strides in education access and equity, and reach 500,000 children, half of whom will be girls.

#### Uganda – Providing education to refugee children

In a coordinated effort with relief agencies, the United Nations and other relevant actors including Education Cannot Wait, the Government of Uganda developed a 3.5-year Education Response Plan for Refugees and Host Communities in Uganda which received a catalytic US$11 million in seed funding from Education Cannot Wait. The comprehensive programme looks to raise a total of US$389 million to reach more than 560,000 refugee and host community children and youth – half of whom will be girls.

#### Reaching 100,000 girls in the Lake Chad region

In the Lake Chad Region, where 3.5 million children are at risk and violent attacks on girls, forced marriages and abductions are commonplace, Education Cannot Wait has already reached over 100,000 girls through its initial 2-year investment.

### BY THE NUMBERS

- **2.5X**
  
  Girls in crisis settings are 2.5 times more likely to be out of primary school than boys

- **90%**
  
  Girls living in crisis are 90% more likely to be out of secondary school than those living in countries where there is no crisis

- **39 million**
  
  Analysis from 2015 indicates that 39 million girls were out of school or had their education disrupted because of war and disaster

- **4.4 million**
  
  Number of girls Education Cannot Wait strives to reach by 2021