

Education Cannot Wait

Reprogramming Multi-Year Resilience Programme (MYRP) Funding in the context of COVID-19 Guidance Note

April 2020

Purpose

Education Cannot Wait has two windows for responding to countries in crisis. The First Emergency Response (FER) window is designed to respond rapidly to a sudden onset crisis or when there is an escalation of an ongoing crisis. The Multi-Year Resilience Programme (MYRP) window, on the other hand, emphasizes multi-year recovery interventions aimed at sustainability. The latter window makes up the bulk of ECW's investments and focusses on humanitarian-development coherence and joint programming.

In the case of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, ECW has made substantial FER investments to address the urgent needs in countries following school closures. Beyond this rapid response, there is also a need for medium to longer-term MYRP interventions to enable children affected by COVID-19 to return to more resilient and better prepared Education systems once schools re-open.

In this regard, ECW allows existing MYRP grantees (UN agencies and non-governmental organizations) to reprogram to respond to these evolving longer-term needs due to the COVID-19 pandemic, under the leadership of in-country Governments. This note outlines guidance on how ECW Grantees and in-country partners should reprogram existing MYRP financing in the context of the COVID-19 crisis.

Principles

In relation to requests for reprogramming MYRP interventions, it is important for in-country partners to consider the following principles:

1. **Validate the need for reprogramming.** Ensure first and foremost that reprogramming activities is indeed required. The FER grants which have been provided to support COVID-19 responses aim to safeguard current MYRP investments so that previously planned recovery and development activities can proceed once the situation normalizes. However, if current partners deem it necessary nonetheless to reprogram MYRP funding, ECW stands ready to support these efforts.
2. **Ensure linkages with other financing sources.** Reprogramming should link with interventions supported under the FER COVID-19 grants where possible. Where appropriate, efforts should be made to ensure a continuity of work initiated/supported by the FER grants so that these investments can be sustained. All reprogramming of MYRPs should also align with national COVID-19 strategies and updated Humanitarian Response Plans and government COVID-19 plans and ensure synergies with interventions to be supported by other donors.
3. **Maintain the focus on existing target populations.** All reprogramming should retain the focus on ECW target populations to ensure that refugees, internally displaced people and host communities are not further marginalized by the impact of COVID-19. In addition, all reprogramming should support gender-responsive interventions, with 60% of beneficiaries being girls, and children with disabilities.

4. **Utilize existing coordination mechanisms.** The process of reprogramming should be undertaken in a transparent and participative way in collaboration with the relevant in-country coordination mechanisms as per the development of the original MYRP. This will include Education Clusters, Education in Emergencies Working Groups and Refugee Coordination bodies as well as Local Education Groups.
5. **Consider new grantees if necessary.** The process of redesigning the MYRP may result in interventions which lend themselves to a different configuration of grantees which can better deliver the revised programme. Thus in-country partners should, if necessary, consider selecting new grantees to be proposed to ECW.

Process

To facilitate a simple and effective process for reprogramming funds, ECW has adopted the following exceptional measures:

- The ceiling for changes in amounts between budget lines to support existing interventions without needing prior authorization from ECW has been raised to 30%.
- In cases where new strategies/interventions are proposed and/or the budget changes surpass the 30% ceiling, a reprogramming request form should be submitted to the ECW Secretariat. A simplified form has been developed specifically for this purpose. More specific guidance on completing this form, how these requests will be approved and the timelines for this process will be issued by the ECW Secretariat in early May.

Potential Intervention areas for re-programming

Programmatically, while the solutions will depend on each country context, ECW considers the following potential interventions and entry points to be relevant for MYRP re-programming:

1. **Strengthen systems for remote learning opportunities.** Less than 25 percent of low-income countries currently provide any type of remote learning, and of these, the majority are using TV and radio.¹ In contrast, close to 90 percent of high-income countries are providing remote learning opportunities, nearly all of which are provided online. In sub-Saharan Africa, only 11 percent of countries rely on online opportunities following COVID-19, and only 23 percent use a combination of online and broadcast. MYRPs can support national partners to develop inclusive and interactive TV and Radio education solutions. The latter should meet child-friendly education standards and include messaging on safe distance learning as well as providing tools and platforms for children and teachers to address feedback. Such upgrading of the education services on offer would also provide an opportunity to train teachers in IT and give them access to pre-packaged lesson plans and contents.
2. **Accelerated learning solutions.** As ECW works to ensure humanitarian and development coherence, the MYRPs can incorporate compressed curricula as a new standard to reintegrate children whose education has been interrupted. A common post-closure scenario in several countries is one with many children of the same age having reached different levels of proficiency. MYRPs work to adapt existing accelerated curricula and testing procedures to the reality of such scenarios, advocating for more flexible systems of reintegration and certification.

¹ *Vegas, Emiliana: School closures, government responses, and learning inequality around the world during COVID-19, Brookings, April 14, 2020*

3. **Preparedness and Disaster Risk Reduction.** The post-pandemic reality calls for a closer monitoring of school closures and dropouts, offering MYRPs an opportunity to buttress Education Management Information Systems (EMIS) in crisis-affected countries as well as preparedness and disaster-risk reduction strategies.
4. **Support to families to send their children back to schools.** To ensure that children return to schools once they re-open, MYRPs consider back-to-school campaigns and interventions to support livelihoods to cover the costs of education including through cash and voucher assistance initiatives.
5. **Water, Sanitation and Hygiene.** A key requirement for preventing the spread of COVID19 handwashing, and hygiene more generally. ECW investments strengthen the programming components related to Water, Sanitation and Hygiene in targeted learning facilities. This includes both the provision of facilities, such as functioning toilets and handwashing facilities with soap, as well as awareness campaigns and life skills education programmes to ensure proper hygiene is practiced.
6. **Integrate mental-health and psycho-social support (MHPSS).** ECW has seen this time of rapid transition as an opportunity to build grantees' awareness of, and commitment to, MHPSS as part and parcel of education in emergencies. Existing MHPSS interventions in its MYRPs are strengthened and adapted for delivery at distance. These adaptations build on the initial interventions from the FER investments. They include socio-emotional learning as a key component of distance learning; counseling and psycho-social support provided via phone/video/online platforms; guidance and messaging for teachers and parents to promote children/youth's wellbeing at home; teacher trainings on their own self-care and wellbeing; referral pathways to health and child protection to be established and better communicated; and child protection and education sectors to combine their forces to support marginalized children/youth more holistically.
7. **Ensure gender-responsive programming.** To translate ECW's commitment to gender equality into reality on the ground, ECW requires all grantees to target approaches for girls and most marginalized children. This includes children and adolescents with disabilities are reflected in any reprogramming request based on gender analyses that identifies differentiated needs, threats and opportunities for interventions. For example, in implementing continuous learning strategies, partners must evaluate how girls' caregiving roles or their lack of access to digital technology and skills associated with the use of such technology may exclude them from these opportunities. In addition, reprogramming should ensure continuity of education for children with disabilities through special education programs, training of teachers and accessible and safe learning for these children. ECW also requires grantees to explore how to provide safe remote mental health and psychosocial support to girls, including to help prevent and address sexual violence.

In exploring MYRP reprogramming in the above areas, ECW **develops and tests innovative solutions** to the novel challenges COVID-19 brings for all of us. ECW believes that this period of rapid and profound change can be a catalyst for system change, providing us with an opportunity to strengthen education systems in a lasting way. Strengthening and integrating remote flexible learning solutions into the existing Education systems may provide solutions for children who drop out for extended periods during each school year due to harvesting and/or attacks against schools.

To ensure that such changes are guided by quality evidence, ECW also engages in partnerships with key actors for **cross-country research and evaluation initiatives** on the above programmatic areas.