



**EDUCATION  
CANNOT  
WAIT**

The global fund for education in emergencies

**EXECUTIVE  
SUMMARY**



**2020 ANNUAL RESULTS REPORT**

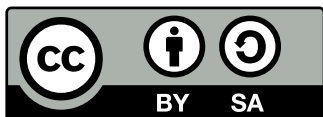
**WINNING THE  
HUMAN RACE**

#### ABOUT THIS PUBLICATION

This report was elaborated under the direction of the Education Cannot Wait (ECW) Secretariat, with contributions from the ECW Executive Committee, grant recipients, and constituents of the ECW High-Level Steering Group. The report covers the period from 1 January to 31 December 2020.

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Education Cannot Wait, July 2021



#### ABOUT EDUCATION CANNOT WAIT (ECW)

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. We urgently appeal to public- and private-sector donors for US\$1 billion to reach even more crisis-affected girls and boys. 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.

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# **WINNING THE HUMAN RACE**

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2020, Education Cannot Wait and its partners acted to continue the Education of millions of children and adolescents affected by the Covid-19 pandemic, conflict and crisis.

The COVID-19 pandemic devastated education systems throughout the world in 2020, making the year exceptionally challenging for children and adolescents already left furthest behind due to armed conflict, climate-induced disaster or forced displacement. The pandemic acted as a risk-multiplier, as it not only created new challenges but also amplified existing risks for the most vulnerable groups, particularly girls and children and adolescents with disabilities. UNESCO estimated that globally, 1.5 billion students, from pre-primary to upper-secondary levels, experienced some sort of learning interruption as a result of school closures in early 2020.<sup>1</sup> This learning loss will only aggravate the pre-pandemic rate of learning poverty, affecting 53 per cent of children in low- and middle-income countries who by 10 years of age could not read or understand a simple text.<sup>2</sup>

Shortly after the World Health Organization declared a global pandemic, on 11 March 2020, Education Cannot Wait responded rapidly and decisively to the crisis, initiating a substantive package of grants targeting all countries with ongoing ECW investment. US\$23.0 million was mobilized from the First Emergency Response (FER) reserve within 21 days, and a further US\$22.4 million was approved in July 2020 – a total of US\$45.4 million. This funding was distributed across 85 grants in 32 countries and contexts to minimize the impact on education in crisis-affected areas and ensure children and adolescents were able to continue learning.

Funds from over 75 per cent of COVID-19 FERs were sent to partners within eight weeks, making this ECW's most rapid disbursement of funds to date. As a result, over 29 million crisis-affected children and adolescents (51 per cent girls) were reached and supported with distance-learning opportunities, COVID-19 awareness activities, and health and

hygiene products in 2020. In addition, over 300,000 teachers (55 per cent female) were trained on how to facilitate distance learning, adhere to and implement COVID-19 protocols, and promote health and hygiene standards.

These successes amid a global pandemic are testament to ECW's mandate and the resilience of the fund, its partners and the communities, children and adolescents they serve. The systems and support structures that have emerged after COVID-19 will remain a critical tool in enabling children and adolescents to continue their studies when schools are being attacked, damaged or made inaccessible due to conflict, crisis, disaster or future pandemics. Efforts by partners and grantees are guided by Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4, and align with ECW's focus on ensuring that the children and adolescents left furthest behind can access and enjoy their right to a quality and safe education.

1 United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, 'Education: From disruption to recovery', <<https://en.unesco.org/covid19/educationresponse>>, accessed 6 July 2021.

2 World Bank, 'COVID-19 could lead to permanent loss in learning and trillions of dollars in lost earnings', Press release, World Bank, Washington, D.C., 18 June 2020, <[www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2020/06/18/covid-19-could-lead-to-permanent-loss-in-learning-and-trillions-of-dollars-in-lost-earnings](http://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2020/06/18/covid-19-could-lead-to-permanent-loss-in-learning-and-trillions-of-dollars-in-lost-earnings)>, accessed 6 July 2021.

Despite the pandemic, ECW maintained its focus on addressing the education needs of children and adolescents in protracted crises and, in line with its Strategic Plan 2018–2022, approved an additional eight new Multi-Year Resilience Programmes (MYRPs), bringing the total to 18 at the end of 2020. In addition, four existing MYRPs re-programmed their funds to respond quickly to COVID-19 challenges that the education sector faced.<sup>3</sup>

In 2020, ECW distributed US\$138 million to 29 grantees in 33 countries (US\$69 million via FERs [including COVID-19 FERs], US\$62 million via MYRPs and US\$6.5 million via the Acceleration Facility) in order to scale innovations and build institutional capacity for coordination within the education in emergencies and protracted crisis (EiEPC) sector.

Regular, non-COVID-19 grants active in 2020 reached more than **2.6 million children and adolescents (48 per cent girls)**, bringing the total number of children and adolescents reached since ECW's inception in 2016 to nearly **4.6 million (48 per cent girls)**. ECW mobilized US\$91.9 million in 2020 from both public and private sources, for a total of US\$684.5 million mobilized globally since 2016. In addition, ECW and its partners leveraged US\$1 billion in 10 MYRP countries.<sup>4</sup>

**TABLE 1. Cumulative key results since ECW's inception, 2017–2020**

INDICATORS	RESULT 2017	RESULT 2018	RESULT 2019	RESULT 2020
Number of children reached with ECW support	<b>0.7 MILLION</b>	<b>1.4 MILLION</b>	<b>3.5 MILLION</b>	<b>4.6 MILLION</b>
Resources mobilized for ECW trust fund and leveraged in MYRPs	<b>US\$173.5 MILLION</b> mobilized for ECW trust fund	<b>US\$329.2 MILLION</b> mobilized for ECW trust fund	<b>US\$712.6 MILLION</b> (US\$592.6 million for ECW trust fund + US\$120.0 million leveraged in six MYRPs)	<b>US\$1,717.0 MILLION</b> (US\$684.5 million mobilized for ECW trust fund + US\$1,032.5 million leveraged in 10 MYRPs)
Number of grants	<b>42</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>139</b>	<b>167</b> (256 including grants for COVID-19 interventions)

<sup>3</sup> Afghanistan, Chad, State of Palestine, and Uganda.

<sup>4</sup> 'Leveraged funds' are defined as existing and new country programme funding in response to the needs of MYRP target populations, aligned with MYRP outcomes and coordinated with MYRP partners through the relevant coordination mechanisms.



# ECW'S MANDATE IS ARTICULATED AROUND FIVE CORE 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.

*A summary of the results of these core functions is presented below.*

**ECW's mandate supports SDG 4, which aims to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.**

## 1./2. INSPIRE POLITICAL SUPPORT AND FINANCING

Over the years, ECW has grown into an established global fund with a proven ability to deliver programmes in conflict and crisis contexts. ECW offers governments, multilateral institutions and the private sector an opportunity to finance comprehensive education programmes for children and adolescents, from the onset of crisis through recovery phases. As a programme model, it requires a crisis-sensitive, context-specific approach and the use of existing coordination structures designed to deliver assistance in countries and contexts affected by armed conflict, forced displacement and climate-induced disasters. All this work requires high-level political support and significant education financing.

### Advocating for increased financing for education

continues to be one of the most important components of ECW's mandate, aimed at accelerating progress towards SDG 4. The COVID-19 pandemic brought the importance of education to the fore, yet it also negatively affected both overseas development assistance (ODA) and humanitarian funding for education. Despite the worrying global trends, ECW was able to maintain its funding performance thanks to strengthened partner engagement and influence, including through its Executive Committee and High-Level Steering Group.

Strategic partnerships continue to be a critical component to advancing the SDG 4 agenda. ECW

has become a 'go-to' organization for innovation and creativity, supporting groundbreaking initiatives through its Acceleration Facility, exploring new partnerships and adapting areas of focus, such as digital connectivity and climate action. It has also expanded its private-sector engagement with new and scaled-up support from corporate and philanthropic partners, including the LEGO Foundation, Porticus and Verizon.

With no end to the pandemic in sight during 2020, the need for **increased political support** for EiEPC became ever more obvious. ECW firmly positioned itself as a global reference for EiEPC and established its expertise in delivering education programmes during crises. In the same vein, ECW and its partners repositioned EiEPC as a priority within the broader United Nations system. ECW gathered additional political support for EiEPC through its collaboration with other education actors, including the Education Commission, the Global Partnership for Education (GPE), the International Finance Facility for Education (IFFEd), UNESCO, UNHCR, UNICEF and the World Food Programme, along with a broad inclusion of international CSOs, including AVSI, the International Rescue Committee, the Jesuit Refugee Service, the Norwegian Refugee Council, Plan International, Save the Children and Theirworld, as well as local CSOs, and global initiatives such as the Global Campaign for Education and Save our Future.

## 3. IMPROVE JOINT PLANNING AND TIMELY RESPONSE

ECW developed eight new **Multi-Year Resilience Programmes (MYRPs)** in 2020,<sup>5</sup> all of which included a more strategic focus and a 'whole-of-child' approach (see Strategic Objective 3, in Part I of the complete report). ECW also enhanced MYRP development processes by strengthening their alignment to existing national policies and strategies, placing greater emphasis on their use in mobilizing resources and ensuring that they are results-based and risk-informed. Some 75 per cent of MYRPs developed during the year were based on a good quality process, meaning that they scored above 4 on a 5-point scale.

ECW's **First Emergency Response (FER)** grants exist to respond rapidly to new and escalating humanitarian crises, and in 2020, ECW established a new FER grant mechanism to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. In its continued commitment to rapid response, ECW reported its most timely deployment of funds yet in 2020, with 76 per cent of sudden-onset crisis FERs (including COVID-19 FERs) and 58 per cent of all FERs disbursed within eight weeks.<sup>6</sup> Similarly, the timeliness of MYRPs increased to 71 per cent in 2020 due to the implementation of a lighter, more strategic approach to programme development and approval.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Burkina Faso, Colombia, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ecuador, Mali, Niger, Nigeria and Peru.

<sup>6</sup> In 2019, 50 per cent of sudden-onset crisis FERs and 14 per cent of all FERs were disbursed within eight weeks.

<sup>7</sup> No MYRPs were disbursed within eight weeks in 2019.



## 4. STRENGTHEN CAPACITY TO RESPOND

Strengthening EiEPC coordination mechanisms for efficiency, transparency and accountability is one of ECW's core strategic objectives. ECW continued its collaboration and support to **improve the response and coordination capacity** of the Global Education Cluster (GEC), the Inter-agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE) and UNHCR. In response to COVID-19, the GEC scaled up remote support to coordinate, develop and consult members of the education clusters through its help desk, distance support, rapid

response teams and online coordination trainings. ECW's financial absorption capacity increased to 95 per cent across its investment portfolio. Some 55 per cent of second- and third-generation MYRPs had cash-transfer components for households, caregivers or 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 implementers thus building in-country response capacity.

## 5. IMPROVE EVIDENCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY

In all its investment windows, ECW supports partners in the **use of good-quality evidence** to inform programmes throughout the programming cycle. At the programme development stage, ECW emphasizes the use of good-quality data and evidence to identify the children and adolescents most in need, pinpoint their specific needs and assess the crisis context. An external review and analysis of eight MYRP applications developed in 2020 showed that 63 per cent (against a target of 60 per cent) used good-quality data and evidence that were timely, cross-sectoral, disaggregated, conflict-sensitive and gender/equity-specific.

To generate good-quality evidence for planning, ECW worked closely with the GEC to provide support to ECW grantees in conducting needs assessments for the development of MYRPs in Colombia, Iraq and Somalia in 2020. The GEC also supported secondary data reviews in eight MYRP countries/contexts: Afghanistan, Burkina Faso, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, the State of Palestine, Sudan, Venezuela and Yemen. Rapid response teams supported country teams in the Sahel, the Regional Education Working Group for Latin America and the Caribbean, and the Iraq education cluster.

At the programme implementation phase, ECW supports the use of data and evidence to assess and evaluate **progress towards targets**, working with partners to strengthen the measurement and tracking of outcome-level results. ECW launched a multi-year initiative to measure holistic learning outcomes, with a particular emphasis on the integration and analysis of social and emotional learning. A pilot programme in five countries from 2020 to 2022 will develop, test and document fit-for-purpose solutions for measuring holistic learning outcomes of children in crisis-affected countries, which is a new requirement for all MYRPs.

An evaluation of the FER investment modality completed in 2020 found that the FERs were relevant to EiE needs, particularly when used in rapid-onset and escalating emergencies, and confirmed the FER model's proof of concept and the validity of its theory of change.

# COLLECTIVE EDUCATION OUTCOMES

At beneficiary level, the work done by ECW and its many partners is grouped around five collective education outcome areas:

- Increased access
- Equity and gender equality
- Greater continuity
- Improved learning and skills
- Safe and protective learning



In 2020, widespread closure of schools due to the COVID-19 pandemic affected **access to education**. ECW partners responded by setting up home-based and distance-learning programmes, which allowed 10.2 million children and adolescents (48 per cent girls) the opportunity to continue their education despite school closures. Learning materials to promote learning at home, designed for either self-learning or to be used by caregivers and visiting teachers, were also provided. Distance-learning programmes adopted strategies to leverage technology for remote learning through radio, television and the Internet. In Bangladesh, for example, ECW supported a shift in programme focus to home-based, caregiver-led education, eventually supporting 61,307 learners. Parents and caregivers were provided with learning materials covering basic numeracy, literacy and life skills and supported by Rohingya volunteer teachers to engage children in education activities for at least two hours a day. Some adolescents were enrolled in online courses on the Coursera and EdX learning platforms.

Of the 98 grants that reported results on access to education in 2020, 96 per cent of programmes increased access to education for crisis-affected children and adolescents. To promote access, ECW-supported interventions sought to increase the number of learning spaces available to children by rehabilitating existing classrooms, building new temporary or permanent spaces, and equipping spaces with furniture, teaching and learning materials, and WASH facilities. In 2020, ECW funding allowed for the building and/or rehabilitation of 1,743 classrooms. ECW recognizes the vital role of teachers in the education system and in 2020 recruited and financially supported 12,182 teachers (39 per cent female). Targeted mobilization and sensitization campaigns to increase school enrolment were conducted.

Global commitments to education continue to underscore the importance of enabling inclusive,

equitable and equal education for all boys, girls and adolescents, irrespective of the barriers they face in accessing education.

**Gender equality and girls' education in emergencies and protracted crises** are at the forefront of ECW's mandate. To fulfil its commitments on gender, ECW set an ambitious 2020 target of reaching 60 per cent of girls in all its investments.<sup>8</sup> For all active grants in 2020, ECW reached 1.27 million girls (48 per cent of children/adolescents reached), which is roughly the same number and percentage as in 2019. Since ECW's inception, a cumulative total of 2.2 million girls have been reached through its regular programming. ECW's US\$45.4 million COVID-19 FER investment and MYRPs re-programmed in response to the pandemic reached 14.8 million girls (51 per cent of children/adolescents reached) with distance-learning interventions and health and hygiene messaging and products.

In 2020, 13 grantees (18 per cent) reported strong evidence (with two measurements) of having improved access to education for girls in six countries. Partial evidence (with one measurement) was reported for a further 55 grantees (76 per cent) operating in 20 countries. Three MYRP grants, across Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Uganda, reported fewer girls accessing education compared to 2019, largely due to the COVID-19 crisis that forced schools to close, creating re-enrolment challenges.

In terms of learning, several programmes reported data indicating positive achievement for girls compared to boys. In Somalia and Uganda, girls generally performed as well as boys or outperformed them. In Somalia, 1.5 per cent fewer girls than boys achieved the top grades in reading; girls were 6.5 per cent less likely than boys to achieve the lowest grades in reading and 10.3 per cent less likely to achieve the lowest grades in numeracy, indicating that on average, girls in school or other safe education spaces are learning more than boys.

<sup>8</sup> The target is in consideration of any pre-existing gender gaps that shape the demographics of learners and teacher/education personnel in several crisis-affected countries and regions. Exceptionally in some contexts, there may be no rationale to target 60 per cent girls in consideration of baseline information concerning school-age children in the areas of intervention.

In 2020, ECW stepped up efforts to systematically enhance inclusive education through its investments. Since its inception, ECW has reached 51,501 children with disabilities (46 per cent girls), which represents just over 1.1 per cent of ECW's total reach. The figure is below the 10 per cent ambition, but it is a considerable improvement over the 0.2 per cent of ECW's total reach at the end of 2019.

**Continuity of education** in conflict and crisis settings is a significant issue. Having children and adolescents start school, stay in school and transition from one level to another requires stability and continued support with predictable funding, such as that provided through ECW's MYRPs. In 2020, ECW diversified the age groups and education levels it supported. Of all children and adolescents reached with ECW support since inception, the share of children reached with secondary education increased from 9 per cent by the end of 2019 to 13 per cent (329,397; 48 per cent girls) by the end of 2020. ECW reached 275,049 children (51 per cent girls) with early childhood education (ECE) or pre-primary education interventions by the end of 2020 – more than doubling the 108,330 children (52 per cent girls) reached at the end of 2019. ECW increased its investment in ECE from 8.7 per cent of total cumulative investment by the end of 2019 (US\$19.6 million) to 11.5 per cent by the end of 2020 (US\$59.5 million).

At the same time, children in school received remedial education and catch-up programmes to prevent them from dropping out. These efforts were supplemented by awareness campaigns that highlighted the importance of completing schooling and informed families about school feeding programmes, an added incentive to send their children to school. In 2020, 163,938 children and adolescents (46 per cent girls) were supported through school feeding programmes in 19 ECW-supported interventions.

ECW supported 10,243,871 of the hardest-to-reach children and adolescents (48 per cent girls) to continue their education through distance learning as a response to the COVID-19 pandemic all over the

world. To facilitate this, teachers (55 per cent female) were trained in the use of distance-learning applications and developed their capacity to guide learners using such applications through radio, television, social media communications and messaging platforms, including WhatsApp. In addition, 292,171 teachers and other education personnel (55 per cent female) were trained to observe COVID-19 protocols when making home visits and when learners returned to school after closures.

ECW implemented a host of non-formal education interventions to ensure that out-of-school children could continue to access education. Accelerated education programmes (AEPs) provide learners with an equivalent level of educational achievement, taught using a compressed curriculum and methods that match children's level of knowledge, skills and competencies. AEPs are often certified. They are conducted within a shorter time span than formal education, and give over-age, out-of-school children a chance to catch up with their peers and reintegrate into the formal education system, at a suitable level for their age, or be transferred to the next level, usually the secondary-school level. In Somalia, for example, a significant number of IDP children who enrolled in school were over-age and/or had never attended school; they were offered the Alternative Basic Education (ABE) accelerated curriculum in order to catch up and adjust to formal schooling. For active grants in 2020, an average of 60 per cent of children transitioned or reintegrated to formal education after having attended AEPs, remedial classes or catch-up programmes. Most of these programmes were non-formal, and their average completion rate was 86 per cent.

Within education systems, qualified and competent teachers with adequate **capacity** are central to providing sustained **quality education** in EiEPC settings. ECW has trained 68,933 teachers (48 per cent female) since its inception and 42,381 (48 per cent female) in 2020. The share of teachers trained on EiEPC-specific topics such as mental health and psycho-social support, gender and inclusion has

increased by 2 to 4 percentage points; it shows that these topics are increasingly integrated into the investment portfolio. The global COVID-19 pandemic challenged teachers in terms of their capacity and ability to adapt to localized crises. In 2020, teachers often had to diversify their teaching methods and were required to develop new distance-learning techniques to reach children and adolescents amid school closures while maintaining educational requirements. In total, 310,568 (55 per cent female) were trained on COVID-19-related topics such as health and hygiene protection, and on COVID-19 protocols, providing social and emotional support, and facilitating distance-learning models via radio, messaging or online group chats.

Teachers' ability to provide quality education often depends on the quality of teaching resources available to them. In 2020 ECW provided 1,463,577 materials to children and adolescents (45 per cent girls), bringing the total number of materials provided since 2017 to 2,486,670 (47 per cent received by girls). In addition, 9,218 classrooms in 2020, and 24,060 to date, were supported with materials to upgrade classroom resources.

During a crisis, frequently changing situations and population movements make it challenging to measure the effectiveness of interventions on **learning outcomes**, and in 2020 the COVID-19 pandemic compounded these challenges due to school closures, the cancellation of exams and safety concerns. Yet, 22 out of 119 grants were able to obtain baseline learning outcome measurements,<sup>9</sup> indicating both promising changes as well as large gaps in current levels of learning. In Somalia, early-grade reading and mathematics competencies were assessed as part of the MYRP baseline. Results showed that 62 per cent of students (58 per cent girls) could not read and 38 per cent could not do basic math calculations. An innovative pilot to measure the effectiveness of reading clubs on literacy in Uganda also showed low reading abilities; only 5.8 per cent of students (5.4 per cent of girls and 6.3 per cent of boys) could correctly read one or more words a minute in

the passage that was provided. Intervention schools scored substantially higher than or equal to control schools across a range of core reading skills such as phonemic awareness, alphabet knowledge, fluency, vocabulary and comprehension.

In relation to social emotional learning, the MYRP in the State of Palestine provided psycho-social support and remedial education for children who were formerly detained and children under house arrest (mainly boys). To date, 97 per cent of children who received remedial education reported satisfaction on the alternative education received. Of the total children targeted for psycho-social support by the grantee Save the Children, 82–84 per cent reported improvement in their ability to express their feelings, deal with anger, and handle their stress caused by the emergency, in comparison to 43–46 per cent prior to the intervention.

**Physically and psychologically safe learning environments** are a key component in ECW investments. A lack of safety and protection can lead students to drop out of school; it can increase their exposure to violence, exploitation and abuse, and reduce their ability to focus on learning. Conversely, schools can help students recover from stress and adversity and protect them from outside dangers such as conflict, natural hazards and violence. ECW promotes a 'whole-of-student' approach to protection and education that includes health, WASH, disaster risk reduction (DRR), and mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS).

ECW's gender strategy has a goal of addressing gender inequality in EiEPC, and the empowerment of girls, particularly adolescent girls, lies at its heart. Girls' empowerment can be achieved only through gender-responsive MHPSS and the mitigation of gender-based violence (GBV) risks in and around learning spaces. In 2020, 63 per cent of ECW-supported programmes reported increased levels of safety and protection. Among MYRP grantees that implemented safety and protection interventions towards this outcome, 89 per cent provided partial evidence of an improvement and 11 per cent reported

<sup>9</sup> Learning outcome measurements are not expected or required for many grants out of the 119, including the 60 grants that reported as a response to the COVID-19 pandemic. A learning outcome measurement is required for MYRP grants, and 12 out of 20 MYRP grants (60 per cent) have partial or solid learning outcome measurement data.



solid evidence, which requires a comparison between two data points. Among FER grantees that implemented such interventions, 56 per cent reported either partial or solid evidence of an improvement.

ECW supported a range of actions to protect children and keep them safe, including interventions to deter violence and exploitation, combat the recruitment of children to armed groups, and increase school security. To improve children's physical safety within and around schools, ECW supported safe transport to and from school communities and the monitoring of areas around schools to identify safety and protection concerns. These efforts are in consideration particularly of girls, whose risk of dropping out of school may increase if their safety at or on the way to school is not assured. To protect girls and boys from abduction, kidnapping, human trafficking, child labour and child recruitment, MYRP grantees in Afghanistan and Syria provided 3,049 students (788 in Afghanistan and 2,261 in Syria; 46 per cent girls) with safe transport to educational facilities. Grantees in Syria supplemented safe transport with public campaigns to promote education for all children, including children with disabilities.

ECW supported school leadership and government officials with the design of safety needs assessments and the development of school safety plans involving community stakeholders. ECW partners supported schools in establishing early warning systems and engaging school communities on the importance of self-protection and safety drills in the event of disasters. ECW partners trained teachers to incorporate DRR in education curricula and lessons. In 2020, 17,469 teachers (61 per cent female) across 20 programmes were trained on DRR, emergency preparedness and/or risk management.

To keep children safe within learning environments, ECW partners supported interventions to deter student bullying and corporal punishment in schools, by promoting positive disciplining and conflict-resolution skills among teachers and administrators. Beyond such trainings, ECW grantees helped establish school codes of conduct to safeguard children.

Through 18 programmes in 2020, some 2,600 learning spaces and schools were able to enforce codes of conduct and train teachers and community members in their application. Some 2,404 principals and teachers were trained on such codes of conduct and their implementation.

Conflict and displacement expose communities to significant stress and adversity. Learners and teachers must acquire skills to cope with and navigate the stress and adversity they experience; without such skills, children won't be able to learn, and teachers won't be able to teach. ECW believes that MHPSS is part and parcel of quality education. A technical guidance note on MHPSS in EiEPC, published in 2020 for use in MYRP and FER programme development, includes a range of community-driven MHPSS interventions for use in various contexts. The guidance note is accompanied by an indicator library for MHPSS in EiEPC, intended for use by grantees in measuring and reporting on knowledge acquisition and behaviour change in response to ECW-supported MHPSS interventions.

Protecting children at school encompasses not only their physical and psychological safety, but also their physiological well-being. This includes making sure that crisis-affected girls and boys are ready to learn and can focus on their studies by providing them with access to nutritious meals and safe and clean water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) facilities. Students, especially girls, without access to safe and clean WASH facilities may not attend school regularly or may drop out; they may prefer to use WASH facilities in their homes, in privacy and dignity, which can expose them to dangers on the way to and from school. To counter this situation, some 52 per cent of ECW-supported grants have implemented actions related to WASH issues, and out of these, 73 per cent have reported increased access to drinking water, basic sanitation facilities separate for girls and boys, and basic hand-washing facilities. Similarly, school feeding programmes supported by ECW encourage students to come to school and stay in school by providing access to nutritious meals.



## LOOKING FORWARD

ECW 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.

ECW's 2020 Annual Results Report demonstrates the fund's rapid growth and reach in terms of both the children and adolescents who have benefited from a quality education and the resources ECW has mobilized. It also demonstrates that the humanitarian-development nexus can work in practice, that collective outcomes can lead to learning outcomes, and that it is possible to position an inclusive quality education as a priority in the multilateral system. All these achievements are **collective** and a testament to what is possible when all partners work together.

The report also shows how the challenges of delivering education in emergencies and protracted crises have become more complex and how the need for significant, additional financial resources has become more urgent. COVID-19 was a public health disaster that cut off millions of children and adolescents from learning and safe spaces – and dashed their hopes for

a better future. The pandemic brought upon them new risks and triggered mental health and psycho-social issues that will require attention and support, as a condition for their learning.

ECW will continue to invest in the most vulnerable children affected by extreme crises and emergencies that disrupt their learning and impact their well-being. However, building back better in the post-COVID-19 era will require multi-year investments and looking beyond emergency and short-term funding. ECW is no longer a start-up fund, but a proven model with wide coverage across the most severely crisis-affected contexts and countries across the globe. In this spirit, ECW provides its case for investment and has extended its strategic plan period for one year through the end of 2022, to be able to mobilize the required resources and focus on actual in-country delivery.

## RESULTS HIGHLIGHTS 2020:

### CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS REACHED:

**2,639,529**  
[48% GIRLS]<sup>10</sup>



### CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS REACHED WITH COVID-19 INTERVENTIONS



**29,219,170**  
[51% GIRLS]

### OVERVIEW OF ASSISTANCE

#### ECW programmes

(including COVID-19 interventions)

Number of countries assisted **34**

Number of active grantees **29**

Number of active grants **142**

### CHILDREN REACHED, BY GRANT MODALITY



**MYRP: 952,436**  
[36%]



**FER: 1,112,457**  
[42%]



**II: 574,636**  
22%

### CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS REACHED, BY EDUCATION LEVEL

**Pre-primary: 144,779**  
6%<sup>11</sup> [50% GIRLS]

**Primary: 2,050,085**  
81% [48% GIRLS]

**Secondary: 329,397**  
13%<sup>12</sup> [48% GIRLS]

### CHILDREN REACHED BY TYPE OF BENEFICIARY<sup>13</sup>

**IDP**

16.4%

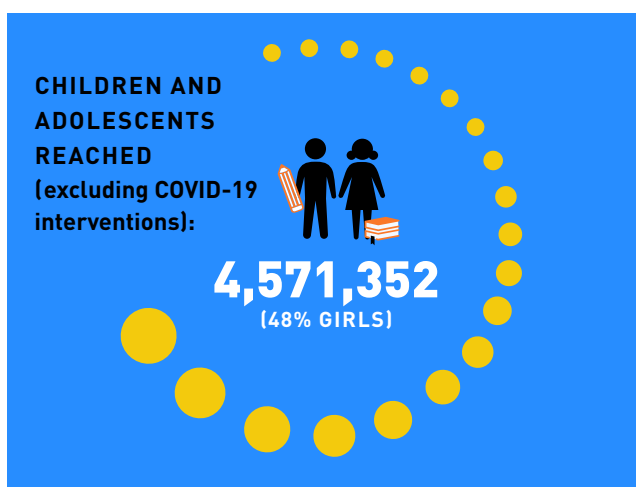
**Unknown**  
5.2%

**Other affected populations**  
40.4%

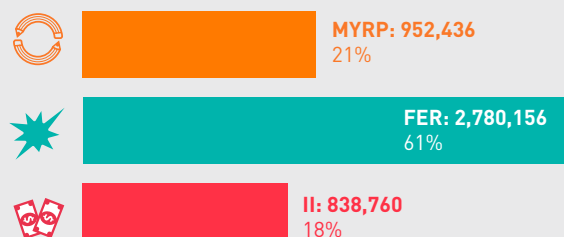
**Refugee**  
38.0%

- 10 In ECW's corporate results framework, the target number of children and adolescents to be reached in 2020 is 6 million. A comparison between the reported (2.6 million) and target (6 million) numbers of children and adolescents reached should not be made. That is because the 6 million target represents children and adolescents reached through both ECW trust funds and leveraged and aligned funding, while the reported figures in this and previous annual results reports represent children and adolescents reached only through ECW trust funds. For additional details, see the text box titled 'Interpreting ECW figures on children reached'.
- 11 Against a 10% target at end of the strategic plan period.
- 12 Against a 20% target at the end of the strategic plan period.
- 13 The disaggregated data is based on a total of 2,307,832 children reached. 331,697 children were not disaggregated by a beneficiary group at the grantee level and were excluded from this stage of the analysis.

## SINCE INCEPTION (2017–2020):



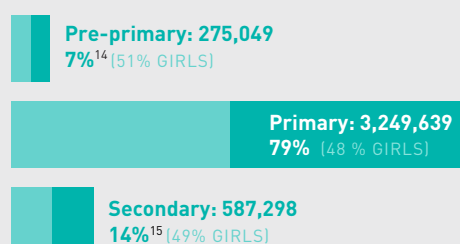
### CHILDREN REACHED, BY GRANT MODALITY



### OVERVIEW OF ASSISTANCE

	ECW programmes, excluding COVID-19 programmes	ECW programmes, COVID-19 programmes only
Number of countries assisted	<b>33</b>	<b>32</b>
Number of grantees	<b>41</b>	<b>26</b>
Number of grants	<b>166</b>	<b>89</b>

### CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS REACHED, BY EDUCATION LEVEL



In 2020, ECW diversified the age groups and education levels it supported. Since the fund's inception, the share of children and adolescents reached with secondary education out of all those reached with ECW support increased from 9 per cent in 2019 to 13 per cent to 2020. Furthermore, by the end of 2020, ECW reached 275,049 children (51 per cent girls) with early childhood or pre-primary education interventions – more than doubling the 108,330 children (52 per cent girls) reached at the end of 2019. The share of primary school-age children supported was 85 per cent in 2019 and 79 per cent in 2020.

<sup>14</sup> Against a 10% target at end of the strategic plan period.

<sup>15</sup> Against a 20% target at the end of the strategic plan period.

## SELECTED PROGRAMME HIGHLIGHTS IN 2020:

### Teachers trained in 2020



**42,381**  
(48% FEMALE)

(68,933 teachers trained since inception)

### Children who received learning materials in 2020



**1,580,703**  
(45% GIRLS)

### Children supported with school feeding



**206,798**  
(53% GIRLS)

### Children with disabilities reached by ECW-supported programmes



**51,501**  
(46% GIRLS)



Across ECW's programme portfolio, the percentage of children with disabilities reached grew from 0.2 per cent since inception to 1.3 per cent in 2020

(2.3 per cent reached through MYRPs; 1.2 per cent reached through FERs)



Access to education increased in 97 per cent of ECW-supported programmes



Measurement of learning outcomes expanded to 22 out of 119 grants,<sup>16</sup> showing both improvements and gaps in the levels of school children's learning



Children's safety and protection improved in 55 ECW-supported programmes (out of 119)

## COVID-19 SPECIFIC

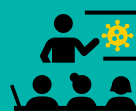


**4,504,711**

children, parents, and education personnel were reached with messages related to COVID-19 and focusing on education.

**ECW APPROVED US\$45.4 MILLION**

to 32 countries to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic, disbursing FER funds at record speed.



**310,600**

teachers trained (55 per cent female) on COVID-19 related topics such as distance learning, COVID-19 protocols, and health and hygiene promotion.



**10,243,871**

(48% GIRLS) of the hardest-to-reach children and adolescents in the world continued their education through distance learning.

<sup>16</sup> Learning outcome measurement is not expected or required for many of the 119 grants, including the 60 grants that reported as a response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

## STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE RESULT HIGHLIGHTS:



### 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.

## INTERPRETING ECW FIGURES ON CHILDREN REACHED

In its Strategic Plan 2018–2022, ECW committed to an overarching goal of reaching 8.9 million children through its investments, reported both in total and disaggregated by investment window, sex, age and population group. Across all investment windows, ‘children reached’ is defined as the number of children and adolescents aged 3–18 years who are supported directly or intermediately by ECW assistance. Direct support entails that children and adolescents directly receive outputs from ECW-financed grants, such as school kits, cash transfers, school feeding, provision of textbooks. Intermediate support entails that children and adolescents benefit from downstream interventions, such as teacher training, school/classroom construction and rehabilitation, provision of classroom materials. In practice, intermediate support is estimated by using the ratio of current or expected students to inputs (e.g., the pupil-to-teacher or pupil-to-classroom ratio). For instance, the intermediate beneficiaries of 100 teachers receiving pre-service training is 100 times the pupil-to-teacher ratio. When classrooms are supported, the pupil-to-classroom ratio is used.

The number of children reached excludes two categories of beneficiaries: (1) long-term beneficiaries, i.e., those who may benefit from the intervention after the months/year(s) of intervention; and (2) indirect beneficiaries, i.e., those who more broadly use any system or environment improved by the interventions. Indirect beneficiaries may include children benefiting from changes in education policies, children in districts in which education inspectors are trained, children benefiting from improved coordination of humanitarian actions. To avoid double-counting, if a child benefits from several interventions by one or more ECW grantee(s) during or across years, the child is counted only once.

Despite the use of this common definition across ECW investment windows, there are important differences in the intervention packages reaching children and adolescents under the different investment windows. Children reached through MYRPs benefit from comprehensive intervention packages adapted to their specific needs. MYRPs usually last three years and cost US\$220 per child on average. Children reached through non-COVID-19-related FERs benefit from less comprehensive intervention packages that seek to restore education access for crisis-affected children and adolescents more generally. They usually last between 6

and 12 months and cost US\$25 per child on average. The COVID-19 pandemic required an additional distinction to be made when reporting figures of children reached and results achieved. In contrast to these more comprehensive programming approaches under initial investments (II), MYRPs and non-COVID-19-related FERs, children and adolescents reached through COVID-19 interventions received shorter and more targeted support primarily focused on the provision of distance education through radio and other channels and messaging related to COVID-19 protocols, such as: hygiene and social distancing; the use of protective products (masks, soap and anti-bacterial fluids); and the promotion of WASH facilities, such as hand-washing basins. COVID-19-related FERs were between six and nine months in duration and cost US\$1 per child on average; their goals were to enable children and adolescents to continue their education despite school closures and to provide them with health and hygiene protection. Because of these differences in the focus and depth of investment modalities, the numbers of children reached as well as programme-specific results on teachers trained and materials distributed are reported separately throughout this report and should not be totaled.

In relation to the targets set in ECW’s corporate results framework, comparisons between the reported (2.6 million for 2020) and target (6 million for 2020) numbers of children and adolescents reached should not be made. That is because the 6 million target represents children and adolescents reached through both ECW trust funds and aligned and leveraged funding, while the reported figures in this and previous annual results reports represent children and adolescents reached only through ECW trust funds.

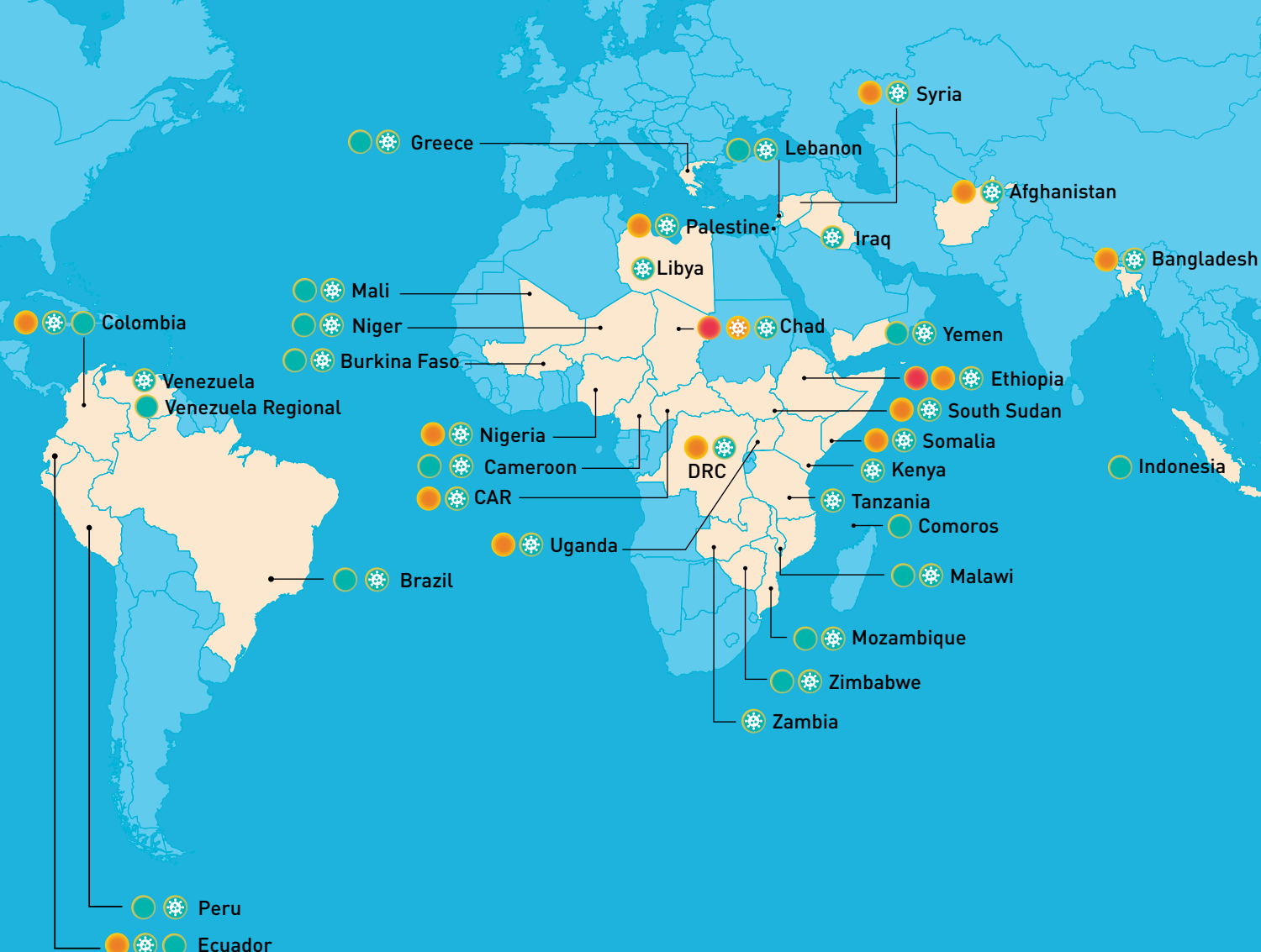
In the original model, the ECW seed or trust funds were envisioned to constitute between 10 and 20 per cent of the total funding mobilized (ECW trust funds, and leveraged and aligned funding) in each crisis context. While the aspiration is to do so, it has not yet been possible to set up a common monitoring and indicator framework for ECW seed-funded and other aligned and leveraged programmes in the supported countries. Moreover, the original target number of children reached was based on a hypothetical global average cost per child of US\$113 rather than the actual costs per child in the different countries, which averaged US\$220 per child in MYRPs and US\$25 in FERs. Despite these shortcomings, the targets of 6 million in 2020 and 8.9 million in 2021 and 2022 were maintained to serve as aspirational goals throughout the 2018–2021 Strategic Plan period.



## MAP OF ECW INVESTMENTS ACTIVE IN 2020

- MYRP investments\*
- FER investments
- ❄ COVID-19 related
- Initial Investment

\*ECW may have also made FER investment



The boundaries, names, and designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations, Education Cannot Wait, or partner countries.







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

Education Cannot Wait 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. We urgently appeal to public and private sector donors for \$1 billion to reach even more crisis-affected girls and boys. 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.

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