

**EDUCATION  
CANNOT  
WAIT**

# Education Cannot Wait Policy and Accountability Framework on Disability Inclusion

Realizing the right to inclusive and equitable quality education of children and adolescents with disabilities in emergencies and protracted crises

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**The Education Cannot Wait (ECW) Policy and Accountability Framework on Disability Inclusion** provides a blueprint to ensure that the ECW Secretariat realizes disability inclusion, both internally and through its investments and partnerships.

The Policy and Accountability Framework seeks to guide the systematization of ECW work on Disability Inclusion to ensure that the Fund can reach 10% of children with disabilities across its investment portfolio. Importantly, the implementation of this blueprint will ensure that children and adolescents reached by ECW, including those with disabilities, access inclusive and equitable quality education in a safe and protected environment.

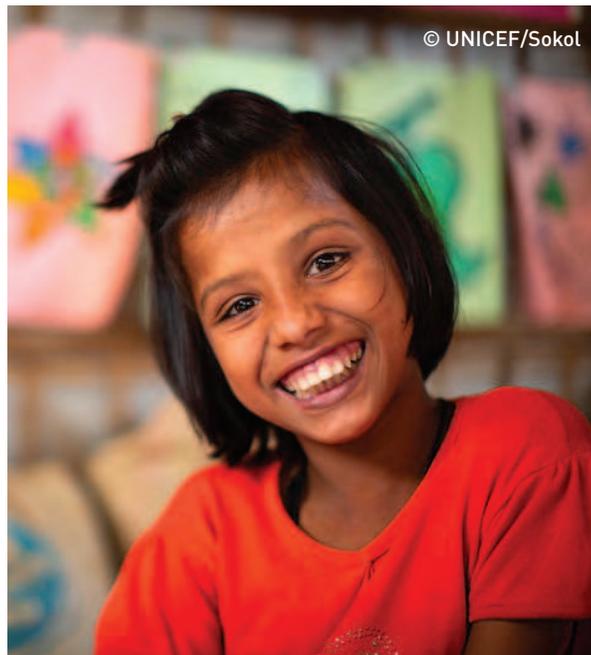
The ECW Policy and Accountability Framework has been developed during 2021. The document benefitted from a consultation process with organizations of persons with disabilities. Members of ECW Executive Committee have also contributed during the review process.

The ECW Policy puts forward that, by leveraging its core functions, ECW can help address challenges that currently hamper disability inclusion in education in emergencies and protracted crises. In this regard, the ECW Policy sets out three key objectives whose achievement will be instrumental to realize the vision of the policy.

The achievement of the first one aims to ensure that ECW disability inclusion is central in its day-to-day work, in its planning and it is embedded in all operations. Attaining the second objective will ensure that ECW programming is inclusive and systematically advances disability inclusion and inclusive education. The third one entails that, by working with partners, ECW can help ensure disability inclusion is central in the education in emergencies sector. Importantly, the ECW Policy identifies core values and principles that will permeate actions undertaken by the ECW Secretariat in pursuing these key policy objectives.

The ECW Accountability Framework on Disability Inclusion guides the operationalization of the values, principles and commitments made in the ECW Policy. It details what the ECW Secretariat must do to achieve the three key objectives of the Policy, as well as roles and responsibilities in implementation and monitoring.

The ECW Accountability Framework on Disability Inclusion defines a set of action areas that the ECW Secretariat must focus on to achieve the objectives of the ECW Policy. For each of these areas, it also details what actions are to be taken distinguishing between foundational actions to those that will ensure ECW meets or even exceeds the requirements to make its internal practices and operations, investments, and partnerships inclusive.



*Yasmina is a Rohingya refugee who ECW has reached as part of the Bangladesh Multi-Year Resilience Programme in Cox's Bazar.*

# LIST OF ACRONYMS

<b>AF</b>	Acceleration Facility
<b>CFM</b>	Child Functioning Module
<b>CRPD</b>	Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
<b>DRG</b>	Reference Group on Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action
<b>ECW</b>	Education Cannot Wait
<b>EMIS</b>	Education Management Information System
<b>ExCom</b>	Executive Committee
<b>FER</b>	First Emergency Response
<b>GBV</b>	Gender-Based Violence
<b>GDS+2</b>	Global Disability Summit +2 Years Report
<b>GEC</b>	Global Education Cluster
<b>IASC</b>	Inter-Agency Standing Committee
<b>IDA</b>	International Disability Alliance
<b>INEE</b>	Inter-agency Network for Education in Emergencies
<b>MHPSS</b>	Mental Health and Psychosocial Support
<b>MSNA</b>	Multi Sector Needs Assessment
<b>MYRP</b>	Multi-Year Resilience programme
<b>OPD</b>	Organizations of persons with disabilities
<b>UNDIS</b>	United Nations in the Disability Inclusion Strategy
<b>UNESCO</b>	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
<b>UNICEF</b>	United Nations Children's Fund

# CONTENTS

<b>I. Background</b>	<b>1</b>
I.i The importance of disability inclusion in Education in Emergencies and Protracted Crises	1
I.ii What challenges lie ahead	1
I.iii The ECW Policy and Accountability Framework	3
I.iv Process of development	3
<b>II. ECW Policy on Disability Inclusion</b>	<b>3</b>
II.i Purpose and scope	3
II.ii Vision and objectives	4
II.iii Principles and values	5
II.iv Review	5
<b>III. ECW Accountability Framework on disability inclusion</b>	<b>6</b>
III.i Structure	6
III.ii Accountability, Roles and Responsibilities	6
III.iii Action areas	7
III.iv Accountability Framework	8
Policy Objective 1: ECW is fit for purpose	8
Policy Objective 2: ECW Programming is inclusive	12
Policy Objective 3: ECW's partnerships help promote Disability Inclusion in Education in Emergencies and Protracted Crises	16

## LIST OF TABLES

<b>Table 1</b> Action areas under Policy Objective 1: ECW is fit for purpose	7
<b>Table 2</b> Action areas under Policy Objective 2: ECW Programming is inclusive	7
<b>Table 3</b> Action areas under Policy Objective 3: ECW's partnerships help enhance Disability Inclusion in education in emergencies and protracted crises	7
<b>Table 4</b> Action area 1.a – Leadership: actions required, by level	8
<b>Table 5</b> Action area 1.b – Planning: actions required, by level	9
<b>Table 6</b> Action area 1.c - Accessibility and reasonable accommodation: actions required, by level	10
<b>Table 7</b> Action area 1.d - Expertise: actions required, by level	11
<b>Table 8</b> Action area 2.a - Meaningful Engagement: actions required, by level	12
<b>Table 9</b> Action area 2.b - Programme design: actions required, by level	13
<b>Table 10</b> Action area 2.c - Risk, Safeguarding and Accountability to Affected Population: actions required, by level	14
<b>Table 11</b> Action area 2.d - Data & Resources: actions required, by level	15
<b>Table 12</b> Action area 3.a -Awareness raising: actions required, by level	16
<b>Table 13</b> Action area 3.b - Knowledge: actions required, by level	17
<b>Table 14</b> Action area 3.c - Cooperation and coordination: actions required, by level	18
<b>Table 15</b> Action area 3.d - Capacities: actions required, by level	19

# I. BACKGROUND

## I.i The importance of disability inclusion in Education in Emergencies and Protracted Crises

Education Cannot Wait (ECW) works with governments, humanitarian and development actors, private sector, and civil society to raise the profile of education in emergencies and protracted crises. ECW's main goal is to ensure that all children and adolescents in emergencies and protracted crises can access inclusive quality education and learn in a safe and protected environment that promotes their wellbeing. Particularly, ECW funds programmes that help realize the right to inclusive and equitable quality education among the most marginalized children who are excluded, among others, because of their origins, status, identities, and beliefs.

In this regard, ensuring that children with disabilities can access and learn on an equal basis with others will help realize both the right to inclusive education enshrined in Article 24 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) and Sustainable Development Goal 4.

However, the UNESCO Global Education Monitor Report 2020 shows that children with disabilities are more likely than other learners to be out of school. These children are also less likely to learn meaningfully and complete their education. Furthermore, the UNICEF report *Seen, Counted, Included* shows that outcomes related to access to education and learning varies among children with disabilities depending on the functional difficulties<sup>1</sup> these children experience. Importantly, the report highlights the need to consider the diversity of children with disabilities and the intersecting inequalities that exist between girls and boys<sup>2</sup> with disabilities.

Education inequalities are even more severe in countries affected by emergencies and protracted crises, which historically are predominantly low- and middle-income. As it is estimated that 80% of children with disabilities live in these contexts, designing and implementing programmes on education in emergencies

and protracted crises that meet the requirements of children and adolescents with disabilities is necessary to fulfil ECW's mission. Importantly, to ensure that ECW can reach 10% of children with disabilities across its investment portfolio.

## I.ii What challenges lie ahead

Since the adoption of the CRPD (2006), the international community has been increasingly working with and for persons with disabilities. This joint work has been shifting the focus towards approaches that enhance equity and rights and away from charity and medical models of disability. In humanitarian action such shift is enshrined in the Humanitarian Inclusion Standards for Older People and People with Disabilities<sup>4</sup> and Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Guidelines, Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action.

The guidelines and standards detail what organizations and humanitarian actors must do to make humanitarian response inclusive, including in education. In this regard, the establishment of the Reference Group on Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action (DRG) is supporting the operationalization of IASC standards. Standards and guidelines in fact are not widely known or systematically understood, as well as they are inconsistently applied throughout the programme cycle.

The gap between legal provisions and practice often stems from institutional barriers, including the lack of policies and code of conducts that recognize the rights of persons with disabilities. Nonetheless, persons with disabilities have a critical role to play in policy and programme development as enshrined in Article 4 - Education, Article 11 - Situations of risk and humanitarian emergencies, and Article 32 - International Cooperation of the CRPD, as well as in Humanitarian Inclusion Standards for Older People and People with Disabilities<sup>5</sup>.

Persons with disabilities and organizations of persons with disabilities<sup>6</sup> (OPDs) bear critical knowledge,

1. Functional difficulties refer to the difficulty that a child experiences in performing a certain activity. The Washington Group and UNICEF developed a set of questions, namely the Child Functioning Module, which are designed to identify difficulties among children according to a range of severity. A set of questions was developed for children aged 2-4 and another on for those aged 5-17 to reflect differences individual development.

2. ECW promotes an inclusive and intersectional approach in all its investments. Whilst ECW strategic documents, including its Gender Strategy talk about "girls", "boys" and "adolescents", they also promote the inclusion of children with disabilities, LGBTQI-community, and other vulnerable groups, without any discrimination. Particularly, the ECW Gender strategy highlights that for ECW, the concept of gender is all inclusive: it refers to women, men, girls and boys, and their specific needs, as well as gender identity, gendered, and inter-generational relationships.

3. WHO & World Bank. World Report on Disability. 2011.

4. Humanitarian Inclusion Standards for Older People and People with Disabilities on education should be read in conjunction with the INEE Minimum Standards for Education and Sphere Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Humanitarian Response.

5. See Humanitarian Inclusion Standards for Older People and People with Disabilities guidance: 2: Safe and equitable access, action 2.1

6. OPDs are representative organizations of persons with disabilities, majority-governed and led by persons with disabilities [CRPD/C/GC/R.7].

experience and expertise that can make humanitarian action and education in emergencies and protracted crises more inclusive, and relevant for affected populations. Greater engagement of persons with disabilities and OPDs, which remains untapped, would help address socially shared beliefs and attitudes that diminish the agency and capacities of persons with disabilities. Their engagement would also bring to bear the diversity of persons with disabilities who are instead often portrayed as homogeneously “vulnerable”<sup>7</sup>.

Such representation implies that differences in barriers, risks, and requirements of underrepresented groups of persons with disabilities are seldomly assessed and factored in programme design and implementation. For example, the development of the education response in emergencies may just consider barriers, risks, and needs of children with visible disabilities such that those with less visible ones remain excluded or are put at greater risk of harm. Similarly, the need to look at disability in relation to different identities and status is increasingly acknowledged as key to ensuring the inclusion of all persons with disabilities. However, challenges remain in embedding intersectionality lens in the development and operationalization of humanitarian action and education in emergencies.

Making education in emergencies and protracted crises inclusive thus requires the systematic engagement of children with disabilities, parents, caregivers, families and OPDs in the cluster system and in coordination mechanisms at country, regional and global level. To be sustained and sustainable, humanitarian actors must enhance accessibility and reasonable accommodation along with the allocation of resources to persons with disabilities and OPDs.

Capacity strengthening<sup>8</sup> and increasing exchange between humanitarian actors and persons with disabilities and OPDs<sup>9</sup> will also help reap the benefits of meaningful engagement. Similarly, cross-sectoral coordination between clusters can help integrate service delivery through schools and improve the mental and physical wellbeing of all children in emergencies and protracted crises, including those with disabilities.

At the programme level, what is necessary to make education in emergencies inclusive will depend on the context. Nonetheless, the role of parents, caregivers, families, and OPDs will be fundamental to raise awareness on the equal right to education of children with disabilities. They will also be key in guiding programme development on what is needed and what should be done to ensure that schools and learning spaces are places where all children, including those with disabilities, can access, learn, and belong. Moving in this direction also hinges on the engagement of teachers, school personnel and administrators. They are necessary to enhance a common understanding and practices on inclusive education, as well as to create bridges between schools and learning spaces with local communities and promote broader attitude change on disability.



*A self-learning programme funded by ECW in Syria is supporting thousands of out-of-school children, like Kawthar, in accessing educational opportunities.*

Similarly, making education in emergencies inclusive for all and embracing diversity requires disaggregated data to identify and understand difficulties that children experience, like those collected using the UNICEF Child Functioning Module (CFM). Inconsistencies and large data gaps remain in emergencies and protracted crises<sup>10</sup> and when data are available, little or no use has been acknowledged by humanitarian actors<sup>11</sup>. Further, the focus has been on disaggregation, but making education in emergencies and protracted crises inclusive requires the collection of data on barriers and risks learners with disabilities experience<sup>12</sup>, as well as data to inform service provision.

7. “Persons with disabilities are not inherently vulnerable. Rather, vulnerability is imposed on them, including by barriers and lack of support”. (2019 IASC, pp 17)

8. In line with the Grand Bargain: increase of multi-year investments in the institutional capacities of local and national responders and provide at least 25% of humanitarian funding to them as directly as possible.

9. Humanitarian Practice Network 2020. [Disability inclusion in humanitarian action](#), Humanitarian Exchange, Issue 78 October 2020

10. United Nations Children’s Fund, Seen, Counted, Included: Using data to shed light on the well-being of children with disabilities, UNICEF, New York, 2021.

11. See the note on the outcome session of the 2021 Humanitarian Networks and Partnerships Week, [Inclusion strategy and roadmap: ‘building the bridge’ between the status quo and the goal to be achieved](#).

12. UNICEF and the Washington Group are developing a module on Inclusive Education to measure school environment and participation to support inclusive education. This module includes a set of questions targeting out of school children. Further details on progress and status can be found [here](#).

Finally, political will and organizational leadership are key to make disability inclusion a top priority in humanitarian action and realize the right to education for all children, including those with disabilities. In this regard, the Global Disability Summit +2 Years report (GDS+2) shows that resources have been mobilized and efforts made, but progress remains slow. In this regard, the GDS 2022 has been an opportunity to ensure that governments, humanitarian, and development actors move toward a common understanding around inclusive education<sup>13</sup> in line with Article 24<sup>14</sup>– Education of the CRPD as well as the General Comment No. 4 to Art. 24 . The GDS 2022 will also be critical to mobilize additional resources and build partnerships that are necessary to make education in emergencies inclusive for all children, including those with disabilities.

### I.iii The ECW Policy and Accountability Framework

ECW Policy on Disability Inclusion embraces the commitments made by the United Nations in the Disability Inclusion Strategy (UNDIS). It defines what ECW must do, in line with a core set of values and principles, to ensure disability inclusion is realized systematically through its investments and operations.

The Accountability Framework details the Action Areas ECW should focus on in implementing the Policy, as well as specific actions to be taken to achieve the objective sets out in the Policy. The Accountability Framework also provides a timeframe for the implementation of actions and their achievement.

ECW will plan implementation on an annual basis and monitor achievement of the actions detailed in the Accountability framework as part of the ECW annual work planning process.

### I.iv Process of development

The development of the ECW Policy and Accountability framework on Disability Inclusion has been led by the ECW Secretariat. The ECW Secretariat worked on it with a task team including members of the International Disability Alliance (IDA), particularly IDA working groups on Article 11 – Inclusive Humanitarian

Action and inclusive education. Members of ECW Executive Committee and the ECW Gender Reference Group have also been consulted as part of the review process of the Policy and Accountability Framework along the Secretariat of Inclusion International.

## II. ECW POLICY ON DISABILITY INCLUSION

### II.i Purpose and scope

**The ECW Policy on Disability Inclusion defines the way of working for the ECW Secretariat and its partners to advance systematically within and through all its investments in education in emergencies and protracted crises the right to inclusive and equitable quality education of all children and adolescents, including those with disabilities.**

The ECW Policy acknowledges that strategies and interventions are owned and defined by local, humanitarian and development actors to be context specific. Also, ECW funds programmes on education in emergencies and protracted crises rather than implementing them. Thus, the Policy focuses on how ECW advocates for and enhances disability inclusion in education in emergencies and protracted crises through its operations, programming practices, guidance and partnerships, which will ensure ECW can reach 10% of children with disabilities across its investment portfolio.



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*In Ethiopia, ECW has facilitated a 3 year MYRP aimed to improve learning through equitable access, crisis-sensitive and quality education for emergency-affected children, including children living with disabilities.*

<sup>13</sup>. In 2016, General Comment No. 4 to CRPD Article 24 described inclusive education as involving “a process ... to provide all students ... with an equitable and participatory learning experience and environment that best corresponds to their requirements and preferences”. For example, the UNESCO 2020 Global Education Monitor Report finds that 68% of countries have a definition of inclusive education and only 57% of those definitions cover multiple marginalized groups. Inclusive education interventions go beyond zero rejection as it requires system transformation and cultural shifts. In this regard, the International Disability Alliance (IDA) came to a cross-disability consensus position on what inclusive and equitable quality education is, in line with the CRPD. Details can be found in the report: [“What an inclusive, equitable, quality education means to us”](#)

<sup>14</sup>. In 2016, General Comment No. 4 to CRPD Article 24 described inclusive education as involving “a process ... to provide all students ... with an equitable and participatory learning experience and environment that best corresponds to their requirements and preferences”. For example, the UNESCO 2020 Global Education Monitor Report finds that 68% of countries have a definition of inclusive education and only 57% of those definitions cover multiple marginalized groups.

The ECW Policy frames disability inclusion as a right. Realizing it will be a process that requires leadership and engagement, resources, expertise and a shared organizational commitment. In this regard, ECW aims to uphold the right to inclusive quality education for all children, including those with disabilities, in education in emergencies and protracted crises through its core functions, namely

- 1. Inspire political commitment** with aim for greater equity and empowerment of affected populations.
- 2. Raise significant additional funds** across interventions that equitably expand quality, safe, and continuous education.
- 3. Unite humanitarian and development actors** in support of joint planning and response.
- 4. Strengthen capacity**, individual and institutional, of those leading efforts.
- 5. Improve accountability** by building evidence and platforms to understand "what works".

By leveraging its mandate, ECW can contribute to address those challenges highlighted in Section I.ii, which currently hamper the realization of disability inclusion, and ultimately, access to education and quality learning for all children, including those with disabilities, in emergencies and protracted crises.

The ECW Policy builds on the framework provided by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), the Sendai Framework 2015-2030 and the Charter on Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action.

Within the ECW institutional architecture, the Policy on Disability Inclusion complements the ECW Gender Strategy and the ECW Policy and Accountability Framework on Gender Equality. Similarly, it integrates provisions of the ECW Capacity Development Framework, which highlights the role of local actors, including persons with disabilities and OPDs. In this

regard, the ECW Policy also benefits from the recommendations made by the formative evaluations of ECW First Emergency Response programmes (FERs), as well as Multi-Year Resilience programmes (MYRPs)<sup>15</sup>. Finally, this document builds on the ECW Evaluation Policy to guide the generation and use of evidence on disability inclusion and inclusive education, as well as on the ECW Technical Guidance Note on Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS).

## II.ii Vision and objectives

**ECW strives to ensure that children in all their diversity, including those with disabilities, who are reached through its programmes, access inclusive and equitable quality education and learn on an equal basis with others in an accessible, safe and protected environment.**

Realizing this vision requires that ECW Secretariat and its staff, who have overall responsibility for the day-to-day operations of the Fund<sup>16</sup>, put disability inclusion at the centre of internal operations, procedures and guidance, as well as at the core of external relations, communication, and partnerships. To ensure that ECW Secretariat is fit for purpose and can both guide partners in developing their programmes and play a leadership role in education in emergencies and protracted crises, ECW commits to have the necessary expertise and to bring about shared understanding among its staff on disability inclusion. The ECW Secretariat will also enhance disability inclusion through its strategic plan. Importantly, ECW Secretariat commits to ensuring that knowledge, learning, and information generated through its programmes and shared with the public can be accessed, understood, and used by all.

Being an organization that funds programmes implemented by its partners, ECW commits to help design and leverage inclusive programming practices. That is, ECW will promote meaningful engagement at country level of children with disabilities, their parents, families, caregivers and OPDs, as well as teachers, school personnel and administrators, throughout the programme cycle. ECW will ensure that investments are based on a twin-track approach. That is,

<sup>15</sup>. ECW financial investments (95 per cent) are allocated to support country-level programming through two windows: FER and MYRP. FERs provide rapid funding to the most immediate and urgent education needs as a crisis suddenly occurs or escalates against an inter-agency coordinated proposal and is aligned with inter-agency planning and resource mobilization strategies, such as Flash Appeals and Humanitarian bringing together humanitarian and development actors and bodies. By integrating immediate and medium-term responses that are mutually reinforcing, MYRPs facilitate long-term predictable funding, helping to strengthen coherence between humanitarian relief and development interventions and financing. The third ECW window, the Acceleration Facility (AF), constitutes up to 5 per cent of ECW funding and aims to provide a flexible financing mechanism to fund strategic initiatives that tackle a prioritized subset of systemic barriers. See [ECW Operational Manual](#) for greater detail.

<sup>16</sup>. The Secretariat's functions are: (i) strategy and policy development and implementation; (ii) advocacy, external relations, and communication; (iii) oversight and management of fund-raising, finances, reporting, and risk; (iv) management and monitoring of grants and relationships with grantees; and (v) supporting other ECW organs in their work. See [ECW Operational Manual](#) for greater detail.

interventions in each investment are designed to enhance equal participation and returns for children with and without disabilities (mainstreaming), as well as each investment includes targeted activities for children with disabilities to address specific, as well as intersecting barriers, risks and needs. ECW will also ensure that organizations receiving funds allocate adequate resources to operationalize the twin-track approach, collect and use data to inform implementation, as well as put in place accessible safeguarding procedures and feedback mechanisms.

In its role of global fund for education in emergencies, ECW also commits to enhance disability inclusion in the sector. Particularly, by raising awareness through campaigns and supporting the strengthening of existing networks and platforms. Leveraging these networks and platforms, as well as through its investments, including the Acceleration Facility, ECW commits to promote capacity strengthening and exchange, as well as cross-sectoral collaboration. Also, ECW aims to promote the uptake and use of tools and practices that effectively enhance disability inclusion in education in emergencies and protracted crisis. Lastly, ECW will foster cross-learning and exchange between MYRPs on strategies and practices to enhance disability inclusion.

### II.iii Principles and values

ECW values the diversity of learners and seeks to enhance equity in education and learning, regardless of disability, status, orientation, identity, and origin. ECW also appreciates that the overlap of these attributes can generate, in a given context, compounding inequalities and marginalization. Particularly, the intersection of age and gender related norms along with beliefs about the worth and competencies of persons with disabilities. Thus, ECW embraces intersectionality as a building block of its approach to disability inclusion to ensure that its operations, communication, and partnerships can engage all children. Importantly, ECW promotes non-discriminatory practices in its programmes, operations, procedures, and partnerships to enhance the active and equal participation of all learners, including those with disabilities.

With regards to disability, ECW promotes a rights-based approach in line with the CRPD. That is, children with disabilities, their families, as well as

OPDs are active stakeholders of ECW programmes following the principles of partnerships<sup>17</sup>. Similarly, ECW recognizes its duty to ensure the rights of learners with disabilities by putting in place accountability mechanisms to assess the delivery of its programmes. Also, by strengthening protection, particularly with regards to gender-based violence (GBV)<sup>18</sup>, and ensuring that programmes do not put children, including those with disabilities, at greater risk, in line with the **do no harm principle**.

In practice, ECW will work towards removing attitudinal, institutional, internalized, and physical barriers that marginalize, both intentionally and unintentionally, all learners in education in emergencies and protracted crises. Particularly, barriers, in interactions with long-term individual physical, mental, intellectual, or sensory impairments do not allow learners with disabilities to enjoy full and effective participation in education on equal basis with others.

ECW will also enhance accessibility of schools and education. Improved accessibility is necessary to meet the requirements that guarantee equitable and safe access to education and learning among all children and adolescents, including those with disabilities. Similarly, ECW will seek to ensure the application of the principle of universal design for learning<sup>19</sup> in teaching, assessments, and provision of materials, among others, to guarantee that all children, including those with disabilities, have a holistic and meaningful learning experience. Thus, ECW will work with teachers, school personnel and administrators to enhance inclusive pedagogy and curricula and promote a culture of inclusion along with targeted support to children with disabilities that meet different requirements. ECW will also complement these efforts by ensuring reasonable accommodation for children with disabilities, including assistive and learning devices.

### II.iv Review

The implementation of the policy is aligned with the start and timeframe of the ECW Strategic Plan cycle. It will be subject to an external review at the end of the cycle.

17. Equality, Transparency, Results-Oriented Approach, Responsibility and complementarity in line with a Statement of Commitment endorsed by the Global Humanitarian Platform [12 July 2007].

18. In 2021, ECW joined the Call to Action on Protection from GBV in emergencies and made the commitment that "all ECW investments (FERs and MYRPs) include at least 1 GBV risk mitigation indicator and budget line for GBV risk mitigation measures". Please find greater detail on ECW's approach to GBV [here](#).

19. International Disability Alliance (IDA). Universal Design for Learning and its Role in Ensuring Access to Inclusive Education for All, 2021.

# III. ECW ACCOUNTABILITY FRAMEWORK ON DISABILITY INCLUSION

## III.i Structure

The ECW Accountability Framework on Disability Inclusion guides the operationalization of the values, principles and commitments made in the ECW Policy. It details what the ECW Secretariat must do to achieve the three key objectives of the Policy, articulated in Section II.ii, namely:

- 1. **ECW Secretariat is fit for purpose**
- 2. **ECW programming is inclusive**
- 3. **ECW's partnerships help enhance disability inclusion in education in emergencies and protracted crises**

Therefore, under each of these three key objectives, the Accountability Framework outlines a set of areas of action that the ECW Secretariat should focus on in implementing the Policy. For each action area, commitments are grouped and listed following a graduated approach to realizing disability inclusion. That is, under each action area, commitments are ordered using a 3-point scale (1. Approaches, 2. Meets, 3. Exceeds requirements) in line with the approach in the UNDIS.

The ordering reflects that efforts and progress required to realize the right to disability inclusion will be incremental. In this regard, ECW must move from foundational actions to advance disability inclusion internally and externally (1. Approaches) to commitments aimed at embedding disability inclusion in all ECW standards, guidance, operations, procedures, and partnerships.

## III.ii Accountability, Roles and Responsibilities

The implementation of the ECW Policy on Disability Inclusion will be monitored and assessed against the ECW Accountability Framework as part of ECW annual reporting processes.

The Executive Committee of ECW (ExCom)<sup>20</sup> provides macro-level review and monitoring of operations of the Fund. As such, ExCom will play a key role in the oversight of this Policy and its implementation: both through the review of annual reporting against the Accountability Framework and the approval process of ECW investments to ensure that actions and requirements of the Policy are systematically embedded in grants (MYRPs).

The ECW Secretariat, including the Director, ECW Senior Management along all its Staff, will lead implementation. Responsible ECW Sections<sup>21</sup> within the ECW Secretariat shall develop costed action plans, jointly with ECW resource person on disability inclusion, to achieve targets under their respective areas of responsibility. Also, individual ECW Staff members shall include in their performance assessments (PER) actions and results that promote the implementation of their sections' plan.

The action plans of ECW sections will align with and complement ECW annual work plan. This will ensure that disability inclusion is mainstreamed across all ECW functions and that it contributes to their achievement. Also, it will allow to track progress and assess results on disability against indicators and timebound targets that are action specific.



ECW funds have provided an opportunity for children and adolescents to receive assistive devices in South Sudan. For Achol, this meant she could receive a wheelchair, giving her access to many services previously out of reach.

20. It includes Donor Representatives, Country Constituency Representatives (national governments from crisis affected countries), Civil Society Constituency Representatives and Individual Members ex officio.

21. Namely, Strategic Planning and Accountability, M&E and Reporting, Education, Communications and Advocacy, Partnerships and Donor Relations.

The ECW Secretariat will also be responsible to integrate a resource person on disability inclusion. This person will coordinate the monitoring process and reporting to the ECW Executive Committee on an annual basis. The resource person will also work with ECW sections to design their annual plans as well as with country partners to embed requirements and actions of the Policy and Accountability Framework in country investments.

ECW sections will provide their respective inputs and updates on implementation against the ECW Accountability Framework. Reporting will be an opportunity to develop remedial actions that are costed, and timebound and/or adjust implementation plans as needed. Responsibility for the implementation of these remedial actions will lie with the respective ECW section.

Internally, the ECW resource persons on disability inclusion will coordinate with the ECW Risk Management and Safeguarding Manager to update the Corporate Risk Framework with regards to the safeguarding of children with disabilities. The ECW resource persons on disability inclusion will also work closely with the ECW Gender Manager to operationalize an intersectional approach to programming, particularly on the engagement of civil society in design and implementation of country investments<sup>22</sup>, as well as on data and monitoring<sup>23</sup>.

### III.iii Action areas

**Table 1 Action areas under Policy Objective 1: ECW is fit for purpose**

<b>1.a Leadership</b>
<b>1.b Planning</b>
<b>1.c Communication and external relations</b>
<b>1.d Expertise</b>

**Table 2 Action areas under Policy Objective 2: ECW Programming is inclusive**

<b>2.a Meaningful engagement</b>
<b>2.b Programme design</b>
<b>2.c Risk, Safeguarding and Accountability to Affected Population</b>
<b>2.d Data and Resources</b>

**Table 3 Action areas under Policy Objective 3: ECW's partnerships help promote Disability Inclusion in Education in Emergencies and Protracted Crises**

<b>3.a Awareness raising</b>
<b>3.b Knowledge</b>
<b>3.c Cooperation and coordination</b>
<b>3.d Capacities</b>

<sup>22</sup>. See [guidance note](#) On the meaningful engagement of local women's and girls' organisations (LWGOs) in ECW-supported investments

<sup>23</sup>. In line with ECW Girls Targeting guidance note.

### III.iv Accountability Framework

Policy Objective 1: ECW is fit for purpose

**Table 4 Action area 1.a – Leadership<sup>24</sup>: actions required, by level**

Target (2026) "Exceeds requirements"		
APPROACHES	MEETS	EXCEEDS
Makes disability inclusion and implementation of the Policy a recurring or regular item on the agenda of ECW Senior Management Team meetings and ECW Sections' meetings	<p>Actions under "1. Approaches" are implemented.</p> <p>Reviews yearly and adjust the implementation of the Policy and ECW sections' action plans.</p> <p>ECW Staff includes in their PER actions and results that advance the work on disability inclusion of their respective ECW section</p>	<p><b>Actions under "2. Meets" are implemented.</b></p> <p><b>Senior managers and staff establish an operational monitoring mechanism to assess implementation of ECW sections' action plans and inform the review of the policy.</b></p>

24. In line with the [UNDIS Technical Notes: Entity Accountability Framework](#), under indicator 1 Leadership - 1.a.i. Senior managers internally and publicly champion disability inclusion

**Table 5 Action area 1.b – Planning: actions required, by level**

**Target (2026)**

“Exceeds requirements”

APPROACHES	MEETS	EXCEEDS
<p>Enhancing disability inclusion is part of the added value and principles of ECW strategic plan.</p>	<p>Actions under “1. Approaches” are implemented.</p> <p>The ECW strategic plan has a section on disability inclusion, which refers to a twin-track approach to disability, including consulting with OPDs</p> <p>Disaggregation of data by disability, gender and age in strategic planning document as relevant</p>	<p><b>Actions under “2. Meets” are implemented.</b></p> <p><b>The ECW corporate results framework refers to disability inclusion as part of a collective education outcome, as well as includes references to disability across the results framework. It sets timebound targets, disaggregated as relevant.</b></p> <p><b>Adequate resource allocation to disability inclusion across the board.</b></p>

**Table 6 Action area 1.c - Accessibility and reasonable accommodation: actions required, by level**

**Target (2026)**  
 "Exceeds requirements"

APPROACHES	MEETS	EXCEEDS
<p>Carries out a baseline assessment of accessibility of ECW communication and knowledge materials, products, and events.</p>	<p>Actions under "1. Approaches" are implemented.</p> <p>Includes budgets for reasonable accommodation and accessibility to make communication and knowledge materials, products, and events accessible.</p> <p>Gathers feedback on reasonable accommodation and accessibility, particularly for events, and keeps records of requests received, as well as of attendance of persons with disabilities disaggregated as relevant</p>	<p><b>Actions under "2. Meets" are implemented.</b></p> <p><b>Makes accessibility and reasonable accommodation requirement in procurement processes.</b></p>

**Table 7 Action area 1.d - Expertise: actions required, by level**

**Target (2026)**  
 "Exceeds requirements"

APPROACHES	MEETS	EXCEEDS
<p>Allocates resources and provide capacity development on disability, for all ECW staff, within the framework of the CRPD and on inclusion of persons with disabilities in humanitarian action.</p>	<p>Actions under "1. Approaches" are implemented.</p> <p>Has a resource person working full-time on disability inclusion to oversee the implementation and monitoring of the policy and provide technical advice to ECW investments</p>	<p><b>Actions under "2. Meets" are implemented.</b></p> <p><b>Establishes ad hoc technical groups including networks of OPDs and experts drawn from ECW ExCom to support the implementation of the ECW Policy.</b></p> <p><b>Plans and executes joint activities on disability and gender to operationalize an intersectional approach within the ECW Secretariat.</b></p>

**Table 8 Action area 2.a - Meaningful Engagement<sup>25</sup>: actions required, by level**

**Target (2026)**  
 "Meets requirements"

APPROACHES	MEETS	EXCEEDS
<p>Engages a diversity of OPDs in scoping missions (MYRPs).</p> <p>Applies UNDIS guidelines for meaningful consultation of persons with disabilities and promote their use by country partners across all stages of the programme cycle<sup>26</sup>.</p>	<p><b>Actions under "1. Approaches" are implemented.</b></p> <p><b>Ensures country partners engage OPDs in programme design as part of programme/steering committee, with adequate budgetary allocation to support participation.</b></p> <p><b>Engages OPDs as implementing partners where possible.</b></p> <p><b>Engages OPDs in yearly reviews and end of programme evaluation (MYRPs).</b></p>	<p>Actions under "2. Meets" are implemented.</p> <p>Organizes awareness raising events for OPDS on ECW's programmes and operations, as well as work with OPDS to make connections with country clusters</p> <p>Establishes a mechanism/roster to plan the engagement of OPDs on a yearly basis for MYRPs and, where possible, as emergencies arise (FERs).</p>

<sup>25</sup>. \*In contexts where OPDs are not present, cannot be established or be engaged in sudden crises (FER), programme shall engage and consult groups of persons with disabilities among the affected population.

<sup>26</sup>. UNDIS Guidelines: Indicator 5 - Consulting Persons with Disabilities: key considerations for meaningful engagement, page 17

**Table 9 Action area 2.b - Programme design: actions required, by level**

**Target (2026)**  
 "Meets requirements"

APPROACHES	MEETS	EXCEEDS
<p>Ensures programmes include an analysis of barriers and enablers, as well as risks that children with disabilities experience.</p> <p>Ensures programmes map key national frameworks/policies (MYRP), actors and existing interventions promoting inclusion of children with disabilities in education in line with the principles of the CRPD.</p> <p>Engages country focal points and specialized entities working on disability and inclusive education from the design phase</p>	<p><b>Actions under "1. Approaches" are implemented.</b></p> <p><b>Ensures programmes discuss barriers and requirements to guarantee education among underrepresented children with disabilities, as well as from a gender perspective.</b></p> <p><b>Ensures programmes reference and utilize a twin-track approach. First, by including outcome and output level results (at least one), and related activities, targeting children with disabilities. Second, by mainstreaming disability across other outcomes and output results, and related activities.</b></p>	<p>Actions under "2. Meets" are implemented.</p> <p>Ensures programmes detail a strategy to enhance disability inclusion in country programme, touching upon, (at least) accessibility and reasonable accommodation, inclusive pedagogy and curriculum, data, and engagement.</p> <p>Ensures programmes embed and operationalize principles of Universal Design for learning.</p>

**Table 10 Action area 2.c - Risk, Safeguarding and Accountability to Affected Population: actions required, by level**

**Target (2026)**  
 "Exceeds requirements"

APPROACHES	MEETS	EXCEEDS
<p>Ensures programmes include participatory risk assessments to identify risks to children with disabilities, how these risks will be managed and what mitigation measures will be budgeted for.</p> <p>Ensures programmes highlight differential risks that underrepresented groups of children with disabilities experiences, as well as those stemming from the intersection of gender, age and disability.</p> <p>Ensures programmes make provisions for enhanced accessibility of information and mitigation measures.</p>	<p>Actions under "1. Approaches" are implemented.</p> <p>Ensures programmes establish feedback and complaint mechanisms, raise awareness about their availability and develop procedures that improve their accessibility.</p>	<p><b>Actions under "2. Meets" are implemented.</b></p> <p><b>Ensures programmes engage local groups, associations or OPDs from risk assessment to implementation of feedback and complaint mechanisms.</b></p>

**Table 11 Action area 2.d - Data & Resources: actions required, by level**

**Target (2026)**  
 "Meets requirements"

APPROACHES	MEETS	EXCEEDS
<p>Ensures programmes highlight gaps in data and knowledge in programme proposals.</p> <p>Ensures programmes assume a 10% disability rate in target population, unless quality data are available.</p> <p>Ensures programmes collect data on children with disabilities, and budget for it, using the Washington tools such as the Child Functioning Module, when appropriate<sup>27</sup>.</p> <p>Establishes a system to track and report on the % of resources allocated in MYRPs and FERs to both targeted and mainstreamed outputs.</p> <p>Ensures programmes include indicators on disability inclusion and inclusive education in the results framework.</p>	<p><b>Actions under "1. Approaches" are implemented.</b></p> <p><b>Ensures programmes budget accessibility and reasonable accommodation and measure them in results framework.</b></p>	<p>Actions under "2. Meets" are implemented.</p> <p>Ensures programmes collect quantitative and qualitative data on the learning environment to assess the inclusion of children with disabilities.</p>

<sup>27</sup>. When data are not available or have been collected based on medical questions or lists, self-identification using a binary question, by sight or when aggregate figures are just provided by key informants.

Policy Objective 3: ECW's partnerships help promote Disability Inclusion in Education in Emergencies and Protracted Crises

**Table 12 Action area 3.a -Awareness raising: actions required, by level**

Target (2026) "Exceeds requirements"		
APPROACHES	MEETS	EXCEEDS
<p>Raises awareness among governments, country clusters and development groups accessing ECW funds about disability inclusion, the diversity of children with disabilities and differences in requirements.</p> <p>Provides technical advice throughout proposal development to integrate disability inclusion in programme proposals and implementation plans (FER &amp; MYRP).</p>	<p>Actions under "1. Approaches" are implemented.</p> <p>Organizes and enhances global campaigns to promote disability as top priority in education in emergencies and protracted crises</p>	<p><b>Actions under "2. Meets" are implemented.</b></p> <p><b>Mobilizes donor support and allocates funds, including through AF, to enhance disability inclusion in education in emergencies and protracted crises prioritizing working with OPDs.</b></p>

**Table 13 Action area 3.b - Knowledge: actions required, by level**

**Target (2026)**  
 "Meets requirements"

APPROACHES	MEETS	EXCEEDS
<p>Highlights disability inclusion as a key area of work, to be advanced through a twin-track approach, in the Acceleration Facility (AF) Strategy.</p> <p>Engages OPDs to identify knowledge gaps on disability inclusion and inclusive education and embed them in the AF plan.</p> <p>Mainstreams disability in the AF plan.</p> <p>Funds targeted AF Programmes on disability inclusion and inclusive education to address systemic bottlenecks in education in emergencies and protracted crises.</p>	<p><b>Actions under "1. Approaches" are implemented.</b></p> <p><b>Assesses ECW's work on disability inclusion and results for children with disabilities through the evaluation of its policies, frameworks, strategic plan, as well as investment windows.</b></p> <p><b>Assesses disability inclusion and results for children with disabilities in annual reviews (MYRPs), reports and final programme evaluations (both FERs and MYRPs) by including questions and components on disability inclusion and inclusive education.</b></p> <p><b>Consolidates lessons learned on inclusive education and disability inclusion based on the review of the Policy and use them to inform the new Strategic plan, as well as guidelines to country partners.</b></p> <p><b>Fund OPDS through the AF.</b></p>	<p>Actions under "2. Meets" are implemented.</p> <p>Establishes a cross-MYRP network on disability inclusion that promotes peer learning on disability inclusion and inclusive education (meeting at least once annually).</p>

**Table 14 Action area 3.c - Cooperation and coordination: actions required, by level**

**Target (2026)**  
 "Meets requirements"

APPROACHES	MEETS	EXCEEDS
<p>Contributes to and works with existing networks on disability inclusion and inclusive education (in emergencies and protracted crises).</p>	<p><b>Actions under "1. Approaches" are implemented.</b></p> <p><b>Works with the Global Education Cluster and UNHCR to advance disability inclusion systematically, as well as with other clusters where relevant.</b></p> <p><b>Maps existing disability working groups in country clusters.</b></p>	<p>Actions under "2. Meets" are implemented.</p> <p>Coordinates with Global, Regional, and country networks of OPDs to ensure ECW programmes complement existing interventions and fill in gaps.</p>

**Table 15 Action area 3.d - Capacities: actions required, by level**

**Target (2026)**  
 "Meets requirements"

APPROACHES	MEETS	EXCEEDS
<p>Ensures programmes carry out a capacity gap assessment as part of the proposal development process of MYRPs, and FERs where appropriate, looking at both local and international actors.</p> <p>Ensures programmes allocate resources in country investments to strengthen capacities, at both system and individual level, to deliver effectively on disability inclusion and inclusive education.</p> <p>Supports international platforms in developing tools and practices to advance disability inclusion in education in emergencies and protracted crises.</p>	<p><b>Actions under "1. Approaches" are implemented.</b></p> <p><b>Enhances capacity strengthening of (inter)national actors on data collection on children with disabilities and linkages with Educational Management Information Systems (EMIS), as well as with Multi Sector Needs Assessment (MSNA).</b></p> <p><b>Funds capacity strengthening of actors working on education in emergencies and protracted crises to partner with persons with disabilities and enhance inclusive education.</b></p>	<p>Actions under "2. Meets" are implemented.</p> <p>Funds capacity strengthening of OPDs to effectively work and engage the humanitarian sector.</p> <p>Helps establish a network of disability advisers that can assist programme development at country level.</p>



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

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