

# EDUCATION CANNOT WAIT (ECW) & GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP FOR EDUCATION (GPE):

## TWO COMPLEMENTARY GLOBAL FUNDS RESPONDING TO THE GLOBAL EDUCATION CRISIS

**The number of crises around the world has increased dramatically over the past decade, placing a major strain on education systems. This has brought incalculable consequences for children who miss out on school.**

ECW estimates that globally, over 234 million children and adolescents impacted by armed conflict, forced displacement, climate-induced disasters and other crises urgently need support to access quality education. Across lower-income countries worldwide, millions more are missing out on a quality education due to challenges such as extreme poverty, malnutrition, the lack of qualified teachers and insufficient education budgets.

Escalating needs, economic uncertainty, dwindling financing and other global challenges are undermining efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) by 2030. SDG 4 on education for all is particularly at risk, despite education being a foundational goal upon which to realize all other SDGs.

In this context, two global funds supporting education across the emergency and development spectrum are needed now more than ever before.

**Funding needs for both ECW and GPE to support quality education for crisis-affected children have never been greater.**

### Why two funds

Crises are multiplying, becoming more complex and lasting longer than before. More resources are needed to better support countries to meet the most urgent education needs while building resilient and equitable education systems for the future. By leveraging each fund's added value, ECW and GPE's strengthened collaboration maximizes funding for education and helps to better meet the full scope of needs:

- **Generating more overall funding for education:** Unique but complementary mandates—ECW's emergency funding and GPE's broader fundraising for education systems, including leveraging domestic financing—and mutually reinforcing financing instruments offer more potential to raise funds across the humanitarian-development spectrum.
- **Offering diverse support options:** The need for short- and longer-term funding often coexists in countries that have nascent or fragile education systems. ECW and GPE's combined operational modalities are well suited to cover this wide range of needs and complement each other.
- **Reinforcing coordination mechanisms:** ECW invests through UN humanitarian and resident coordinator mechanisms while GPE invests through national education development coordination mechanisms, and both funds work to strengthen and connect these coordination mechanisms under the overarching stewardship of the government.
- **Forging more diverse partnerships:** The collaboration of both funds leverages a wider range of partnerships with governments, UN agencies, international and local organizations, civil society and the private sector both globally and at country level.

### Complementarity

GPE's work with governments to prepare for and respond to crises and minimize their impact on education systems complements ECW's work on financing rapid and multi-year education responses in crises through the humanitarian system.

**GPE and ECW converge in fragile and protracted crisis contexts, supporting the continuum between humanitarian and development programming and accelerating progress to realize SDG 4 on education for all.**

## ECW

Supports education in emergencies and protracted crises

Directly executes financing

Humanitarian emphasis with rapid crisis-sensitive and flexible funding

Shorter-term engagement and outlook

Bridges the humanitarian-development nexus, starting from the emergency end of the spectrum



## GPE

Transforms education systems in lower-income countries

Works through governments

Development perspective, accelerated funding for crisis response

Long-term engagement and outlook

Bridges the humanitarian-development nexus, starting from the development end of the spectrum

ECW can intervene in crisis contexts not eligible for GPE funding, while GPE supports many countries where there is no current need for education emergency support. In contexts that receive support from both funds, the specificities of each context determine the nature of the complementarity. It may mean both funds support the same types of activities in different parts of a country; different but mutually reinforcing activities in the same location; or different activities in different locations.

## Examples of how ECW and GPE work together in fragile and protracted crises

| Democratic Republic of Congo                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | Myanmar                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | South Sudan                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
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| The DRC faces a protracted crisis with large-scale internal displacement and over half a million refugees and asylum-seekers. ECW's First Emergency Response and a component of GPE's system transformation grant align to support children in the most severely affected provinces. Moreover, GPE supports the development of a national education in emergencies strategy and the reintegration of children who dropped out of school in the formal education system. ECW and GPE ensure continued synergies in the ECW Multi-Year Resilience Programme in 2025. | After the military takeover in Myanmar in 2021, most partner engagement with the Ministry of Education under the de facto authorities was paused. Partners developed a Joint Response Framework (JRF) to coordinate support for education continuity. GPE approved accelerated funding and re-programmed its existing grant to align to the JRF. ECW's Multi-Year Resilience Programme is also aligned to the JRF. GPE, ECW and other bilateral support expands the geographical coverage of interventions aligned with the JRF. | In South Sudan, ECW and GPE work together in lockstep under strong government leadership to ensure international education financing targets those worst affected by emergencies and protracted crises. When one-third of South Sudan was flooded in 2022, GPE made \$10 million in accelerated funding available to mitigate flood impact on education. The ministry and its partners decided to allocate this support towards the ECW-facilitated Multi-Year Resilience Programme, as additional financing to ECW's \$40 million seed funding. |

## Next steps to further increase synergy

ECW and GPE are committed to continue strengthening collaboration to maximize efficiency and impact, especially in the areas of:

- Shared situation analyses and aligned timings and sequencing of activities for programme cycles at the country level.
- Joint advocacy, including on climate policy and financing.
- Country level coordination and aligned or common programme objectives.
- Oversight arrangements for grants, when ECW and GPE both have funds available for a given context.
- Technical work on thematic areas such as gender and risk management for example.
- Sustainability and exit strategies to ensure a smooth transition from emergency response to longer-term system strengthening.