

## Civil Society Urges Increased Commitment to Education Cannot Wait to Fund and Scale Up COVID-19 Response Efforts

April 8, 2020 - **Civil society organizations committed to providing access to a quality education for children and youth impacted by conflict and crisis around the world strongly urge increased support for education as a core part of global COVID-19 response efforts, including \$50 million in new funding for Education Cannot Wait (ECW).**

More than 1.5 billion children and youth<sup>1</sup> around the world are affected by school closures due to the COVID-19 pandemic, impacting over 91 percent of the world's student population. Learners already vulnerable and affected by crises, including armed conflicts, forced displacement, natural disasters and protracted crises, are now facing the added hardship brought on by this pandemic.

ECW, the global fund dedicated to education in emergencies, operates in 27 countries to address the urgent education needs of 75 million children and youth in conflict and crisis settings. ECW is taking steps to ensure that 60 percent of all students benefiting from ECW investments are girls, while gender-sensitivity is integrated across all ECW-funded programs. ECW is also committed to the inclusion of children with disabilities and providing an accessible and inclusive response to leave no one behind.

**ECW has taken quick action in response to COVID-19 by conducting rapid assessments in countries with ECW-supported programs.** These assessments paint a worrying picture of the significant impact that COVID-19 is having on already severely strained education systems, including an acute shortage of accessible and inclusive distance learning tools, materials and competencies. This means that millions of pupils will not be able to access learning information and complete the current school year as planned. In addition, many areas lack hygienic knowledge, as well as supplies and facilities.

As a result, ECW has activated its First Emergency Response funding window to re-program current grants and deliver new funding. **ECW expects that an initial \$50 million in additional funding will be required to respond to the COVID-19 related education needs for the coming three months. These funds will continue to ensure learning continuity, support accelerated learning, facilitate distance learning, raise further awareness of risks associated with COVID-19, provide WASH services, and prioritize MHPSS and protection efforts.** We welcome this immediate response, as well as all future steps to increase the flexibility of ongoing programs.

**As civil society representatives, we urgently call upon current and prospective ECW donors to commit additional resources to meet this funding goal.** By making specific, measurable commitments and swiftly delivering increased funding for ECW we can take significant steps to minimize the impact of COVID-19 on all crisis-affected and displaced children and youth seeking a quality education.

ActionAid	Humanity & Inclusion	Right to Play
Care International	International Rescue Committee	Save the Children
Children in Crisis	Jesuit Refugee Service	The RET
Christian Blind Mission	Malala Fund	Theirworld
Concern	Mercy Corps	UNICEF USA
Finn Church Aid	Norwegian Refugee Council	War Child
Finnish Refugee Council	ONE	World Vision International
Global Campaign for Education-US	Oxfam	
Global Citizen	Plan International	

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<sup>1</sup> Includes adult tertiary learners <https://en.unesco.org/covid19/educationresponse>