

A CASE FOR INVESTMENT IN EDUCATION CANNOT WAIT

- 222 million children are at risk of missing out on an education because of armed conflicts, forced displacement, climate-induced disasters and protracted crises.
- Education is a catalytic investment when it comes to alleviating poverty. For children affected by crises, it is even more important, providing protection, normalcy and a sense of hope for their futures.

It's time for the Australian Government to protect the right of children to an education, particularly when it is disrupted by circumstances outside of their control.

We're calling on the Australian Government to invest \$24 million over 3 years in Education Cannot Wait, the UN Global Fund for education in emergencies and protracted crises.

3 REASONS FOR AUSTRALIA TO INVEST IN ECW:

- **Responding to climate emergencies in the Indo-Pacific:** ECW's new Strategic Plan includes a core focus on responding to the impact of climate change on education. Australia can play a leading role in shaping this work, ensuring that global funding reaches children impacted by emergencies in its priority countries affected by climate-induced disasters across the Indo-Pacific.
- **Multilateral leadership & visibility:** Australia was a founding donor to ECW in 2015, helping the fund to become the high-impact global public good it is today. Australia also invested \$10 million in 2017-2020. Investing in ECW again means protecting Australia's original investment, delivering global impact, and standing shoulder to shoulder with global allies to keep children learning in the most complex crises.
- **Girls' education & reaching those furthest behind:** ECW funding is focused on the most complex, protracted, and underfunded crises, and ECW's interventions seek out those most likely to fall behind within those crises: girls, children with disabilities, and forcibly displaced populations.

ECW's financing challenge

ECW needs \$1.5 billion to ensure that 20 million children and young people affected by crises – including 12 million girls – receive an education over the next four years.

With this funding, ECW can:

- Get 12 million children and adolescents back into school following a new emergency or the escalation of a crisis.
- Provide three years of holistic education support to 8 million children and adolescents in protracted crises.
- Support 12 million girls with quality education.
- Support 2 million children and adolescents with disabilities with quality education.

During the ECW High-Level Financing Conference in February 2023, USD \$826 million was mobilised towards this target. ECW is seeking a further \$675 million to ensure it can deliver its 2023-2026 Strategic Plan.

How a partnership with ECW can help deliver on Australia's global priorities

Australia has a golden opportunity to shape the next phase of ECW's development, playing a leadership role in efforts to respond to the impact of climate change on education globally, and across the Indo-Pacific region.

Ahead of the COP28 meetings in the United Arab Emirates in November 2023, an Australian investment in ECW would be a powerful signal of Australia's commitment to invest at the intersection of the global climate and learning crises. As ECW operationalises its approach to climate change, as defined in its 2023-2026 strategic plan, Australian political, financial and technical leadership can help shape the work of the fund for years to come.

Historically, Australia has been a strong supporter of ECW. Australia played an important role in the establishment and operationalisation of the ECW fund. Financial resources, strategic leadership and technical support helped ECW evolve into the high-impact global public good it is today. Australia's investment also sent a signal to other donors to join – in total, the fund now has 25 donors.

ECW's Impact

Since 2016, the fund has:

- Supported 7 million children and adolescents to get an education across 41 countries affected by war, climate-induced disasters, and displacement
- Supported 31.2 million children and adolescents through its COVID-19 emergency response, 51.8% girls.
- Trained almost 90,000 teachers - 57% women.

#EmpowerHer

ECW's #EmpowerHer – ensures girls can access 12 years of quality education

- **19.5 million girls** reached since 2016
- **92%** of ECW investments showed improvements in gender parity
- **Actively campaigning and advocating for the rights of girls' to an education globally**, including in response to the situation in Afghanistan.

ECW 2023-2026: A New Way of Working

ECW's central priority through its new Strategic Plan will be to address the two most critical and persistent challenges to closing the quality education gap in emergencies and protracted crises: a lack of funding and weak capacities and systems. In doing so, the new plan places an increased focus on:

- Responding to climate change
- Prioritising holistic learning outcomes
- Improving financing data
- Placing localisation and community participation at the core of its work
- Advancing its commitment to gender, disability, and displacement

ECW and the Climate Crisis

Over the next four years, ECW will significantly increase funds available to respond to climate-induced disasters through its First Emergency Response (FER) reserve, which provides rapid financing within weeks of a climate-induced disaster, supporting Australia's strong commitment to anticipatory action.

Through its Multi-Year Resilience Programs, ECW will intensify efforts to be climate smart and include climate risks as part of an all-hazards approach to needs assessments and needs-based decision-making and program design.

ECW in the Indo-Pacific

Since ECW was established, the fund has invested in 41 countries affected by conflict, climate-induced disasters, displacement, and health emergencies, including in the Indo-Pacific Region.

- In Bangladesh, ECW investments support access to safe and holistic learning spaces, ensuring the continuity of education for both refugee and host community children and adolescents.
- In Indonesia, ECW responded rapidly to the devastating earthquake in 2018, investing in temporary learning spaces, learning materials and psychosocial support.
- In Papua New Guinea, following the 2018 earthquake in the Southern Highlands and Hela, ECW investments helped restore access to education, provide child protection and psychosocial support increased resilience.

ECW in Afghanistan

In Afghanistan, ECW investments expand access to community-based education, especially for girls and adolescent girls; promote continuity in learning

by facilitating the transition to formal education; support teacher training; improve monitoring systems; establish child protection and safeguarding measures in communities; and ensure access to mental health and psychosocial services.

In early 2023, ECW approved USD \$30 million for two years for its Afghanistan Multi-Year Resilience Programme, bringing its total funding to Afghanistan to approximately USD \$85 million since 2017, making it the largest investment country for ECW. ECW also maintains dialogue with all stakeholders, including the Ministry of Education, to help ensure all levels of the education system are open to all, especially girls at secondary level.

ECW and the Global Partnership for Education responding to the climate crisis together

South Sudan's years of violent conflict, severe hunger, and poverty have had a heavy toll on the education system and led to the displacement of millions of people internally and towards neighboring countries, with devastating impact on the provision of basic services, including education. Further, recurrent climate-induced disasters exacerbate education needs; unprecedented floods in 2022 significantly displaced communities and damaged essential infrastructure, including many schools.

In South Sudan, ECW and GPE work together in lockstep to ensure international education financing targets those worst affected by emergencies and protracted crises. When one-third of the country was flooded in 2022, GPE made US\$10 million available at the country's request to mitigate flood impact on education.

In partnership with the Ministry of General Education and Instruction, the Education Cluster, Coordinating Agencies UK and USA, and other key global and national partners – GPE allocated this US\$10 million towards the ECW-facilitated Multi-Year Resilience Programme 2 (MYRP-2), as additional financing to the US\$40 million seed funding from ECW, meaning the GPE funding was fully integrated into the MYRP-2 scope of work, targeting of beneficiaries and grantee selection process. Country partners felt this made for a more efficient process

The MYRP-2 is grounded in the reality of South Sudan, with a focus on girls and children with disabilities, the return of refugees and IDPs, and the transition from emergency to development.

The programme supports a holistic package of interventions, including school fees, radio education, re-enrolment campaigns, teacher training – especially for female teachers, child protection and safe and protective learning. The MYRP is aligned with the country's education sector plan, which the bulk of GPE resources is supporting in areas of improving access, quality, and system management.

ECW and GPE's support to South Sudan is humanitarian-development coherence in action. The ECW MYRP-2's focus on humanitarian response and early recovery provided a framework for GPE to fund and help build resilience by mitigating flood impacts on education.