

### COVID-19 Integrated Education Response in Libya

The “Education Cannot Wait” Initiative allocated US\$750,000 towards a UNICEF initiated education in emergency response programme to support 9,000 girls and boys affected by the ongoing protracted crisis in Libya which is compounded by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The protracted crisis in Libya is now entering its ninth year and has left over 400,000 people in displacement, including nearly 120,000 children. Since 15 March 2020, schools and non-formal learning centres in Libya have remained closed to limit the spread of COVID-19; this has left at least 1.3 million students out of school. The closure has also left conflict-affected children and adolescents unable to access various essential services including psychosocial support, as schools and non-formal learning centres serve as access points for these services.

“With more than eight months into the pandemic, children's education is significantly disrupted. With education on hold, their future will be on hold. We cannot allow that.” said UNICEF Special Representative in Libya, Abdulkadir Musse. “This initiative will enable UNICEF and its partners to help children in Libya, including the most vulnerable, such as children with disability and refugee and migrant children. We must act now to ensure they are not left behind”, he added.

The initiative will help to minimise the impact of disruption in education by increasing accessibility while maintaining the safety of children and educational personnel during the COVID-19 pandemic. UNICEF, as the sector lead and in partnership with the “Education Cannot Wait” Initiative and other stakeholders, has prioritized distance learning, capacity building of educators for mental health and psychosocial support to children, catch up classes, water and sanitation activities, and supplementary food distribution in selected schools.

“This initiative has been most timely, offering hope and assistance to vulnerable boys and girls who have already suffered too much”, said Yacoub El Hillo, Deputy Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General, UN Resident Coordinator and Humanitarian Coordinator for Libya. “We are very proud of this partnership with “Education Cannot Wait” and hope to work with more partners to meet the full scope of the needs in Libya”, he added.

The “Education Cannot Wait” Initiative is deeply appreciated by UNICEF, the larger UN family and implementing partners in Libya. This initiative helps to ensure that 4,050 children receive individual learning materials, 2,500 children benefit from supplementary food distribution and 4,000 children receive water, sanitation, and hygiene support. Students with disabilities and children from vulnerable groups, including internally displaced persons, migrants, refugees and host communities, are key beneficiaries of the initiative.

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UNICEF promotes the rights and wellbeing of every child in everything we do. Together with our partners, we work in some of the toughest places in the world and across 190 countries and territories to translate that commitment into practical action, with a special focus on reaching the most vulnerable and excluded children everywhere.

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