EDUCATION CANNOT WAIT AND A WIDE RANGE OF NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL PARTNERS LAUNCH $1.8 BILLION RESOURCE MOBILIZATION CALL TO ACTION

CATALYTIC INVESTMENTS TO SUPPORT QUALITY EDUCATION FOR 9 MILLION CHILDREN AND YOUTH IN THE WORLD’S WORST HUMANITARIAN CRISES

13 June 2019, New York – Education Cannot Wait and its partners are launching the “Act 4 Education in Crisis” campaign calling on governments, private sector companies, philanthropic foundations and global leaders to rise and support the Fund’s efforts to mobilize $1.8 billion by 2021 for 9 million children and youth living in the midst of war, forced displacement and disaster.

In times of crisis, education can play a life-saving and life-sustaining role. Yet, a large gap persists in funding for education in crisis, with just 2 to 4 per cent of annual humanitarian funding going to the education sector. This underfunding has left behind 75 million children whose education is disrupted by conflict, disaster and crisis.

Education Cannot Wait – a global fund for education in emergencies hosted by UNICEF – is filling this gap. Working with a wide range of partners, our investments provide speedy educational responses when a crisis erupts or escalates, while also linking humanitarian and development aid efforts to optimize collective efforts and ensure quality learning outcomes for children and youth in protracted crisis contexts.

“Girls and boys caught up in conflicts and crises endure abnormal circumstances of unspeakable violence, dispossession and disruption to their young lives. Their will to survival compels them to develop extraordinary resilience in coping with these sudden or chronic circumstances,” said Education Cannot Wait Director, Yasmine Sherif. “If we who are spared their suffering act generously now by investing in their intellectual, social and emotional development through continued quality education, we can protect them, and help them transform their experiences and scars into creativity, knowledge and productivity, and may even open the doors for a new generation that is empowered to bring positive change.”

Education Cannot Wait’s new Case for investment in Quality Education in Crisis lays out the urgency and the value of investing in the education of children in crisis-affected countries as one of the soundest investment in human and socio-economic development and in peace and stability to make today. It is endorsed by the UN Special Envoy for Global Education and Chair of the Fund’s High-Level Steering Group, Rt Hon Gordon Brown, development ministers, education ministers of crisis-affected countries, Heads of UN agencies, private sector partners and philanthropists, global education ambassadors and civil society partners.

“Hope dies when a child or young person is unable to plan and prepare for the future, and it is up to us to keep hope alive. So, let us bridge this gap between humanitarian and development aid. Let us fund humanitarian aid in education properly. Let us ensure Education Cannot Wait has the funds to support and facilitate coordinated education responses in all the conflict areas of the world,” said Gordon Brown.

Around the globe, hundreds of civil society organizations are rallying behind the “Act for Education in Crisis” campaign. “Across the world children affected by crises tell us that education is the key to their futures, their safety, their health and their happiness, and that it cannot be delayed. We call upon donors to urgently support the education of girls and boys, including forcibly displaced children, caught up in humanitarian crises by fully funding Education Cannot Wait so that it can provide quality, inclusive and safe education to 9 million children and youth annually by 2021,” said a coalition of civil society organizations in a joint statement issued today.
Since it became operational in 2017, Education Cannot Wait has reached 1.4 million children. This includes close to half a million refugees and over 200,000 internally displaced children and youth. Half of all the children reached by the Fund are girls. For Aisha, a 16-year-old refugee girl in Chad who fled Nigeria after a Boko Haram attack on her village, this is the difference between the hope of becoming one day a doctor and a life of marginalization. For 12-year-old Zakaria in Syria, this means an opportunity to continue his schooling and hang on to the dream of a better future despite the conflict raging in his country.

By raising $673 million by 2021, the Education Cannot Wait Global Trust Fund responds to new sudden onset crises, such as the recent devastation caused by Cyclone Idai in Southern Africa or the escalating Venezuela crisis. The Fund also supports multi-year educational responses with a target of 25 priority countries affected by protracted crises to provide hope and opportunities to 9 million children like Aisha and Zakaria. These groundbreaking programmes, launched with Education Cannot Wait’s seed-funding allocations, need to catalyze an additional $1.2 billion in co-financing at the country level.

To date, Education Cannot Wait has mobilized over $344 million from 15 generous public and private donors. With the launch of the “Act 4 Education in Crisis” campaign, the Fund builds on its first two years initial success, deepening the support of existing partners and calling on new donors to join the partnership.

“Our strategic donor partners are generously and steadfastly seeking to meet the challenge but much more remains to be done,” says Sherif. “By working together and investing about $113 per child per year, we can empower the next generation of leaders. When we invest in the human mind, when learning is achieved, it cannot be taken away or destroyed. Indeed, a good education is all that is left when all else crumbles.”

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Notes to Editors:

Learn more about the “Act for Education in Crisis” #Act4Ed campaign and its supporters: [www.act4educationincrisis.org](http://www.act4educationincrisis.org)

Download the Education Cannot Wait’s Case for Investment in Quality Education In Crisis [here](http://www.act4educationincrisis.org).

The joint statement by civil society partners is available [here](http://www.act4educationincrisis.org).

EDUCATION IN EMERGENCIES BY THE NUMBERS*

- **30%**. Children and youth in fragile and conflict affected countries are 30 per cent less likely to complete primary education.
- **50%**. Children and youth in fragile and conflict affected countries are 50 per cent less likely to complete lower-secondary education.
- **2.5X**. Girls in crisis settings are 2.5 times more likely to be out of primary school than boys.
- **90%**. Girls in crisis settings are 90 per cent more likely to be out of secondary school than those living in countries where there is no crisis.
- **39 Million**. An estimated 39 million girls caught up in war, disasters and crisis need urgent educational support.
- **$15-30 Trillion**. The World Bank estimates that if every girl worldwide were to receive 12 years of quality schooling, irrespective of whether there’s a crisis or not, their lifetime earnings could increase by $15 trillion to $30 trillion.

*References

About Education Cannot Wait (ECW):

ECW is the first global fund dedicated to education in emergencies. It was launched by international humanitarian and development aid actors, along with public and private donors, to address the urgent education needs of 75 million children and youth in conflict and crisis settings. ECW’s investment modalities are designed to usher in a more collaborative approach among actors on the ground, ensuring relief and development organizations join forces
to achieve education outcomes. Education Cannot Wait is hosted by UNICEF. The Fund is administered under UNICEF’s financial, human resources and administrative rules and regulations, while operations are run by the Fund’s own independent governance structure. Additional information is available at [www.educationcannotwait.org](http://www.educationcannotwait.org)

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