

Organisation Strategy for Denmark's Engagement with Education Cannot Wait (ECW) 2023-2026

FINAL version

9 October 2023 | Migration, Stabilization and Fragility (MNS)

Danish Organisation Strategy for Education Cannot Wait (ECW) 2023-2026

Introduction:

This 2023-2026 Organisation Strategy for Denmark's engagement with Education Cannot Wait (ECW) describes the strategic objectives and choice of priority areas that Denmark's partnership with ECW will be guided by in this period. It builds on the previous Organisation Strategy and ECW's own Strategic Plan 2023-2026.

Key results:

- Children and adolescents affected by crisis are able to access safe and inclusive quality education and achieve holistic learning outcomes, including related to gender equality as well as climate and the environment.

Justification for support:

- The overarching aim of ECW's interventions is to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education for all, which is a priority in Denmark's strategy for development cooperation, 'The World We Share'.
- ECW is the primary international organization working to strengthen education in emergencies. ECW fills a gap in the global aid architecture, bridging humanitarian and development assistance.

How will we ensure results and monitor progress:

- Engage actively with ECW and its constituents through the seat on the Executive Committee, in ECW working groups and via bilateral dialogues.
- Pursue linkages where relevant with processes and instruments internal to the Danish MFA.

Risk and challenges:

- Further deterioration of crises situations due to conflict and climate change.
- Gaps between actors and systems delivering humanitarian and development assistance respectively.
- Fragmentation among education actors and risk of decreasing global funding for education.

File No.	2023-28719					
Responsible Unit	MNS					
	<i>Mill.</i>	2023	2024	2025	2026	total
Commitment		85	85	85	85	340
Projected ann. Disb.		85	85	85	85	340
Duration of strategy	2023-2026					
Finance Act code.	§ 06.36.04.11					
Desk officer	Line Friberg Nielsen					
Financial officer	Antonio Ugaz-Simonsen					

SDGs relevant for Programme



Budget

The Danish contribution will support ECW's achievement of the strategic priorities outlined in ECW's strategic Plan 2023-2026. The contribution will also finance a secondment to support ECW's work in prioritised areas.

ECW annual budget 2023: USD 252 million

Danish involvement in governance structure

- Denmark has a seat in ECW's High Level Steering Group and on its Executive Committee

Strat. objectives

To reach those left furthest behind with quality education, while improving the way education is coordinated and delivered in emergencies and protracted crises.

Priority results

Advancing the commitment to gender equality

Strengthening the humanitarian-development nexus

Responding to climate change

Core information

Established: 2016
Headquarters: New York
Human resources: 37
Chief Executive Officer: Yasmine Sherif

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1. Objective of the Organisation Strategy

It is the aim of Danish development assistance to create hope and opportunities for people by promoting economic and social protection and development. Ensuring access to quality education in fragile countries and crises affected contexts is a priority in this regard. This is done through contributing to long-term and sustainable solutions while also responding quickly in the face of changing realities.

Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4: *Quality Education* is the overarching, strategic aim of Danish development assistance to education. This goal is critical because of its transformative effects on many of the other SDGs. Sustainable development hinges on every child receiving a quality education. Quality education offers children and young people the tools to develop to their full potential, enabling upward socioeconomic mobility. Without quality education, children and young people are more likely to suffer adverse health outcomes and less likely to participate in decisions that affect them, threatening their ability and opportunity to shape a better future for themselves and their societies.

The overarching vision of the global education fund Education Cannot Wait (ECW), established in 2017, is to achieve a world where all children and adolescents affected by emergencies and crises can learn free of cost, in safety and without fear. ECW's mission is to generate greater political, operational, and financial commitment to meet the educational needs of millions of children and adolescents affected by crises, with a focus on more agile, connected, and faster responses that span the humanitarian–development continuum to achieve sustainable education systems. Denmark has supported ECW since its inception.

This Organisation Strategy (OS) for Denmark's engagement with ECW 2023-2026 provides strategic considerations and specific goals for Denmark's engagement with ECW, forms the basis for the Danish financial contributions and is the platform for dialogue with ECW. It outlines Danish priorities for ECW performance within the framework established in ECW's own Strategic Plan 2023-2026.

The OS is anchored in Denmark's overall commitment to the SDGs, in particular SDG 4. It is furthermore anchored in the Danish Strategy for Development Cooperation 2021-2025, "*The World We Share*", which includes a focus on equal access to quality education for children and young people in fragile contexts, with particular focus on marginalised and vulnerable groups including women, children and young people. Education is recognised as a driver for human rights, democratic societies and economic development, while climate change and degraded ecosystems trigger and intensify conflicts and fragility, which in turn exacerbates poverty and inequality. Denmark is therefore committed to; '*Ensure access to healthcare services and quality education in fragile countries and regions of origin, with particular focus on marginalised groups and women, children and young people*' (Objective 1 in the Danish Strategy for Development Cooperation).

This OS is also anchored in the '*How-to*' note on social sectors and safety nets, in support of the implementation of the Danish strategy for development cooperation 2021-2025. This underlines that support to education will primarily be channelled through multilateral partnerships and global foundations and that through these partnerships, Denmark will ensure that decisions to the extent possible deliver on Danish objectives for our support to education. The OS is equally anchored in the '*How-to*' note on securing coherence between humanitarian aid, development cooperation and peacebuilding (the HDP nexus).

The Danish MFA has not commissioned a review of its previous ECW OS (2019-2022). Similarly, there is no MOPAN evaluation of ECW. This OS is therefore primarily informed by the comprehensive independent Organisational Evaluation of ECW from 2022 and the results achieved vis a vis ECW's own results framework from its previous strategy period. The OS is also informed by ECW's Strategic Plan

for the period 2023-2026. Finally, the ECW secretariat has kindly provided input and assured the accuracy of the description of ECW.

2. Context

During the past three decades, access to education has improved across the world, contributing to upholding people's rights and advancing social, political and economic development. However, the COVID-19 pandemic had an enormous negative impact on education in low and middle income countries, exacerbated by existing and new conflicts, climate change and, more recently, inflation and food insecurity. This leaves education related goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda severely off track and risks leaving children and young people very poorly equipped to navigate uncertain futures.

Based on ECW's estimates released in June 2023, armed conflicts, forced displacement, climate change and other crises have increased the number of crisis-impacted children in need of urgent quality education to 224 million. About 72 million of the crisis-impacted children in the world are out of school. Of these out-of-school children, 53% are girls, 17% have functional difficulties, and 21% (approximately 15 million) have been forcibly displaced. Around half of all out-of-school children in emergencies are concentrated in only eight countries: Ethiopia, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Sudan, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Myanmar, Mali and Nigeria. 127 million in-school children are not achieving the minimum proficiencies as outlined in SDG 4. Gender disparities in education access become more pronounced in secondary education and are largest in high-intensity crises such as in Afghanistan, Chad, South Sudan and Yemen. Finally, there are several demonstrated correlations between exposure to risks related to climate change and access and quality of education. Approximately 83% of out-of-school children, and approximately 75% of in-school children facing learning deprivation, live in countries with a Climate Change Risk Index higher than the global median value (UNICEF Climate Change Risk Index (CCRI)). Between 2022 and 2023, the number of crisis-affected children of school age has increased by 25 million, i.e. a 12.5% increase, driven by a combination of conflict and extreme natural events like droughts and floods, the causes and effects of which have been exacerbated by climate change (ECW, 2023).

3. The organisation

Background

The global education fund 'Education Cannot Wait' (ECW) started out as a vision presented at the World Humanitarian Summit in 2016 and became operational as a fund in 2017, hosted by UNICEF. Its five core functions are to: 1) Inspire political commitment to education in emergencies and protracted crises, 2) Generate additional funding, 3) Plan and respond collaboratively, 4) Strengthen capacity to respond, and 5) Improve accountability (see annex 6: ECW Theory of Change). ECW has just entered into its second strategic period, 2023-2026.

The Executive Director of ECW is Yasmin Sherif. The primary accountability of the ECW Secretariat is to a High Level Steering Group (HLSG) and an Executive Committee (ExCom). The HLSG provides overall strategic guidance to the fund, and is currently chaired by Gordon Brown, United Nations Special Envoy for Global Education and former Prime Minister of the United Kingdom. The ExCom oversees operations and approves programmatic development, and is currently co-chaired by representatives of the MFAs of Norway and Germany. Denmark has a seat on the HLSG and on the ExCom.

Since its inception ECW has reached more than 7 million children and adolescents in areas affected by conflict, disaster and protracted crisis. To date the fund has mobilised USD 1.56 billion (including future commitments) and before the end of the 2023 - 2026 strategic period the fund aims to mobilize resources exceeding USD 2.2 billion and to reach 20 million children and adolescents with pre-primary, primary

and secondary education. Denmark is currently the fourth largest donor to the fund¹, exceeded by Germany, UK and US. The LEGO Foundation has emerged as the largest philanthropic donor to ECW with a current contribution totalling USD 65 million.

Principles

In its work, ECW adheres to a set of principles, including defending education as a fundamental human right and an enabler of all other rights, championing holistic, quality education for children and adolescents in crisis-affected contexts, and delivering inclusive quality education in crises that responds to the structural and intersecting disparities holding back girls, displaced learners, children and adolescents with disabilities, and other marginalized groups. ECW is similarly committed to investing in local actors and building local level capacities and demonstrating an agile, coordinated, and sustainable response in both emergencies and protracted crises, working across the humanitarian–development nexus to address immediate needs, while also achieving sustainable impact and transformation.

ECW funding modalities

ECW operates under three funding modalities:

- The *First Emergency Response* (FER) window provides rapid support to Education in Emergencies (EiE) for 6-12 months through the international humanitarian coordination system.
- The *Multi-Year Resilience* (MYR) window serves to bridge the humanitarian-development nexus through 3-4-year programmes. Based on this modality, ECW promotes cooperation among key education actors in country, in particular the Education Clusters and Local Education Groups (LEGs).
- The *Acceleration Facility* (AF), a flexible financing mechanism to fund strategic initiatives, supports the collection and analysis of evidence to inform best practices and scale up innovations. The AF represents a concrete initiative to re-inforce and develop new global public goods for the sector, and incentivise positive collaboration across sectors for enhanced education outcomes.

In the 2023 – 2026 strategic period, ECW aims to allocate 25% of funding to the FER window, 72% to the MYR window and 3% to the AF. The rationale for the indicative allocations were to strengthen the FER window as requested by the ECW ExCom in recognition of ECW's essential role as first responder for education in emergencies. The comparatively low allocation to the AF signals prioritizing the FER and the MYR windows, which comprise ECW's comparative advantage. The MYR programmes (MYRPs) continue to be ECW's flagship programs, offering predictable, significant multi-year funding.

Each individual programme, through the FER and MYR windows, is designed by the partners on the ground according to local needs and priorities. The partners explain how the thematic priorities are pursued in each setting and outlines if certain priorities are particularly relevant in the context. ECW thematic commitments are global, so individual programmes may have a stronger dedication to i.e. inclusion and early childhood, while other focus more on MHPSS and girls' secondary education. ECW reviews and comments on the programme, results framework and budget, before a final version is eventually approved.

¹ Denmark has supported ECW since its creation in 2016, with a total of DKK 279 million 2016-2018. Denmark proceeded to give a 4-year contribution of DKK 250 million for 2019-2022. In 2020, Denmark contributed DKK 64 million to ECW's COVID-19 response and an additional contribution of DKK 75 million was made in 2022.

ECW's MYR programming seeks to be based on close dialogue with in-country partners and aligned with other programmes. If existing programmes are in place, ECW will support those and present a version of the program in a format that allows for ECW ExCom approval. Alternatively, ECW will identify partners to whom ECW should focus its funding. In other settings, the existing in-country programmes do not consider children and adolescents affected by emergency and ECW therefore has to establish such a program, as in Bangladesh for example. Through the joint programming approach that includes local actors, ECW seeks to ensure that programmes create synergies and avoid duplication.

Since its inception ECW has employed 'direct execution' as modality of financing, i.e. funding goes directly to frontline implementing agencies and organizations, without transiting through government systems. This approach is intended to protect these investments in contexts where political turmoil and instability are common. Where a political situation is or becomes significantly destabilized, ECW partners are still able to work and implement activities.

ECW presence

ECW is currently investing in every significant emergency or crisis in the world (see Annex 5). The fund has developed a comprehensive analytical model for analyzing needs in the countries most affected by emergency and crises, building on internationally recognized data. The analysis is updated on a yearly basis and used to identify the emergencies in which ECW should make MYRP investments, and the level of these investments. As outlined in the ECW 2023 – 2026 Strategic Plan, ECW will focus the MYRP investments in fewer countries, and the model will be adjusted accordingly. In addition to the needs analysis, there are political considerations. For example, ECW may receive dedicated funding to crises that would not be candidates for funding based on the model. A recent example is the Ukraine MYRP which is fully funded by earmarked funding, which cannot be used in other settings. Yemen is an example of a crisis where the needs are overwhelming but where the political complexity makes it unfit for a MYRP.

Financial management and risk management

As a UNICEF hosted fund, ECW strictly follows UNICEF financial procedures. This means that all grantees must have a valid HACT assessment (Harmonized Approach to Cash Transfers) in place and have integrated the PSEA (Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse) framework in their operating procedures and be registered on the UN Partner Portal.

ECW's programmatic risks are captured and managed through ECW's portfolio-level risk management mechanism, with grantees providing an analysis of their risks and risk mitigation actions as part of their initial proposal. Thereafter, grantees are required to update their risk registers and report back to the Secretariat at least every six months, keeping the risk informed approach to fiduciary risk management updated. ECW commissions financial spot-checks for all non-UN grantees and may initiate specialized or regular audits based on the overall risk status of the grantee. The Secretariat also follows up with grantees on an ad hoc basis, including to adjust and enhance the programme, when the context requires it, and conducts monitoring visits, often as part of a joint donor review. At the corporate level, a corporate risk framework is maintained to help ECW manage its risks, covering all aspects of ECW's core functions and objectives. The corporate risk framework is currently being updated to align with the new Strategic Plan.

4. Lessons learned, challenges and opportunities

Since its inception, ECW has successfully reinforced global recognition of the importance of education in humanitarian response and plays a unique role as a global fund dedicated to education in emergencies and protracted crises (EiEPC). ECW's **mandate** has become increasingly relevant as emergencies and crisis have continued to spread, affecting still more children and adolescents, and their education.

ECW is the only global fund for EiEPC, and its **comparative advantage**, compared with other education actors, is that it is a lean, field-driven, catalyst fund. ECW provides speedy support in crisis situations, particularly at the onset of emergencies. This is something that Denmark has actively expressed appreciation for, and sought to stress the significance of, in discussions about matters that could inadvertently make ECW more centralised, complex and heavy. ECW's operating model, with the three investment windows, adds value at country level, and the focus on the humanitarian-development nexus is critical. At the same time, as the 2022 Organisational Evaluation found, ECW is still a work in progress, with several areas of the organisation and its instruments needing adjustments and improvements.

The global architecture in education across the humanitarian-development nexus includes ECW and Global Partnership for Education (GPE), UNICEF, UNESCO, UNHCR, the Global Education Cluster (GEC), among others, and can be competitive. Challenges pertaining to systematic and effective **coordination and collaboration** persist, although recent years have shown strong examples of collaboration. There remain several untapped opportunities to make the coordination and collaboration more institutionalised. This includes gaining representation in each other's governance or coordination structures. While ECW's governing bodies include representation from other key education actors, this is not reciprocated in all cases.

Efforts to ensure clarity about **the respective roles of GPE and ECW** specifically have been only partially successful. GPE deploys substantial resources to education in fragile and conflict affected contexts (FCACs), and focused efforts to improve coherence between GPE's work and ECW's are needed. Part of the difficulty is that there cannot be a sharp division of labour between the two; inevitably they will operate in many of the same countries. There are some good examples of country-level coherence but there is scope to clarify their respective roles and strengthen collaboration.

The decision for ECW to incubate in UNICEF was sound, and being **hosted by UNICEF** gives ECW a whole host of benefits, not least in relation to risk management (fiduciary and administrative risks and risks related to physical and sexual abuse and exploitation and child safeguarding measures). However, the hosting relationship has not developed optimally. It is ECW's view that the current arrangement hampers its ability to deliver efficient and agile implementation. At this time, there is no explicit hosting agreement, something which both UNICEF and ECW have been slow to act on. Hosting by UNICEF, which is by far the largest recipient of ECW grants, also raises questions about conflict of interest. However, as pointed out in the 2022 organisational evaluation, there are rules in place to mitigate this. Overall, it will be important to assess whether the operating space provided by UNICEF regulations supports ECW's longer-term ambitions, and Denmark therefor supports ECW's intent to review its hosting options.

Denmark has experienced ECW's approach to engaging with partners as more informal than formal. This has enabled a close dialogue and good opportunities for sparring, with ECW being flexible and open to consider suggestions and ideas. At the same, informality has produced lack of clarity in some areas, not least when and how decisions are being made, and the role of the ExCom. Similarly, the purpose of the HLSG has been hard to identify at times, with all decisions having passed through the ExCom beforehand. These governance considerations have also been pointed out in the 2022 evaluation.

Danish priority areas 2019-2022

The collaboration with ECW as laid out in the Danish OS for ECW 2019-2022 had four priority areas: 1) Humanitarian-Development-nexus, 2) gender equality, 3) access to quality education and 4) resource mobilisation. Below is a closer look at lessons learned and challenges within these three areas:

1) Humanitarian-Development nexus:

While ECW is effective in delivering support to emergency and crisis settings, there continues to be challenges in terms of ensuring coherence and a transition across the nexus from humanitarian-focused programmes towards transitional education plans. ECW has made considerable efforts to work with humanitarian and development partners alike to map the transition path, yet more is needed, including improved clarity on joint planning and response with development stakeholders and between education coordination bodies, building knowledge and capacities at global and country levels to work across the nexus, and strengthening the inclusion of local actors. ECW's MYRP modality has clear country-level value-add as an instrument that addresses the humanitarian-development nexus. However, there are examples of MYRPs duplicating existing coordination mechanisms and plans.

The approach of working through host governments is not always efficient, in terms of reaching the populations affected by crisis, particularly as host governments may not recognize the rights of affected populations such as refugees or girls or they choose to prioritize some population groups over others, or if governance is contested. ECW addresses this by continuing to support children at risk of missing out on education until other funding sources can assume the responsibility and advocate for governments and development agencies to include children affected crisis in their development plans and investments.

Denmark is in a strong position to advocate for better coordination and coherence because of its partnership with and funding support to ECW as well as GPE while also making an earmarked contribution to UNICEF's education work across the Sahel.

2) Gender equality:

ECW shows a strong commitment to gender equality at the strategic level. ECW is committed to gender mainstreaming, and gender equality is a cross-cutting thematic priority in ECW investments. ECW's work is guided by a Gender Strategy and a Gender Policy and Accountability framework that is well aligned to the IASC gender and equality framework. Whilst the gender strategy lays out the objectives of ECW towards the achievement of gender equality in its interventions, the gender policy and accountability framework ensures alignment with ECW's operations and management practices and compliance of ECW activities and decisions. ECW's emphasis on the empowerment of women and girls, and promoting gender equality in and through education, is in line with Denmark's international leadership on women and girls' rights and promotion of gender equality.

At the operational level ECW has also demonstrated a strong commitment to address the educational needs of girls and a move from a gender-sensitive to a gender-responsive approach. However, issues remain with respect to documentation of the change in quality of inclusion (who is left behind) and outcomes (how much are gender norms evolving, and how systemic are educational changes). In 2020, ECW introduced a new indicator to measure the extent to which new MYRPs address social norms, attitudes and behaviors that underlie gender inequalities. In 2021, ECW could document that 71% of MYRPs included a focus in their results frameworks on changing the social norms, attitudes and behaviors reinforcing gender inequality. While this strengthens the focus on gender dimensions from the design stage, it does not provide information about outputs or outcomes. Also, ECW has so far not tracked how funds are used specifically to promote gender equality. However, this gap is being addressed as part of ECW's new data management system. Additionally, the target to reach 60 percent of girls,

introduced for MYRPs in 2019, demonstrates a clear commitment of resources, and as of 2022 15 percent of the AF budget has been ring-fenced for gender-related innovations.

There are several encouraging examples of ECW's efforts to promote gender equality. In South Sudan, for example, the MYRP contributed to organize Girls Get Equal campaigns to promote girls' enrolment in schools. It also supported the engagement of men and boys around menstrual hygiene awareness and positive masculinities and promoted dialogue with community leaders on harmful gender norms and practices and safeguarding needs. Community leaders were also trained to support young mothers to stay in school through engaging with spouse and parents.

From Denmark's perspective, ECW has taken considerable time to take on board recommendations to ensure appropriate measures to plan for and track the achievement of gender equality related objectives. This has led Denmark to take a leadership role in the ExCom and contribute actively to ECW's work in this area, in part as member of ECW's Gender Reference Group.

3) Quality education:

An internal ECW Position Note on Quality education and increased learning in EiE settings from 2020 states that ECW promotes a holistic approach towards learning, which ECW has defined as encompassing the certain elements of a minimum package to increase learning outcomes. These include: an analysis on the motivation and readiness of the learner i.e. what does (s)he bring in terms of (i) previous schooling experiences and levels of learning, (ii) nutrition status, (iii) psycho-emotional-social wellbeing, and (iv) its status of protection; a suitable conducive and safe learning environment is to be created matching the diverse needs of both boys and girls including those less abled; focusing on the teacher/instructor and its capacity and (mental) readiness to teach in EiE settings; and the final aspect is some form of contextual relevant holistic learning outcome measurement. However, these elements have not been consistently reflected in guidance across ECW's investments, although ECW is making progress. In particular, the AF modality has evolved to have a strong focus on, and investment in, strengthening systems and approaches to measuring holistic learning outcomes in crisis settings.

Among the MYRPs that showed solid or partial evidence of increased levels of learning, four (Uganda, Syria, Mali, and Ethiopia) demonstrated notable learning leaps for participating children and adolescents (established from internal quality assured MYRP reporting). These programs exhibited key features that significantly contributed to improvements in learning, including learning approaches specifically designed to meet the unique needs of the learners, for instance distance-based programming for mobile populations, adopting established methods for early-grade reading and mathematics and self-paced learning programs. Another key factor is the focus on social-emotional well-being for teachers and learners, providing dedicated attention to teacher training on mental health and psychosocial support, as well as incorporating student-led active pedagogies such as activity or play-based learning. Promoting manageable classrooms and measures to improve the remuneration of teachers also fostered a greater dedication among teachers to provide quality education. Finally, participatory and localized school management empowered and strengthened schools, communities, and caregivers, fostering a supportive educational environment leaving to improved levels of learning.

4) Resource mobilisation:

ECW's contribution towards reinforcing political commitment to EiEPC is evident, and funds mobilised for the ECW trust fund have been substantial. The targets, however, have been lowered over time, in part to be more in line with donor appetite. At the same time, the fund remains heavily dependent on traditional bilateral donors, although private sector partners and philanthropic institutions have joined as donors to ECW. Hence, it is pertinent that ECW continues to pursue new and innovative partnerships and alternative sources of funding.

Further, ECW's ability to generate *additional* funding for EiEPC appears to be at a smaller scale than what ECW has purported, as established by the 2022 organisational evaluation. Presenting claims of large amounts of leveraged funding for EiEPC may undermine rather than reinforce the case for additional EiEPC funding. As part of a response to this, ECW will develop a Financing Observatory to improve EiEPC financing data.

The 2022 organisational evaluation also found that the resource mobilisation function of the ECW secretariat, compared to other global funds, is inadequately resourced. The escalating needs combined with the challenging funding environment points to the need for ECW to urgently enhance its resource mobilization capacity. This investment will need to happen in a manner that allows ECW to stay lean and keep administrative costs at a minimum, features considered to be key to ECW's comparative advantage.

The 2022 organisational evaluation of ECW recommends that the HLSG, of which Denmark is a member, should take more of a lead in the resource mobilization for ECW. It was in fact one of the aims of the Danish 2019-2022 ECW OS, that Denmark would use its leverage as a major donor to ECW to mobilise additional support for the fund. Indeed, Denmark has highlighted the need for adequate to ECW at relevant occasions and the Danish strategic collaboration with the LEGO Foundation has also proved a strong platform for joint advocacy for support to education, incl. EiEPC.

ECW's management response to the 2022 organisational evaluation was embedded into the new ECW Strategic Plan where appropriate. Evaluation recommendations in the following areas have most significantly influenced ECW's new strategy: on localization, both in terms of funding level and in terms of engagement; on financing – with the recommendation to establish a Finance Observatory and articulating global needs and financing gaps in the EiEPC sector; and commitment to gender, disability and displacement.

5. Priority areas

As a donor to ECW, and a member of its HLSG as well as ExCom, Denmark will support ECW in achieving its overall strategic priorities.

The ECW 2023-2026 Strategic Plan identifies five strategic priority areas:

1. *Prioritizing holistic learning outcomes:* ECW is committed to redoubling its efforts to ensure that crisis-affected children receive education that enables them to acquire holistic learning outcomes and improves their wellbeing.
2. *Transforming global financing data:* ECW is working with partners to establish a new Financing Observatory to provide timely, transparent, harmonised and high-quality data on EiEPC (education in emergencies and protracted crisis) financing.
3. *Responding to climate change:* ECW is committed to ensuring that its response to the climate crisis cuts across all of its work, from global advocacy to climate-responsive and climate-smart programming.
4. *Placing localization and community participation at the core of its work:* ECW is committed to the Grand Bargain and to advancing meaningful local leadership, influence and engagement in EiEPC responses.
5. *Advancing its commitments to gender equality, and to addressing forced displacement:* ECW's commitment to reach those left behind remains a core principle of its work. In order to deliver, ECW is moving from gender responsive to gender transformative approaches, as an example.

In order to ensure a strategic and focused engagement, Denmark will prioritise two of ECW's five strategic priorities listed above: **advancing commitments to gender equality** and **responding to climate change**. The focus on gender equality is a continuation from the previous ECW OS (2019-2022). Responding to climate change is a new priority area for Denmark in the strategic engagement with ECW, just as it is a new priority area for ECW itself. For this reason, further elaboration of ECW's work with climate change therefor follows.

Since ECW's inception, response to climate change has increasingly become an element in its programming. Climate change is either the dominant reason for responses (floods, droughts, landslides, e.g. Burundi, Pakistan, Libya, Horn of Africa), the underlying reason (conflict or needs escalated by competition over resources, like in Central Sahel, and Horn of Africa) and in few cases not related to climate change (earthquakes and tsunamis, like in Nepal, Indonesia and Haiti). The MYRPs responding to protracted crises integrate climate change related awareness and response through curriculum adjustments, teacher training and MHPSS emphasizing resilience, through climate friendly construction of class rooms (i.e. pressed bricks rather than burned) and by locating classroom in consideration of climate risks (heavy rains, landslides, flooding). Most MYRPs include considerations of responding and adapting to climate change.

Moving forward, ECW will integrate the use of OECD DAC Rio Markers for Climate in designing, tracking and reporting. The application of the Rio markers should ideally be agreed as a sector to ensure coherence in how various partners and actors apply the Rio Markers. ECW has reached out to UNESCO and GPE to arrive at a consistent methodology for how to apply the markers in education. ECW is working with partners (Save the Children, Plan, UNICEF, UNHCR, etc.) to ensure that their approaches to climate responsive education can be linked to the ECW design and reporting structure. In terms of climate financing, ECW is seeking accreditation to the Green Climate Fund and the like, under the umbrella of the hosting within UNICEF. ECW is yet to conclude, however, whether it is viable to compete for funding from the global climate funds.

A third priority area for Denmark will be ECW's role in **strengthening the humanitarian-development nexus**, reflecting a continuation from the previous ECW OS (2019-2022) and underlining the continued critical importance of this area of work for ECW. While the humanitarian-development nexus is not a strategic priority for ECW, it remains at the core of ECW's mission and mandate, to strengthen this. While ECW points out that alignment across actors at country level has become improved, with several examples of GPE funding fully integrated into ECW-facilitated MYRPs for instance, there is still scope for further coordination and coherence. In addition, we consider ECW's work on localisation, which is one of ECW's priorities, as part of its contribution to strengthening the nexus.

The prioritisation of the three areas in the engagement with ECW 2023-2026, will be guided by the following description of scope:

1. **Advancing commitments to gender equality**: As part of the Danish commitment to inclusive and equitable quality education, Denmark will engage with ECW and its partners to ensure effective implementation of ECW's commitment to advancing gender equality and empowerment of women and girls. This entails engaging with ECW's programming, partnerships and organisational set up, ensuring that ECW plans and budgets for a gender-transformative (gender-responsive as a minimum) approach across FERs and MYRPs, engages partners at all levels (including local women's organisations), and takes measures to become a gender-transformative organization. This effort will be guided by ECW's new Policy & Accountability Framework 2023-2026 for *Gender Equality & Empowerment of Women and Girls*, and its Implementation Guide 2023-2026 for *Delivering on Our Ambition to Advance Gender Equality &*

Empowerment of Women and Girls. Denmark will pay particular attention to ECW's efforts to document the extent to which its interventions contribute to changing gender norms and tracking of how funds are used to promote gender equality. The engagement will include active participation in ECW's Gender Reference Group, through which Denmark collaborates with likeminded donors and education actors with gender equality and girl's education as a priority.

2. **Strengthening the humanitarian-development nexus:** Denmark will engage with ECW and its partners to support ECW's efforts to strengthen coherence at the humanitarian-development nexus. Focus will be on the delivery of expected results and evidence to contribute to better learning on what works and what does not. Nexus indicators are integrated in the ECW Strategic Plan results framework and the detailed methodology for reporting and measuring progress is being rolled out. Further, Denmark will support ECW's focus on collective outcomes; broader partnerships based on comparative advantage; and multi-year programming, to be delivered and achieved through advocacy, resource mobilization, data and evidence. This includes continuation of efforts to produce a roadmap for increased collaboration between ECW and GPE at global level, and promote ECW participation and active contribution to country level collaboration among actors and across sectors and with government representatives, with the view to design programmes that build on existing structures and plans. Another focus will be to ensure ECW's effective engagement with the in-country Local Education Groups (LEGs) that are involved in ECW planning and have oversight of ECW grants. The latter is partly achieved through dialogue with ECW's partners, incl. GPE and other in-country partners.
3. **Responding to climate change:** Denmark will engage with ECW and its partners to strengthen ECW's contribution to climate-responsive and climate-smart education interventions in emergencies and protracted crises. This effort will also seek to draw on the MFA's existing knowledge and guidance around disaster preparedness and risk reduction. Denmark will encourage ECW to work together with other education stakeholders to strengthen the alignment between policy and programming across the humanitarian-development nexus, when it comes to preparedness, anticipatory action and risk reduction specific to climate change. Rather than developing new guidance, ECW will be encouraged to support the mainstreaming of climate change action within EiEPC coordination and support the use of existing approaches. Denmark will also support ECW's efforts to access and distribute climate finance through its existing funding mechanisms and its efforts to adopt the OECD DAC Rio Markers for Climate for systematic tracking of climate change investments. Prioritising ECW's contribution to the response to climate change is in line with *The World We Share*, in which Denmark sets out to strengthen action to support climate change adaptation and build local resilience in the poorest and most vulnerable countries.

These three priorities also guide the Danish OS for engagement with GPE 2023-2026, enhancing the opportunity to create synergies in the strategic engagement across the two partnerships.

See Annex 1 for the ECW OS Results Framework which is aligned with ECW's own results framework from its new strategic plan 2023-2026. See Annex 2 for a risk management matrix.

6. Approach to engagement with ECW

In line with the Doing Development Differently (DDD) principles, and as highlighted in the Danish MFA *How-to*' note on social sectors, Denmark will aim for policy influence through dialogue with donors and other constituencies. As one of the lead donors to ECW, Denmark has a seat on the HLSG through which Denmark can influence ECW's strategic direction. Equally, Denmark has a seat on the ExCom, through which Denmark will seek close cooperation with like-minded donors, who share similar priorities

(multi-lateral, bi-lateral, EU and others). While Denmark will be following certain areas more closely, to ensure that they are appropriately resourced and monitored, Denmark will generally support the streamlining of donor engagement, to ensure that ECW can focus its resources on the implementation of its strategy and achievement of planned results. Denmark will also work together with other donors to ensure that ECW performs strong risk management and has in place anti-corruption measures and procedures to avoid Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment (SEAH), and that they work as intended. Furthermore, Denmark will contribute to the work of ECW’s technical level reference group on Gender Equality. Finally, Denmark will actively encourage and push for representation of local civil society partners and children and youth in the work of ECW as well as in ExCom discussions as and when relevant.

Additionally, Denmark will utilize its role as a main donor to both ECW and GPE to promote the complementarity between the two funds and ensure synergies where possible. This will draw on available data and assessments as well as continuous dialogue with likeminded donors of the two funds and their implementing partners. The Danish engagement on this issue will be at policy-level, i.e. not at the operational level.

At present, engagement across Copenhagen and Danish missions, and across multilateral and bilateral development assistance and various partnership instruments, is ad hoc when it comes to EiEPC and ECW specifically. Where possible, Denmark will seek to enhance this collaboration, in particular when it comes to humanitarian assistance. Equally, external engagement with Danish stakeholders, across UN-, civil society and private sector partners, is on an ad hoc basis. Where possible, Denmark will seek to enhance knowledge sharing, and leveraging of synergies and funding opportunities.

Denmark will conduct a partner monitoring visit to ECW in 2024.

7. Budget

Danish contribution in DKK to ECW in the period of 2023-2026

2023	2024	2025	2026	<i>TOTAL</i>
85 million	85 million	85 million	85 million	<i>340 million</i>

A secondment or adviser will be funded from the contribution, to provide specialised capacity to ECW within a relevant area of work, such as climate resilient investments in education in emergencies.

Annex 1: Results matrix

The ECW Strategic Plan 2023-2026 has two main goals: 1) increase participation and 2) increase well-being and learning, and two strategic objectives (SO): 1) increase and better funding for education in emergencies and 2) stronger capacities and systems. While Denmark will monitor ECW's overall performance², this organisation strategy prioritises the following results and indicators. In line with the MFA multilateral guidelines, the results framework below uses ECW's Results Framework from its Strategic Plan 2023-2026.

To note, regarding the priority result, 'Responding to climate change', that climate change is conceptualized as a cross cutting priority in the ECW Strategic Plan 2023-2026. Qualitative assessments will be used to measure the achievement of the climate change related outcomes listed, which explains why are no indicators. ECW will also work with grantees to integrate and measure intermediate outcome of climate indicators (e.g. number of active Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) responses in school facilities) in relevant programs.

Overall goal:	<i>Children and adolescents affected by crises realize their right to safe and inclusive quality education and achieve holistic learning outcomes</i>		
Priority results:	1: Advancing the commitment to gender equality	2: Strengthening the humanitarian-development nexus	3: Responding to climate change
	<p>Outcome 1.1 (ECW Result 1): Increased gender-equitable participation, retention, and completion in safe and inclusive learning spaces</p> <p>Indicator #1.1.1: % FERs/MYRPs with gender-equitable retention or completion rates above 75% in ECW-supported learning spaces.⁷</p> <p>Baseline: Baseline to be established in 2023 Target: 90 pct.</p> <p>Outcome 1.2 (ECW Result 2): Improved inclusive, gender-equitable holistic learning and well-being outcomes</p> <p>Indicator #1.2.1: Number and % of MYRPs with gender-equitable improved learning outcomes in literacy and/or</p>	<p>Outcome 2.1 (ECW Strategic Objective 2A): Stronger EiEPC capacities and systems at country level</p> <p>Indicator #2.1.1: Number and % of MYRPs with evidence of improved coordination at the nexus</p> <p>Baseline: n/a Target: n/a</p> <p>Indicator #2.1.2: Amount and % of funds in FERs and MYRPs transferred to national/local partners – including local women's organizations (LWOs), organizations of persons with disabilities (OPDs), and refugee-led organizations – as directly as possible</p> <p>Baseline: n/a Target: n/a</p>	<p>Outcome 3.1: Generation, use and sharing of data across the climate and education sectors increases</p> <p>Outcome 3.2: Climate risk-informed design is integrated into relevant MYRPs operating in climate vulnerable contexts.</p> <p>Outcome 3.3: Financing for EiEPC and climate change is more coherent and better-aligned in climate vulnerable contexts.</p> <p>Outcome 3.4: Local actors have more resources and support to respond through climate adaptation strategies.</p> <p>Outcome 3.5: Improved coordination between EiEPC and climate change actors on advocacy, funding and other responses at the country and global levels.</p>

² The full ECW 2023-2026 Results Framework can be found on ECW's website under 'Main Results Dashboard'.

	<p>numeracy in ECW-supported learning spaces</p> <p>Baseline: 8 MYRPs, 100%, 63% with solid evidence</p> <p>Target: 20 MYRPs, 90%, at least 60% with solid evidence</p>		
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Annex 2: Risk management matrix

Risk factor	Likelihood	Impact	Risk response
Reduced political and organisational commitment to ECW.	Less likely	Major	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with the Secretariat and the HLSG and ExCom to determine and support overall strategic direction of the Fund and deliver political advocacy for ECW. Support Secretariat to document results and create opportunities for advancing the work of ECW.
Conflict and/or political disturbance and/or disaster preventing implementation and/or monitoring of ECW programmes for longer or shorter periods of time	Likely	Minor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure risk mitigation plans are built in to country level programme documents and taking into account impact on expenditure.
Lack of coordination among development and humanitarian actors to bridge the humanitarian-development nexus	Likely	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pro-actively advocate for coordination and collaboration among actors and specifically monitor progress and set-backs through stakeholder dialogue and reporting.
Failure to raise new funding for EiEPC and adequate funding of ECW supported programmes	Less likely	Major	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revisit resource mobilization strategy, incl. issue of capacity requirements. Support Secretariat to pursue alternative sources of financing and develop new donor relationships. Support Secretariat to quantify the financial and service delivery impact of losing key donors and develop mitigation strategies, and review and manage the donor funding pipeline. Denmark can use its leverage and networks to strategise with other donors.
ECW governance and operational structures and processes impede the agility and speed of ECW operations, and ECW's ability to deliver its Strategic Plan	Likely	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support and engage in strategic planning processes and revisions to governance and operational frameworks, ensuring that evaluation and audit recommendations related to governance and operational structures are implemented.
Insufficient ECW Secretariat capacity to deliver the Strategic Plan, to manage programmes, and to ensure robust oversight of delivery and risk management.	Likely	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure sufficient Secretariat capacity to deliver (including through core staffing, consultancy budget, and secondments), requesting updates and ensuring that evaluation and audit recommendations related to capacity are implemented.
Major breach of donor compliance	Less likely	Major	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitor country programme compliance with donor requirements. Continue to review internal processes to ensure they are donor compliant. Annual audits of donor compliance processes. Coordination among donors will help ensure compliance and monitoring.
Breach of zero-tolerance in relation to sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment (SEAH)	Less likely	Major	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitor ECW ability to ensure continuous and close oversight in terms of risk assessment, adherence to codes of conduct, reporting mechanisms and rigid follow up on SEAH cases with appropriate measures. Denmark can use its role in the ECW Excom and networks with donors and partners to monitor.
Fraud, corruption or diversion by ECW grantees or third parties.	Likely	Major	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage with the Secretariat and ExCom members to ensure that the Secretariat and UNICEF Fund Support Office (FSO) provide appropriate oversight and monitoring of management and use of funds, follow-up on allegations of misuse of funds, and support grantees to follow appropriate processes.

Annex 3: ECW budget and forecast 2023-2026



Budget strategic period 2023-2026

Indicative allocations to funding windows	Planned	%
Multi-Year Resilience Programmes (MYRP)	\$ 985.000.000	70%
- West Africa (<i>Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Sabel Regional</i>)	\$ 111.000.000	11%
- Central Africa (<i>Burundi, Cameroon, CAR, Chad, DRC</i>)	\$ 219.000.000	22%
- East Africa (<i>Ethiopia, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Uganda</i>)	\$ 224.000.000	23%
- Asia and Ukraine (<i>Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Myanmar, Pakistan, Ukraine</i>)	\$ 240.000.000	24%
- South America (<i>Colombia, Ecuador, Haiti, Peru, South America Regional</i>)	\$ 59.000.000	6%
- Middle East & North Africa (<i>Iraq, Lebanon, Libya, Palestine, Syria</i>)	\$ 132.000.000	13%
First Emergency Response (FER) FERs are allocated to sudden onset emergencies or escalations in crises and are therefore undefined geographically)	\$ 380.000.000	27%
Acceleration Facility (AF)	\$ 40.000.000	3%
- Open call for proposals	\$ 30.000.000	75%
- Flexible financing modality	\$ 10.000.000	25%
Total programme costs	\$ 1.405.000.000	94%

Secretariat resources to offer specialized support for programme design and implementation, global advocacy for EIE, capacity building for in-country partners and thematic leadership as well excellence in monitoring and reporting, including honoring staff and compensation as per UNICEF guidelines.	\$	61.750.000	65%
External and specialized support to deliver on the ambitions of the strategic plan	\$	15.200.000	16%
Missions to programme countries and global advocacy to inspire political commitment (travel)	\$	5.700.000	6%
Supporting smooth operations of ECW governance structure and insuring that ECW is fit for purpose	\$	4.750.000	5%
Specialized support focusing on adherence with UNICEF procurement, HR, and grant making regulations (hosting)	\$	7.600.000	8%
Operational costs	\$	95.000.000	6%
Total	\$	1.500.000.000	

Notes:

- MYRP - indicative regional allocations
- FER - unpredictable
- AF - funding focused on achieving the six strategic themes in ECW's Learning Agenda and delivering on ECW's existing capacity development framework
- ECW operational costs can be up to 7% (over the strategic period) of disbursed funds. Currently it is around 5.5%.

Annex 4: ECW - sources of funding pledged and agreed 2016-2023

	Development	Humanitarian	No distinction	<i>In mill. USD</i>
Australia			\$7,17	\$7,17
BMZ	\$374,40			\$374,40
Bulgaria		\$0,12		\$0,12
Canada		\$127,29		\$127,29
Denmark	\$148,79			\$148,79
DEVCO	\$62,04			\$62,04
Dubai Cares			\$8,75	\$8,75
FCDO			\$259,35	\$259,35
Group2	\$52,34		\$0,61	\$52,95
FDFA			\$0,61	\$0,61
Switzerland	\$52,34			\$52,34
Finland	\$9,27			\$9,27
France	\$11,24			\$11,24
Global Citizen			\$0,01	\$0,01
Ireland	\$32,40			\$32,40
LEGO Foundation			\$65,00	\$65,00
Netherlands		\$31,56		\$31,56
Norway		\$134,22		\$134,22
Porticus			\$6,98	\$6,98
Group1	\$106,30	\$53,00		\$159,30
PRM		\$53,00		\$53,00
USAID	\$106,30			\$106,30
Sweden	\$29,79			\$29,79
Theirworld			\$4,64	\$4,64
Verizon			\$0,99	\$0,99
Group3			\$0,01	\$0,01
Italy			\$2,10	\$2,10
Qatar			\$20,00	\$20,00
Zurich Cantonal Bank			\$10,60	\$10,60
Total	\$826,56	\$346,19	\$386,20	\$1.558,95

Annex 5: ECW country engagements – overview (2022)



