



The global fund for education in emergencies

## **EDUCATION CANNOT WAIT ANNOUNCES US\$20 MILLION CATALYTIC GRANT TO SUPPORT A MULTI-YEAR EDUCATION PROGRAMME IN SOUTH SUDAN**

**If fully funded, the programme will provide half a million children and youth with access to equitable, safe, and protective learning environments and support young nation in creating systematic change to move from conflict to development**

**11 December 2019, New York** – Education Cannot Wait (ECW) announces a two-year US\$20 million catalytic grant to set in motion a multi-year educational response programme in South Sudan.

The seed funding grant is being allocated by ECW to Save the Children to support crucial programme activities and help catalyse additional resources to fully-fund the total US\$189 million three-year programme. This is an investment in the world's youngest nation's efforts to deliver on global promises for universal and equitable access to education and reach the most marginalized girls and boys as outlined in the Sustainable Development Goals.

Recent estimates indicate that as many as 2.2 million children (75 per cent of whom are girls) are out of school in South Sudan and 2.8 million boys and girls have had their education disrupted by conflict. Political instability, armed conflict, extreme poverty, food insecurity, climate extremes and forced displacement have perpetuated a cycle of vulnerability that pushes children and youth to the margins and undermines development efforts.

In all, 7.2 million people need humanitarian assistance in South Sudan, including 1 million children who have been exposed to traumatic events; 73 per cent of men and adolescent males (over 15 years old) as well as 84 per cent of women and adolescent females (over 15 years old) are illiterate. Girls are often the victims of gender-based violence, rape and child marriage; and boys face forced recruitment as child soldiers. Children with disabilities are often those left furthest behind.

This investment by ECW aligns with initiatives on gender and education and aids with the implementation of the Girls' Education Strategy 2018-2022.

"To build peace and opportunity for the children and youth of South Sudan, we need to invest in equitable, safe, protective and quality learning environments for internally displaced people, returnees, and host community girls and boys," said Minister of General Education and Instruction H.E. Deng Deng Hoc Yai. "This is part of our promise to our people for a better future for generations to come."

Fully funded, the three-year programme will support the Government of South Sudan in addressing ongoing emergencies and crises and moving toward a more positive development trajectory.

"Providing education for the girls and boys of South Sudan is an essential investment in peace and development for this young nation," said Yasmine Sherif, Director of Education Cannot Wait. "I call on all partners to join our efforts and contribute to fully-fund this new programme. Together, we can restore hope and ensure a better and more equitable future for the next generation."

The Multi-Year Resilience Programme will be guided by a high-level Steering Committee chaired by the Ministry of General Education and Instruction that will include representatives from donors, the National Education Coalition and National Education Cluster, civil society and UN Agencies.

In working toward more systemic change, the programme works to provide access to at least 100,000 children aged 3 to 5 to pre-primary education, boost gender equity, prevent early dropouts from school, and support children and youth in accessing the psychosocial support they need to recover and rebuild from trauma, conflict and displacement.

**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.

To date, ECW investments span more than 30 countries affected by armed conflict, disaster and forced displacement.

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