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# Gaza Humanitarian Response: Education Cannot Wait Announces US\$10 Million First Emergency Response Grant

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**ECW urges more public and private sector donors to join efforts to support children in Gaza with life-saving mental health and psychosocial services and protective learning opportunities.**

01 November 2023 | NEW YORK

With innocent children bearing the brunt of the catastrophic humanitarian situation in Gaza, Education Cannot Wait (ECW) today announced an initial US\$10 million First Emergency Response grant to urgently support mental health and psychosocial services and protective learning opportunities for crisis-affected girls and boys, and generate global funding support for innocent children whose mental health and education during their formative years is at massive risk.

As of 30 October, over 3,400 children have reportedly been killed, 6,300 injured and over 220 schools have been damaged or destroyed in Gaza since 7 October. More than 1.4 million people, a majority of whom are children, have been displaced – with at least half living in overcrowded and unsanitary shelters with limited clean water, food or medicines.

“The scale of horrors and adversity endured by the children in Gaza for nearly four weeks is unfathomable. I have seen much human suffering over the past three decades, but never thought we would see anything of this intensity in our lifetime. Working together with UN organizations on the ground, we must immediately provide girls and boys with the mental health and psychosocial support and protective learning environments they desperately need now. Our independent, humanitarian partners on the ground have the capacity to deliver now. This support is absolutely crucial to help them cope with the severe trauma and stress they are experiencing,” said Yasmine Sherif, Executive Director of Education Cannot Wait, the UN global fund for education in emergencies and protracted crises.

“I call on all public and private donors to join our efforts as much more funding is urgently required to meet the immense needs of the 1.1 million children and adolescents impacted by the ongoing war,” she said.

The ECW grant will be delivered by globally respected, proven and credible UN organizations actively present and working together in Gaza: UNRWA and UNICEF. They are ready to provide education interventions focusing on mental health to promote the safety and well-being of innocent and deeply scarred children, heroic teachers and other education personnel. This naturally emphasizes psychosocial support to address their soul-shattering, heartbreaking suffering and to ensure connection to urgently needed protection services including access to health, nutrition and food.

“The children in Gaza have gone through hell and have paid an unprecedented price in this brutal conflict. Psychological support and education offer children the opportunity to tap into their extraordinary resilience and hold on to hope. Together, let us ensure that every child in Gaza has the chance to learn, to dream and to build a better future. They deserve nothing less. Thank you for standing in solidarity with Gaza’s children,” said UNRWA Commissioner-General Philippe Lazzarini.

Initial assessments show that over 90% of children in Gaza are demonstrating acute signs of stress and trauma as a result of what they are witnessing and suffering through – an unimaginable horror – and the crisis is also impacting the wellbeing of teachers and other educational workers and humanitarians. “In addition to calling for massive additional funding, ECW urges respect for the UN Charter and international humanitarian law, universal human rights and calls for an immediate humanitarian ceasefire,” said Sherif.

All education facilities in Gaza are closed – and many are being used as shelters and are not safe due to damage inflicted by airstrikes in the ongoing conflict. In all, the education of over 625,000 students has been brutally interrupted. Disruption to schooling has increased the risk of severe post-traumatic stress disorder. Orphaned children are particularly susceptible to these risks. Without parents, who shall console them during their darkest hours?

Women and children account for the majority of those killed; meanwhile, the conflict has also increased risks of gender-based violence for girls and women.

All activities through this new grant will be delivered through the UN system to ensure alignment with humanitarian principles and accountability to affected populations. Funding will be strictly managed and utilized by UN agencies only. ECW is also working with the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) in coordinating efforts to mobilize additional financial support for locally identified education needs.

The UN and partners are appealing for US\$294 million to address the most urgent needs of 1.26 million people in Gaza and the West Bank for three months. So far, a third of the total has been pledged. UNRWA is urgently seeking \$104 million to cover urgent food, non-food, health, shelter and protection needs for persons seeking safety in UNRWA shelters across the Gaza Strip and another 250,000 Palestine refugees within the community.

At ECW, we urgently call for top-ups and additional funding to support our independent, reliable and

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**Tweets**

@EduCan - Jun 13  
 The world marks a tragic milestone for #HumanRights: +1,000 days since girls were banned from secondary school in #Afghanistan 🇦🇫  
 @EduCannotWait & partners continue to highlight their powerful testimonies through #AfghanGirlsVoices campaign!

credible partners in-country to work together in alleviating abnormal human suffering for 1.1 million young innocent children and adolescents during their most formative years – years that will determine their future and that of the world.

#### Note to Editors

##### About Education Cannot Wait (ECW):

Education Cannot Wait (ECW) is the United Nations global fund for education in emergencies and protracted crises. We support quality education outcomes for refugee, internally displaced and other crisis-affected girls and boys, so no one is left behind. ECW works through the multilateral system to both increase the speed of responses in crises and connect immediate relief and longer-term interventions through multi-year programming. ECW works in close partnership with governments, public and private donors, UN agencies, civil society organizations, and other humanitarian and development aid actors to increase efficiencies and end siloed responses. ECW urgently appeals to public and private sector donors for expanded support to reach even more vulnerable children and youth.

**On X (formerly Twitter), please follow:** @EduCannotWait, @YasmineSherif1, @KentPage

**Additional information available at:** [www.educationcannotwait.org](http://www.educationcannotwait.org)

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