

Education Cannot Wait Announces US\$5 Million Grant in Response to Drought in Ethiopia

New investment delivered by Norwegian Refugee Council and UNICEF provides 85,000 children with access to safe and protective learning opportunities.

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[/EINPresswire.com/](https://www.einpresswire.com/) -- In response to a devastating drought that has impacted 1.6 million children, taken lives and pushed millions into hunger, Education Cannot Wait (ECW) announced today a US\$5 million grant that will provide more than 85,000 children and adolescents in [Ethiopia](#) with access to quality, inclusive and safe learning opportunities.



Driven by climate change, the largest drought in four decades has impacted the learning trajectory of millions.

The 12-month grant is delivered by the Norwegian Refugee Council and UNICEF, and builds on ECW's ongoing investments in Ethiopia, which have already reached a quarter of a million children impacted by the multiplying crises of climate change, conflict and displacement that have derailed social and economic progress across Ethiopia and much of Africa. ECW investments in Ethiopia now total more than US\$59.5 million.

"We must not turn our back on the children of Ethiopia. World leaders must step up with urgent financial support to catalyze transformative actions that leverage the power of education to build a better world. Make no doubt about it, the climate crisis is also an education crisis. By investing in the education of Ethiopia's most vulnerable children we are investing in long-term solutions to the climate crisis and a brighter future for the people of Africa," said Yasmine Sherif, Director of Education Cannot Wait, the United Nations global fund for education in emergencies and protracted crises.

The worst drought in four decades is triggering conflicts, pushing families from their homes, and leaving children hungry and in desperate need of the safety, protection, and opportunities that

an education provides.

The number of out-of-school children spiked from 3.1 million to 3.6 million in just the last six months in Ethiopia. In the Afar, Oromia, Sidama, Somali, SNNPR, and SWEPR regions an estimated 480,000 children are out of school, and the drought threatens the closure of more than 4,500 schools.

With the chaos and fear triggered by the drought, the incidence of sexual violence, including female genital mutilation and early marriages, has spiked dramatically in drought-hit regions, with an increase of 119% since last year, according to UNICEF.

“With over half of children in the Somali Region currently not in school, and many more at risk of dropping out, it is imperative that action is taken to support vulnerable children to continue to learn during this volatile time. Children, especially girls, affected by drought face multiple challenges to stay in school, including inadequate food and water at home and in school, climate-driven displacement, and limited teaching staff. Together with ECW, NRC will address these barriers, allowing children to return to school, continue learning and build resilient futures,” said NRC Country Director Isaac Odhiambo Ooko.

“Every child has a right to an education, no matter where they are,” said Mariko Kagoshima, Acting UNICEF Representative in Ethiopia. “We are very grateful for this new funding from ECW, and we look forward to working with the Norwegian Refugee Council and other partners to get more children back into school. Education enables children to reach their full potential so they can build a better future for themselves and their communities.”

The investment aims to improve learning and well-being of crisis-affected girls and boys including adolescents through access to quality, inclusive and safe learning opportunities for 85,782 children [60% girls; 10% children with disabilities] in the six drought-affected regions of Ethiopia – Afar, Oromia, Sidama, Somali, SNNPR and SWEPR.

Among various holistic education outcomes, the investment will improve learning environments, incentivize families to send their children to school through cash transfers, support non-formal and remedial classes, lower accessibility barriers for children with disabilities, improve water and sanitation facilities, provide psychosocial support, and strengthen the delivery of education in coordination with local, national and international actors. Education Cannot Wait and its strategic partners have rolled out a series of investments in response to the climate crisis in hard-hit places like the Central African Republic, Chad, Pakistan, Somalia and Sudan in recent months.

In connecting climate action with education action, Education Cannot Wait’s [High-Level Financing Conference](#) next February in Geneva provides a key opportunity for world leaders to step up and deliver on the promises outlined in the Paris Agreement and 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Education Cannot Wait

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