

# GLOBAL BUSINESS COALITION FOR EDUCATION'S COMMITMENT TO EDUCATION IN EMERGENCIES: PROGRESS REPORT

**At the World Humanitarian Summit in 2016, the Global Business Coalition for Education (GBC-Education) committed to mobilize \$100 million in financial and relevant in-kind resources from the business community to support the newly launched Education Cannot Wait fund for education in emergencies.** To deliver on this pledge, GBC-Education has created the Rapid Education Action database, known simply as [REACT](#).<sup>1</sup> REACT aims to coordinate available private sector resources and provide systematic ways to direct these resources to solve challenges faced when delivering education in these difficult emergency contexts.

## WHY EDUCATION IN EMERGENCIES

In disasters and emergencies, education is life saving. It provides children with a safe place to stay during the day; protects them from vulnerabilities to trafficking, child labor, early forced marriage, or recruitment into armed groups; and is a dissemination point for crucial information about services and safety during a crisis. In the long-term, education helps ensure stability and security while equipping young people with the skills needed to rebuild their societies. Despite its importance, education is frequently seen as a luxury rather than a necessity in crisis, is under-prioritized and woefully underfunded.

An estimated **75 million children and adolescents**<sup>2</sup> have had their education disrupted or ended due to natural disasters, conflicts, and other emergencies. Yet, only 2% of all humanitarian funding goes to education.

## WHY REACT

Traditionally, corporate contributions to education in emergencies tend to be small, short term, and uncoordinated. While many companies want to contribute their assets and

expertise to help build the next generation of skilled young people, these uncoordinated activities often do not deliver the sustainable impact necessary. REACT aims to make the business commitment greater than the sum of its parts and advance the overall global response to education in emergencies. REACT's objective is to identify challenges on the ground and then leverage assets from the corporate sector to solve those challenges in the most effective way possible.

## REACT AND EDUCATION CANNOT WAIT

The [Education Cannot Wait fund for education in emergencies](#)<sup>3</sup> (ECW) was launched at the World Humanitarian Summit in Istanbul in May 2016. ECW's crucial mandate includes dramatically raising new sources of funding for education in emergencies, disseminating best practices, galvanizing political support, and improving coordination among existing actors. In its first year of operation, ECW has approved grants to support education projects in Syria, Yemen, Chad, and Ethiopia, and is working to invest in global public goods and first response activities. REACT is a resource to crowd in and align corporate assets with the broader humanitarian response.

## PROGRESS TO DATE

Over the last 6 months, the groundwork has been established to deliver on GBC-Education's commitment:

**OUTREACH TO COMPANIES:** GBC-Education contacted over 250 companies, securing pledges from 50 companies to assist in emergencies. GBC-Education has documented the types of support available, geographic areas of operation, and what each company could contribute to advance education in emergencies. The support available is diverse. Consultancy companies have come forward to offer employee time and brainpower to address practical problems holding back education progress. Technology companies are offering significant in-kind support — providing tablets and access to digital learning platforms for children affected by crisis. Recognized global brands are offering digital tools for students to support learning on the ground, while some have pledged tents and shelter for schools.

**INITIAL PARTNERSHIPS DEVELOPED:** GBC-Education has established several partnerships to pilot the model of directing corporate resources to solve challenges emerging from delivery partners working on the ground. Current pilot partnerships are underway in Somalia, Lebanon, and Iraq.

**RESPONSE MODEL WITH EDUCATION CANNOT WAIT:** GBC-Education is working with Education Cannot Wait directly to identify specific challenges where business could play a role in the initial investment countries. We are now actively seeking to broker new partnerships to address those challenges. We are also working with the ECW Secretariat to bring business support to create global public goods for education in emergencies.

**DIGITALIZED DATABASE:** With the help of LexisNexis and RELX Group, GBC-Education is creating a digital database to store REACT information and provide an interface accessible to partners on the ground while protecting data privacy of companies.

REACT brokers new partnerships by supporting in the initial stages of matching corporate assets with education needs. REACT follows-up on partnerships to help share experiences and lessons learned with the broader global community.



# EXAMPLES OF PILOT PARTNERSHIPS INITIATED THROUGH REACT

## CODING SKILLS AND A SUSTAINABLE INCOME FOR SYRIAN REFUGEES AND DISPLACED IRAQIS:

- **LOCATION:** Iraq
- **FOCUS:** Displaced Syrians and Iraqi Youth
- **CHALLENGE:** Refugees and displaced youth found it difficult to study without any income for basic living expenses.
- **PARTNERSHIP: REACT connected the US-based language company, NaTakallam, with an NGO working with Syrian refugees and displaced Iraqis to train and certify them in coding skills, Re:Coded.**  
NaTakallam agreed to hire refugees participating in the Re:Coded certification courses and offered them the opportunity to also train as Arabic instructors. During the period of time the refugees are participating in coding courses, they are able to tutor students in the Arabic language remotely over Skype. Once certified, Re:Coded helps with longer-term job placement and NaTakallam brings on board the next cohort of refugee instructors taking the certification course.
- **RESULT:** Iraqi and Syrian refugees are able to develop coding skills while also generating an income as language instructors. Some of the first cohort of students have acquired world-class software development skills and many have been placed in well-paying jobs, working remotely.

## COMMUNICATION AND FUNDRAISING SUPPORT FOR THE SOMALIA FAMINE:

- **LOCATION:** Somalia
- **FOCUS:** Somali students impacted by famine
- **CHALLENGE:** Given the onset of drought impacting the education sector, the Somali Education Cluster (led by UNICEF) needed help with advocacy, public relations, fundraising, and communications.
- **PARTNERSHIP: REACT partnered the US-based company Radioflag with the Somalia Education Cluster.** Radioflag has made available their communications platform, which spans over 160 countries to support the cluster's effort.
- **RESULT:** Discussions are underway about how best to harness the remote radio solutions, using the technology and platforms for communication, PR, and advocacy support.

## CREATING PARTNERSHIPS THROUGH A PLATFORM:

- **LOCATION:** Global
- **FOCUS:** Connecting companies to "on the ground" needs
- **CHALLENGE:** By developing REACT, it quickly became clear that many companies are willing to make a contribution to education in emergencies. GBC-Education needed to find a way to systematically organize, catalog, and connect parties, while putting in place a system to be used by ECW.
- **PARTNERSHIP: REACT engaged UK-based RELX Group and US-based LexisNexis to develop a solution.** LexisNexis agreed to provide a platform with ongoing consultancy support from RELX Group to design and build the platform. It will provide a way to catalog, store, match, and bring in systemic requests from ECW and partners.
- **ANTICIPATED RESULT:** A digital platform is under development and will be ready in the coming months.

## MCKINSEY & CO. RESEARCH SUPPORT FOR ECW:

- **LOCATION:** Global
- **FOCUS:** Global education certification for Syrian children
- **CHALLENGE:** The ECW Secretariat identified a need for research on the availability of internationally validated certificates for children learning on the move as a major barrier for children in crisis.
- **PARTNERSHIP:** REACT approached McKinsey & Co. who agreed to share two years worth of research, data, and solutions on refugee education continuity with government and private partners to help ECW identify practical solutions.
- **ANTICIPATED RESULT:** McKinsey & Co. will meet with ECW Secretariat to share lessons learned, data, and recommendations for possible solutions for refugees, which could go to scale.

## EDUCATION AND TECHNOLOGY SUPPORT TO CLASSROOMS IN LEBANON:

- **LOCATION:** Lebanon
- **FOCUS:** Education and digital classroom support
- **CHALLENGE:** Thaki was able to deploy hardware to refugees and vulnerable students in camps and public schools. However, they had no way to monitor student progress or provide tutoring.
- **PARTNERSHIP:** REACT identified synergies between the US-based company Cerego with Netherlands-based NGO Thaki. Cerego offered to embed their innovative tools on Thaki-donated technology. Cerego's platform makes it possible to monitor learning and provide remote real-time tutoring to students.
- **ANTICIPATED RESULT:** The project is will be underway in the next school year so that students can enroll for mentorship and tutoring programs. There are ongoing conversations to deliver additional hardware at no cost from Silicon Valley partners.

## Join GBC-Education

Please contact [info@gbc-education.org](mailto:info@gbc-education.org)

- 1 You can find more details about the REACT database and register resources from your company on our webpage at <http://gbc-education.org/initiatives/react-database/>.
- 2 Overseas Development Institute. (May 2016). Education Cannot Wait: Proposing a fund for education in emergencies. Accessible at <https://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/resource-documents/10497.pdf>.
- 3 See more details on the Education Cannot Wait Fund at [www.educationcannotwait.org](http://www.educationcannotwait.org).