



**Humanitarian Education Accelerator (HEA)**  
**Applicants' Guide**



## What is the HEA and how could it support your innovation?

The Humanitarian Education Accelerator (HEA) was established in 2016, through an initial partnership between UNHCR, UNICEF and the UK Department for International Development - to **generate evidence** that supports the design and delivery of high-quality education innovations **at scale** for children affected by humanitarian crises, whilst also **building internal capacity** of implementers to identify and sustainably scale what works.

Now funded by **Education Cannot Wait** and led by **UNHCR**, the HEA is continuing its support for promising humanitarian education innovations to transition from successful pilots to programmes that can operate at scale, in order to reach more children with quality education.

The HEA provides a unique model of support for grantees, blending mentorship by experts, peer-to-peer learning and capacity building support to strengthen internal monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) and scaling processes, with a long-term approach to evaluation and evidence building. You can hear from members of our earlier cohort of grantees on the ways in which the support they received from HEA helped their programme [here](#).

The HEA will select **3** promising innovations that will receive mentorship, scaling, M&E and financial support in their scaling process. The process of selecting the final three innovations will take approximately six months. Initially we will shortlist **10** innovations, bringing them together for a week-long Scaling Bootcamp to dig deeper into their projects and scaling ambitions. Thereafter, **5** teams will be supported to work on the development of their M&E and scaling frameworks. Out of these five teams, the final **3** will be selected for continued mentorship, M&E and scaling support, in addition to funding.



## HEA support to successful applicants includes:



### Stage 1

Capacity building by experts in scaling innovations, M&E and partnerships for 10 innovations during a **week-long Scaling Bootcamp**

First week March 2021



### Stage 2

Tailored **mentorship** and **further capacity building support** on research, Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) and scaling for 5 innovations over 3 months

April – July 2021



### Stage 3

**Funding of up to USD 200,000** for the final 3 selected innovations - to be used towards internal capacity building in M&E and investments in research, project implementation and scaling. A fully funded external **evaluation** for the final 3 selected innovations will also be provided.

August 2021 – December 2022

More detailed information on the different stages of the selection process is provided on pages 7 & 8 of this guide.



## Eligibility/selection criteria

The HEA will not be funding new, untested innovations in this funding cycle. We are instead looking to support innovations that have already been rolled out, have a Proof of Concept and are looking to scale beyond the pilot phase.

The following **criteria** will be used to identify an initial shortlist of successful interventions for support under the HEA:



**Humanitarian education focus:** does your innovation provide a solution to an **education challenge within emergency or protracted crisis settings?**



**Geographic focus:** is your innovation being implemented in one or more of the following focus countries: **Chad, Ethiopia, Jordan, Lebanon** and **Uganda?**



**Proof of concept:** have you developed a Proof of Concept around your innovation?



**Readiness to scale:** Are you **preparing to or currently scaling?** What is your readiness to scale?



**Sustainability:** do you have human resources and financial resources to support the scaling process?



## What level of scale should you have reached to apply?



### Pilot + proof of concept

You have piloted your innovation in a limited number of centres, undertaking a significant real-world 'field test' that includes the documentation of some evidence in support of your innovation.

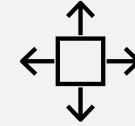
You have an innovation team in place, are documenting your processes and designing/planning for further implementation, expansion and/or rigorous testing.



### Testing for Scale (Scale Up)

You are in the process of adapting/revising your pilot through staged expansion within the same context.

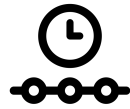
You have an innovation team in place in addition to wider organisational buy-in (if sitting within a larger organization). You have evidence supporting your innovation and are building M&E into your scaling plans.



### Scale Out

You are planning staged expansion in the same context or seeking to transition a proven solution to scale (and testing at scale) in one or more contexts/organizations

You have an innovation team in place, wider organisational support, robust evidence and M&E processes and have begun to distil complexity of your innovation for replicability.



## Call for Applications timeline



Launch of Call:  
17 December 2020



Longlisted applicants deliver  
5-minute pitch to HEA panel:  
8/9 February 2021



Deadline for applications:  
15 January 2021 5pm CET



Shortlisted applicants  
attend Scaling Bootcamp:  
1 - 5 March 2021



## What are we looking for in your Proof of Concept\*?

We are looking for innovations that have **passed the pilot phase** and are entering into the next phase of programming. For us, this means innovations that have **already tested their concept or idea** and have shown **initial impact** through a proof of concept as they turn their pilot into a fully formed programme. We would like to know how you initially identified your challenges and proposed solutions, how you tested and experimented with the solution and why you feel you are ready to grow.

Ideally you will have already **completed an initial internal or external assessment and/or evaluation** of your pilot project, and have collected **sufficient impact data** on the pilot, so that your innovation has achieved **internal organisational buy-in** to grow the programme. This can include, but is not limited to, the acceptability and usability of the innovation, its cost, efficiency, feasibility or sustainability. Innovation teams will be expected to have a **good understanding of their past and current learning objectives** and the **types of evidence** they need to generate.

Your proof of concept will allow us to assess which stage you have reached in your scaling journey, so that we can bring together a cohesive cohort of innovators, who can learn from one another through the course of the HEA programme.

\*A proof of concept can be any evidence gathered (for e.g. via an internal or external evaluation, case study or data collection exercise) that indicates your innovation is having/has had an impact on your target beneficiaries.



## What do we mean by readiness to scale?

The HEA selection process is as much about understanding the innovation team and wider organisation as it is about the innovation itself. **Our research shows** that a key factor for successfully and sustainably scaling an innovation is not just the efficacy of the innovation itself, but the **strength and readiness of the team** that runs it.

Ideally you will be able to show that **you have started to think through your business model, partnerships and scaling plans**, as well as building **solid Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning processes (MEL)**, including data collection, into your programme.

A large part of the HEA is about supporting our selected teams to **develop this capacity** and really **embed these processes**, so even if you currently do not have the full expertise in your team, we want to understand your thinking around and focus on these areas. If your innovation team sits in a larger parent organisation, we will also be looking for confirmation that you have **secured acceptance and 'buy-in' for your innovation**, have the **flexibility** of organisational systems to support the innovation, and have the support to explore a range of relevant pathways to scale.





## Stage One of the HEA

Stage One will bring together a shortlist of up to **10** successful innovations for a Scaling Bootcamp which will take place on **first week of March 2021**. During the 5-day bootcamp, shortlisted innovations will receive:

- Detailed information about the **HEA's support** and what it could achieve for organisations;
- **Engagement with HEA mentors, M&E advisors and members from the HEA Technical Team** to undertake a scaling assessment framework of each innovation, and start defining key scaling challenges - in programming, monitoring and evaluating the impact of the innovation as it scales;
- The opportunity to **engage in peer learning with a cohort of humanitarian education innovators**, to exchange ideas, build connections and expand your network of potential partners.

The Scaling Bootcamp will be an opportunity for shortlisted applicants to understand the HEA and its support and develop key insights into their own programmes and scaling plans. Sessions with mentors, experts and peers within the selected cohort, will provide all organisations with support in thinking through challenges and solutions for developing their scaling and M&E plans. The bootcamp will also allow the HEA Technical Team, who ultimately select the final innovations, to gain a deeper understanding of the teams behind each innovation and assess which innovations would be ready for the later stages of HEA scaling and financial support.

The bootcamp will include feedback on the observed strengths of the innovation teams, as well as opportunities for improvement and specific recommendations. At the end of the week, the 10 teams will be invited to submit a HEA Stage 2 application. This application will be based primarily on the scaling vision and strategy developed in the bootcamp.



## Stage Two of the HEA

Following the Scaling Bootcamp, **up to 5 innovations** will be selected to receive **in depth support** over the course of three months, starting from April 2021.

The 5 innovation teams will receive support from the HEA's scaling and M&E experts to further develop their scaling strategy and research plans, while building their internal M&E capacity. This will entail webinars, online calls as well as individual mentoring sessions and workshops by the HEA Mentors.

During this time, the selected innovation teams will work on building out their budgets, research plans and monitoring and evaluation frameworks. This will inform their final application for Stage 3 of the HEA, from which three innovation teams will be awarded the full grant funding.



## Stage Three of the HEA

Up to **3** final innovations will then be selected by July/August 2021 and awarded up to **USD 200,000**, which they can spend up until **December 2022**. These funds can be used to assist in scaling efforts, particularly building internal research, monitoring and evaluation capacity to implement the programme and programme activities that are part of the overall scaling plan.

In addition, the teams will be paired with an external evaluation firm who will support with an evaluation – taking a developmental evaluation approach – and will continue to receive tailored mentorship support from HEA experts to scale effectively.



## Contact



For more information about the HEA application process please refer to our FAQ document or contact us via email:

[HEA@unhcr.org](mailto:HEA@unhcr.org)

You can also find more information on our Twitter account:

 [@HEAccelerator](https://twitter.com/HEAccelerator)