

Education in Emergencies and for Reconstruction: A developmental approach

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Education in Emergencies and for Reconstruction

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Preface

UNICEF Programme Division is pleased to present this Working Paper which focuses on UNICEF strategies for responding to education needs in communities affected by crisis or chronic instability. The paper was prepared in the Programme Division, with extensive consultation with education officers in the field, our colleagues in the Emergency Operations Division, and with input from external partners.

The paper outlines a set of broad strategies for UNICEF's work in education in emergencies, and provides a summary of the organization's approach, some practical information on implementation, and an identification of areas where more work is needed. It is intended to provide information and to stimulate the debate on how UNICEF's approach to education in situations of crisis and chronic instability can be further refined.

The developmental approach to education advocated in the paper is in line with UNICEF's new perspectives on programming in situations of crisis and chronic instability that crystallized at the recent meeting in Martigny. The publication is thus particularly well timed as UNICEF moves towards closer integration of its emergency response into normal country programming, and begins to focus more systematically on emergency preparedness in every country programme, and a more flexible approach to country programming.

The target audience is UNICEF staff involved in education and programming issues, especially in crisis and chronic instability, as well as professionals in other organizations. Feedback would be much appreciated.

We look forward to receiving your suggestions and comments on the ideas presented here so that they can be incorporated into our ongoing work in the area.

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Executive summary

Education is an inalienable right—one that all children, including those caught in natural and human-made emergencies, must be able to access. This provides the challenge of how to provide education to children experiencing these difficult circumstances.

Education is not a relief activity; it is central to human and national development and must be conceptualized as a development activity. In emergency situations educational activities must be established or restored as soon as possible. Where education systems have been rendered non-functional, the rebuilding of the system provides an excellent opportunity for transforming education so that it meets the learning needs of diverse groups within a given population.

In any country education can also serve as a mechanism for contributing to the prevention of emergencies. In many countries it is necessary to have an emergency preparedness plan and it is essential to know what to do to support education in the event an emergency breaks out. Examples and suggestions are provided.

Although much has been accomplished in this relatively new field, a number of challenges remain to be addressed. These include such issues as child soldiers and the differential impact of emergencies on girls' education.

Résumé analytique

L'éducation est un droit inaliénable — un droit que tous les enfants, y compris ceux qui sont happés par les situations d'urgence dues à l'homme ou liées aux catastrophes naturelles, doivent pouvoir exercer. D'où le problème qui consiste à assurer l'éducation des enfants qui vivent dans ces circonstances difficiles.

L'éducation n'est pas une activité de secours; elle est essentielle au développement humain et national et il convient de la concevoir comme une activité de développement. Dans les situations d'urgence, il faut mettre en place ou rétablir dès que possible les activités éducatives. Lorsque les systèmes d'éducation ne sont plus en état de fonctionner, la remise en état du système est une excellente occasion de transformer l'éducation afin qu'elle réponde aux besoins éducatifs de groupes différents au sein d'une population donnée.

Dans tout pays, l'éducation peut aussi servir de mécanisme contribuant à la prévention des situations d'urgence. Dans de nombreux pays, il est nécessaire de disposer d'un plan de préparation aux situations d'urgence et il est essentiel de savoir ce qu'il faut faire pour appuyer l'éducation lorsque survient une situation d'urgence. On trouvera dans ce document des exemples et des suggestions.

Certes, beaucoup a été fait dans ce domaine relativement nouveau, mais un certain nombre de tâches restent à accomplir. Il s'agit notamment de questions telles que les enfants soldats et les effets différentiels des situations d'urgence sur l'éducation des filles.

Resumen Ejecutivo

La educación es un derecho inalienable—un derecho al cual deben tener acceso todos los niños, incluso los que se encuentran en situaciones de emergencia naturales o provocadas por los seres humanos. Constituye pues un reto el tratar de brindar educación a todos aquellos niños que atraviesan estas circunstancias difíciles.

La educación no debe entenderse como una actividad de asistencia o socorro; es más bien un aspecto fundamental del desarrollo humano y de una nación y como tal debe ser conceptualizada como una actividad del proceso de desarrollo. En situaciones de emergencia se deben establecer o restaurar las actividades educativas lo más antes posible. En aquellas situaciones en que los sistemas educativos se hayan vuelto inoperantes, la reconstrucción del sistema educativo proporciona una excelente oportunidad para la transformación de la educación, de manera tal que se puedan satisfacer las necesidades de aprendizaje de diversos grupos dentro de una población dada.

En cualquier país del mundo la educación puede servir también como mecanismo que contribuya a la prevención de situaciones de emergencia. En muchos países se hace necesario tener un plan de acción que permita estar preparados para una situación de emergencia. Existe además la necesidad indispensable de saber cómo obrar para brindar apoyo a la educación en caso de que se presente una situación de emergencia. Se proporcionan ejemplos y sugerencias.

Aun cuando es mucho lo que se ha logrado en este campo relativamente nuevo, existen todavía una serie de obstáculos que se deben vencer. Éstos comprenden cuestiones tales como los niños a los que se convierte en soldados en un conflicto y el efecto específico que tienen las situaciones de emergencia en la educación de las niñas y muchachas.

EDUCATION IN EMERGENCIES AND FOR RECONSTRUCTION:

A DEVELOPMENTAL APPROACH

Purpose

This document aims to provide programme guidance to those faced with the challenge of addressing education in emergency situations. It has been developed in cooperation with UNICEF colleagues in Emergency Operations and field offices, and with education advisors and others concerned with the impact of emergencies on education. Professional colleagues from sister UN organizations such as UNESCO and UNHCR, bilateral agencies, and non-governmental organizations such as Save the Children and the Norwegian Refugee Council have also provided valuable information. This will always be an evolving guide, changing as experience and better knowledge contribute to improved practice in emergency situations.

Emergencies include natural disasters such as floods and earthquakes, and human-made crises such as civil strife and war, the latter also called “complex emergencies”¹. Persistent poverty, the increasing number of children living on streets, and the HIV/AIDS pandemic are silent, chronic emergencies. All emergency situations have an adverse impact on education. Children, for example, especially girls, drop out of school during natural disasters and war. During droughts parents may not be able to pay required school fees. Poverty and fighting disable students, which hampers their ability to learn. War is a major psychosocial stressor with long-lasting effects that influence learning.

Why address Education in Emergencies?



Source: “The Kids in Somalia” by Christian Clark, *First Call for Children*. April-June 1994.

¹ UN General Assembly Resolution 45/1822

The Convention on Human Rights and the Convention on the Rights of the Child, among others, declare education to be an inalienable right. It is also an enabling right, in that it assists children and adults to access their other rights. It is the right of every child regardless of the circumstances in which she or he is thrust. Children in emergency situations must be able to participate in quality primary education that includes the same “core” of skills, knowledge, competencies, values and attitudes that constitute a basic education, and to which the world committed in 1990 at the Jomtien conference on Education for All (EFA).

RIGHT TO EDUCATION

1. States Parties recognize the right of the child to education, and with a view to achieving this right progressively and on the basis of equal opportunity, they shall, in particular:

- (a) Make primary education compulsory and available free to all;
- (e) Take measures to encourage regular attendance at schools and the reduction of drop-out rates.

Source: Abstracted from Convention on the Rights of the Child, Article 28

In emergency situations, whether caused by human or natural forces, education serves many purposes. It plays a critical role in normalising the situation for the child and in minimising the psychosocial stresses experienced when emergencies result in the sudden and violent destabilisation of the child’s immediate family and social environment. It is essential in assisting children to deal with their future more confidently and effectively, and can be instrumental in making it possible for them to develop a peaceful society. Furthermore, educational activities that include parents and other community members can play an important part in rebuilding family and community cohesiveness.

Unfortunately, these compelling arguments are not globally understood and it has been difficult to mobilise sufficient funds for education in emergencies. One reason for this might be the way education has tended to be conceptualised with regard to emergency situations. We propose a different approach.

UNICEF Commitment to Education in Emergencies

Basic education must play a part in every emergency programme. Educational activities will be consistent with UNICEF overall policy on basic education and tailored to the specifics of the particular emergency. UNICEF is committed to basic education (see box for definition). In line with its own mandate, universal primary education (UPE) through both formal and nonformal means is a key goal. Early childhood care for growth and development (ECCD) and adult education serve as complementary elements to good primary education, and UNICEF places special and high priority on the girl-child and the education of women.

Where a significant proportion of children are deprived of primary education, it must be accorded the highest priority within the educational context. While it is important to adhere to the broad concept of basic education, given UNICEF's resource limitations it is particularly important to set priorities and coordinate with various aspects of UNICEF support.

WHAT IS BASIC EDUCATION?

Basic education consists of a combination of indispensable competencies, knowledge, skills, and attitudes that serves as the foundation of any individual's lifelong learning. Although there will be differences in what constitutes "basic education" from society to society, there are some fundamentals that are common across cultural, social, and political boundaries.

Key competencies include reading, writing, and numeracy. Without these competencies it is difficult for an individual to pursue learning in modern times. Knowledge should be both theoretical and practical. An example is the area of basic science. Its content, for instance, will likely vary according to the particular context, but it must provide learners with the basic scientific concepts and experience that will allow them to function on a daily basis in such areas as food, nutrition, water, and sanitation.

Skill provides an individual with the ability to use knowledge effectively and easily. There are many different types of skills. Survival skills are those that are basic to survival, such as finding food and seeking protection. Life skills enable an individual to have access to a better life. These might include skills for work, problem-solving skills, communication, analysis, and logic. Attitudes are feelings about or positions towards certain purposes or aspects of life. These include self-esteem, tolerance, cooperation, and civic responsibility.

Thus, basic education is a broad and complex concept. Although there is general agreement as to what the components are, there is plenty of room for each country and community to configure these components in ways that are most relevant to them. In operation, basic education occurs in a wide range of contexts and is not limited by structure, content, or participants.

A new approach: Emergencies as opportunity for educational transformation

Education in emergency situations has frequently been viewed as a short-term response that is a "stop-gap" measure until normalcy can be restored: a relief effort. This concept **must** be challenged. The challenge is especially important with regard to human-made, or "complex", emergencies because this concept ignores the role of education as a social and cultural institution that is used by society to instill attitudes, values, and certain types of knowledge in its newest citizens, its future leaders. Education is an institution that is very resistant to change, although it is host to powerful tools for very significant change.

Complex emergencies, which result in conflict and civil strife, do not occur because of a single event. They have a history, often of disparity, power imbalance and discrimination, that results in an emergency. A single event, frequently misunderstood as the cause, can ignite all the frustration that has built up over years. Some aspects of natural disasters often have roots in human behaviour as

well. For example, floods are often exacerbated by years of improper land use. Thus, education as a social institution may even contribute to an emergency.

Accepting this fact allows for a very different view of emergencies. An emergency can provide a "crisis situation" in which immediate change is possible. In fact, it may be much easier to introduce change into education systems as a result of an emergency than in peaceful, orderly times. Emergencies can thus provide an opportunity for transforming education along the lines envisioned at the Jomtien World Conference on Education for All. They allow for the possibility of **reconstructing** a social institution that helps develop and form the human resources that determine the way a society functions. The challenge to educators is to understand this, plan for it under very stressful and difficult situations, and to assist with putting facilitating mechanisms in place.

Responding to emergencies with a view toward transformation²

Any emergency education programme must be a **development** programme and not merely a stop-gap measure that will halt when a particular situation is no longer experiencing intense media coverage. Of course, it may have to start very simply, with the basics. But it must be designed so that as it is extended and expanded it is changed in significant ways. The education system must be **rebuilt** rather than merely re-instituted; it must change in profound ways.

What are the kinds of changes that we should seek and plan for? These will vary according to each situation but there are some core elements that should be present. Education should be children-centered, and learning should be fun. Teachers should be respected and supported so that they can provide a good learning environment that facilitates quality and relevant education. The entire education system, not just the curriculum, must be gender sensitive and attentive to equity and diversity issues. Financial resources should be equitably distributed. Parents and community members should be respected partners in the educational process. Community resources should be included as part of the "package" of learning materials.

A good education system can accommodate diversity in approaches and partners in the educational process. Where there is diversity, however, it is essential that the final product, primary education, be of high quality regardless of how it was accessed. **All** who participate must receive an equal opportunity to acquire the critical elements of primary education — skills, knowledge, competencies, attitudes, and values. These "critical elements" are common regardless of context or geographic location, although the sequencing and approach to them will vary greatly. They may be considered the international "core" of basic education. In addition, each location and context will require that learners acquire specific knowledge, values, competencies, skills, and attitudes relevant to their situation. Both the core and situation-specific aspects of basic education will be addressed in greater detail later in this paper.

² In this document we are referring to basic education with an emphasis on children of primary school age. Education for younger children, older children, and adults is equally important and should be conducted under the same conceptual rubric.

The question of relevance is very important. In an emergency context, science and life skills must be targeted toward the existing situation. For example, in a conflict children may need to learn about land mines, and in a refugee camp or during a flood they may need to understand how cholera is transmitted. These are applications of core concepts, as is the skill of learning how to ride a bus, for many urban children.

Education for prevention

Education has a critical role to play in preventing emergencies, especially complex ones. It can serve to prevent war and foster a peaceful society. It can also contribute to controlling some natural disasters, such as environmental degradation. This is not simple to accomplish, however. It is a long-term process and much “developmental” work remains with regard to which educational approaches will have the desired impact. Styles of learning and teaching need significant reform around the world. Teachers operating from stances that include prejudice and stereotyping cannot help children learn respect, social justice, and conflict resolution skills. It will take a sustained effort to change teacher education systems, the results of which may not be clearly apparent for several years.

Education must be transformed to develop citizens who value peace, respect for others, questioning, and diversity. Who have with an understanding of interdependence and dependence on a fragile environment, and have skills in conflict resolution. In its very basic form this is **good education practiced in a facilitative and democratic learning environment**. Although basic, this is not easy.

In many cases we need to seriously re-think current actions in the area of “peace education.” Too much peace education is, unfortunately, action after the fact. Furthermore, peace education all too often tends to use conventional approaches—telling children how to act, how to “be nice and better people,” rather than demonstrating and living those elements that are essential for genuinely peaceful and productive lives.

We have a good basis from which to start. Much has been developed under the aegis of peace education, global education, education for development, education for democracy, civics education, life skills education, values education, human rights education, and environmental education—to name a few. This proliferation of terms for “peace education” is quite confusing to educators and non-educators alike, and these efforts need to be assessed and adapted. The challenge is to take the critical concepts and aspects of these approaches and to integrate them into ongoing educational practice. Good education can serve a number of purposes. Its contribution to the nation can be healing and restorative as well as proactive. The content of such education is addressed in greater detail later in this paper.

If education is to play its rightful role in preventing emergencies, it must be viewed in its broadest context. Its scope must include communication, information, and the media. Education has an important part to play in promoting the application of, and adherence to, international law.

We must not, however, fall into the trap of believing that education is a panacea. Education is one of a number of societal institutions that contribute to sustaining a peaceful society. Just as the causes of emergencies are several, so are the sources of prevention. A functioning justice system based on human rights and the ability to participate equitably in economic life, for example, are also essential. Yet, ignoring education also ignores the very means for creating awareness and acquiring the skills and knowledge for functioning in an improved society.

Emergency preparedness

Unfortunately, a number of emergencies can be anticipated, both natural disasters and complex ones, even though they may not be preventable. Inherent in a commitment to the right to education is the willingness to plan to ensure that this right can be accessed during an emergency situation. This has a number of implications.

First is a recognition of where these situations might erupt. A number of emergency early warning systems exist. There is a need for educators to be aware of these systems and to pay attention to them. At the same time, these systems could be further strengthened through the inclusion of educational indicators.

Awareness should be part of every agency's strategy. Agencies should be prepared to address education in the event that an emergency should materialise. For example, it might be necessary to safeguard school and teacher training curricula, identify alternative sources of learning materials, and ensure that a set of all textbooks is safe. Developing an inventory of available stocks of educational materials, supplies, and materials and human resources might be a very important and time-saving step.

Many organizations have extensive experience addressing educational needs in times of crisis and emergency, and this work needs to be recognised and built on. Such experience has resulted in very practical supportive materials such as education kits and some useful analytical ideas.³ It is important to be aware of these.

Interagency collaboration and coordination are important at this stage. All agencies taking care of all the various aspects of preparedness leads to duplication of effort and a waste of resources. Recognition of comparative advantage can contribute immensely to a timely and comprehensive response to an emergency situation. This recognition must occur at the preparedness stage. At a recent meeting⁴, the following were identified as important for education in relation to emergency preparedness:

³ One example is a model that is under development by Robert Fuderich. This model has three axes: (1) emergency affected groups (such as refugees, internally displaced persons, and those in their home community), (2) level of emergency (pre-emergency, emergency, and post-emergency) and (3) educational level of the intended learners (such as ECD, primary, secondary, youth and adult). It is argued that interventions will differ according to the intersection of these axes and the specific field context.

⁴ Interagency Consultation on Humanitarian Assistance and Refugees, Geneva, 9-11 May 1996

- A coordinating mechanism for operations and fundraising;
- A repository of information, examples of materials, technical memory, local and international human resources (including UN volunteers and NGO stand-by education personnel), and assessment tools;
- Guidelines for interagency cooperation in logistics and other aspects of programme delivery;
- Interagency rapid assessment teams, skilled in negotiation, mediation, education, and ability to work with existing authorities; and
- Local and regional human institutional capacity.

EDUCATION IN EMERGENCIES

Principles of Cooperation UNHCR/UNESCO/UNICEF (1995)

- Education is essential.
- Major emergencies require clear directions and indicators.
- The initial response must address specific, local needs of school age children.
- The approach to emergency education must have a longer term view to rebuild the education system.
- Cooperation among our agencies is essential and requires a joint committee/technical unit.
- Our view of education must be children-based—there must be direct and, if possible, unbroken links between refugee camps and later settlement locations.
- The first agency operating in the field must collect educational statistics to facilitate planning.
- There is a need for simple guidelines on how to get started/where to look for support.
- Special attention must be paid to girls and adolescents.
- Adolescents must be brought into the process as early as possible.
- "Second chance" or "drop-in" education for adolescents should be a component of education in emergencies.
- There is a need for agreed-upon mechanisms for working with NGOs.
- There is a need for agreements on salaries/payment for work.
- Education in emergencies must be more than kits—it must include, for example, training, dealing with trauma, and community building must be included, and it may be necessary to tailor curriculum under emergency situations.
- Curriculum issues need special attention, particularly with regard to the relevance of the "former" curriculum and language policies. A long-term view is necessary.
- Speedy identification of local skills and capacity are essential.
- Teachers and teacher training are especially important in relation to emergency situations.
- If vocational skills are considered as part of education in emergencies, particular attention must be paid to output and likely opportunities.
- Educational content must include basic life skills that are particularly necessary in the existing emergency.
- Health campaigns should remain the responsibility of health workers.

These general principles hold at all levels—field and global. It is important to keep this aspect of emergencies in proper focus. Preparedness should not consume all the energy and effort of an ongoing Country Programme of Cooperation. Rather, it should be a modest, cautionary, and discreet activity that is carried out by one or two persons in the education team in collaboration with other colleagues.

Education in situations of emergency and crisis

Every emergency is unique but there are some characteristics which can be useful in determining response options. An emergency is characterised by systems breaking down and very few assistance agencies or mechanisms in operation. At this point it is necessary to "make do" with whatever exists. Because of the increase in complex emergencies worldwide, this document emphasises such emergencies, but the content can be adapted to other emergencies, as appropriate. In the final analysis, the actual nature of the emergency is not that important in terms of the immediate needs of those affected. They all need to address basic needs such as: shelter, protection, nourishment, health care, and education. The overall goal of those addressing these situations is to eliminate constraints so that those affected can still live normal, healthy, productive lives with dignity.

It is essential that survival and protection rights be ensured during the initial stages of an emergency. These should be addressed before provision is made to offer educational activities. The accompanying box provides some guidance regarding conditions that must be met before implementing education in emergency situations. Nevertheless, **planning of education should be part of every emergency programme from the very beginning.** In complex emergencies, the media are usually very present and must be addressed in a coherent manner. UNICEF commitment to children's education should be part of any media/communication strategy.

UNICEF recognises that poverty and pandemics such as AIDS also places children in "emergency" situations by threatening their well-being. These conditions are addressed in UNICEF's regular Country Programme of Cooperation. Chronic poverty often renders people homeless, unhealthy, and unable to access resources that could allow them to better their situations.

CONDITIONS THAT MUST BE MET BEFORE IMPLEMENTING EDUCATION IN EMERGENCIES

- An organizational structure should be in existence, or emerging, identifying the affected populations;
- An expressed interest for children's education;
- Securing a suitable site for the learning centre;
- Availability of teachers/facilitators;
- Availability of the most essential educational materials;
- Acceptance of the suggested educational programme and language of instruction should be obtained from the parties concerned;
- No immediate serious health risks are involved in gathering the children together; and
- All learning sites should have been de-mined in post-conflict circumstances.

Source: Adapted from *Organizing Primary Education for Refugee Children in Emergency Situations* by UNESCO/UNHCR (1988)

Addressing a complex emergency

Once the basic conditions for implementing education have been met, the following should be taken into account:

- UNICEF advocates and supports the rapid re-establishment of basic education;
- Priority must be given to children of primary school age;
- Special efforts must be made to encourage and facilitate girls' participation, if necessary;
- Learning should be fun;
- Nonformal approaches and contextually-relevant content must be explored; and
- Parents, communities, and local resources should be involved to the extent possible.

Emergency situations demand targeted and limited responses that fall within the overall UNICEF policy on education, but that are carefully and purposefully circumscribed so that they can be managed under emergency conditions. Furthermore, they must contain the essential components of a more developed educational system so that they have the potential to be expanded and built upon to form a coherent “full blown” education system in the future. For this reason UNICEF supports the following three aspects of education in emergencies:

- Materials to facilitate child learning (particularly through educational kits);
- Teaching (particularly training to work with the kits); and
- Community participation in support of primary education.

There is no guarantee that an education specialist will be readily available in an emergency situation. If a specialist is not available, responsibility for education should, whenever possible, be assigned to a staff member who works in another sector related to the provision of social services. The staff member assigned to education cannot, and should not, work alone. He or she will need to co-operate closely with others concerned with the education of children, first of all the children and their families, but also with relevant institutions in the country, NGOs, and the UN and other agencies.

If possible and feasible, an interagency team should be formed. The team, under the leadership of one of the agencies, will then use the guidelines to coordinate the work and ensure that the various activities are carried out in a logical order. In particular, UNICEF staff members must work cohesively.

An essential first step is an initial overall assessment of the entire situation. UNICEF has developed some guidelines for this purpose, which include simple instructions for developing basic assessment tools. These are available as part of the UNICEF *Emergency Handbook*. Another useful source is the guidelines produced by UNHCR.⁵ This “education assessment” will ideally be carried out at the same time as any other assessment of the overall situation so that an intersectoral view is possible: interagency collaboration is very important. If UNICEF is designated the “lead agency” for the

⁵ See UNHCR, *Revised (1995) Guidelines for Educational Assistance to Refugees*.

assessment, care should be taken to ensure that the assessment related to education covers all age groups and the education needs of all populations, and not just those of children. This is a requirement for partner agencies, even though UNICEF supported programmes usually focus on youth and younger children.

It is unlikely that there will be much in the way of organized educational activities at this stage. Nevertheless, given UNICEF's mandate for children, information related to education should be collected as part of a larger, multi-sectoral data gathering activity. Information addressing education should include:

- The educational needs of the community. This includes emphasising the collection of information on the number of children (by age and gender) who are in need of basic education; level of formal/non formal education of the children; extent of disruption caused by the disaster that created the dislocated group; extent of malnutrition and poor health; need for any special survival skills; and location of the target groups;
- The extent to which families, neighbourhoods, and communities are intact, and the extent to which they are able to participate in planning and implementing educational activities. If these structures do not exist, are there others? Or, can education play a mobilising role?;
- The types of social mobilisation required to maintain educational activities under the new circumstances;
- Existing education facilities and services, covering existing institutions and organizations (including NGOs) that have the *potential* to contribute; existing basic educational programmes, both formal and non formal; instructional materials available; existing physical facilities that could be used for education; facilities that are available to support curriculum development, training of staff and production of supportive material; and recording and broadcasting facilities; and
- Local resources, including level of education of the target community; numbers of individuals with sufficient experience to take on leadership in a technical role in providing educational services; and number of individuals and their qualifications who can serve as classroom facilitators (paraprofessionals) and teachers.
- At the same time it is important to start some initial thinking and analysis that can contribute to the plan for education in a specific emergency. Consideration needs to be given to the following:
- What was the language of instruction of the target group? Mother tongue?;
- Are textbooks and learning materials from the original system available? Usable?;

- The types of "coping" skills that are necessary for children in both the short- (given the emergency) and the long-term (in anticipation of an easy transition to normalcy). In conflict and post-conflict situations, "education for reconciliation" may need to be included;
- Specific, practical goals that are achievable; and
- The types of skills and knowledge parents and other adults need to facilitate the education and well-being of children.

The following lists of "do's" and "don'ts" may prove useful in this exercise.

DO'S

- Consider how the participation rights of children might contribute to your planning and implementation;
- Be proactive in meeting all potential partners in an emergency programme;
- Have an up-to-date listing/directory of national, NGO, and international organizations involved in education activities in all sectors;
- Seek the support of others, especially community members, in implementing activities;
- Be open and honest when dealing with partners;
- Keep records of all significant discussions and of all promises made on behalf of UNICEF;

If other agencies implement UNICEF-supported activities ensure that goals, objectives, activities, criteria, timeliness, quality, monitoring, and reporting are well-understood.

DON'TS

- Don't underestimate the ability or potential of local people to contribute to an emergency education programme;
- Don't be aloof, paternalistic, or haughty in your role as a provider of assistance;
- Don't create unrealistic expectations;
- Don't criticise when on-the-spot capacity building is a better utilisation of your resources.

In an emergency, as in any other situation, it is essential to remember that UNICEF's mandate is for children and this is why we are involved in their right to education. Our focus must be children-centered and the approach selected by UNICEF is the development of educational programmes that can "move with" and follow children, if necessary. Key to UNICEF's education policy is a focus on **learning** rather than merely schooling. Educational curriculum, both content and methodology, must allow students/learners to develop skills that are useful for life **and** that can be adapted as life circumstances change. In emergencies, as under normal conditions, education must emphasise, for example, basic skills in numeracy, literacy, and communication as well as critical content in such areas

as health, nutrition, sanitation, and civics. If used properly, a focus on learning appropriate skills and good information should eventually reduce the severity of future emergencies and help people cope with current ones.

Mention was made earlier of the international "core" that makes up the major part of the content of any basic education. This needs to be maintained in any organized emergency effort, albeit in a simple form. Learning packages have been found to be particularly useful in emergency situations. They can be adapted, stocked, and distributed, all of which factors are essential if educational materials and supports are to be made available to those affected by emergencies.⁶ *Edukits*, which combine teacher training with basic learning materials, have been developed by UNICEF as a rapid and simple educational response that can be adapted to specific target groups of learners who are unable to enjoy their right to a quality basic education as a result of situations beyond their control, such as poverty or conflict. They provide a means for children to access the skills, knowledge, values, and competencies that can empower them to better respond to and overcome their difficult circumstances, and to lead a productive life. These can be developed and compiled locally or ordered from the UNICEF Supply Division in Copenhagen.

POSSIBLE PROGRAMME ACTIVITIES

- Reproduce local language textbooks and teachers' guides;
- Provide tools and training for rehabilitating learning sites;
- Assist with organizing and supervising primary education;
- Train teachers and paraprofessionals;
- Train teachers in conflict resolution skills;
- Address the special needs of stressed children with other involved organizations, if necessary;
- Assist with community organization in support of primary education; and provide learning materials, including edukits.

Two important aspects must be taken into consideration with regard to the curriculum. First, there are the core knowledge, skills, behaviour, attitudes, and values that are an essential part of basic education, regardless of where the learner is located. The curriculum should support a range of areas which include human rights, environmental awareness, and a sustainable future. Secondly, there is the aspect that is essential for immediate and long-term survival: the essential knowledge and skills that enable a child or adult to survive and cope with the emergency. Examples include mine-awareness; information on HIV/AIDS, cholera, and other health issues; and psychosocial well-being.

In emergency situations, the local context takes on an especially important dimension which cannot be ignored by education if it is to be effective. Thus, it becomes important to shift emphasis in emergencies to address critical and immediate needs. This calls for enhancing, enlarging, and

⁶ One example is the Teacher Emergency Package (TEP), or .School in a Box. that was developed and used by UNESCO and UNICEF in Rwanda during its recent crisis.

strengthening the "life skills" content of the basic curriculum in very specific ways, especially in complex emergencies. Among the areas that must be emphasised are the following:

- **Conflict resolution skills.** These are essential building blocks for a new society. They can be introduced in terms of negotiation and ensuring fair resolution, rather than as a way to "make peace". These skills should form part of any good basic education curriculum as discussed earlier, but if they were not initially included they should be, and emphasised as though they were part of the original content;
- **Addressing grief and psychosocial stresses.** There is no single "right" way to approach this condition. Societies, communities and, indeed, families have developed ways that are considered appropriate for dealing with loss and stress. These need to be identified and utilised as appropriate to enable children, parents, and teachers to come to terms with their situations and experiences and to resume their regular daily activities to the extent possible;
- **Mine awareness.** Mines are major killers of children and schools have often been targets. Children, teachers, and communities must be taught to be watchful and know how to get assistance when mines are located;
- **Health and healthy lifestyles.** Emergency situations mean that many of the normal social structures and controls are broken down. Thus, even where health standards were originally high and clean drinking water available, this may no longer be the case, making it necessary to ensure that there is good education on such topics as sanitation and cholera. Infection rates of diseases such as HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted illnesses usually increase during emergencies, and special efforts need to be taken to ensure that accurate information about prevention and protection is readily available. And children, especially boys, need to know that it is better not to serve as soldiers;
- **Decision making and assertiveness skills.** These are necessary for all affected by emergencies, but especially for girls and women; and
- **Safe learning environment.** Groups of children must not be vulnerable targets. In particular, girls must be safe from harassment and all other forms of violence.

Education related to these topics is important for both the immediate survival of learners in emergency situation, and in developing coping mechanisms in the long run.

There is also a need for targeted, short-term adult education in these circumstances. This might cover, for example, basic information on family survival, information on legal and other aspects of the learners' situation, and/or campaigns directed at peace keeping forces can play an important role in protection—or may be tempted to violate the rights of those most affected by emergencies.

Targeting education

In conflict situations it may be necessary to develop some very targeted educational activities. The following areas are addressed briefly: child soldiers, peace keeping forces, care for young children, girls.

- **Child soldiers.** The increasing use of children as fighters in conflict is most alarming. While stopping this trend will require coordinated effort, education must play a key role in demobilisation. As with other educational responses in emergencies, this must have two aspects: the basic care that is every child's right, and a component tailored to the particular circumstances. The challenge is to tailor a programme that allows children to reassume the childhood that has been stolen from them.
- **Peace keeping forces.** It may be necessary to provide public education to peace keeping forces vis-a-vis the rights and obligations they, as adults, need to recognise and observe with regard to children.
- **Early childhood care and development.** Organized educational activities may serve as an excellent location for provision of early childhood care and development. This is a key part of early learning and such activities can free up girls to access their right to basic education, given that they are often responsible for sibling care.
- **Girls.** Because of established, historical gender bias and because social norms and actions break down during emergencies, girls are usually at particular risk. Their already heavy work loads increase at the same time as their physical and emotional safety is further compromised. Planned educational activities must take this into account and address related issues through, adult education, the curricular content and processes, and providing a safe learning environment.

Impact on neighbouring countries

One area that has received insufficient attention is the “incidental” emergencies that result from the effect of emergencies on neighbouring countries. The varied forms of this impact have not been fully researched but they include accommodating refugee children in schools, addressing obvious disparities caused by international aid directed towards refugees and unavailable to poor local populations, and facing complex social, language, and curriculum issues in systems that have not had an opportunity to anticipate them.

After things quiet down: The transition to a transformed system

Many of the activities identified as emergency interventions also serve as a good basis for rebuilding strengthened and changed education systems. Learning packages serve as an excellent base on which to build. This is a time to plan and to consider how to introduce innovations and change that will ensure that all children have access to better primary education in the long run.

For example, one aspect of conventional education that can be changed during an emergency is that of the role of the community. Critical to real educational change is the decision to use the human resources within a community in different ways. Parents, adolescents, traditional leaders and healers, and others from outside conventional educational circles can contribute to learning, along with teachers. In this way, times of emergency can provide an opportunity to change schools from bricks and mortar to bases for community learning networks. In Cambodia, for example, there is an explicit focus on developing community school building committees and school clusters to rebuild collaboration and trust.

Situations where school infrastructure has been destroyed offer another valuable opportunity to change the pedagogical aspects of the learning/teaching process and school/community interactions by involving parents and other adults, and by introducing classroom arrangements that work against dependence on the lecture and rote memorisation methods.

A number of countries, particularly many of those that are located in Central and Eastern Europe as well as the newly independent states, are also facing extremely difficult circumstances. Given the broad definition of emergency we have acknowledged, they may be seen as being in transition from emergency situations where the source of the “emergency” is often financial, along with the virtual collapse of the system that supported education in the past. In many cases, these countries are facing the immense task of rebuilding their systems while introducing innovations to equip learners to function in the new societies they are developing.

Although the circumstances are different, there are a number of commonalities between such countries and those that have experienced more “conventional” emergencies. They are experimenting with ways to finance education systems in situations where their populations have had, and will continue to demand, education for all. A progressive or staged approach will not suffice. At the same time, many of the strong management and administrative structures that were in place are crumbling because the overall infrastructure is weakening. Thus, a second challenge is how to maintain quality while continuing to provide access.

Because of the extraordinary transitions that are occurring as these countries move from centralised to market economies, they may have much to offer to other “emergency” countries in terms of entering the global system. Their situations show how overall well-being in general, and education in particular, are linked to macro social, political, and economic structures. This should be of great value to countries that are recovering from complex emergencies and that are going through restructuring to enable them to better participate in the global economy.

Early childhood care and development and adult education as complementary strategies

Insufficient attention has been paid to ECCD and adult education in emergency situations. From a UNICEF perspective, these need to be considered in terms of how they can most effectively support universal primary education under difficult circumstances.

Early childhood care and development

The early years of a child are the foundation for its future. The interaction of learning with and its simultaneous dependence on such things as health, nutrition, nurturance, care, and sanitation are crucial in preparing every individual for life. This process must begin early in life for the results to be most effective. ECCD activities contribute to readying the child for school and for lifelong learning. At the same time, primary education, whether experienced in or out of school, should link to and build on the early years. To the extent possible, there should be a "seamless flow" from ECCD experiences through primary education and beyond. This suggests a good understanding of the process of child development and its linkages with learning abilities. Thus, both content and approaches in primary education need to be more sensitive to the child and her or his stage of development. At the same time, there should be improved linkages, information flow, and feedback between activities in support of ECCD and what children are experiencing in organized primary education.

ECCD cannot be equated with "preschool". Its activities are much broader and fundamental, with parents and communities carrying the major responsibility for the early development of future generations. This approach has significant implications for adult education.

Adult education

An essential aspect of adult education must be "parenting" education to give adults the knowledge, skills, and information they need in order to contribute to and facilitate the healthy development of young children. This is no less important in emergency situations. But adult education must give something more. It must also provide adults with opportunities to learn the skills, knowledge, values, attitudes, and competencies that make up a basic education. Because women often bear the largest part of the burden in terms of re-establishing some semblance of "community and family life", and are also extremely vulnerable because of inequitable gender relations, special attention must be paid to their learning needs.

Emergency situations, however, put a unique twist to this. In emergencies, adults need specific and rapid information, enabling them to make sound decisions in very disrupted situations and to protect the lives of their families and themselves. For example, they may need information about the availability of food and shelter or knowledge on how water is purified or how specific diseases, such as HIV/AIDS, are transmitted. This calls for a move away from conventional literacy programmes to innovative short-term activities that are part of a long-term plan for adult education. In particular,

approaches such as radio, popular theatre, and community mobilisation activities have been shown to be very effective.

Resources to assist with education in emergencies and for reconstruction

Some resources exist or are being developed with a developmental view of emergencies in mind. One of the most basic tools is a good analysis of the situation of education in a country, regardless of whether or not it is in an emergency situation. This will provide information on where reform (amending what exists) or transformation (changing the character) are necessary. In this context, reform of the system can serve as a mechanism which contributes to emergency prevention. For example, UNICEF has developed guidelines for conducting a Comprehensive Education Analysis (CEA) which would yield data for policy, planning, and implementation as well as contribute to the Situation Analyses it supports in collaboration with host countries.

The proliferation of emergencies over the last decade has resulted in a talented and creative pool of educators and other professionals who bring practical experience to bear, both at the field level and in contributing to the fast growing knowledge base. These individuals are beginning to meet and share their knowledge and experience. As the same time, much of what has been done is facing some healthy challenges as professionals take a more proactive stance toward education in difficult times with a view to seeing it as a development tool rather than as an emergency response.

Work in the field has also resulted in many documents and other materials that are extremely helpful, such as the development of basic curricula. A development approach encourages the use of materials and approaches that have been used elsewhere in the world. For example, both UNICEF Zambia and the Zimbabwean Ministry of Education are in the process of developing a teacher's guide to assist untrained teachers to teach the first two years of the national primary curriculum and to link this to a low-cost edukit. This may be of use in emergencies. A number of countries have already developed kits to support educational activities in emergencies in Sri Lanka, Sudan, Liberia, Somalia and Rwanda.

In February 1996, at the two African Mid-Decade Review Consultations on Progress Toward Achieving Education for All, education in emergencies and for reconstruction was a topic which generated intense discussion. It is now on the global agenda and was discussed at the Mid-Decade Review meeting in Amman, Jordan in June 1996.

A number of agencies, including UNESCO, UNHCR, NGOs, bilaterals and UNICEF, have begun to collaborate and share materials. They have set up an interagency working group at the International Bureau of Education (IBE), which is part of UNESCO and located at Geneva. These agencies have developed and are in the process of expanding and improving programme guidelines. Each is in the process of becoming aware of "in-house" human and other resources and developing internal networks that can be linked. The University of Pittsburgh has set up a database called GINIE on the Internet to share information.

Remaining challenges

Much remains to be done in the emerging area of education in emergencies and for reconstruction. Some areas warranting immediate attention are indicated below.

Acceptance of viewing education from a developmental perspective. Recent years have seen much attention to education in emergencies at the field level. Particular attention has been paid to the education of refugees. A cursory review of what is being implemented at the field level, and even of many documents, indicates that the predominant paradigm is of education as a relief intervention. As long as this view predominates, the chance of education serving as a major force in preventing emergencies is greatly diminished.

UNICEF approaches to peace education. There is a need to develop a clear statement on this activity and what it entails. Valuable field experience serves as the basis for the need for such clarification.

Monitoring and evaluation of education in emergencies. Much commendable effort has gone into providing education during emergency situations. Mechanisms are being put in place to gather and share information on these initiatives. This is an important step but, unfortunately, it is occurring before these activities have been evaluated. We thus run the risk of promoting activities that are not, in the long run, in a child's best interest. Serious efforts need to be made to monitor and evaluate ongoing education activities.

Differential impact of emergencies on girls, women, and minorities. There is recognition, at least acknowledgement, of the negative impact of emergencies on girls and women. Less attention has been paid to their impact on minority groups that are not the target of complex emergencies. Reliable data and information on what this impact is, how it manifests itself, and how it might be eliminated is almost non-existent. Yet, as we search for safety, peace, and equity for all humans it would seem that this knowledge is absolutely essential. Within education the unfair disadvantage of being female or a minority must be understood and efforts put in place to assist with the rehabilitation of those who have suffered as a result of these disadvantages.

Child soldiers. A great degree of information is becoming available on child soldiers. Yet we do not know how to develop and launch public education programmes that make it unthinkable for adults to allow children to be employed as soldiers, we do not know what children need in order to understand that this is not a desirable life choice, and we do not know how to effectively utilise education in demobilisation operations.

Planning and transition. By their nature, emergency situations seem to militate against long term planning. Lives are at stake and so the short-term "band aid" approaches prevail. Yet a developmental approach calls for planning and looking at the immediate in terms of the longer term. Planning efforts have been attempted in a number of countries that have undergone emergencies but many of them have not been sustained or they have been found to be inappropriate for the situation.

In part, this may be because the modalities of planning that are generally standard and employed in education assume a calm and slow-to-change education system. It may require more conceptualisation and attention to, and development of, such areas as contingency planning if we are to make substantial headway in this area.

Conclusion

Education in emergencies and for reconstruction is a relatively new field that offers a number of challenges. It is a very dynamic area with much being accomplished at the field level. Experience suggests that there is a major paradigm shift in process. This is a shift that provides much greater opportunity for education to contribute to the development of processes and activities that will, in turn, contribute to a better life for the millions who are—or potentially might be—affected by emergencies, rather than serving as a means to maintain the status quo. This paradigm shift deserves serious attention because of its potential contribution to sustained human development and the better fulfillment of Human Rights. Educators concerned with this area should put effort into better understanding and facilitating this change.

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