

## **EDUCATION IN CONFLICT EMERGENCIES IN LIGHT OF THE POST-2015 MDGs AND EFA AGENDAS**

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Increasingly intense international debates surrounding the post-2015 global education agenda have opened up during 2012. Whatever successors to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the Education for All (EFA) goals are eventually negotiated, all stakeholders will need to plan them in close coordination. A major shortcoming of the present education-related MDGs and EFA goals is that they were developed separately, with the more specific EFA goals preceding in time the more general MDGs. Another weakness of both is their too narrow focus on universal primary education (MDGs) and on basic education (EFA). Although the EFA movement has given some attention to non-formal education, adult literacy and skills development, most of the political impetus and financial investment has been on expansion of formal schooling.<sup>2</sup> The education component of a future post-MDG global development agenda needs to be comprehensively worded, allowing for the inclusion of all population groups, all situations and all sub-sectors of education systems. The future post-EFA goals need to spell out, as far as possible, objectives for all those population groups, situations and sub-sectors.

In those international debates over the post-2015 global education agenda, one vital population has been comparatively neglected until now: those affected by violent armed conflict. This includes refugees (people who cross an international border fleeing persecution or war), internally displaced persons (IDPs), and those harmed by conflict without being displaced. The needs for, challenges of and opportunities offered by the provision of education during conflict emergencies are intimately linked to other educational situations, such as provision of education in conflict-affected fragile states, in disaster emergency situations, and post-conflict and post-disaster educational recovery and reconstruction.

The focus of this paper, however, is on provision of education in conflict emergencies. It examines (i) the importance of educational provision in conflict emergencies in the light of post-2015 debates; (ii) the unusual, often threatening institutional environments in which education is conducted during conflict

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<sup>2</sup> In this paper, the term 'education' will most frequently be used in reference to the whole gamut of learning opportunities, including schooling. When particular types or sub-sectors of education are discussed, they will be designated specifically.

emergencies; (iii) several policy dilemmas in conflict emergencies (curriculum choices, secondary education, vocational education and training, teacher supply and management), with an in-depth examination of one policy theme, certification of the learning attainments of refugee and IDP learners, to illustrate the technical intricacy and political complexity of the technical and political challenges that confront emergency education; and (iv) policy commitments to the provision of education in emergencies.

During wars, education systems, personnel and students suffer the effects of conflict and forced displacement.<sup>3</sup> These include loss of life, loved ones and property, recruitment of children as combatants, mass rape and other sexual violence, and loss of educational opportunity, as schooling is halted or disturbed. The violence of armed conflict intensifies inequalities, disrupts whole societies and can have severe psychosocial effects on particular communities and individuals (IASC 2007).

Education policies and practices may play a variety of roles in the underlying causes of conflicts. Restricted educational opportunities (not enough education) deepen poverty and worsen insecurity. Unequal access to educational opportunities fuels grievances and a sense of injustice. Education of bad quality can be highly divisive, particularly if decisions about curriculum content, textbooks or language of instruction exclude or allow vilification of some social groups, and if education reinforces messages that violence is an acceptable solution to personal, social or political problems (UNESCO 2011: 160-171; Østby and Urdal 2011; Bush and Saltarelli 2000). A challenge for education providers in emergencies is to avoid such errors and to act to reinforce peace and social cohesion.

Yet emergencies can also open up opportunities for education system reform. As Mary Joy Pigozzi noted in an influential UNICEF paper in the 1990s, ‘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’ (Pigozzi, 1999: 4). Recent research has demonstrated the conditions under which such positive change can indeed be fostered during emergencies (Nicolai 2009).

### **Why education in emergencies matters**

For those working in education in emergencies, the fact that 2011’s *EFA Global Monitoring Report* was devoted to education in armed conflict was welcome if overdue recognition of the fact that countries undergoing armed conflict are ‘among the farthest from reaching the Education for All goals, yet their educational challenges go largely unreported’ (UNESCO 2011: 2).

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<sup>3</sup> For an excellent and detailed summary of those effects, see UNESCO 2011: 132-159.

Twenty-eight million of the world's 61 million out-of-school primary-school-aged children live in conflict-affected poor countries (UNSG 2012: 6; GPE 2012; UNESCO 2011: 132). Violent conflict harms educational provision and attainment profoundly. Not only are children in conflict-affected countries disproportionately unable to enrol in primary school; their completion, secondary enrolment, literacy and mortality rates are much worse than in other countries. These effects are observed with even relatively minor conflict shocks and most severely impact girls, in part because of the widespread incidence and severity of sexual violence that accompanies war (Justino 2010; UNESCO 2011: 132-133).

The nature of armed conflict has changed in the past century. Wars are now overwhelmingly internal to nations, though foreign intervention plays a role in many such conflicts and they frequently spill across borders. Armed forces are increasingly recruited and deployed by non-state actors. Civilian populations are deliberately targeted. Most conflicts are very long lasting: UNHCR reported that at the end of 2011, almost three-quarters of the refugees it was protecting and assisting were living in protracted situations, i.e. of greater than five years' duration – 7.1 million people in 26 countries (UNHCR 2012: 12). These facts have profound implications for the approach to be adopted towards provision of education. Short-term humanitarian expedients, and the short-term funding that accompanies them, are inadequate if the real educational needs of conflict-affected children are to be met.

Disasters such as earthquakes, floods and severe storms damage education systems, with intense local disruption but also often with harmful effects upon large areas of a country, and across borders. Pakistan's catastrophic experiences of earthquake in 2005 and flooding in 2010 and the Indian Ocean tsunami of 2004 illustrate this forcibly. Disasters tend to strike and harm conflict-affected areas disproportionately, exacerbating the vulnerability of countries already harmed by conflict (Kostner and Meutia 2011).

Whatever post-2015 development and education-specific goals are agreed upon, if they are to be truly comprehensive, the education of children suffering through the effects of armed conflict and disasters must be prioritised. This is not an easy challenge to meet, as the disruption, violence and political sensitivity of emergencies does not make them 'low-hanging fruit' for providing access to quality education. But the difficulty of the task is no excuse for inaction or delay.

With education competing for post-MDG attention with other service sectors, and with strong competition among sub-sectors of education for post-EFA priority, what is the overwhelming importance, the comparative advantage, of focussing attention on provision of education in emergencies?

Above all, states and agencies have a humanitarian imperative. In emergencies, education saves lives and education is a major factor in the protection of children, if properly delivered (Winthrop and Kirk 2008: 639-642; Wargo 2010:

29-32; IASC 2007: 148-156).<sup>4</sup> Children and adolescents who are not in school are at greater risk of violent attack and rape, and of recruitment into fighting forces, prostitution and life-threatening, often criminal activities. During war and displacement, formal and non-formal education provide opportunities to learn life-saving information and survival skills, such as landmine awareness, protection from sexual abuse and avoidance of HIV infection. In emergencies, education is a powerful tool against the pathologies that kill both immediately and later down the line, such as infant mortality and mother-to-child HIV and AIDS transmission.

Education not only saves lives in emergencies, it also sustains life by giving children a sense of the restoration of normality, familiar routine and hope for the future, all of which are vital for mitigating the psychosocial impact of violence and displacement for individuals and whole communities (IIEP-UNESCO 2010: Ch. 3.5). Good quality education provided during wartime can counter the underlying causes of violence, by fostering values of inclusion, tolerance, human rights and conflict resolution (Sinclair 2004; EAA 2012). This can do more than patch up the damage caused by conflict; it can help with long-term processes of peace-building and strengthening social cohesion (Nicolai 2009: 85-87; Novelli and Smith 2011: 28-32).

Education has enormous value for its own sake and all children and young people, including those affected by conflict, have the right to receive an education. However, education is also needed in emergency settings to prepare societies for eventual post-conflict or post-disaster reconstruction and social and economic development. Balanced development with economic growth requires that young people of all social, ethnic, religious and political backgrounds are equipped with literacy, numeracy and basic information technology and vocational skills to contribute to rebuilding of national economies. This must include those affected by emergencies. Without the social capital constructed by strong education, a country or region may remain dependent on the international community during and for some time after an emergency. Young people also need up-to-date skills to earn a living in the informal economies that spring up during wartime.

However, formal education, supplemented by skills training, is insufficient to meet the needs of children and young people affected by conflict. The *World Development Report 2013* (World Bank 2012) emphasizes the crucial importance of job creation in the wake of the global economic crisis of recent years. The latest *EFA Global Monitoring Report* (UNESCO 2012) makes the case that governments and agencies must invest heavily in skills development, but does not adequately address the frustration of youth who complete education and training and then find no work. Marc Sommers (2012) movingly details the anxiety experienced by youth in post-conflict Rwanda, who, despite access to

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<sup>4</sup> Schooling is not automatically protective. State or non-state authorities must ensure that education facilities, personnel and students are safe from attack. Teachers' conduct must be subject to agreed codes of conduct and monitored. School administrators must enact policies to prevent bullying, abuse and exploitation, and enforce them.

reasonably high levels of education and training, cannot earn enough money to purchase land and build a house that will allow them to marry and achieve full adulthood within the expectations of their society. Provision of education and training in emergency settings without investment in job and enterprise creation will fail to meet the deepest needs of conflict-affected youth.

In launching his *Education First* initiative in September 2012, the UN Secretary-General, Ban Ki-moon, strongly endorsed the importance of education in conflict and disaster settings: “Growing up in the Republic of Korea as it recovered from war, I had few school supplies and studied in the open air. People today often ask about my country’s transformation from poverty to prosperity. Without hesitation, I answer that education was the key. In almost all my visits to areas ravaged by war and disaster, the plea of survivors is the same: ‘Education first.’ Education helps to re-establish normalcy for traumatized children and sets the stage for lasting stability. *Education First* aims to raise the political profile of education, strengthen the global movement to achieve access to quality education and generate additional and sufficient funding through sustained advocacy efforts. Many governments, NGOs and all relevant UN agencies support it (<http://www.globaleducationfirst.org/289.htm>).

The Global Partnership for Education (GPE), comprised of 46 developing countries, and more than 30 bilateral, regional, and international agencies, development banks, the private sector, teachers, local and global civil society groups, has issued *Education Cannot Wait: A Call to Action by Global Leaders to Help Children in Crisis Countries*, which echoes and supports the Secretary-General’s prioritization of quality education in emergencies. The *Call to Action* is specifically endorsed by many UN member states, UN agencies and international NGOs (GPE 2012a, 2012b).

Speaking in New York on 24 September 2012, Gordon Brown, recently appointed as UN Special Envoy on Global Education, cited his recent experience in South Sudan: ‘When I talked to [families] about what they wanted most for their children, it was not shelter, although they needed it; not security, although they required it; not food, although they desperately wanted it; it was education for their children.’

The experience of a Sudanese refugee woman who fled from Darfur to Chad in 2004 conveys the importance of education to those affected by emergencies:

*‘We had to leave behind all of our possessions. The only thing we could bring with us is what we have in our heads, what we have been taught – our education. Education is the only thing that cannot be taken from us.’*

(Women’s Refugee Commission, cited in Perlman Robinson 2011: 1)

(<http://www.globaleducationfirst.org/685.htm>)

On 3 September 2012, Dr. Rowan Williams, the Archbishop of Canterbury, hosted a conference on Education for Children Affected by Armed Conflict. At that

conference, Gordon Brown said, 'Education opens a sustainable path to strengthen conflict-affected economies, by giving children opportunities and hope for the future.' Mr. Brown urged the need for 'drastic action' and more investment in education if there is to be any chance of meeting the Millennium Development Goals in 2015. The Archbishop stated, 'This is an issue which takes us to the heart of some of the most disturbing and shocking elements in international life because in recent years, perhaps more than ever, we have seen the disruption of children's education not only as one of the side effects of conflict but quite often as a deliberate tool of terror.'

<http://www.archbishopofcanterbury.org/articles.php/2609/archbishop-we-must-locate-education-at-the-very-heart-of-the-humanitarian-agenda>).

A security-related argument may be advanced in favour of provision of quality education in emergencies. Poor countries can reduce the potential for conflict by increasing of educational opportunities for young people. Barakat and Urdal (2009) found that strengthening female education is likely to have a mitigating effect on conflict even though women and girls with low education do not typically directly engage in violence. Children and young people affected by war and disasters are often members of social groups on the fault lines of their societies. Giving such children and young people a chance for an education reduces the likelihood that they will constitute a lost, disaffected and angry generation, who turn more readily to violence to satisfy their needs and sense of grievance. (Urdal 2011; Østby and Urdal 2011; Collier and Hoeffler 2004).

However, this line of argument needs careful nuancing to avoid blaming youth for the viciousness of manipulative politicians. Only a small minority of war-affected children and youth may resort to armed violence to redress perceived wrongs; and many terrorists emerge from educated milieux in their societies. So denying education to those suffering the consequences of war does not automatically lead to more war; and providing education is not enough to undercut recruitment into armed groups or terrorism. Advocates for education in emergencies must pass the message that education and skills training are essential but not sufficient, without accompanying support to job creation and enterprise development. Nevertheless there is an undeniable connection between the loss of hope for a better future among young people that education, well delivered, can give, and the intensification of violence in many low- and middle-income countries (UNESCO 2011: 164-165).

### **Unusual, often threatening, institutional arrangements**

Education in emergencies takes place in institutional contexts that are unlike those that usually apply in stable, peaceful settings. If there is forced internal displacement, the role of the national Ministry of Education (MoE) in the delivery of education services may be minimal for IDPs, many of whom live in areas outside the government's effective territorial control. UNICEF and NGOs, national and international, often play a far more active role.

In 2005, the United Nations undertook a major reform of humanitarian response

aimed at improving the effectiveness of that response by ensuring greater predictability, accountability and partnership. The humanitarian reform process has been an attempt by the international humanitarian community to reach more beneficiaries, with more comprehensive needs-based relief and protection, in a more effective, timely and accountable manner. A major part of the process has been to create 'clusters' of key institutional actors for each important technical sector involved in response to emergencies.

In 2006, the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) endorsed the application of the cluster approach to the education sector. At the global level, UNICEF and the International Save the Children Alliance jointly lead the Education Cluster, the only global cluster to be co-led by the UN and an NGO. When an emergency occurs in a country, under certain circumstances,<sup>5</sup> the UN humanitarian system will create an Education Cluster, to coordinate UN and international NGO support to the education of IDPs in natural disasters and conflict emergencies. As of December 2011, 43 countries had established Education Clusters, of which 35 were active and 8 'dormant'.

(<http://onerresponse.info/GlobalClusters/Education/Pages/default.aspx>).

UNHCR usually coordinates the education of refugees, in support of the government of the country of asylum, often with the technical engagement of national and international NGOs and UNICEF (UNHCR 2012; Dryden-Peterson 2011). The national Ministry of Education of the asylum country may or may not be involved, depending on the political and military circumstances. National educational planners and managers may struggle to cope with such unusual institutional arrangements.

A frequent characteristic of conflict-related emergencies is the militarisation or 'securitisation' of responsibility for education. Often the national armed forces or a security-related ministry, such as Interior or Police, and, in parts of a country, the state's armed opponents, will take direct responsibility for education, sometimes deliberately marginalizing the national MoE and UN agencies. This may be the case with the education of refugees as well as of IDPs and non-migrant populations. It occurs because of the desire of the state (or its opponents) to control populations and the transmission of knowledge, ideas and values to children, as part of a wider strategy of seeking political and military dominance. The effects on the quality of education and the safety and welfare of children have been very serious in most places where this occurs.

An increasingly worrying trend is for education to be drawn into and viewed as a tool of wider counter-terrorism and counter-insurgency geopolitical strategies of rich nations, which seek to 'win hearts and minds' by providing education to children in conflict-affected fragile states. This process runs the risk of associating efforts of governments, the UN and NGOs to provide education in emergencies with particular political and security agendas. That in turn can lead

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<sup>5</sup> For details see

<http://onerresponse.info/Coordination/ClusterApproach/Pages/Policy%20and%20Guidance.aspx>.

communities to reject such efforts and can even provoke attacks on education and education workers (Novelli 2011; O'Malley 2010: 77-79).

Deliberate attacks on education, any intentional threat or use of force against students, educators, and education institutions, are widely perpetrated during wartime (O'Malley 2010; UNESCO 2010). Some nation states and the international community are beginning to work urgently to strengthen the protection of education from armed attack. This involves enhanced prevention of attacks on education, effective response to attacks often through strengthening community resilience and capacity, better monitoring and reporting, stronger international norms and standards, and increased accountability (Hausler, Urban and McCorquodale 2012). A Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack (GCPEA), founded in 2010, is providing valuable research, information, advocacy and networking in this area ([www.protectingeducation.org](http://www.protectingeducation.org)).

During armed conflict, national resources for education may dry up or disappear. To supplement meagre government sources, funding of education in conflict emergencies typically comes from humanitarian appeals, where education is woefully under-prioritised compared to other technical and service sectors, such as food, water, shelter and protection, receiving only 2 per cent of all humanitarian funding. This is largely due to donors' perceptions of education as a long-term development process, rather than a short-term humanitarian solution to acute needs (UNESCO 2011: 172-175; Brannelly, Ndaruhutse and Rigaud 2009: 68-71). In making such assumptions, donors fail to understand the significant life- and hope-sustaining value of education during conflict, described in the previous section of this paper.

### **Policy dilemmas**

Achievement of any future post-2015 goals set for the education and skills sectors will require much greater investment in finding solutions to crucial educational policy dilemmas that arise during conflict, disasters and forced displacement. These include teacher supply, contractual status and compensation; quality of teaching and learning and measurement of quality; support to the psychosocial needs of both learners and teachers; decisions about curriculum that respond to needs generated by war, including conflict prevention, conflict resolution, HIV and AIDS awareness and awareness-raising about landmines and unexploded ordinance; decisions about language of instruction; supply of textbooks and school materials; certification of the learning attainments of refugee and IDP students; inclusive access to education for learners of all backgrounds – national, ethnic, religious, social and economic – as well as for the disabled; balancing investment in early childhood education, primary, secondary and post-secondary education; provision of skills development for youth, through TVET and informal or alternative education; catch-up and second-chance programmes to make up for time lost from school; dealing with gender dimensions of education in emergencies, including gender-based violence and the specific educational needs of both girls and boys; and the protection of education from armed attack.

There is not space to discuss all these matters in detail; some thoughts on a few of these challenges follow.

### *Curriculum choices*

UNESCO defines curriculum as, ‘the organisation of learning experiences [to produce] desired learning outcomes.’ Curriculum is a broad concept, encompassing ‘educational philosophy, values, aims and objectives, organisational structures, teaching and learning materials and methods, student experiences, assessment, and learning outcomes.’ (Tawil and Harley 2004: 17)

Curriculum is a process, with three interrelated meanings:

- The *official* curriculum, contained in documents, such as ministerial decrees, frameworks, subject syllabi, textbooks and instructional materials
- The *real* curriculum: what is actually taught and learned and how learning takes place, including the school environment
- The *hidden* curriculum: behaviour and attitudes of teachers; use of language and other interactions in the classroom; assessment practices

In conflict and disaster settings, choices about curriculum are deeply politically sensitive, vitally important and require careful and genuine consultation with all stakeholders, notably affected communities (including IDPs and refugees), children and youth, civil society organisations, and authorities of the countries affected, to the extent possible. Curriculum choice is almost always contested terrain. Who decides and how decisions are reached are as important as what is decided. Decisions taken about curriculum are widely believed to affect the construction or reconstruction of communal and national identities. They must take into account deep processes of community reflection upon the meaning of citizenship, collective memory and shared destiny (IIEP-UNESCO 2010: Ch. 4.1; Pingel 2010: 125-127; INEE 2010a: 1-18; Tawil and Harley 2004: 17-27).

In an IDP, refugee or returnee context, the dynamics of three crucial social and political processes add pressure to curriculum choices in emergencies (Tawil and Harley 2004: 26).

- The role of curriculum as a contributing factor to violent conflict in the past
- The role of curriculum in dealing with the legacy of violent conflict
- The role of curriculum in preventing future violent conflict

These are great challenges facing technical education staff, whether of MoEs or of UN agencies and NGOs. The political implications are weighty and often bring

enormous pressures upon educationists. But they must be faced, because curriculum decisions taken early in emergencies often lay the foundation, sound or weak, for future decision-making. There is a risk that bad decisions about curriculum, taken without adequate consultation, may become causes of heightened tension within communities and with government authorities.

### *Secondary education*

One of the most vexed problems in education in emergencies has been an over-emphasis on access to primary education, to the neglect of secondary schooling and of assuring quality of education. Recent research in comparatively peaceful development contexts is stressing the importance of acquisition of reading and writing skills in early grades, giving pupils a greater chance of understanding their lessons and thus completing primary schooling (Perlman Robinson 2011). A similar line of reasoning applies to the relatively neglected secondary education sub-sector. Failing to fund secondary education for refugees and IDPs leads to dieback in primary enrolment and completion. Holding open the possibility of secondary schooling gives students hope and motivation to succeed in primary.

Secondary education is essential for achievement of full primary completion, as in conflict situations teachers must be recruited from among secondary graduates. Those affected by conflict often come from poor rural communities in which such secondary graduates are few in number. Secondary education, especially for girls and young women, is vital to diminish heavy teacher turnover, which weakens quality. It is important that teachers recruited during emergencies stay with the profession and with their own communities once the conflict ends. Educating those affected by the conflict to secondary level and engaging them to teach children in their communities increases that likelihood. Similarly, secondary education of conflict-affected communities can prepare other professional groups essential to recovery and reconstruction, including nurses and technicians.

In their study of the causes of civil wars, Collier and Hoeffler (2004: 581) noted that, 'If the enrolment rate for secondary schooling is ten percentage points higher than the average the risk of war is reduced by about two percentage points (a decline in the risk from 10.5% to 8.6%).' Urdal (2011: 10) nuances this, noting that 'education does not seem to have a pacifying effect on large youth cohorts in highly agrarian societies.' However, Barakat and Urdal (2009) note that 'there is no indication that rapid expansions in secondary or in tertiary education increase conflict potential by leading to an over-supply of educated youth.'

### *Vocational education and training*

Despite these benefits of secondary schooling, conflict-affected areas need balanced (though not necessarily equal) investments across all sub-sectors. Investing in the limited production of mid-level technical and academic skills through formal institutions, combined with emphasis on livelihood-related skills,

can be more effective in the short and medium term than pushing for universal secondary schooling.

Thorough study of local and regional labour markets is necessary before launching vocational training programmes. Micro-level analysis and design is needed to avoid saturating labour markets with too many graduates of particular vocational programmes. In war zones and refugee and IDP settings, economies are so disrupted, dynamic and distorted that it is very difficult to plan for long-term investments in formal TVET.

A key to understanding the place of vocational and skills training in emergencies is to distinguish between measures intended to *create* livelihoods and those intended to *supplement* them. The latter is a more sound approach in conflict settings for two reasons: (i) The purchasing power of poor, displaced communities can rarely sustain the graduates of large-scale TVET programmes and institutions in full-time work; and (ii) The short-term, humanitarian funding sources available during emergencies certainly cannot sustain the long-term investment needed to create and maintain such institutions. It is much more effective to acknowledge that vocational training should aim to help people supplement the incomes that they derive from other sources, whether agriculture, small marketing activities or humanitarian assistance. Supporting small-scale and inexpensive micro-apprenticeship schemes avoids the job market saturation that so often results from overly ambitious or inappropriate vocational education programmes. Given the duration of emergencies, implementers must seek long-term sources of funding for vocational education designed to supplement incomes, and seek to prevent the typically high turnover of staff who manage them.

One of the best ways to equip conflict-affected young people to increase their employability and to supplement their incomes is to ensure that they are literate in their own language and, if possible, an international language of business, such as English, French, Portuguese or Spanish, depending on their location. Adding to this basic numeracy, basic IT skills, and some entrepreneurship training means that conflict-affected young people can have a chance to make a bit of money on the side, which lifts their quality of life and their consumption. This in turn can bring economic gain to whole communities (Lazarte Hoyle 2012: 87-100).

#### *Teacher supply and management*

The single most important factor in assuring the quality of learning in emergencies is the regular availability of well-trained, motivated teachers, who know the content of their courses and engage their classes with learner-focused teaching methodologies. Decisions taken about teacher supply early in an emergency can have effects on the future of the teaching force lasting long after the conflict. Those decisions cover identification of needs for different categories of teachers, qualifications, recruitment, gender balance, contractual status, compensation and benefits (monetary and non-monetary), working conditions, teacher trade unions, codes of conduct, pre-service and in-service training,

certification, retention, supervision, evaluation of impact and physical protection of teachers.

In the 1990s and early 2000s, bad decisions on some of these matters, notably on contractual status and compensation, had disastrous effects during post-conflict reconstruction in several countries, including the loss of tens of thousands of experienced teachers from the profession and loss of momentum in the achievement of EFA. These experiences provoked deep reflection and broad consultation among and between staff of ministries of education, UN agencies and NGOs. While some mistakes continue to be repeated, a growing body of research evidence and experience is beginning to bear fruit in guidance for sound planning and management of a teaching force during emergencies (Dolan *et al.* 2012; IIEP-UNESCO 2010: Ch. 3.1 – 3.4; INEE 2010a; INEE 2010c: 94-103; INEE 2009).

### **An in-depth example of the challenges facing education in emergencies: Certification of refugee and IDP pupils' learning attainments**

The obstacles that arise to certification of refugee and IDP learning attainments illustrate the technical intricacy and political complexity of the institutional challenges that confront all educational provision during emergencies. I will discuss certification as an example of a nuanced analytical approach that needs to be applied to planning, policy and implementation processes throughout the field of education in emergencies.

The right to certification of learning is an essential part of the right to education, an issue that has been explicitly addressed in education programming only relatively recently (Kirk 2009). For refugee and IDP pupils and their parents, the lack of recognition of their learning is one of the most frequently expressed frustrations and a major obstacle to educational and economic advancement. Proper accreditation, certification and validation procedures increase the economic and social contribution of IDPs, refugees and returnees to their respective communities. For the comparatively small numbers of refugees who are allowed permanently to remain in their countries of asylum (Fielden 2008), certification is a powerful tool for successful social and economic integration. Knowing that their studies will be recognized gives students hope for the future, increases their motivation to continue their education and reinforces resilience and self-reliance.

Certification should not be restricted to formal school programmes. It should be provided for vocational training, accelerated learning and catch-up classes, life skills programmes, including human rights and peace education, and non-formal learning extended to special groups, such as former child soldiers and the disabled.

A number of terms are used in referring to certification. *Accreditation* is a mark of quality that publicly attests the worth of an education programme or curriculum. It confers official endorsement of that programme, usually by a

government Ministry of Education. *Assessment* is a process by which learners' attainments are evaluated, often by formal examinations. *Certification*, strictly speaking, is proof of successful completion of a learning programme by a learner. *Validation* is a process by which the authenticity of the certification is ascertained. *Recognition* is the acceptance by an outside party of a certificate's worth and authenticity.

There are several technical issues frequently cited by MoEs as justification for delaying or refusing to recognise refugees' and returnees' qualifications. The *curriculum* followed by the students is usually different from that of the MoE of the jurisdiction in which the students wish to have their studies recognised. This may include differences of syllabus subjects, subject content, pedagogical methods and length of school cycles. *Teacher training and teacher certification* processes of the refugee teachers are different from those of the MoE of the jurisdiction in which the students wish to have their studies recognised. *Validation* of the authenticity of certificates presented by students poses problems. *Comparability* of certificates issued by many different authorities is very difficult – how can equivalences be established? Ministry personnel are often unable to read or understand the *language* of certificates presented and the detailed content of programmes completed. During conflict and flight, the certificates previously earned by IDPs, refugees and returnees may have been *lost or destroyed*. As war and flight do not respect academic schedules, ministry officials may have difficulty determining how to certify *incomplete academic years*. In addition, parents and pupils themselves may not be clear about how their own standard of attainment compares with that of pupils in the education system into which they are seeking entry. This can complicate the decision-making process.

Specific technical obstacles to certification arise around the *administration of examinations*, which are usually the basis on which certificates are issued. These may include: *rigidity of rules* on nationality and maximum age of candidates, on subject pre-requisites, on the possibility of accumulating subject examination certificates over several years and on invigilation of examinations by national MoE officials; *rigidity of examination timetables*, which results in exclusion of displaced students, who are unable to sit exams in particular places at particular times; *security* – both physical security for the holding of examinations and security of the examination papers, to avoid premature leaks; *cost and time* of examination administration; and imposition of *examination fees* for impoverished students.

The technical issues referred to above may be complicated by political challenges. These may include: *Authority to certify* – Ministries tend to guard jealously their authority to certify, validate and recognise qualifications. *National sovereignty* – Ministries may feel that they are protecting a sovereign prerogative of their national government by insisting on their own accreditation and certification processes and refusing to recognise refugees' qualifications. *Military, ideological or other political opposition* – IDPs, refugees or returnees may have been living in areas under control of political groupings opposed to the government that the MoE serves. Such political groupings may even have been

at war with the government. In these circumstances, Ministry officials may find it difficult to assist people rightly or wrongly perceived as linked with their government's opponents. *Funding and staffing* – Dedication of ministerial staff time to certification, validation and recognition of refugees' attainments can be costly. MoEs may not have sufficient budgetary allocations for the purpose. Donors may not prioritise this activity sufficiently highly, or at all, in negotiations over budgetary support. *Power and corruption* – In many cases, exercising the authority to recognise refugees' or returnees' studies confers real personal power over other people. This power can be abused, with recognition of studies becoming a commodity for sale, for money or for various services, including sexual exploitation.

Missing or unrecognized identity documents must not prevent school entry, progression and formal evaluation. To facilitate validation, documents should be provided as soon as possible after the completion of a learning programme, and if relevant, in more than one language. As a bare minimum, UNHCR, UNICEF or their implementing partners may issue official certificates of completion from their own organizations, noting the specifics of the course and information identifying the participant.

To tackle all these challenges, governments, UN agencies and NGOs must do everything in their power to:

- Secure recognition of refugees' and IDPs' prior learning attainments, for entry into national schools of the country or area of asylum.
- Secure accreditation for refugee and IDP education programmes with the MoE of country or area of origin, and of asylum.
- Secure certification of refugee and IDP students' examination results or diplomas, which is recognized by the MoE of both country of origin and country of asylum.

To accomplish those goals, MoEs may develop clear policy guidance and procedures for the equivalency of curricula, programmes and examinations, where displaced students may be integrating or reintegrating education systems. Implementation of such policy guidance and procedures at local levels can eliminate potentially exploitative, ad hoc decision-making by individual schools and authorities. Regional and cross-border policies and mechanisms, such as examination and syllabus boards and conventions, may be elaborated to ensure a level of coherence and consistency for refugee and returning populations on the move. Inclusion of affected communities, refugee teachers and education experts in policy development related to accreditation and certification enhances the usefulness of these processes. Donors, the UN and NGOs should provide technical and capacity building support as needed to MoEs supporting refugee children, to facilitate planning and policy development around certification. Tools and instruments such as 'certification supports,' grade conversion charts, syllabus comparisons, etc., are needed to ensure the smooth transition of students from and into different education systems (Kirk 2009).

## Commitments

Although it has taken a long time to achieve, there is growing evidence of high-level policy commitments by governments and key agencies to the principle that education must be part of every humanitarian response and that those commitments are based on recognition of the life-saving and life-sustaining value of education in emergencies.

The past twelve years have been marked by a rapid multiplication of UN and NGO actors working in support of states to provide education in emergencies. Many international NGOs have developed deep and broad expertise in that field, contributing enormously to influential policy dialogues involving governments, capacity development of national partner agencies and implementation of high professional standards.

An effective and influential professional network of emergency educators, the Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE – [www.ineesite.org](http://www.ineesite.org)), has advocated powerfully for education to be a core element of humanitarian response in every emergency. INEE member organizations collaboratively developed the INEE *Minimum Standards for Education: Preparedness, Response, Recovery*. (INEE 2010c), which have become the normative framework for work in education in emergencies throughout the world. INEE has fostered inter-agency cooperation in developing and using specific tools for assessment, planning, implementation, information management and evaluation for the field. A side effect of these efforts has been the generation of a passionately committed corps of over 7,500 professional emergency educators worldwide, a community of practice that is both tightly bound by shared values concerning education in emergencies and outward looking, seeking to make connections with other communities that work for the well-being of children and the advancement of education of those in the hardest of circumstances.

There has been an explosion of research efforts on this subject by universities, research institutes, UN agencies and NGOs, with reasonably generous funding by donors. Interdisciplinary research has been published on a range of themes highly relevant to effective planning and management of educational response in emergencies. Some of those themes have included work on the links between provision of education and child protection in emergencies, the protection of education from armed attack, the role of education in conflict risk reduction and disaster risk reduction, meeting psychosocial needs through education, the special educational needs of youth in conflict, the education of refugees and internally displaced persons, and links between education and state fragility. These research efforts are beginning to yield evidence to provide bases for sound policy and practice in a relatively new field of humanitarian and educational endeavour. A rich range of assessment, planning, management, monitoring and evaluation tools for education in emergencies has been developed and is being constantly updated (<http://toolkit.ineesite.org/toolkit/Home.php>). Similarly, many tools and resources are available for skills development targeting

livelihoods for youth (<http://www.ilo.org/skills/areas/skills-for-youth-employment/lang--en/index.htm>).

A number of provisions of international law convey the right to education in emergencies (for a detailed listing and discussion, see Hyll-Larsen 2010 and Perlman Robinson 2006). The humanitarian system has responded to the need for strengthened operational coordination and accountability through the establishment of the global humanitarian Education Cluster and multiple national clusters. While funding for education in emergencies is still inadequate, it has expanded considerably in recent years. A culmination of many years of effective advocacy came on 9 July 2010, with the passage of a UN General Assembly resolution that formalized a global commitment to the principle that education must be a core feature of humanitarian response in every emergency (UN GA 2010).

In addition to those commitments under international law, the UN GA resolution of 9 July 2010, the creation of the IASC Education Cluster and the UNSG's *Education First* initiative, several governments have made policy commitments of varying degrees of firmness to the principle that education will always be part of humanitarian response that they support (Brannelly, Ndaruhutse and Rigaud, 2009: 32-43).

Donor government ministries have tended to separate short-term humanitarian programming from long-term development efforts, with different staff and funding sources, partly out of rivalry between departments over budget allocations and posts, but partly due to a fundamentally misguided conception of a dichotomy between development and relief. Many governments of war-affected countries perpetuate this artificial division of responsibility for internal political and financial reasons. The United Nations agencies and many international NGOs have followed the donors' lead, as their funding depends so heavily on the contributions of the 30 or so major rich nations. Yet there has been a slowly growing recognition that emergency provision of education must take into account the changing nature of armed conflict referred to earlier in this paper, including widespread internal conflicts, deliberate targeting of civilian populations, with cross-border spillover effects and the protracted duration of many conflicts. The shift of thinking includes an acknowledgement that humanitarian relief and development are not discrete processes. Rather development is the fundamental process that includes long periods of violent conflict and recovery from them. Many governments and agencies also recognize that supporting education in conflict-affected and fragile states requires a variety of aid modalities at different phases of conflict and recovery (Brannelly, Ndaruhutse and Rigaud 2009; UNESCO 2011: 172-183, 255-257; INEE 2010*b*; Turrent 2011).

A growing conviction is emerging that national and sub-national education policy formulation and planning processes must be conflict-sensitive, i.e. attuned to diagnosing the influence of education on conflict and of conflict on education and taking actions to remedy those effects. It is not enough to prepare for conflict emergencies and to respond effectively. Education systems and personnel can

contribute to conflict prevention, conflict risk reduction and peace-building. Tools, techniques and capacity-development initiatives are becoming available to enable education sector staff to make these things possible (IIEP-UNESCO 2011; Sigsgaard 2012). Similar processes are occurring with disaster risk reduction and disaster-sensitive planning in the education sector (Global Education Cluster n.d.; see also INEE's comprehensive annotated list of resources in its Toolkit: <http://toolkit.ineesite.org/toolkit/Toolkit.php?PostID=1054>).

There is encouraging evidence that the international community is moving beyond vague statements about the importance of education in emergencies to specific policy commitments from member states. One of the ten key actions enjoined by the UN Secretary-General's *Education First* campaign is to 'sustain education in humanitarian crises, especially conflict.' That entails the following actions (UNSG 2012: 24):

1. 'Enforce the protection of children, teachers and schools during armed conflict.
2. 'Ensure national education policies are in place to secure the continuity of children's education during humanitarian emergencies.
3. 'Make education a central pillar of every humanitarian response – ensuring education is at least 4% (up from 2%) of the overall humanitarian budget.'

With similar emphasis, the Global Campaign for Education's (2012) *Education Cannot Wait* call to action spells out 16 concrete actions to be taken by governments and agencies, organised under three main headings:

1. 'Increase levels of humanitarian aid to education and improve its delivery mechanisms.
2. 'Keep education safe from attacks.
3. 'Integrate emergency prevention, preparedness, response and recovery in education sector plans and budgets.'

These are explicit echoes of the concerns of the many governments, NGOs and UN agencies that have been articulated and amplified by INEE for over a decade. Despite the excellent efforts of INEE, the global education sector lobby remains relatively weak and inward looking. As noted earlier, the Global Partnership for Education and the UN Secretary General have recently endorsed the vital importance of educational provision in conflict, but this recognition has been a long while coming. Even in the comparatively narrow field of education in emergencies, there have been few efforts to build inter-sectoral alliances, for example with advocates for the health and livelihoods sectors. The humanitarian Cluster system has not yet generated a flowering of inter-sectoral cooperation, which might strengthen education's place within the prioritisation of humanitarian funding. The links and alliances are far stronger with the child

protection lobby. In addition to INEE, other professional networks, such as the Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack (GCPEA – [www.protectingeducation.org](http://www.protectingeducation.org)) and the Child Protection in Crisis Network (CPC – [www.cpcnetwork.org](http://www.cpcnetwork.org)), strongly support the provision of high quality education in conflict emergencies, from a protection perspective. INEE is well placed and needs to lead the education in emergencies community into closer advocacy partnerships with networks and advocates in other sectors, especially health, gender and livelihoods, which will enhance the effectiveness of all concerned. The struggle for post-2015 policy prominence and serious funding does not have to be a zero-sum game between rival sector lobbies.

With the post-2015, post-MDG and post-EFA agendas being determined now, the education, development and humanitarian communities have the highest moral imperative to support education in emergencies, politically, technically and with adequate funding.

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