

EDUCATION CANNOT WAIT: PLAN, PRIORITIZE, AND PROTECT!

Achieving Universal Primary Education: Issues to Consider¹

Humanitarian crises pose critical challenges to achieving universal primary education. In responding to armed conflict and natural disaster, education is frequently overlooked despite being essential to the rehabilitation of both individuals and communities. In your discussions of the bottlenecks and solutions to accelerating progress towards achieving MDG 2, please consider the following:

Is education PRIORITIZED?

Education currently receives only 2% of humanitarian funding, even though communities demand continued access to it during crises, and it provides a foundation for economic recovery and growth following conflict and disaster. In your country:

- Have there been any challenges in securing a focus on education in crisis-affected areas within donor and government policy?
- If applicable, what are the main barriers to obtaining humanitarian funding for education?
- Are there non-humanitarian funding sources that could be used or are used to fund education in crisis situations? (i.e. pooled funding, disasters budget, etc.)

Are children, teachers, and education facilities PROTECTED?

Schools are often intentionally bombed, burned, and destroyed in situations of armed conflict and teachers and students are shot, maimed, and raped. This is because schools are viewed as vehicles of the state or are seen to spread “western” values, amongst many other reasons. Schools are also used by armed forces and armed groups for military purposes such as barracks, bases, and interrogation centers, making them targets of attack by opposition forces. In your country:

- Are attacks or military use of schools making it dangerous for children to go to school? Are parents reluctant to send their children to school for fear that they will be caught in the cross-fire or harassed by soldiers occupying schools?
- If so, what can be done to address this problem? Are measures to prevent and respond to attacks being implemented at the community level, or incorporated into project and policy planning including in education sector plans, development projects, and legislation?
- Has action been taken to designate schools as conflict-free areas or zones of peace? Are policies, legislation, military doctrine, or local protection measures implemented to limit the use of schools by armed forces and armed groups?

Is prevention, preparedness, and response incorporated into PLANNING?

Education sector plans frequently do not include activities to deter, mitigate, and respond to the effects of humanitarian crises, and to ensure that, in these situations, all children maintain their access to education that is protective and of good quality. This is despite evidence that for every \$1 spent on crises prevention (including education) \$7 is saved in recovery costs. In your country:

- What policies exist that are related to education affected by conflict and/or disaster?
- Has a conflict and/or disaster risk analysis been conducted for the education system? If yes, what are the main conflict and/or disaster related risks and impacts on the education system?
- Is the coordination mechanism for education one in which mutual learning and sharing of experience can take place, and where the Ministry of Education can exercise leadership? How well does this mechanism work in reducing the risks associated with conflict and/or disaster?
- Is there funding available as part of the overall budget framework in order to prepare for, mitigate, or respond to conflicts or disasters?
- Does the education management information system (EMIS) include any data that could be used for monitoring Conflict/Disaster Risk Reduction activities?

¹ These questions are suggested by the INEE Working Group on Education Cannot Wait Advocacy. The goal of the group is to ensure the success of Key Action 2 in the UN Global Education First Initiative: sustain education in humanitarian crises, especially conflict.