

Evidence and Learning: Strengthening crisis and risk-related data and institutional education information systems

Case Study – ABS development organization for woman and child In-depth Education Needs Assessment in Hajjah governorate

Brief description of practice and the key learning

The Assessment developed and implemented by Abs Organization for Women & Child (ADO) intends to identify the most important education needs at the level of infrastructure, education provision capacity, and learner well-being in the governorate of Hajjah – more specifically the districts of Mustaba and Abs.

This assessment – carried out from April 1, 2020 to May 15, 2020 - is considered the first step towards providing and adapted educational support for affected boys and girls in Hajjah governorate aimed at creating an effective, stimulating, safe and encouraging educational environment.

The assessment comprised of six different data collection tools and methodologies including:

- Secondary data Collection
- Key Informant Interview
- School assessment
- Focused group discussion (for children and youth, for parents and adult community and teachers)
- Rapid observation
- Classroom observation

The assessment developed by ADO targeted three main groups: i) Students; ii) Parents, authorities, marginalized communities; iii) Teachers. The information gathered aimed to provide a comprehensive understanding of the vulnerabilities of the school community – including educators, learners and their families- whilst defining the priority education needs in a participatory manner. Indeed, the information gathered by ADO ranged from school enrolment, student profile; number and status of teachers, risk factors in the schools and vicinity, drivers of school abandonment, structure rehabilitation and needs, as well as community perception and awareness of the importance of education, the benefits of public and personal hygiene, methods of preventing diseases such as the emerging corona virus, the children's need for psychological support sessions. These elements are all considered by ADO to be necessary information to plan for adapted EiE and monitor progress and resilience building.

What challenges does the practice/initiative address and why was the change needed?

The conflict in Yemen has resulted in more than 2,500 schools not operating, two thirds of them destroyed, 27% closed, 7% used for military purposes, and more than two million children are out of school. In addition to the damage that directly affected schools, three quarters of teachers in Yemen have not received their salaries for more than three years, which may threaten the education of 4.5 million Yemeni children.

Hajjah Governorate is one of the governorates directly affected by the ongoing conflict in Yemen because it is located on the contact lines between the two parties to the conflict there and many of its directorates

are within the conflict circle and its people left them to safer directorates, such as the Abs and Mustaba districts.

In the affected areas in Abs and Mustaba, it is estimated that more than 150 schools in Abs districts require urgent rehabilitation to ensure they are safe for girls and boys children to re-enter and resume learning.

What were you trying to achieve? How do the aims and objectives relate to improving the identification and monitoring of education needs and barriers in crisis-affected contexts and emergencies?

The assessment carried out by ADO aims to determine the educational needs of the targeted schools in Hajjah governorate - Abs and Mustaba districts – in terms of school infrastructure, teachers, students .

There is a set of considerations that were set in consultation with the Ed. Cluster and targeted community during the design of the assessment, specifically for defining the schools which were deemed most in need.

- Distance from conflict areas
- Proximity to displacement settlements
- Attendance of displaced students
- Relative density of students in these schools (displaced - residents) compared to other schools
- Expected impact of the intervention provided by ADO in terms of the expected increase in the number of students
- Obtainment of aid from other partners
- Need of infrastructural maintenance work
- Dropout rates from education in the communities surrounding the schools

Once the six target schools were identified, the assessment proceeded in further defining the programmatic needs of each school to tailor the provision of service to the priorities described by the respondents. More specifically, in direct consultation with the targeted communities, ADO investigated the following criteria:

- Type of rehabilitation works for the infrastructure required by schools
- Number and category of students inside the targeted schools (residents, displaced persons, male, female, and the disabled)
- Number of volunteer teachers who are not included in the emergency cash assistance provided by UNICEF to be included in the lists of those eligible for cash assistance
- Number of teachers to target within the training course activity and the teachers bag distribution activity.
- Number of actual classrooms that can be added based on the existing need.
- Perception on importance of education, as well as other issues such as child labor, early marriage, through Focus group discussion.
- Identify the level of community knowledge about the importance of hygiene and its effectiveness in preventing infectious diseases such as gastrointestinal diseases and the emerging corona virus, the need for psychological support sessions for affected children.

Did your practice meet the initial aims and objectives? What were the main results?

Through the collection of data from the different tools developed and rolled out by the assessment, ADO was able to select six schools that were deemed as being the most vulnerable. In a second moment, the analysis was complemented with the perceptions expressed through the Focus groups.

By doing so, the assessment provides a detailed profile for each school – accompanied by pictures and analytical tables – that describes:

1. number of resident and displaced families
2. the current school population (grade, sex, disability, displacement status)
3. Number and status of educators,
4. Specific risk factors (i.e. vicinity to displacement camps, school drop-out rate, average distance from residence),
5. status of school infrastructure (structure, WASH facilities, recreational spaces);
6. recommended intervention.

The information was then shared with the Ed. Cluster and the MoE through systematic reporting and consultation.

What stakeholders were involved? How did you ensure their involvement was participatory and collaborative?

ADO systematically coordinated with key institutional, international, and local stakeholders, including the Ministry of Education, NRC, ECW and the Ed. Cluster. This allowed ADO to build on the existing structures, coordination mechanisms.

ADO ensure that the Local Security authority was a primary stakeholder from the inception throughout the roll-out of the assessment. As a result of their participation in the process, the assessment teams obtained movement permits that allowed them to visit the targeted districts to conduct the monitoring and supervision field visits. In collaboration with the Supreme Council for the Management and Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and International Cooperation (Houthi authority) (SCAMSHA) and MOE, ADO conducted the Post Distribution Monitoring to measure and insure the quality of service.

Moreover, due to the collaboration with the MOE district office, ADO was able to reach out to and include educators in the process, thus understanding their perspective and ensuring their participation in the definition and implementation of the recommended actions.

How did the practice interact with and potentially strengthen the institutional education information systems in the context?

Through the consultation and participation of the Ministry of Education at district and governorate level throughout all phases of the assessment, and under guidance of sub-national education cluster, ADO revised and adapted the Ministry of Education District's school supervision and monitoring tool to ensure that this tool includes components of the EiE approach. At the moment of submission, this revised tool is currently in the process of being finalized and validated.

What challenges and barriers did you face and how did you change your approach to overcome these?

The assessment coincided with the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, and this in turn provoked the following challenges:

- The inability to quickly implement the field survey process for restoration, maintenance, teacher and student data due to the closure of all government facilities and the relative curfew imposed. ADO overcame this challenge by referring to community committees and establishing a call center for community leaders and teachers.
- The inability to fully implement the interview plan as initially envisaged. To overcome this, the members of community committees were divided, and door to door awareness raising efforts were carried out to inform households and ensure their participation in the exercise.
- The awareness- raising activities foreseen to be carried out among the communities had to be limited due to the imposed social distancing measures. To overcome this challenge, house-to-house awareness was prioritized.

What was the key learning from your practice? If you did it again, what would you do differently? What pointers would you give to help someone from another organization facing similar challenges?

- Ensure close coordination with local authority, community leaders and community representatives should be ensured to facilitate the identification and assessment of needs, as well as ownership of the recommended interventions and achieved results.
- During the phases of design and roll-out of the assessment it's advisable to ensure the diversity of Local authority to strength the support for the project, including the coordination with community representatives.
- Strengthen community participation, through developing the capacity of School Management Committees, Parent Teacher Associations (PTAs) and Student Committees/Councils in the areas of leadership and promotion of full and authentic participation of school staff, parents, and children in school governance mechanisms.

Submitted evidence

- Assessment Report