

## INEE Minimum Standards Case Study: Protecting Adolescents and Young Refugees Through Quality Education in Eastern Chad

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Organization:	RET - Refugee Education Trust
Location:	Eastern Chad

### Background and Context

Since 2003, the crisis in western Sudan has forced more than 250,000 people to cross the border and take refuge in eastern Chad where they settled in 12 refugee camps. Well before the crisis, eastern Chad was already engulfed in chronic poverty, underdevelopment and instability as a result of intra-community conflicts and cross-border militia raids. In the education sector, the Chadian government, UN agencies and nongovernmental organizations focused their interventions on primary education, construction of educational facilities in all camps, provision of educational kits to teachers and school kits to students, training of primary teachers, and teachers' incentives and compensation.

In December 2005, Refugee Education Trust (RET) started a post-primary education program aimed at protecting and empowering young Sudanese refugees (basic education for over-aged youth, formal and distance secondary education and language courses) and young people in the Chadian host communities (basic education for over-aged youth). The program provides basic education for over-aged youth, the accreditation of primary final examinations and secondary education, foreign languages courses, the acquisition of life skills, training in setting up and managing small businesses, as well as cultural and creative activities.

Again this year, more than 5,000 young people benefit directly from the RET education program in eastern Chad.

### Application

RET pays special attention to the INEE Minimum Standards in all phases of its education interventions in eastern Chad. The manual of the INEE Minimum Standards is a reference for all RET staff working in the field.

Below is a table describing how the standards are applied.

Domains	Standards	Application	Key actions
<b>Domain One: Foundational Standards - Community Participation</b>	Standard 1: Participation	Since the inception of the RET programs in Chad in 2005, the refugee population and host communities have actively been engaged in the needs assessment, the design, implementation and evaluation of the programs, most often through the Education Committees (EC).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An Education Committee (EC) has been established in each camp where RET has an operation.</li> <li>• EC includes representatives of a wide variety of groups in the community including community leaders, women, youth, students, school administrators or representatives, inspectors from other schools, etc.</li> <li>• The number of EC members varies between 15 and 17.</li> <li>• The EC is trained and participates in developing the action plan.</li> <li>• The EC contributes both physically and materially towards educational activities, including constructing shelters and designing or improving classrooms.</li> </ul>
	Standard 2: Resources	The use of local resources is required given that Chad is a landlocked country. With the assistance of the EC, all of the resources available in the camps are identified and used effectively.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Schools have a database recording existing community skills, knowledge and resources in each camp.</li> <li>• Classrooms are built with local materials such as seccos, straw, etc.</li> </ul>
<b>Domain One: Foundational Standards -Coordination</b>	Standard 1: Coordination	In a complex emergency, such as in eastern Chad, responding to the educational needs of refugees and ensuring complementarity of activities require coordination between the different actors. RET cooperates and coordinates its activities with the Chadian ministries, donors, UN agencies and NGOs that are on the ground.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• RET actively participates in coordination meetings convened by the Education Cluster and attended by technical staff from the Chadian Ministry.</li> <li>• RET actively participates in coordination meetings with beneficiaries and partners working in the field of education. These meetings serve as mechanisms for sharing information on the planning and coordination of responses (through UNHCR).</li> <li>• RET participates in bilateral meetings with partners involved in education.</li> <li>• MoUs have been signed with other partners to improve response quality.</li> <li>• RET and its partners use coordinated funding mechanisms, including the CAP and UNHCR funding.</li> </ul>

Domains	Standards	Application	Key actions
<b>Domain One: Foundational Standards - Analysis</b>	Standard 1: Assessment	In 2005, a participatory initial assessment was conducted in collaboration with partners and beneficiaries.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A context analysis was conducted with the participation of beneficiaries.</li> <li>• There was collaboration with the WATSAN sector and the shelter and camp management sectors for appropriate location of the facilities.</li> </ul>
	Standard 2: Response Strategies	The initial assessment found that the level of education was low in the camps and security very volatile. As a result, the response strategies included the protection of young people through equal access to quality education and the empowerment of teachers and community leaders in case RET needed to interrupt its intervention.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Life Skills Program (basic education for over-aged youth) has been established through an inclusive approach. Also, the vulnerable students, such as single mothers, widows, etc., are able to participate in language courses thanks to flexible schedules (four sessions of two hours per day).</li> <li>• The curriculum of the country of origin (Sudan) is used.</li> <li>• EC strengthens capacity building for staff and community members.</li> </ul>
	Standard 3: Monitoring	Activities and needs are regularly monitored by RET staff, teachers, and the EC.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A database recording all beneficiaries is used.</li> <li>• A monitoring of daily attendance and students' learning (qualitative assessments) is conducted.</li> <li>• A monitoring of daily teacher attendance is performed.</li> <li>• The EC, teachers and the school principal monitor educational activities.</li> <li>• Monitoring tools were developed to ensure the relevance of educational responses.</li> </ul>
	Standard 4: Evaluation	Stakeholders make regular evaluations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• External consultants conduct an evaluation.</li> <li>• The host country conducts an annual evaluation.</li> <li>• An internal evaluation is conducted.</li> <li>• An evaluation by the beneficiaries is conducted.</li> <li>• The evaluation findings and lessons learned are shared and followed by recommendations.</li> </ul>

Domains	Standards	Application	Key actions
<b>Domain Two: Access and Learning Environment</b>	Standard 1: Equal Access	All young refugees aged 15 to 25 are given access to RET programs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Centers are accessible to all.</li> <li>The program is recognized and accredited by the home country (Sudan).</li> <li>Support is offered to vulnerable people (young mothers, young widows, etc.).</li> <li>Health kits are distributed to girls.</li> </ul>
	Standard 2: Protection and Well-being	RET schools and learning centers are fenced and safe and are most often located inside the camps.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gates are closed during school hours.</li> <li>Security guards are on site every day.</li> <li>Corporal punishment is prohibited.</li> <li>Learners receive regular sessions of psychosocial support.</li> <li>Within each EC, there is a point person (female) compiling information related to gender-based violence and referring cases.</li> </ul>
	Standard 3: Facilities and Services	RET schools and learning environments are safe and accessible to all. They have toilets and sufficient quantities of clean water.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There is a safe water source and a faucet in each center.</li> <li>Toilets are separated for young men and women.</li> <li>The Life Skills program's curriculum promotes skills-based health, hygiene education and raises awareness on environmental issues.</li> </ul>
<b>Domain Three: Teaching and Learning</b>	Standard 1: Curricula	The Sudanese curriculum is used.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There is a MoU with the Sudanese Ministry of Education for organizing exams in eastern Chad that are recognized in Sudan. Some diplomas (SEDL) and trainings (basic literacy) are recognized in Chad.</li> <li>Manuals and kits are culturally adapted and provided in sufficient quantity.</li> <li>This is a two-year basic education program, followed by Grade 8, which is the last class of primary school.</li> <li>Learning content is provided in the native language of the learners: Arabic.</li> </ul>
	Standard 2: Training, Professional Development and Support	Teachers receive trainings.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>RET regularly offers two types of training opportunities to teachers: trainings to certified teacher that are recognized and accredited by the home country (Sudan), and trainings in capacity building whose certificates are issued by RET but are not officially recognized in Chad.</li> <li>Distance learning courses are offered to secondary teachers to enable them to obtain recognized degrees.</li> <li>Teaching materials are adapted and appropriate to the context.</li> </ul>

Domains	Standards	Application	Key actions
	Standard 3: Instruction and Learning Processes	Teaching uses learner-centered approaches.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teaching is learner-centered.</li> <li>A system of peer educators is organized.</li> </ul>
	Standard 4: Assessment of Learning Outcomes	Screening tests, exercises, and periodic reviews are conducted to assess the learning outcomes of learners.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Total monthly tests (25%).</li> <li>Mid-term (25%).</li> <li>Final exam (50%).</li> <li>Exercises.</li> <li>There are screening tests for certain programs. The MoE of Sudan recognizes the quality of the mechanism given that RET schools for Level 8 (last year of primary school) and for secondary are the only ones in the camps in eastern Chad to be able to conduct examinations recognized by the MoE of Sudan.</li> </ul>
<b>Domain Four: Teachers and Other Education Personnel</b>	Standard 1: Recruitment and Selection	Qualified teachers are recruited through a transparent process.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teachers have recognized credentials and are recruited through a transparent process.</li> <li>The teacher-student ratio is 1 to 45 per classroom.</li> <li>References of recruited teachers are checked by the EC.</li> </ul>
	Standard 2: Conditions of Work	Teachers have clearly defined conditions of work and are appropriately compensated.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A monthly compensation observing UNHCR guidelines is provided to teachers.</li> <li>Teachers sign and must comply with a code of conduct.</li> <li>Teachers are required to work between 10 and 15 hours per week.</li> </ul>
	Standard 3: Support and Supervision	Clear supervision mechanisms and monitoring of performance appraisals for teachers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Performance appraisals for teachers are conducted, including by the learners.</li> <li>Psychosocial support and appropriate professional development are provided to teachers in a non-discriminatory way.</li> <li>Teachers are supervised by the EC.</li> </ul>
<b>Domain Five: Education Policy</b>	Standard 1: Law and Policy Formulation	Education policies ensure the right to quality education, including free and inclusive access to schooling.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There is collaborative work on education policy between the Chadian authorities, UNHCR, UNICEF and NGOs.</li> <li>Information is shared between all the partners involved in education policy.</li> </ul>
	Standard 2: Planning and Implementation	Education programs provide inclusive educational activities that meet the rights and educational goals of the affected population.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Inter-sectoral linkages are established.</li> <li>Resource coordination is integrated with existing coordination mechanisms.</li> </ul>

## Challenges

### ● Security:

The security situation in Chad is unpredictable. Particularly, since 2005 there have been several evacuations or relocations due to the fighting, resulting in the prolonged absence of the RET personnel. Staff can only travel in convoys escorted by UN forces or National Security. The region has suffered from ongoing targeted killings, abductions of personnel of humanitarian NGOs and carjacking incidents.

In response to these challenges and based on the INEE Minimum Standards, RET has given priority to *community participation and capacity building and empowerment of teachers and refugee leaders*. EC members and school principals/ representatives receive training, and all stakeholders are well-equipped and prepared to work in the absence of RET staff. In late 2006 - early 2007, educational activities ran smoothly despite a three month long absence of RET personnel on the ground.

### ● Lack of qualified personnel:

The lack of qualified personnel is a crucial problem given the low level of education in the refugee camps in eastern Chad. In 2005, youths who had completed secondary school could be counted on fingers, even in camps of more than 17,000 people. Human resources (teachers) were minimal if not nonexistent.

To overcome this, RET has implemented a system of peer educators by recruiting the refugees who had reached the highest level of education. Then, the peer educators received *“relevant and structured recurrent training, tailored to the needs and circumstances.”* (Domain Three, Standard 2).

### ● Diploma accreditation:

One of the main challenges has been the recognition of diplomas. The Sudanese curriculum, which is different from the host country (Chad) curriculum, is used in the camps. Initially, neither country recognized the diplomas and certificates obtained in the camps. To overcome this problem, in 2006, RET signed a MoU with the University of Khartoum, which allows young people to pursue a distance secondary education degree. In August 2009, another MoU was signed with the Sudanese Ministry of National Education to allow the recognition of the RET schools and the organization of examinations for Grade 8 and formal secondary school (Domain Three on teaching and learning).

### ● Cultural barriers and gender-based violence issues:

Cultural practices such as female genital mutilation, early marriages and teenage pregnancies restrict or prohibit girls or young women access to education and respect for their rights. Generally, once married or pregnant, girls leave the classrooms in the camps. RET has implemented a flexible program of basic education, offering several sessions during the day so that these girls can attend according to their availability.

## Outcomes

**Community participation** is one of the most effective practices resulting from the implementation of the INEE Minimum Standards. At first, involving the community in all phases of the project did not seem realistic, especially considering the number of refugees who had never set foot in schools. Nevertheless, RET established ECs, which are made up of community leaders and representatives, school directors, teachers and school representatives. The situation changed after two years in the program when learners in the RET centers began writing letters to their relatives in Darfur. The community then recognized the benefits of the program, even more so the following year when students received their diplomas that were recognized through distance courses. Finally, when RET managed to establish formal schools in the camps, community participation further improved quantitatively and qualitatively. Today, the community repairs classrooms, builds shelters and makes donations to the best students, etc.

Lesson learnt: In a community that is mostly illiterate, community participation is progressive and depends on the interest that the community gives to education. This process is best enhanced if education programs include the sensitization and training of the community. In eastern Chad, experience has also shown that **diploma validation and accreditation is crucial to ensure quality education** (*“All persons have access to quality and relevant educational opportunities.”* Domain Two, Standard 1).

RET first established a basic education program for over-aged youth, which is a three-year non-formal program enabling youths to complete Grade 8 with a formal examination. Then, students who obtained their Grade 8 diploma were given the opportunity to pursue a formal secondary education that is recognized by the Sudanese Ministry of Education and provides access to an accredited degree. Today, young people no longer need to leave the camps and risk their lives to attend accredited schools or join the militias.

Lesson learnt: *"The education programme in refugee contexts is recognised by the relevant local education authorities and the country of origin."* (Domain Two, Standard 1, Key actions). This stimulates students and prevents school dropouts during the program.

### **Support to vulnerable people and linkages to other sectors, such as health services, nutrition, protection and psychosocial**

Vulnerable young students are identified daily in RET schools. They are referred to the relevant services to ensure adequate care and support. For example, teenage mothers who are too often marginalized, victims of rape, and girls coming from very poor families in the camps. Support improves school attendance and prevents dropouts or absences.

#### **Would you like to share your Minimum Standards experience?**

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