

Pakistan Floods Emergency: Advocacy Issues

In every emergency, common advocacy messages related to the education sector include:

1. **Education should be prioritized as integral to emergency response and early recovery, as education is vital for children and youth and for the future of the country.**
2. **Not only is it important for children to go “back to school” after a sudden-onset emergency, but efforts should be made to get “all in school”.**
3. **Education in the aftermath of an emergency is about ensuring continued opportunities for learning and development in safe, child-friendly spaces, not just reconstructing classrooms.**
4. **Interruption to the education of children and youth should be minimized to reduce risk of drop-out and lost learning.**

Education services and infrastructure have been severely disrupted and damaged by the flooding.

- ❖ Half of the approximately 15.4 million people affected by Pakistan’s devastating floods are children. According to initial reports, there are 309’000 children including 136’000 girls whose schools have been damaged.
- ❖ About 5’500 schools that were not damaged by the floods have been converted into shelters for IDPs. Current estimates are that 306’000 children, including 135’000 girls, have had their schools converted into shelters.
- ❖ Children have undergone severe trauma in being displaced from their home and witnessed loss of lives and livelihoods around them.
- ❖ Teacher absenteeism in schools anticipated as local teachers have been directly affected and displaced due to flooding.

A strong response to education needs is urgently needed.

- ❖ As the summer vacations draw to a close (in most places by mid August), timely continuation of the school year for approximately 4.2 million children remains a huge challenge.
- ❖ The overall emergency response will be less effective if education is excluded. In Pakistan, the resumption of education allows, for example, the provision of inoculations against cholera and typhoid and the treatment of conditions including diarrhea. Providing children with a safe place also enables parents to access services and recover livelihoods more easily.
- ❖ Given the huge scale of damage to schools it will take considerable time to build the damaged infrastructure and equip them with learning materials. Any delay to educational activities will result in denying access to education to millions of school going children.
- ❖ Destruction and disruption to educational infrastructure and activities has pushed Pakistan even further back from attaining MDG 2 goal of achieving universal primary education.

The Education Cluster is working in-country on a coordinated response

- ❖ The Education Cluster, having been active in Pakistan for several years, is responding to the emergency at national level together with sub-national Clusters in Baluchistan, Khyber Pakhtoonkhwa (KP), Punjab and Sindh Provinces.
- ❖ The Education Cluster is currently organizing a rapid assessment to determine priority needs and gaps.
- ❖ Education was not included in the Pakistan Initial Floods Emergency Response Plan. Four clusters (Food, Health, WASH and Shelter) were prioritized for inclusion, which means no funding has been received for education through the appeals mechanism to date.
- ❖ Education will be included in the revised Floods Emergency Response Plan in September with an urgent request for funding.

IMMEDIATE ACTION REQUIRED

Education actors:

- ❖ Contribute to assessments of education-related needs in all affected areas.
- ❖ Continuation of the school cycle to give normalcy and routine to children is of utmost importance. We must act immediately to ensure children can access quality education as schools open in late August and September 2010.
- ❖ Establish temporary learning spaces where schools have been destroyed or extensively damaged to ensure continuation of educational activities.
- ❖ Restore educational services in schools converted into IDP shelters for the flood-affected population. Work with the Shelter Cluster to identify alternative living spaces for those sheltering in schools.
- ❖ Provide psychosocial support to traumatized children and reintegrate them into day-to-day school activities.
- ❖ Use schools as a point of entry to inoculate children for cholera/typhoid, prevent/treat other diseases (diarrhea, worms, skin infections, etc), and provide critical early childhood development activities (e.g. parent training, pre-school programmes, transition to school).

Donors:

- ❖ Contribute urgently needed funds for education - likely to be in range of \$20 million for immediate response interventions.
- ❖ Fund the Education Cluster to carry out a rapid assessment, followed by a more in-depth assessment, in all affected areas.
- ❖ Include funding for education programmes as part of their emergency response, including the establishment of temporary learning spaces to ensure continuation of educational activities.
- ❖ Provide education support in areas where cross-clusters and cross-sector outcomes will be realized (e.g. WASH, Health, Protection).

For any further information/comments, please contact:

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