

Foundations working in Education in Emergencies: A Statement of our Shared Principles
Consultative paper
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Introduction and Background

This paper articulates an emerging set of common commitments and principles shared by foundations working in the Education in Emergencies (EiE) sector. It outlines both what we have in common with other donors and international organisations working in the EiE sector, as well as what we believe to be our added value and unique contribution to this field. This paper draws on inputs received from a group of private philanthropic foundations, all members of the International Education Funders Group (IEFG) working in EiE sector. The starting point is a recognition that **children and youth have the right to education** and the urgent learning needs of those living in contexts of humanitarian crisis requires a **collaborative and coordinated response**. In this spirit of collaboration, the purpose of this paper is two-fold: **to define and strengthen our shared principles and identity as a community of IEFG members working in EiE**; and **to contribute to the dialogue with the EiE sector in order make actionable the right to education for children and youth caught in crisis**.

We recognise that the EiE field is highly fragmented: Many of the UN agencies and NGOs who deliver services at the field level compete over resources, largely because of the nature of the current humanitarian financing architecture. Foundations can contribute to overcoming this fragmentation and are committed to doing so. The collective work involved in producing this paper shows that there is a desire among foundations to improve our own practices and to look for ways that we can collectively better serve the needs of the most vulnerable and marginalised learners.

The set of principles outlined in this paper draw on previous work the IEFG has done to define its relationship with the Global Partnership for Education, detailed in the paper ‘Private Foundations’ Engagement Strategy 2018-2020’. The Engagement Strategy asserts that ‘foundations are becoming full-fledged development partners rather than donors... foundations are steering away from funding single or ad hoc projects but instead plan multi-asset interventions and leverage funding with advocacy, networks, knowledge and experience.’

FOUNDATIONS VALUE PROPOSITIONS:

Thought Leadership: Foundations invest in cutting edge research that can inform policy, support the development of innovative programming, generate knowledge, influence discourse and build networks

Innovation: Foundations have more freedom than governments and inter-government organisations. This means they can play an important role in driving innovation in financing, policy, programming and new kinds of partnership

Dexterity and agility: Foundations are less bureaucratic so they can be more dexterous and agile when responding to policy challenges or program engagements. Foundations ‘can employ strategic entrepreneurialism to swiftly mobilize their assets to work with unlikely partners in new ways.’

Sector-specific and cross-sectoral collaboration at national and international level: Foundations strengthen engagement around SDG4 but also promote multi-stakeholder cross-sectoral partnerships to tackle multi-dimensional development challenges that cut across different SDGs.

Advocacy: Foundations ‘can assert political influence to forge complementarity at the country level and are keen to support governments as drivers of development and to leverage their resources in support of national development plans.’

Information and transparency: Foundations ‘play a key role in increasing the systematic sharing of information and data that can be beneficial to governments and multilateral organizations that might lack capacity in the areas of innovation, data and data mining ‘

Process to Date

Although the IIEG has hosted a sub-group on Education in Emergencies for some years, the first move towards a more purposeful collaboration among foundations working in emergency contexts arose at a meeting in Nairobi in October 2018. The focus of this meeting was on the need to better coordinate education and child protection responses in humanitarian crises; IIEG members (as well as other private and bilateral donors) identified a commitment to **child well-being** as a shared value among those working in both sectors. Following this meeting, IIEG members developed a discussion paper 'Towards Collective Action in Education in Emergencies'; which was the focus of a discussion during the IIEG meeting in San Francisco. Through these discussions the idea of producing a position paper to outline our shared principles was raised.

This paper draws from a survey of IIEG members, commissioned by Porticus, following the November 2018 IIEG meeting. Survey data was used to produce a mapping of IIEG members' collective work in the EiE field, which illuminated several areas of synergy and convergence in members' strategy and programming in EiE. As of March 2019 eighteen foundations had completed the survey. The survey and mapping results were presented at an IIEG regional meeting in Paris in February 2019, during which twelve IIEG members discussed these points of synergy and convergence. These positions were further discussed and revised by a group of 14 IIEG members during a meeting in Zurich in April 2019. **Taken together, the survey data, mapping exercise, and subsequent conversations held at the Paris and Zurich meetings have identified four broad areas of synergy, which has informed the articulation of four common principles for the foundations working in EiE.**

Four Common Principles

1. **A shared focus on equity in education:** This group of foundations is aligned with global commitments to provide equitable and inclusive quality education for all learners, including those who have been displaced from their homes or are otherwise caught in crisis. We recognise that many learners in crisis situations face multiple and intersecting forms of disadvantage: gender, poverty, minority status, language barriers, poor physical and mental health, injury and disability, and family separation all compound the educational challenges they face through the disruption of education by emergency and displacement.

Education inequity may look different in different locations or among different age groups. IIEG members work across different regions and countries effected by conflict and crisis. They also work across the life-course in emergency settings, from pregnancy through infancy and early childhood through to adolescence. In recognition that equity gaps emerge in utero and infancy, several IIEG members focus their work on the youngest learners and their families and communities. Much of this work bridges the sectors of education, child protection and health. Others focus on the unique learning and protection needs of young adults on the move. IIEG members' diversity in region and age group is a strength of the network, as we can learn from our peers about mainstreaming equity in our EiE programmes at different ages and stages.

2. **A commitment to work with local partners, including host communities, and to be accountable to them**

As noted in Principle 1 above, this group of foundations are aligned with global education commitments as set out in Sustainable Development Goal 4, which asserts the right of all children and youth to equitable, quality education. Yet unlike bilateral donors, foundations are not signatories to the SDG agenda and thus cannot be held directly accountable for reaching the targets

of SDG4. Instead, we aim to be accountable to our partners and the communities in which we work at the grassroots level. Such an approach requires humility and a recognition of the limitation of our local knowledge; we cannot claim to be perfect in our accountability to communities and local organisations, but we will continue to strive to achieve this goal.

We believe that foundations are unique within the donor community for their close ties with and long-term commitment to local civil society organisations working on the ground with displaced and host communities. These relationships with local partners, which often exist over many years, allow foundations to hear and to amplify local voices in EiE response. Our local presence can allow us to more rapidly assess ever-changing realities and needs at the 'grassroots', both within displaced and host communities. This may also lend us a degree of legitimacy with our partners and with international organisations, networks, bilateral and multilateral donors.

3. **A commitment to quality education opportunities - beyond academic learning:** The Sustainable Development Goal 4 calls for all boys and girls to have access to *quality* education, which is broadly defined to include education for human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity. Yet despite the breadth of quality education targets, learning outcomes are most commonly assessed through narrowly-defined measures of literacy and numeracy, whether at the classroom level or through national and international testing. In the EiE field, there is growing acceptance that social-emotional and non-cognitive skill development is essential for children and youth effected by crisis, but a huge gap remains between discourse and action.

Foundations can play an important role in closing that gap by supporting the design, implementation and measurement of different modalities that provide quality, holistic learning for children and youth in crisis. Foundations have more freedom with how their funding is used than many other donors, which allows for innovation and experimentation. We have the potential to catalyse significant impact by supporting innovation in social-emotional and non-cognitive learning programmes, as well as the measurement and assessment of holistic learning outcomes.

4. **A commitment to child and youth well-being and protection:** Child well-being is at the heart of all of our work, and it is this commitment that helps us move away from siloed approaches to education in emergencies. A focus on child protection and child well-being is closely related to the above discussion on equity and quality learning, as IIEG members recognise that children need to be healthy and safe in order to learn effectively. Although many IIEG members see their work in terms of education and learning, there is also a dimension in their work that does deal with the safety, care and protection needs of the learners they support. This may be encompassed in work to include psycho-social support and social and emotional skills/life skills as part of a curriculum or programme; to promote child-friendly and child-centred pedagogy; or to promote safe and hygienic schools; to protect education from attack. Foundations have a key role to play in encouraging (where appropriate) inter-sectoral programming in emergency settings in order to improve learning and well-being for all children and youth.

Moving from Principles to (Tentative) Positions

Drawing on the four principles outlined above, we are putting forward four tentative positions that could form the basis of more purposeful collaboration within this group of funders. These are to be discussed and further developed at our next meeting, tentatively scheduled for 24 September 2019 in New York.

1. Statement on recognising and strengthening governments' obligation to education

Government remains the largest provider of education for children and youth in every country, but the capacity of governments to deliver on the right to education is highly constrained in fragile and crisis-affected contexts. Supporting governments (at local, district and national levels) to provide equitable, quality education for all is a crucial part of education systems-strengthening. This includes supporting host governments to integrate migrant learners into public education systems.

2. Endorsement of INEE Minimum Standards and Mandate

In order to deliver on the above set of principles, to help address the fragmentation of the EiE field, and to ensure that local organizations and communities have a seat at the table, the foundations working in EiE endorse the mandate of INEE and commit to promoting the INEE Minimum Standards as a way to ensure a common process for ensuring quality, equitable and inclusive education in emergencies. Foundations recognise that these standards outline the very minimum we should expect from our programs; they are there for us to build from and further develop as we work to ensure the programs we support contribute to strengthening the sector as a whole.

3. Development of common standards and measurements for social-emotional learning in EiE

Co-creation of standards, measurements and assessment of holistic learning outcomes is a potential action-area for this Working Group. Foundations may approach this in different ways, including measuring learning outcomes through skills-based assessment. Some efforts have been made to validate EiE academic and SEL assessment tools and test social-emotional skills among crisis-affected communities. Others work to assess life outcomes through employment or participation in civil society. IIEFG members fund a range of education models, including catch-up programs, out of school voluntary programs, language programmes, extra-curricular programs, etc. Each of these will have a different way of defining and assessing quality learning outcomes, and this diversity can be a strength in developing holistic standards and measurements. Evidence drawn from foundations' work in this area could be infused into the wider sector to provide support to the work that many bilateral and multilateral organisations are doing on assessing holistic learning outcomes.

4. Development of mechanisms to support intersectoral collaboration between Child Protection and Education in Emergencies

The complementary nature of education and child protection is widely recognised, but collaborative opportunities between the sectors are rare. IIEFG members working to support the learning needs of children and youth in crisis situations could play a key role in encouraging and developing intersectoral work through their grant-making. At a funders meeting in October 2018, it was suggested that the framing of 'our shared commitment to child and youth well-being' could be a starting point in developing more purposeful intersectoral collaboration.

Conclusions

Based on the above, IIEFG members engaged in Education in Emergencies share a commitment to the following themes:

- **We strive to facilitate the realization of the right to education for all children including those in emergency situations;**
- **We strive for education being geared towards relevant and holistic learning outcomes;**
- **We strive for addressing child wellbeing in the form of psycho-social support (PSS) in all learning environments to help restore children's resilience and ability to thrive;**
- **We strive for learning and child development beginning at the start of life;**
- **We strive for parents and caregivers to have a crucial role to play in EiE;**

Beyond a common focus, we also have a shared approach and understanding of partnerships:

- **Working with local partners is important to us, including in conflict and crisis contexts;**
- **We work with communities affected by crisis, as well as host communities (particularly vulnerable and marginalized communities);**
- **We have long term engagement and commitment to our local partners, including in conflict and crisis contexts**

There is a particular timeliness to our group of IIEFG foundations looking at potential synergies around our collective commitment to learning and well-being in humanitarian emergencies. There is a new architecture emerging in the education in emergencies context, in part because of Education Cannot Wait and the Global Compact, and as private foundations we want to contribute our resources and expertise in a way that best helps the most vulnerable but in a way that is consistent with our overlapping core purposes. This creates an opportunity for foundations to rethink our relationship with each other and also to initiate a new dialogue with other non-foundation donors. These are the twin purposes behind this position paper. We look forward to further refining these principles and positions through engagement with IIEFG colleagues.

Annex: Summary table of key findings from the mapping exercise (November 2018 – February 2019, 14 foundations)

1. Foundations tend to approach EiE as an important theme within their work; not their only focus or purpose.
2. The sector is expanding. Important new players are developing (or have very recently developed) EiE focused programmes.
3. Funding is expected to grow modestly among established players, but with some very large new sector entrants.
4. EiE programmes vary significantly in type, scale and focus.
5. There are a variety of reasons why foundations focus on EiE (eg. need, geography, theme) but many highlight working with the most marginalized, vulnerable and underserved as a motivation.
6. The sector is open to co-funding.
7. Foundation activity spans the full education age spectrum, but individual foundations vary significantly in their target age range.
8. Foundations collectively work with all types of grantees, but approaches vary significantly between individual foundations.
9. Most foundations align with, but no one externally reports against, the SDGs.
10. Approximately half of foundations engage in advocacy and network building as part of their work. Half do not.
11. There is a strong cluster of relationships within the sector already, but not everyone is connected.
12. A small number of grantees are shared by members of the network; most are not.
13. Around half of foundations engage with international funding mechanisms. Half do not.
14. Foundations tend to cluster around various combinations of four major content themes (global and cultural issues; society and sustainability; learning through play; whole child/SEL skills)
15. There are some consistent themes in the ways that foundations talk about 'quality learning', but much variation in expressing them.
16. There is a core set of learning outcomes that most foundations align with.
17. Foundations vary in the marginalized groups they work with.
18. Foundations nearly all fund a variety of similar education delivery models.
19. The INEE Conference, IIEG (biannual meetings) and CIE are the main events that these foundations attend.
20. There is little overlap in the list of target countries (beyond Syria, Jordan and Lebanon)
21. Many future issues for the sector have been identified, but the desire for coordination and alignment is most frequently mentioned

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