

INEE Minimum Standards Case Study: Temporary Learning Spaces in South Sudan

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Background and Context

The Jonglei state in South Sudan is one of the most underdeveloped regions in the newest nation in the world. Basic social services, including health care, education, food and clean water are very limited as a result of the long spells of war and conflict. Large numbers of refugees and IDPs are stranded without homes, particularly in town centers, as a result of the ongoing emergency situation. Inter-ethnic violence, natural disasters, political instability and floods have led to the high mortality rates, child abductions, and destruction of learning spaces, materials and disruption of formal schooling.

During the time of the referendum, returnees from North Sudan and East Africa swarmed Bor town, in the Jonglei state. Subsequently, in November and December 2011, over 5,200 and 2,000 people were displaced to Bor town from Jalle and Kapat due to conflict in Pieri, including school-age children. As a result, the 2012 primary school enrolments were significantly higher than normal, resulting in congestion and overcrowding of learning spaces.

This project created 6 Temporary Learning Spaces (TLS), 5 were constructed in Pieri and one in Bor, to replace those from the surrounding areas to create a better learning atmosphere for the pupils who returned home. As a result, 12 classrooms were created, giving access to 700 returnee boys and girls. Parent Teacher Associations (PTA) were trained in comprehensive school management and emergency resource mobilization.

Application

HCO used the INEE Minimum Standards to ensure community participation and coordination throughout.

Foundational Standards: Community Participation: Participation

To ensure community participation, local authorities were consulted at the beginning of the process to develop support for an inter-agency needs assessment. Awareness meetings were conducted, and gradually community members began realizing their roles in education. As a result, a collective response strategy was created. Throughout the project, PTA trainings enhanced community awareness and participation. This led to community involvement in mudding the TLS and construction of additional TLS and temporary pit-latrines.

Foundational Standards: Community Participation: Resources

From the initial stages, all stakeholders were involved in mapping and mobilization of resources. In part due to the limited capacity of HCO, local resources were prioritized to implement the project. These were mapped, selected, and mobilized through the PTAs and local authority within the community. Additionally, volunteer teachers were selected from within the community for trainings on psychosocial support, improving the existing local resources.

Foundational Standards: Coordination

A team comprised of individuals from HCO, local authorities and international agencies conducted a comprehensive study to assess the necessary response strategy and map resources. Various meetings were held to prioritize the needs and draw out an intervention plan.

Foundational Standards: Analysis: Assessment and Monitoring

After conflict, developing a strategy required information about the magnitude of the damage. Therefore, HCO in partnership with an inter-agency team, conducted a needs survey and shared the findings with other agencies. Education was among the issues that needed to be addressed. Additionally, HCO conducts frequent field visits to ensure the viability of the ongoing projects.

Domain 2: Access and Learning Environment: Equal Access

TLS were created to address the needs of both boys and girls. To address girls' needs in particular, the Agui Girls' School was created.

Domain 2: Access and Learning Environment: Protection and Well-Being

Educational and recreational materials were also delivered to the schools most disrupted by the incidence to address the specific needs of those children and provide them with a sense of normalcy. Additionally, teachers were trained on psychosocial support and life saving skills. This was aimed at improving pupils' coping during emergencies and creating a child friendly school environment.

Challenges

The largest setback was the poor transportation. Because it was an emergency response, the project had to be implemented during the rainy season when the roads were largely washed out. Nevertheless HCO worked closely with UNMISS for flights to the area. People also volunteered to transport materials to the project site by foot. Construction in Pieri was scheduled for after the rains.

Security threats due to the inter-tribal conflict in Jonglei State also affected project implementation. However, through inter-agency communication and coordination various deployments in insecure places were made possible. Secondly, security updates were often provided to all humanitarian workers to guarantee their safety.

Limited finances also posed an issue. However, mobilization of local resources and a volunteer labor force in the construction of TLS made the project possible. Though language barriers initially existed, local translators were identified to ensure full communication between the various stakeholders.

Outcomes

All in all, the project successfully created 6 Temporary Learning Spaces (TLS) to create a better learning atmosphere for the pupils who returned home. As a result, 12 classrooms were created, giving access to 700 returnee boys and girls. Parent Teacher Associations (PTA) were trained in comprehensive school management and emergency resource mobilization. Additionally, girl child enrolment as increased as a result of the social mobilization campaigns conducted in communities

affected by inter-communal clashes.

Community participation should be incorporated into all aspects of the program. Through awareness campaigns and identifying and working with local leaders, community perception of the project was raised, ensuring acceptance and success of the project. By working with the community, HCO was able to mobilize resources that they otherwise would not have been able to access.

The implementation of this life saving project faced great deal of setbacks at the initial stages. However, alignment with the INEE Minimum Standards and adherence to proposed log resulted in maximum yields.

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