



Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies  
Réseau Inter-Agences pour l'Éducation en Situations d'Urgence  
La Red Interagencial para Educación en Situaciones de Emergencia

## **INEE Good Practice Guide:**

### **Assessing Resource Needs and Capacities in an Initial Emergency**

#### *Assessing and analyzing community non-formal educational needs*

As a life-saving measure, emergency non-formal education programs speed the learning and adaptation of crisis-affected populations. During the initial emergency, vital information may be transmitted through community awareness campaigns regarding how to access services such as shelter, health, water and sanitation, and how to cope with the immediate crisis dangers such as health and land mine awareness. In many instances, long-term and more systematic education is needed. For example, in many situations populations lack basic language, literacy and life-skills for survival:

- refugees and IDPs who must live in an areas in which they don't know the language;
- minority communities or youth who have been excluded from the educational system;
- female or child-headed households who, due either to death or separation, lack a family member with basic literacy and numeracy skills;
- persons with disability who have not benefited from self-sufficiency education.

#### **Examples of Non-formal Educational Activities**

- Women's literacy and development Programs
- Community-based Rehabilitation (CBR) Programs for persons with disability
- Language programs to facilitate the integration of refugees or minorities.
- Accelerated education programs for young people who have missed school
- Community information campaigns using drama, radio, newspapers, television
- Community Newsletter

### **Strategies**

- **Assess the different parts of the community**

Communities can be considered from many different perspectives: age, gender, ethnicity, economic status, and disability. During an initial crisis, it is essential that the educational needs of each of these communities is assessed and prioritized. Participatory methods are useful in both delineating each of these groups as well as their educational needs. It is important that all sections of the population are involved in determining the specific needs of sub-groups, such as minority elderly women or unemployed minority youth.

- **Assess and prioritize information for community awareness campaigns**

Information should be tailored to meet the specific and changing needs of the targeted community. The needs of a population change throughout the history of a crisis and depending upon the season. For example:

- People who have not had an opportunity to learn how to read or write for various reasons may have access to basic education as a result of social changes caused by conflict;

- Agricultural messages vary according to season;
- Cholera and measles are of concern during an initial emergency, while not as much a concern as health services are established;
- New dangers may present themselves to people, such as land mines and other safety concerns, providing opportunities to learn new knowledge, apply indigenous knowledge, and use new contexts for enhanced literacy or post-literacy skills.

It is important also to consider how the messages will be conveyed and whether they will reach all portions of the population.

- **Assess long-term educational needs**

In many situations, basic literacy, numeracy and language skills are vital to the survival, as well as the social, political and economic re-establishment of adults. However, providing programs targeting these skills are a longer-term intervention and should be based upon an assessment of the functional skills and needed knowledge. Specific skills for adult students in new and strange situations include: communication skills to access medical services, go to markets, and conduct basic business transactions.

The living skills of persons with disability should be included within this assessment, with the goal being, to maximize their self-sufficiency and social integration, e.g. their ability to walk by themselves, communicate freely, clean and cook. Often these individuals have not developed these skills due to lack of training in the pre-conflict arena, or because they have lost their means of assistance (hearing aids, canes, wheelchairs) during the conflict.

## Checklists

### Previous and Present Situations

- How do people receive information? (e.g. television, radio, newspaper, and word of mouth) and places where people gather such as water taps, food distribution or markets where information campaigns could be conducted.
- If a program could be established, who would be available to teach or train? Primary, high school, university graduates? Tradespeople to assist with vocational skills? Mid-wives, nurses, traditional healers and doctors who can provide health education? Has anyone received training in adult learning methods? Educational activities? Seating? Protection from sun, and rain and where necessary, temperature?
- Did a system of non-formal education exist prior to the conflict? Who managed the programs — the government? Local NGOs (women's groups, development organizations)? INGOs? UN? What subjects were covered in these programs? Adult education programs? Health Education programs? Community Based Rehabilitation Programs? Regular radio information spots or newspaper articles? Do any of the materials from these programs exist? Who are the staff and from where do they come from?
- Is the previous learning situation suitable for a crisis/post-crisis situation? What additional materials should be added i.e. health issues, child rearing, land mine awareness? Are there messages which propagate violence, hate or discrimination within the previously existing materials
- Where adult education systems exist/existed, determine:
  - Where and when they met
  - Who attended (male/female, ethnic groups, economic status).
  - What curriculum were they using? Are the same books available?

In areas of IDP/refugee situations, the local community should be investigated for similar and compatible activities.

- Was/Is everyone able to access the programs? Why not? Investigate issues of security, distance to school, gender, minority status, ethnicity, religion, disability, IDP/refugee/local status, security, acceptable clothing, lack of food and payment.

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