



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 *Assessment of School-Age Children*

Since formal education is typically disrupted by crisis, re-establishing schools and services for those who should be attending school is a fundamental component of emergency education. The responsibility of providing education is compounded when children come from countries or areas without functioning educational systems/infrastructure, or if they are too poor to access education services. Special attention should be paid to identifying those children not attending school, their reasons for non-attendance, and strategies to enhance their attendance. Additionally, it is important to view the needs of the children within the context of the condition of the educational system they are in. The following three scenarios should be considered:

- *No educational system exists.* E.g. self-help initiatives by crisis affected populations, and refugee camps or repatriation situations immediately following a conflict. Detailed assessment must be conducted of what resources are available and matched to needs to reconstruct an educational system.
- *Some education capacity system exists.* E.g. refugee situations where host government has limited capacity in emergency education or post-conflict situations where newly formed Ministries have limited capacity. Emergency education programs must be put into the context of the system and where possible build the capacity of local organizations to respond.
- *Well-established educational capacity exists.* E.g. long-established refugee programs, and refugee flows into a peaceful country with a well-established educational system and knowledge of emergency education. The challenges in these scenarios are not only the establishment of systems, but also the negotiation of access to quality education.

### Strategies

- **Assess the educational needs of all children**

The right of all children and adolescents to basic education should be the base for developing and conducting any educational assessment. This strategy should take into consideration the different groups within the school-age population such as age, gender, and ethnic group, as well as economic and social class, while identifying their needs, capacities and obstacles in educational attainment.

- **Include in the assessment perspectives of children and adolescents, as well as adults teachers, leaders, and parents.**

Different community members have different perceptions. Therefore, it is important to consult children, teachers and adults. For example, in some countries, young mothers are prohibited from continuing their education. While not a law, and despite the wishes of students and parents, school administrators still enforce this policy.

- **Consider both formal and non-formal educational needs and capacities**

Children learn both inside and outside school. In times of crisis, some children (especially adolescents), are not interested in attending school, but instead, want vocational training. Additionally, all children need life-skills training in issues such as land mine awareness and health education. Some non-formal education opportunities for this age group that could be investigated are: traditional apprenticeship (tailoring, blacksmithing), specialized clubs (agriculture, health, sports clubs), and child-focused radio and newspaper presentations. In the Balkans, one NGO targeted football coaches to spread land mine awareness messages since most of the land mine victims were young men.

During an emergency, accurate statistics are difficult to obtain, especially for children. Therefore it is necessary to make an educated guess as to triangulate different pieces of information to determine how many children there are. Possible strategies include: (1) finding existing national census records (in refugee areas headcount information from UNHCR, or WFP food distribution records) (2) conduct a sampling of households within a community (3) using participatory surveys such as the "bean sort" (below) with community focus groups. As a general figure, school-age children are typically 20-25 % of a population.

### Example Participatory Assessment Strategy

In a small focus group, explain that 100 beans represent all of the children in a community. Ask the focus group to divide the beans proportionally into those children who go to school and those who do not. In this case they allocated 30 beans to those children who attend school. The focus group can then be asked to divide these groups further by gender, age, minority, economic classes or refuge/local/IDP status. 100 beans are used so researchers and focus group members can think in terms of percentages, however this is not statistically accurate.

<b>School age children within a community (100 beans)</b>	Going to school/participating in Educational Activities (30 Beans)	How are they paying their school fees? Parents? Relatives? Boyfriends? How many students are supporting themselves? What do they do when they are not in school? Are there times of the year when they cannot attend school? Does each group complete school? At what age do they drop out?
	Not going to school/participating in Educational activities (70 Beans)	Why are they not attending school or educational activities? Do they want to go to school or educational activities? What are they doing? What life skills information do they need? Land mine awareness? Health Education? Assertiveness training? How do they presently receive information? Do they want skills training or vocational education? Are there any laws prohibiting them from attending school due to their refugee status? Motherhood? Ethnicity? Are their community attitudes prohibiting children from attending school? Do the children not feel welcome at school? Do they feel they are too old?

**Protection Note:** If specific age groups of children, such as adolescents, are missing, this should be reported to UNHCR or UNICEF and investigated immediately as children have been/are recruited into being soldiers and sex workers. It is also important to identify and report to a tracing organization any children who have been separated from their families and are living on their own.

## Checklists

### Protection

- In which language are the children taught? Are there other languages within the community? Do all children have the language abilities to access services?
- Is there any special information that children vitally need regarding health or security such as HIV/AIDS awareness, family planning or land mine awareness?
- How is the health status of the children? Do they have enough food to attend school?
- What percentage of children has never attended school?
- Are there any children within the community that need special support? Crisis affected or traumatized children? Children who are separated from their families?
- Do children with disabilities attend school?
- What are children not attending school doing? Would they attend school if it were offered at a different time? Are they earning money? What are they doing?

### Formal educational access

- Are there schools?
- What age do children go to school? What age do they start? How are they admitted? When should they finish? Are there children who are older than the other children within the class?
- What schools exist within a community? Pre-school? Primary? Secondary? Are they available for all children?
- What special issues hinder boys and girls from attending school? Lack of sanitary materials? Clothing? Cultural practices?
- Are there different ages with different levels of education? How is the education system organized?

### Non-formal educational access

- What sports, arts and social organizations exist for school-age children within the community? Where do they occur?
- Do these children attend school? Do these activities compete with schooling?
- Where do children receive life-skills educational materials? Radio? Newspaper? Sports and Social Clubs? Is the information they receiving accurate?
- How are the educational needs different for children in school and out of school?

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