



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: Education Structures & Management – Repatriation and Reintegration**

Educational activities and schools are powerful tools in the process of repatriation and social integration for refugees and IDPs. Repatriation, reintegration and post-conflict reconstruction are multi-sectoral endeavours with many variables that must include education. In addition to improvements in security, returnees base their repatriation decision on the reconstruction and re-establishment of educational and medical facilities, rebuilding of roads and support for re-establishing homes and livelihoods. All of these should be planned holistically i.e. schools and their furniture can be built by youth trained in vocational programs. The planning of repatriation and accompanying services should take into consideration the official openings and closings of school years. Information campaigns should be conducted in both the asylum areas and the areas of return to prepare communities for the process of repatriation, resettlement and reintegration.

### **Strategies**

- **Negotiate the recognition, continuation and completion of students' education**

To facilitate students' integration into the home country educational system, there should be a process to recognize and accredit education received in the asylum country (e.g. refugee programs) prior to repatriation. The home country's Ministry of Education or a credible examinations council should facilitate this accreditation process. Steps should be taken to ensure that adequate educational facilities and staff are in place in the areas of return, to ensure that students are able to continue their studies, especially in the case of secondary school students. Possible strategies may include integration of returnee teachers, and establishing a shift system to share limited school space. Wherever possible students should be allowed to complete their cycle of education, including the final matriculation exams. It is important to have an NGO or UN representative speak on behalf of the refugee education system, and uphold the issues of teachers and students in repatriation and reintegration.

- **Monitor integration of students and educational staff**

As a general rule, special programs for returnees should be actively discouraged, as this creates tensions in the larger community. However, formal and informal monitoring mechanisms should be put into place to determine whether returnee students and teachers are being discriminated against, and whether the educational services are meeting their needs or hindering the resettlement process. For example, refugees and IDPs often wait in urban areas before returning to rural areas. In this case it is important that the rural schools be well resourced.

## Checklist

- Is it safe for refugees to return? What are the protection issues affecting certain minority groups?
- Are the returnees able to make a free and informed decision to return? Do they have access to accurate information? Where is it coming from? Are they receiving information regarding the availability of education?
- Are there sufficient schools and educational facilities available for the returnees? What provisions have been made to accommodate a large influx? Tents? Shifts? Are there sufficient secondary school facilities for the returning students to continue their studies?
- What measures have been taken to ensure the security and access of the returnees?
- Will students finish their studies before returning?
- Have repatriation briefings been conducted with students? Parents? PTAs? What concrete steps have been taken?
- Do students, teachers, school administrators have documentation to show their progress through the education cycle, training, years served?
- Have steps been taken to integrate the returning education staff into the home area?
- Is there an individual NGO or organization acting as a focal point on educational issues for the home country Ministry of Education, UN agencies and other NGOs?
- Is educational support being offered in the areas of return? To support integration, is the support offered equally to returnees and non-returnees?
- What will happen to the educational assets (i.e. buildings, textbooks, equipment) in the areas of asylum? If in the appropriate language will they be taken to the home country or used in the area of asylum? Will the school facilities be handed over to the asylum country communities or government?

## Resources

- [Beyond Provision: A Comparative Analysis of Two Long-Term Refugee Education Systems](#) (2005) (pdf) By Sean Corrigan. (MA Thesis submitted to Department of Sociology and Equity Studies in Education, Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto). This paper is an assessment of the quality and effectiveness of the education systems of the Tibetan and Palestinian refugees in their respective host countries of India and Lebanon. This paper gazes beyond the initial emergency phase and into the realities of such refugee camp 'education systems' and the outcomes of such systems vis-à-vis host nation and international aid community responses to the long-term nature of these camps.