



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: Inclusive Education of Children At Risk – Towards Full Participation

Girls, children with disabilities, minority children, and child soldiers are some of the many groups who do not always enjoy full participation within society because they are marginalized or shunned. Discrimination in the educational sphere occurs at many levels – families often find themselves choosing which of their children to send to school, schools manifest community prejudices, and sometimes individuals tell themselves they are not capable of learning. Consequently, these marginalised children are often denied access to schools and a formal education. Special efforts should be made to provide basic education to these children because education is essential to enable them to survive and to participate in society. Educational interventions should focus not only on providing formal and non-formal educational services, but also on addressing the obstacles, such as discrimination and language barriers, that keep certain children from being included.

Strategies

- **Do not endanger those being assisted**

Inclusion of some groups such as girls or minorities may be met with violence and hostility. Pushing inclusion too fast or without community support, may endanger those involved, and also may jeopardize other opportunities for equity.

- **Treat all participants equally**

Inclusive education is part of a strategy for inclusive development. Education programs and schools are mirrors of the dynamics within communities. Special classes, programs or materials distributed for just girls, persons with disabilities, or minorities can reinforce a community's ideas of discrimination and segregation. If integrated classes are not possible, educational interventions should include activities that bring the targeted groups together within the larger community context, through sports, art or music.

- **Challenge discrimination and stereotypes**

In times of crisis, traditional community norms and stereotypes are often challenged and changed. A change which is often observed in crisis situations is a change in gender relations. Education programs in emergencies should therefore be prepared to support individuals, families and communities as they take advantage of this window of opportunity to create a more inclusive and equitable society.

- **Monitor students within educational programs**

Access to education does not mean that the students are fully benefiting from the opportunity. Mechanisms should be put into place to monitor the participation of targeted students in the classroom and, where necessary, address any shortcomings. Specific warning signs might range from physical and verbal abuse in the school by students and teachers, to acts of discrimination, such as teachers not calling on students in class or not graduating them from one grade to the next.

- **Community-wide language education**

In some cases, communities must learn new languages in order to survive in new situations caused by crises. Refugees or IDPs are forced to flee into areas where they do not know the common language. Similarly, minorities may not have had access to learning the language of the majority group. In both cases, education interventions must not only focus on the children in school, but also the out-of-school youth and adults who are interacting daily with the local/majority population.

All of the above strategies are based on the assumption that educational services and schools are physically available, and that students have the financial resources to go to school. Below is a discussion of possible solutions to unavailability of educational services and lack of financial resources.

Addressing Issues of Inclusion		
	Specific issues	Programmatic interventions
Schools not available	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schools too far away, especially for younger children • Higher grade levels not available 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where merited, construction of a school or additional classrooms. In the interim, other buildings may be used, such as churches, warehouses, etc. • Construction of classrooms for younger children; older children can walk to more distant school • Arrangement of transportation with community i.e. horse cart collecting children for school or free/discounted transportation on local buses • If building space is limited, children can attend in shifts with younger children attending during the morning and older children in the afternoon. • Children with disabilities who live

		<p>far from school could be assisted by other students to get to school, perhaps through the use of wheelbarrows or other means.</p>
<p>Economically challenged</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of resources for children to attend school • Children's labour or income is needed to support the family 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Income generation support targeting poor families • Income generation support for schools to decrease school fees • Scholarships • Changing the timing of schooling to fit the children's and families' daily and seasonal work schedules • Decreasing children's home chores, such as decreasing time spent fetching water by drilling wells or providing piped water or providing grinding mills. • School Feeding • Providing educational materials (exercise books, textbooks, pens) to all students • Discouraging or making optional the use of school uniforms. • Identifying and addressing hidden costs within the educational system, such as fees for school maintenance, tutoring, furniture and examinations

Checklist

Assessment

- Has an assessment been conducted to determine who is not attending formal education and why?
- Do marginalized groups within the community face physical and financial barriers preventing them from gaining access to education?
- What are the various barriers that prevent different groups from participating fully in society? Can any these barriers be addressed through education? Vocational skills? Language training? Life Skills?

Programs

- Are measures put into place to ensure the security of the students on their way to and from the educational activity?
- Have teachers and facilitators been trained how to positively mainstream children who are discriminated against into the education activities?
- Are there mechanisms in place to monitor how “welcoming” and “friendly” the school is through focus groups with the students, teachers and school administrators?
- Have local authorities been briefed on the importance of inclusive education? Are they supportive?
- Is there a community outreach component to the program that addresses stereotypes and discrimination?