



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: The Role of National Non-Governmental Organisations

Examples of National NGOs with an educational focus:

- Individual Parent Teacher Associations, as well as larger district and national equivalents
- Private schools
- Principals Associations
- Teachers Unions
- Student Unions and student government
- Community School Associations
- Advocacy Organizations
- NGO Networks
- Women's Groups providing adult literacy or pre-primary activities
- NGOs focusing on minority issues including education
- Educational NGOs focusing on teacher training
- Youth-serving organizations such as local sports clubs or Scouting programs.
- National associations for persons with disability

Aside from the government, local NGOs can play an important role in providing educational services. Although in many countries, the influence of national NGOs has been underestimated, more and more they are recognized as a moving force in a country's progress toward Education For All.

The accompanying text box shows that national NGOs with an education focus can vary widely from formal to non-formal education, from a community to a national focus, and have a specific target group such as women, persons with disability, students and teachers. Additionally, it is important to note that in an initial emergency, non-educational local NGOs may distribute, particularly with organization and capacity building, in aid of community efforts. In all cases, these organizations should complement the government's work, especially for minorities and out-of-school youth, and add to the community dialogue on education.

Strategies

• Establish a visible presence

In most situations, local NGOs are not as visible as the large international NGOs or UN organizations focusing on education. To avoid this, local organizations need to make themselves more visible by:

• Participating in the education coordination meetings.

Where necessary, interpretation services should be available for the meeting, and the minutes and relevant documents should be translated. Local NGOs should not have to provide their own translation since this affects their participation in the meeting. These meetings are ideal places to meet and set up individual meetings with international organizations looking for local partners, as well as donors, who can fund services directly.

- **Binding together with other local organization**

Local NGOs with a common focus such as women, minorities, youth or persons with disability can meet, coordinate their activities, and identify priorities for the community.

- **Seek material and technical expertise where necessary**

Most international humanitarian agencies include in their programs the capacity to develop local capacity and partners. The accompanying textbox identifies the positive and negative characteristics of national NGOs as perceived by international NGOs (INGOs). The challenge to local NGOs is to seek ways to maximize their positives, and where necessary seek support from the INGOs to address the negatives. Specific examples may include:

- Asking for a specialist such as teacher trainer, accountant or logistician to provide technical assistance or to be seconded to the local NGOs
- Requesting specific areas of training such as Child Rights, working with Child Soldiers, Psychosocial training, etc.
- Partnering with an international NGO to implement programs.

- **Understand relationship of NGO programs to long-term government Ministry of Education plans**

As part of an emergency response, governments, donors, international organizations typically develop a long-term development plan including education, or an Education For All National Action Plan. These plans usually identify specific areas for development, such as primary school education, out-of-school youth and civil society, etc. While local NGOs are sometimes consulted in the development of these plans, they are often overlooked when the final plan is distributed. It is important for local NGOs to be able to collectively state where their activities fit into these larger plans. National NGOs are often better able to address an unmet need, offer an alternative viewpoint, and stimulate debate on issues that are not yet mainstreamed by the government.

Perceived Pros and Cons of Working with National NGOs

Perceived Pros	Perceived Cons
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Already in the area • Better able to address local needs • Relationship with local community • Know the local working environment • Function in the local language • Long-term commitment • Established programs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Political • Limited financial and material accountability. • Possibly unable to access some communities • Possibly inexperienced in working in an emergency situation • Limited resources • Limited ability to communicate rapidly due to need for translation or computer access

Checklist

- Which national education NGOs existed prior to the conflict?
- Are local NGOs participating in the emergency response? Why not?
- What can be done to raise the visibility and involvement of the local organizations?
- What is the capacity of the local organization?
- Are educational NGOs invited and do they participate in emergency education coordination meetings?
- Is translation of the meeting and documents provided?