



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 Roles of United Nations Agencies

The United Nations and the many organizations under its umbrella play a fundamental role in providing and coordinating educational assistance in areas of natural disaster and conflict. While the principal emergency UN agencies are UNHCR, UNICEF, WFP, UNESCO and UNDP, there are many other UN agencies supporting the humanitarian and education response, i.e. ILO, UNFPA, FAO.

Strategies

- **Understand the roles of the different organizations and their responsibilities in an emergency**

Although UN Agencies have established mandates, they often take on other roles in different situations due to resources, expertise, personnel on the ground. To implement and coordinate programs effectively, it is important to understand the roles of each UN agency and their working relationships to each other, the local government, NGOs and the beneficiaries. These roles often change over time. Some UN agencies with emergency response capabilities, such as UNICEF and UNHCR, will take a lead role during the initial emergency and then hand over responsibility to government or another UN agency, with a longer term and development focus. A key resource to understanding UN agencies and their roles in specific crises are the UN Consolidated Appeals which are posted on Relief Web.

- **Maximize UN resources and expertise**

The UN and its personnel have a wealth of programmatic information and resources. While some of the how-to knowledge is available through their respective web-sites, much of it must be specifically requested through their technical experts, many of who are working in various countries. To gain a perspective the agencies' special expertise, it is important to ask the staff in the field. Often UN agencies develop pilot programs in health education, psychosocial support, teacher training and peace education that NGOs can assist in implementing.

- **Coordinate through the UN**

Typically the UN plays a key role alongside the government (if it exists) coordinating the humanitarian activities in areas of emergency. The UN coordinating role at the highest level is vitally necessary to ensure that the needs of all those affected are met. The general humanitarian coordination meetings, as well as those specifically focusing on education, are essential for conducting complete assessments of the needs of those within the area, for developing standardized approaches, and for sharing resources.

| UN Agency | Relevant Expertise | Institutional Experience and Resources |
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| ILO | Demobilisation of adult soldiers | Curricula for vocational education |
| IOM International | Experience with demobilization of adult soldiers | Listings of diaspora wishing to return to their country and their qualifications |

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| Organisation for Migration | | |
| UNDP UN Development Programme | Typically lead agency in areas of post-conflict. Civil society. | |
| UNESCO UN Education, Science and Culture Organisation | Support for Ministries of Education in Post-Conflict environments | Manual on establishing emergency education programmes Educational statistics Sample emergency materials from around the world |
| UNHCR UN High Commissioner for Refugees | Extensive experience in establishing education programmes in refugee camps | Vocational education and Peace education materials ARC materials |
| UNICEF UN Children's Fund | Extensive experience in establishing programmes for women and children in both stable and unstable countries including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Establishing child-friendly spaces ○ Demobilisation of child soldiers ○ Accelerated education programmes ○ Women's and children's health including immunization ○ Teacher Training ○ Non-formal education programmes ○ Adult literacy | Peace education materials Smile Keepers Training Materials Psychosocial Training Materials Child Rights Materials |
| WFP World Food Programme | How to run school feeding and food for training programmes | Guidelines for school feeding Guidelines for food for training Educational statistics from their school feeding programmes |
| WHO World Health Organisation | Lead agency coordinating all matters of health including contagious diseases, HIV/AIDS, drug abuse | Health education materials School health materials Health statistics |

Checklists

- Which UN agencies are present in the country? What are their areas of focus? Which ones are focusing on education?
- Are there education coordination meetings? Do all of the relevant organizations attend? Are local and international organizations invited?
- What topics are discussed at the coordination meetings? Is there dialogue and coordination between organizations focusing on formal and non-formal education?
- Has the UN sponsored a comprehensive survey of the educational needs? Students attending school? Participation levels of boys and girls? The needs for school rehabilitation? Teacher training? Student materials?
- In areas of post-conflict reconstruction, is there a coordinated plan to support the re-establishment of the Ministry of Education?
- What projects are the UN agencies sponsoring? Do they have any manuals or guides for their implementation?
- Has the UN produced and translated educational materials?