



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: Training and Capacity Building – The Role of National Governments

Under international law, national governments are responsible for providing basic educational services to all children within their borders, including refugees, internally displaced and minorities. In areas of conflict or post-conflict, national government staff are often unprepared to address emergency situations and coordinate large numbers of UN agencies and international NGOs. In areas of conflict, this situation is often compounded by the newly (re-)established Ministries of Education, which are being organized rapidly with inexperienced staff, limited office equipment and transportation. To overcome these challenges, governments must assert their role, and where necessary seek material and technical assistance from NGOs, donors and the UN to overcome challenges.

Strategies

- **Provide a structure for addressing emergency education issues**

Under the Education for All (EFA) initiative and Dakar Framework for Action, all government Ministries of Education should create contingency plans for education in emergencies as a result of conflict and natural disasters. Part of this planning should include placing copies of national curriculum, textbooks, and other educational materials with UNESCO's International Bureau of Education for safekeeping.

Countries directly affected by emergencies are especially concerned, as well as neighboring nations that will assist the refugee and internally displaced populations from one or more surrounding countries. Government officials should have a clear understanding of the issues involved in re-starting an educational system after an emergency. Specific issues are:

- how to address large numbers of untrained teachers entering the workforce,
- payment of teacher and school administration salaries, and
- how to ensure quality services in government schools.

- **Maximize but not disrupt existing systems**

In order to rapidly respond to a crisis, planners and programmers should take account of all of the existing resources, such as

- buildings especially functional schools,
- educational staff, and
- educational materials.

Where possible these resources should be used to assist in the emergency response. Care should be taken to minimize the impact on the functioning part of the school system. For example, if government educational materials are diverted to the emergency, plans for replenishment should be made either through the Ministry of Finance, UN or donors. Can schools be used to aid the emergency without permanently disrupting regular classroom and student life? Different arrangements are needed if displaced populations are either too numerous or geographically remote to attend classes in existing schools.

- **Coordinate and maximize emergency educational services**

The role of a Ministry of Education during an emergency is to ensure educational services for all children through coordinating the activities of the UN and NGOs. This is a daunting task and requires an understanding of the mandates of the UN agencies, donors and international organizations, their resources, and how to coordinate and use them to meet the long-term needs of the country.

Building the government's ability to coordinate should be integral to any emergency education program, because the government will be able to better respond to the current crisis and those in the future. With this in mind, governments should request support for additional staff, vehicles and equipment, and technical support to play its coordination and management role. In some cases, governments may be able to contribute a match in kind for the required inputs. Once government ministries apply to receive such support, it is essential that they have transparent systems in place to account for funds and material received.

- **Provide a long-term strategy**

A valuable tool for attracting donor support and guiding UN agencies and NGOs, is a framework that clearly shows the transition from emergency response to development. This should include a comprehensive plan describing the provision of formal education services ranging from pre-school education through to University, vocational education, teacher training and non-formal life skills education. Additionally, the plan should address issues of improving access to schools (specifically the poor, girls, children with disabilities, and minorities), as well as improving the quality of education.

Emergency funds are available temporarily. Therefore it is essential that they be used to both address the emergency education situation and support the permanent development of the educational system. As examples:

- regional and government staff should be supported with training and material support
- resources, such as vehicles, computers, and photocopiers, used by the NGOS should be transferred to the government on their departure
- permanent school buildings used for refugee and internally displaced students should be handed over the local governments and communities
- education of children, teachers and administrators should follow a curriculum that leads to recognized certification.

In refugee and disaster situations, international organizations often focus on direct provision of educational services, rather than building the government's ability to respond. This is based in part on historical experience where refugee-hosting governments saw externally funded education projects as a source of income and employment for nationals, with the additional benefit of education being provided to the poor. If school enrolments are high, it may also be too expensive to pay government level salaries in emergency situations. The emphasis is therefore on rapid interventions using low cost *ad hoc* arrangements pending a more durable solution.

Checklists

Government background

- Who in the government is responsible for emergency education? Do they have any previous experience implementing emergency education programs?
- Do they have the necessary experience and understanding of the UN and NGOs to coordinate their activities?
- Does the Ministry of Education have sufficient personnel and resources to implement the emergency education program? Has a request been made for additional resources?
- Do the government officials have sufficient resources to monitor the implementation of activities?
- Has an assessment been conducted of local and government resources? Can local schools start a shift system with the regular classes in the morning and the emergency classes in the afternoon?

- If staff are diverted to assist in the emergency, how long will they be away from their jobs? Who will cover their duties while they are away?

Coordination

- Are regular education coordination meetings held with all agencies involved? Are they efficiently run and are progressive decisions taken by the end of the meeting? Who chairs the meeting? Does this person need support in developing the agenda and running the meetings?
- Have standardized reporting structures been put into place to monitor the educational activities, and the number of children attending school?
- Are statistics cross-tabulated to measure the effectiveness of collaboration, e.g. of WFP's school feeding program, the NGOs, other UN agencies and the government?
- Are the UN and NGOs implementing activities in accordance with national law? If construction is occurring, are national school building codes being respected?
- Are teachers from the outside being hired to run the programs? What effect will this have on the existing teachers, e.g., will they leave their jobs or transfer?

Long-term planning

- Is there a plan for how to make the transition from emergency to development? If not, has the government requested assistance from UNESCO? Does the Ministry of Education have example plans from other countries? Are they aware of case studies of other counties in similar situations?
- Are all NGO and UN proposals for activities being checked and approved by the government? Do their plans fit into the national plan?
- What happens to the assets (schools, vehicles, radios, etc) which the NGOs and UN use to implement education programs? Can these inputs be written into the proposals, so there is a plan that they will be transferred to the government?
- What provisions are being made to train teachers, administrators, and government officials?
- Will students and teachers be certified for the education and training that they receive?

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