INEE

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
On-Site Teacher Training and Support – Mobile Trainers and Mentors

One of the greatest challenges in emergency education is supporting teachers, especially those with limited or no training, to improve their daily classroom teaching. Pre-service and in-service training for teachers, while important for orienting teachers to the profession, are expensive for large numbers of teachers and do not allow sufficient time for classroom observation. A more efficient and economical solution is to support teachers while they are in their own schools teaching their own classes, through the establishment of "mobile trainers" or "teacher mentoring programs" described in the accompanying textbox. These programs not only increase teachers' effectiveness, but also have been shown to contribute to teacher retention and satisfaction. In order for teachers to feel more relaxed about the program, the mentoring and training should be separated from their official governmental review process.

Mobile Trainers	Teacher Mentoring
Teacher trainers conduct workshops regionally or at individual schools. This can be a set workshop for all teachers, or focus on the content and teaching methods for teachers of a specific subject area such as English, Math or Science. Additionally, based upon classroom observation trainers can tailor their workshops or provide mini-workshops to address specific issues.	To increase the amount of individualized attention, experienced teachers within each school can mentor less confident and untrained teachers. Specific areas for mentoring may include daily and long-term lesson planning, discipline, alternative teaching strategies.

Strategies

How Mentor got its name

The derivation of the word "mentor" comes from Homer's epic poem *The Odyssey*. When the hero, Odysseus, sets out for the siege of Troy, he expects a long absence from home and asks his trusted friend Mentor to care of his household. During the time Odysseus is away, however his wife's unwanted suitors overrun his house, and the goddess Athena asks Zeus if she can intervene. With Zeus's approval, Athena assumes the shape of Mentor and whispers sound advice to young Telemachus, the son of Odysseus. Mentor has since been known as a wise counselor.

- **Respect local training, professionals and experts**

In most parts of the world, mobile trainers and mentoring programs are completely unknown and provoke many questions from local professionals. Therefore, experts from the local university or teacher training college should be involved in developing the program. This not only builds respect for program, but reinforces the importance of the local and national institutions. The program should not replace the formal teacher training system, but functions only as an interim measure for ensuring quality education in crisis or unstable conditions.

- **Careful selection of trainers and mentors**

Mobile training and mentoring are more personal than other types of teacher training. Closer relationships develop that have great potential to inspire teachers and to improve their professional practice. Therefore, the trainers and mentors selected should be experienced and accredited teachers with a passion for teaching, as well as a true willingness to assist other teachers. If mentors are selected at each school, it may be necessary to review the mentor position on a yearly basis as more experienced or trained teachers return to the area. Additionally, in order to gain respect for the program and its results, clear roles should be established between the mentor/trainers, head teachers and local government officials.

- **Provide adequate training and support to trainers and mentors**

Training and mentoring adult teachers is not the same as teaching and interacting with children. Training should be provided to prospective mentors and trainers to cover adult learning theory, active listening, psychosocial support, how to observe classes and provide feedback. Following training, the field activities of the mentors and trainers should be structured on weekly or monthly basis on certain issues such as "lesson preparation" or "questioning" to give focus to their work. Monetary or material compensation for the mentors and trainers should be provided to maintain their motivation.

Checklists

> **Topical areas of focus for mentor teachers**
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> - Lesson preparation
> - Student discipline problems
> - How to know your students
> - Varying teaching techniques to keep student attention
> - How to address children with disabilities in the classroom
> - Gender and ethnic equity in the classroom

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- How were the mentors selected? Are they respected by their colleagues? Do they have the necessary formal training to be respected by trained teachers and administrators?

- Does the mentor conduct model lessons? Mini-workshops?

- Have the mentors been trained in how to be an effective mentor? To observe teacher classroom behavior? Do the mentors have guidelines for their various activities?

- What is the process for mentors observing classes? Is a pre-observation interview conducted? Does the mentor disturb class?

- How often does the mentor observe classes?

- Is a checklist available for the teachers who are observed, so they are reminded of teacher good practices?

- Are records kept of the observation? Does the teacher get a copy?

- Are there examples of mentors acting inappropriately? Bullying teachers?

- Will the hours of observation and feedback be recognized for teacher advancement or certification?

- In areas of post-conflict, has the government been involved in the development of the teacher mentoring program? Would be they be interested in incorporating this program into other schools or writing it into the national plan?

- How are the mentors compensated for their activities? How do their rate of compensation relate to that of head teachers? Teachers? Government officials?