



The Permanent Mission
of Canada to the United Nations



La Mission permanente du
Canada auprès des Nations Unies

Summary of Roundtable Discussion:
“Education in Emergencies: A Precondition to Meeting the MDGs”
11 July 2005

Co-sponsored by:
**The Permanent Mission of Canada to the United Nations,
Inter-Agency Network on Education in Emergencies (INEE),
the International Rescue Committee (IRC),
Save the Children,
and the Women’s Commission for Refugee Women and Children ¹**

The purpose of this roundtable was to share information, address challenges and gaps, and determine next steps regarding Education in Emergencies, as a precondition to meeting the Millennium Development Goals.

Speakers:

Ambassador Gilbert Laurin, Deputy Permanent Representative, Permanent Mission of Canada to the United Nations

Carolyn Makinson, Executive Director, Women’s Commission for Refugee Women and Children

Carl Triplehorn, Education in Emergencies Specialist, Save the Children

Rebecca Winthrop, Education Technical Advisor, IRC / INEE

Maysa Jalbout, Senior Education Advisor, Canadian International Development Agency

Moderated by:

Diana Rivington, Counsellor of Development, Permanent Mission of Canada to the United Nations

Participants:

The event attracted 30 participants (see Annex I)

¹ For more information on education in emergencies and the MDGs, please visit the Inter-Agency Network on Education in Emergencies www.ineesite.org; International Rescue Committee www.theIRC.org; International Save the Children Alliance www.savethechildren.net; and Women’s Commission for Refugee Women and Children www.womenscommission.org.

The Importance of Education in Emergencies

Ambassador Gilbert Laurin opened the roundtable by stating that education cannot be ignored in emergency situations as it serves as a positive and essential tool in crisis situations and is one of the sectors most impacted by conflict.

Carolyn Makinson reinforced the point by sharing startling statistics regarding the state of education in emergencies, and highlighted the exacerbated problems for refugee and internally displaced children and youth. Among refugees, just six percent are enrolled in secondary school, whereas the situation for internally displaced people (IDP) is worse. In Sub-Saharan African countries, many children spend their formative years entirely in conflict; worldwide, almost seven million refugees spend 10 years or more displaced.

Dr. Makinson also addressed gender equality within education in emergencies, stating that two-thirds of out-of-school children are girls. She affirmed that displaced populations must have access to overall education services in order to secure a successful and predictable future.

Networking for Joint Strategies and Effective Solutions

Ambassador Laurin stated that this topic is appropriate and timely because, as we approach the September Millennium Summit, we need to look at joint strategies and tools to strengthen basic education. *Rebecca Winthrop* discussed the ways in which the Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE) pursues a joint strategy that has led to effective solutions. INEE was founded in 2000 out of the Education for All World Forum in Dakar and is based on the recognition that to meet the MDGs there is a need to concentrate on education in emergencies. There are now over 1,000 individual members and 300 agency members, including UN agencies, NGOs, governments, donors, teachers and education personnel, disaster-affected community members, and academics. In 2004, INEE launched the *Minimum Standards for Education in Emergencies, Chronic Crises and Early Reconstruction*, which were developed with the involvement of more than 2,250 individuals from over 50 countries. The Minimum Standards present a universal framework for improving the development of appropriate and quality education programs and policies in emergencies through to reconstruction. There are two rationales behind the creation of the Minimum Standards: to ensure quality and accountability in education in emergencies; and to mainstream education as a priority humanitarian response. The INEE Working Group on Minimum Standards is now in the process of facilitating the global implementation of the standards, including promotion, training, piloting, monitoring and evaluation activities.

Ms. Winthrop stated that the lessons learned from this inter-agency networking project are that the Minimum Standards are important and widely applicable, they present a common language and a harmonized framework to support coordination among governments, donors, agencies and affected communities. People who work in various difficult circumstances (wars, natural disasters, reconstruction contexts) are also using them as a powerful advocacy tool.

One participant discussed her work with the World Food Programme’s School Feeding Program, which feeds 17 million children worldwide. In Aceh, coordination with local partners has been very successful. She said that it would be helpful to encourage ministries of education around the world to implement the Minimum Standards and to search out ways to work with local NGOs on sustainability and accountability. She emphasized working with local partners, which are especially helpful in terms of practicalities such as the influence of the private sector, being able to purchase food locally, manufacturing and transporting locally. She stressed that a collaborative inter-agency approach is needed to achieve the MDGs.

Education as Protection for Children and Young Adults

Ambassador Laurin stated that basic education provides children and youth with physical protection from the dangers of a crisis environment and mitigates psycho-social suffering. *Carl Triplehorn* expanded on this concept, stating that education provides physical, psycho-social and cognitive protection for children and youth and; hence, lack of education could put children and youth at risk in these areas. He stated that education in emergencies provides physical protection for children and youth by giving them a safe environment and adult supervision. It provides psycho-social protection by giving children and youth an identity as a student. And it provides cognitive protection because if education is interrupted, children and youth will lose the opportunity to learn and access to future opportunities.

Additionally, education provides self-protection – a child or youth who knows how to read and write has more access to food and can protect him/herself from danger by reading signs regarding landmines, and being exposed to HIV/AIDS awareness and education. He acknowledged that education does not always protect children and youth and that there are cases of in-school harassment or abduction. However, this cannot be a reason not to provide education in emergencies. He said that organizations could take steps to make schools safer in emergencies by consulting with communities, helping with codes of conduct for teachers and staff, and providing children and youth with escorts to school.

Gaps and Challenges

Dr. Makinson addressed the first challenge: lack of funding for education in emergencies, as historically it has not been applicable to either development or humanitarian funding streams. She offered that we need a different way of examining who is affected and a radical re-thinking of funding streams because conflicts in places like Sub-Saharan Africa should no longer be treated as exceptional and short-term. She stressed that the MDGs will never be achieved unless we focus on the needs of IDPs and refugees in conflict situations.

Maysa Jalbout listed three challenges: first, how to best coordinate efforts internationally and among all key stakeholders; second, implementation of an integrated programming model at the country level; and finally, validation of teachers’ qualifications. Another

participant stated that we also need to remember to focus on children who have already missed out on primary education – adolescents and youth not of traditional school-going age. She also offered two challenges. First, what can we do to move past just universal primary education to include adolescents, youth and young parents? Second, how can we pay more attention to other opportunities beyond just formal education?

Another question focused on gaps in the community-level approach that organizations can support. *Mr. Triplehorn* responded, saying that one of the gaps is lack of focus on Parent Teacher Organizations or School Management Committees. *Mr. Triplehorn* stated that we need to understand what they look like, that their role is grossly underestimated, and the area needs much more in the way of training and strong development implementation. Teachers are grossly under-resourced and under-valued in emergency contexts. *Ms. Jalbout* said that organizations should try to introduce specific issues in involving education in emergencies as one piece of a broader puzzle. She also offered that in terms of youth, we have been too successful in preaching universal primary education because now people don’t want to look at the bigger picture, and instead want to focus solely on universal primary education before we start addressing other areas of education.

Next Steps

Ms. Winthrop listed three things that are needed to move forward: first, sustained advocacy to raise awareness and understanding of this issue; second, translation of awareness into policy and funding commitments for education in emergencies; and third, further research and tools to support the work on the ground.

In response to a question regarding what the private sector can do, *Dr. Makinson* hoped that when the private sector supports pilot projects, it would also provide funds to evaluate what works and what doesn’t work, and to disseminate guidance on best practices. *Ms. Winthrop* suggested that the private sector should fund capacity building of NGOs to do things more efficiently.

The Canadian Mission pledged their support for moving forward. *Ms. Jalbout* said that the Canadian International Development Agency’s (CIDA) policy and programming have always been supportive of the principle of providing education to children in emergencies and post-conflict and post-crisis situations and has highlighted education in peace-building. The Government of Canada affirmed its commitment to this issue in its recent International Policy Statement.² This is an important first step that gives CIDA the legitimacy to pursue developing a policy to guide its programming framework, which does not currently exist. CIDA offered that the principles that will shape its new policy framework are: (1) the right of every child to education; (2) recognizing the gender implications of this issue and reaffirming commitment to achieving gender equality in education; (3) protecting children from abuse and exploitation.

² CIDA’s International Policy Statement available at: http://www.acdi-cida.gc.ca/cida_ind.nsf/AllDocIds/A40531E4159C935285256FE300473BEE?OpenDocument

ANNEX I: Organizations participating in Roundtable discussion

American Jewish World Service
Canadian International Development Agency
CARE International
Center for Universal Education
Citigroup
CONGO/World Association of Girl Guide and Girl Scouts
CONGO/Zonta International
Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies
International Peace Academy
International Rescue Committee
Open Society Institute – Network Women’s Program
Permanent Mission of Australia to the United Nations
Permanent Mission of Denmark to the United Nations
Permanent Mission of Germany to the United Nations
Permanent Mission of Greece to the United Nations
Permanent Mission of Ireland to the United Nations
Save the Children
The United Nations Children's Fund
United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
United Nations Population Fund
United Nations World Food Programme
Watchlist on Children and Armed Conflict
Women’s Commission on Refugee Women and Children
Women's International League for Peace and Freedom