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Education for All Global Monitoring Report 2007
Strong foundations: early childhood care and education

Early childhood care and education in emergency situations

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INTRODUCTION

“We the governments, organisations, agencies, groups and associations presented at the World Education Forum pledge ourselves to:

(v) meet the needs of education systems affected by conflict, natural calamities and instability and conduct educational programmes in ways that promote mutual understanding, peace and tolerance, and that help to prevent violence and conflict” (World Education Forum, 2000)

‘War and other calamities’ have unfortunately stalked the world in the 1990s and into the new millennium. The Gulf War, Afghanistan, Iraq, genocide in Rwanda, civil strife in the former Yugoslavia, Colombia, parts of the former Soviet Union, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Burundi, Sudan, Angola and many other countries have led to immense human suffering. Natural disasters have wreaked havoc, as with the impact of Hurricane Mitch in Central America, the earthquakes in Turkey and Iran, the devastating Tsunami in south-east Asia, and the drought in Niger.

No review of Education for All can now ignore the destruction of education systems, societies and infrastructure that accompanies disasters, or the traumatic effects of disruption and displacement on young children and their families (UNESCO 2001)¹. War, in particular, in the twenty-first century is characterised by its impact on civilian populations. Whereas the casualties of war were once predominantly the contending armies, now eight out of ten casualties are likely to be civilians (Kaldor, 1999)² of which children are estimated to form 90% according to a 2002 UNICEF report.³ The ‘new wars’, as Kaldor contends, do not only involve a blurring of distinctions between war (defined as violence between states or organised political groups), organised crime (violence undertaken by privately organised groups for financial gain), and large-scale violation of human rights (violence undertaken by states or political groups against individuals), they also, “borrow from counterinsurgency techniques of destabilisation aimed at sowing ‘fear and hatred’” (ibid). Hence the dramatic increase in refugee and displaced persons and the violence that is directly directed at civilians (Lloyd et al. 2005).⁴

This paper will seek to review progress made to date in meeting the rights of children 3-6 years old in emergency situations⁵. It will examine whether the world has met its commitments to ensuring the rights of children to early care and education when their lives have been disrupted by devastation and displacement as a result of natural or man-made calamities. It will analyse policy and practice from around the world in order to reveal what has been achieved so far and the challenges which still remain ahead to ensure the rights of the world’s youngest children to adequate care and education in times of crisis. The paper concludes with a set of recommendations for further efforts necessary to ensure the care and education of young children in situations of emergency.

1.0 DEFINITIONS, FLAGSHIP INITIATIVES, AND PRINCIPLE PLAYERS

International agencies working in emergency aid have developed rapid replication models for delivering essential food and medical supplies, shelters, and other emergency services. Historically, there has been little experimentation with delivering or prioritizing education assistance, much less with the delivery of community-based early childhood programmes to respond to the psycho-social and educational needs of small children and their families in times of crisis and displacement (Nixon et al., 1996; Burde, 1999; Vargas Baron, 2005)⁶.

Yet, since the early 1990s, education programmes, and to some extent ECCE programmes, designed for civilian populations living in emergency conditions have been increasingly supported by international agencies because of a belief in their potential to enhance several humanitarian goals,

such as stabilising communities, providing safe spaces for parents and children, and in cases of wars and civil conflicts, promoting reconciliation. Hence, while the education goals are important, the broader impact these programmes may have on communities also carries weight amongst aid organizations, and has provided a further rationale for backing such interventions in recent years.

1.1 DEFINING EMERGENCIES AND EMERGENCY EDUCATION

The Inter-agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE) defines emergencies along two broad dimensions, natural disasters and complex emergencies:

- Natural disasters include, among others, hurricanes/typhoons, earthquakes, droughts and floods. Some natural disasters, such as earthquakes, can occur without warning, and have a major impact on those living in the vicinity. Others, such as droughts, may develop more slowly but have an equally devastating impact.
- Complex emergencies are situations that are ‘man made’ and are often caused by conflicts or civil unrest, which may be compounded by natural disaster. In such circumstances, the lives, safety, well-being and dignity of the populations concerned are endangered by various crisis factors, such as natural, man-made disasters and armed conflict.⁷

The *World Education Forum*, held in Dakar in April 2000, adopted a *Framework for Action* requiring countries to work towards the objective of *Education for All*, including a pledge to “meet the needs of education systems affected by conflict, natural calamities and instability”.

Since the 1990s, the theme of ‘education in emergencies’ has received prominent attention in connection with the concept of ‘*complex humanitarian emergencies*’. Publications describing education in crisis, such as in Rwanda, Afghanistan, Somalia and elsewhere can be found in publications such as “Rapid Educational Response in Complex Emergencies (Aguilar and Retaqmel, 1998)⁸”, and “Education as a humanitarian response” (Retamel and Aedo-Richmond, 1998)⁹. Such emergencies have been used to describe crises which have lasted years if not decades. They can include displacement of people internally or across country borders and they can also include ongoing conflict, insecurity and sometimes the collapse of central or provincial government.

What is Emergency Education?

“Education that protects the well-being, fosters learning opportunities, and nurtures the overall development (social, emotional, cognitive, and physical) of children affected by conflicts and disasters.” (Save the Children Alliance Education Group, 2001)

Other uses of the term emergencies, such as that of UNHCR which implies a “sudden onset”, may lead to debates about whether rehabilitation and reconstruction should be considered as education in emergencies (Sinclair, UNESCO 2002)¹⁰. As Sinclair notes, the Dakar Framework overcomes this problem through meeting the needs of education systems “*affected by*” conflict, calamity and instability. “This includes the early phase of post-crisis reconstruction, when special measures are needed- often under conditions of difficult logistics and insecurity- to provide temporary shelter and educational materials to enable children to resume schooling quickly when their regional or national educational systems had been almost completely destroyed” (Sinclair, 2002).¹¹

Similarly, UNESCO defines an educational emergency as a crisis situation created by conflicts or disasters which have destabilised, disorganised or destroyed the education system, and which

requires an integrated process of crisis and post-crisis support (UNESCO, 1999)¹². UNESCO's work therefore emphasises the need to extend support beyond the short-term.

A still broader definition has been adopted by UNICEF which uses the term 'emergency' to include "loud" emergencies, such as natural disasters (eg. Floods, earthquakes) and man-made disasters (eg. Civil strife and war), as well as "silent" emergencies such as HIV/AIDS, extreme poverty, and children living on the streets (Pigozzi, 1999)¹³. In this paper, however, the 'silent emergencies' are not included, except in so far as they occur during situations arising from armed conflict or natural disasters.

Whether a crisis is a sudden onset "acute" emergency or a long-term ongoing emergency has implications in terms of the content of ECCE interventions, the modalities of delivery, and their long term sustainability beyond the emergency phase (Burde, 1999).¹⁴

1.2 FRAMEWORKS, AGREEMENTS, AND STANDARDS FOR EMERGENCY EDUCATION AND ECCE

The 1990 Jomtien World Conference on Education for All (EFA) made only limited reference to education in emergencies, although war and natural disasters have proved a major barrier to the achievement of EFA. The real impetus for putting education in crises on the international agenda was the World Education Forum held at Dakar in April 2000 which recognised that education situations caused by armed conflict, chronic crises or natural disasters, are a major constraint to the achievement of EFA. Children in refugee, internal displacement, returnee or other crisis situations have the right to education, and to benefit from the stabilising and reassuring environment that education can provide. This is borne out by several human rights instruments such as the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989), the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), the Geneva Convention, and subsequent human rights instruments, and the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees with its 1967 Protocols, which all affirm the right of young children to care and education.

The Dakar Forum emphasised this point, leading to a pledge to help education systems affected by conflict, natural calamities and instability, and established agreement on the need for practical strategies and mechanisms to achieve more effective inter-agency collaboration at global, regional, and country level for this purpose. This led to the creation of the Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE) in 2001, which has grown to include over 500 non-governmental organisations, educational and research institutions, bi-lateral and multi-national agencies. The steering group includes three key UN agencies; UNESCO, UNICEF, UNHCR, three NGOs Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), CARE and Save the Children, all of which represent larger non-governmental federations or alliances. Its aims of promoting access to and completion of high quality education for all persons affected by emergencies resulted in the *Minimum Standards for Education in Emergencies, Chronic Crises and Early Reconstruction* which articulates a minimum level of educational quality and access in emergencies, chronic crises and the early reconstruction phase.¹⁵

Practical guidelines or field guidance notes that focus on field operations have also been published recently or are nearing publication, including those from UNESCO (UNESCO 2002a b)¹⁶, the International Institute for Educational Planning (UNESCO IIEP), Save the Children (Nicoli and Triplehorn, 2003)¹⁷, UNICEF (forthcoming) and UNHCR (2003).¹⁸ Most of these monographs focus on providing education for primary school age children, and stress the emergency response phase, much less the post-conflict reconstruction phase (World Bank, 2005)¹⁹.

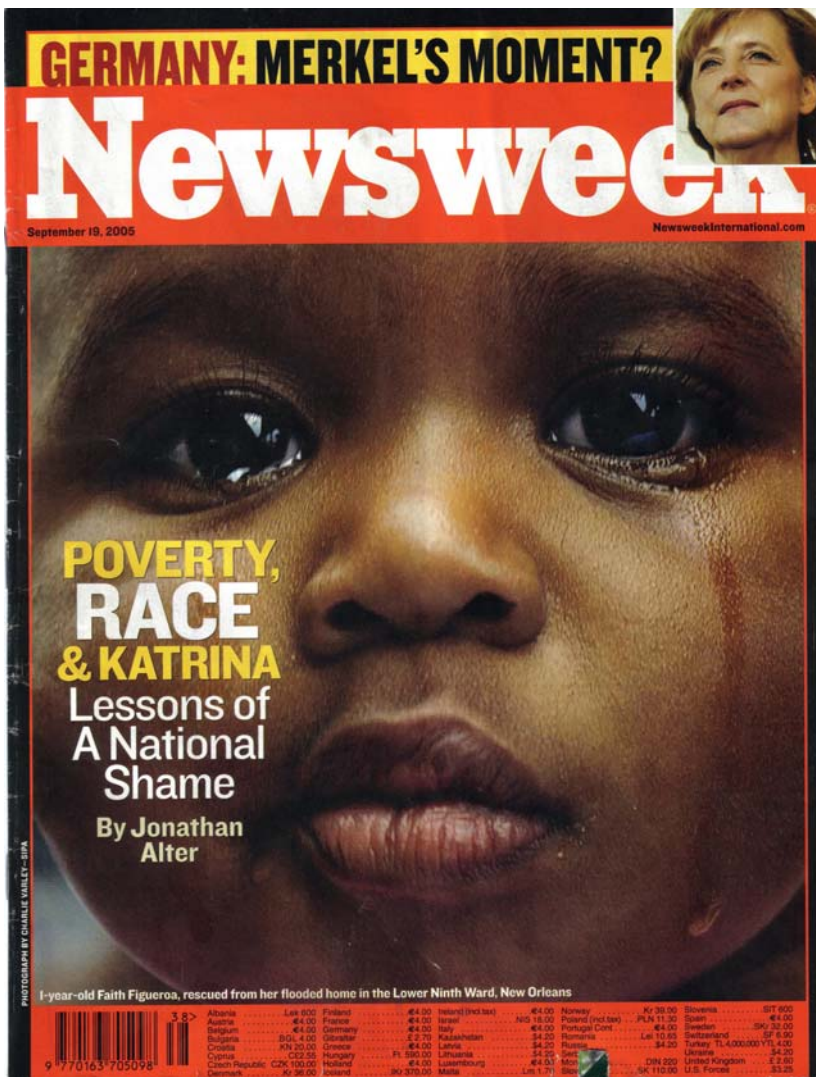
In none of these guidelines is substantial attention given to the specific measures required to meet the needs of children below school age. Heather McLoad (2000)²⁰ notes, “There is no diploma or degree that prepares people for addressing the holistic needs of children in conflict [or disaster] zones” (ibid). There has been little experimentation with delivering early childhood programmes to respond to the psycho-social and educational needs of small children and their families in times of crisis and displacement (Nixon et al., 1996; Burde, 1999; Vargas Baron, 2005)²¹. Often relief workers lack specific child health or child development expertise, and may not be aware of the essential developmental and psychosocial needs of young children. This has often led to the ‘invisibility’ of young children in relief efforts (Plan, 2005)²².

A recent report (Plan, 2005)²³ notes that an evaluation of the impact of UNHCR’s activities, for example, on meeting the rights and protection needs of children states, “ UNHCR’s policies and guidelines on refugee children are strong and we found some good examples of work with refugee children. However, children half of the Office’s population of concern, are often overlooked or considered ‘on the sidelines’ of core protection and assistance work (UNHCR, 2002)²⁴”.

The Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response (Sphere project) manual has detailed guidelines on the survival needs of children, and mentions the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) as one its guiding principles, but makes only perfunctory reference to women, men and children without going into any detail (Plan, 2000 ibid).

In sum, “These examples are typical of a disaster literature that confines children to three areas: they are subsumed within the studies on women in disasters; they are contained with the “medicalised” narrative of disaster which limits children to trauma, psychological and psychiatric studies and social work, all of which focus on how adults can return the child to “normal life”; and as soon as possible; and they are used in the media’s representation of disasters, where children, and the single child become “icons” of suffering and disaster- passive “victims” who need rescuing by outsiders” (Marten 2001 quoted in Plan, 2005 ibid). The cover of Newsweek, in the wake of hurricane Katrina in the USA, is a case in point.

Picture 1: After the cameras have gone?



In assessing the status of ECCE in emergency situations, the review found a serious lack of systematic assessments on progress in meeting the needs of young children in emergencies. Of the few that specifically address ECCE in emergencies, the SCF UK evaluation of the preschool kindergartens in Bosnia-Herzegovina is one of the few systematic attempts to evaluate ECCE programmes in emergencies and is discussed below.

1.3 PRINCIPLE ACTORS

When emergencies occur, humanitarian agencies are the principle providers of emergency education. However, co-ordination efforts are often confused, with the roles of different actors not always clear or complementary, and not always mutually understood, leading to ‘mandate clashes’ (Williams et al., 2005; Sommers, 2002)²⁵. Some have observed that the key actors working in the sector- UN agencies, NGOs, multilaterals such as the World Bank and the regional development banks, bilateral donors- are beginning to succeed in developing, on a case by case basis, developing reasonably workable coordination systems, but to date, there is no recipe for coordinating activities amongst key stakeholders in an emergency (Sommers 2002)²⁶.

Of the UN agencies, UNICEF, UNHCR, and UNESCO (including its institutes) all have mandates to assist young children's care and education in emergencies. Although UNHCR is by far the largest international actor in the field of emergency responses in the education sector (Smith and Vaux, 2003)²⁷, UNICEF's mandate to protect and assist children is potentially broader and much more encompassing. Conflicts over UNICEF and UNHCR's respective responsibilities towards IDPs and refugees have resulted in a memorandum of understanding between them. The MOU assigns UNICEF the primary role for in-country situations, and UNHCR in refugee situations (Sinclair, 2002).²⁸ Similarly, UNESCO's mandate is education, science and culture, and so directly overlaps with UNICEF's child orientation and UNHCR's support for refugees.

Mandate clashes appear to be more acute in catering to the needs of primary school children and older. The picture is less clearly defined for ECCE. To date, it may be said that with the exception of UNICEF and WFP, (which provides emergency nutritional supplements and feeding), most UN agencies have yet to define their roles and responsibilities with respect to delivering ECCE in crisis situations.

While UN agencies tend to be more directly involved in funding emergency programming, it is usually International NGOs which assume an implementation role. The Save the Children Federation, organisations such as Enfants Refugies du Monde, International Rescue Committee, Jesuit Refugee Services, Norwegian People's Aid, Radda Barnen, Redd Barnen, Plan International, Academy for Educational Development, Christian Children's Fund, and many others, work to provide early childhood care, parental education, and pre-primary classes for children and affected by emergencies. Often, despite catering to the needs of 0-6 year olds, the programmes are "invisible", not labelled 'ECD' emergency interventions, as they are designed as part of a larger package of holistic humanitarian support interventions for displaced communities.

Donors are often the most influential in times of humanitarian crisis. However, because education has traditionally been seen as part of development work, not humanitarian relief, humanitarian donors have generally been reluctant to fund emergency education interventions. Few bilateral donors have a policy specifically on education in countries in, or emerging from conflict. A notable exception is the Swedish agency Sida, which has produced guidelines for humanitarian assistance in the education sector (Nicoli and Triplehorn, 2003).²⁹ Multilateral donors, such as the World Bank and regional development banks, have mandates to support educational reconstruction efforts and are increasingly working on conflict prevention. However, their roles in supporting ECCE programmes in post-crisis reconstruction efforts is less well defined.

1.4 THE RATIONALE FOR ECCE IN EMERGENCY SITUATIONS

When it comes to young children, few leaders in developing nations are fully aware of the overwhelming needs of children made vulnerable through displacement and destruction. Comprehensive data about children's needs and status are rarely gathered, analyzed and used for policy and programming. A recent policy review by UNICEF points to a more general marginalization of ECCE amongst policy makers and practitioners within the framework of EFA:

*"The Dakar Framework for Education for All (EFA) calls in Goal One for: **Expanding and improving comprehensive early childhood care and education, especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children.** In spite of this Declaration, the tendency has been to leap over Goal One and move quickly on to Goal Two for: **Ensuring that by 2015 all children, particularly girls, children in difficult circumstances and those belonging to ethnic minorities, have access to and complete free and compulsory primary education of good quality.** What is overlooked is the fact*

that investment in ECD is the critical foundation for school readiness and achieving success in school and life.“ (Vargas Baron, 2005)³⁰

Given the hesitancy of humanitarian agencies to fund education as the “fourth pillar” of humanitarian response, and the lack of awareness by national governments of the importance of ECCE during crises, it is perhaps not surprising that ECCE activities have often been overlooked in emergency provisions.³¹

Beyond rationales based on the immediate benefits that accrue from ECCE programmes in emergencies, early childhood programmes have pay-offs beyond their direct effects (Box 1). They permit outreach to young children for nutrition and health programmes, and the education of parents and caregivers on the needs of the child (health, nutrition, sanitation, hygiene, clean water, supportive caregiver/child interactions and cognitive development). Moreover, they play a critical role in freeing older girls in the family from child care duties that prevent them from attending school. Hence, they are key elements in the Education for All agenda. This is all the more important where extended family structures have been disrupted by war and displacement (Bensalah et al., 2001)³²

Box 1: Rationales for ECCE in Emergencies

UNESCO’s practical justification for an educational response in emergencies and for reconstruction is that:

- (1) Education helps meet the psychosocial needs of children affected by conflict or disasters that have disrupted their lives and social networks
- (2) Education is a tool for protecting children in emergencies
- (3) Education provides a channel for conveying health and survival messages and for teaching new skills and values, such as peace, tolerance, conflict resolution...
- (4) Education for All is a tool for social cohesion, whereas educational discrepancies lead to poverty for the uneducated and fuel civil conflict
- (5) Education is vital to reconstruction of the economic basis of family, local and national life and for sustainable development and peace building

Save the Children outline their rationale for emergency ECCE in Kosovo:

- Pre-schools and playrooms are inherently valuable for children (cognitively, socially, emotionally and physically), and even more so in times of war
- Children benefit from socialising with peers and adults outside the family
- Children benefit from getting out of their homes; the playrooms provide a relief from family tensions;
- Preschools are supportive of family economic opportunity and well-being, particularly for mothers who are trained to work in the playrooms and earn a small income or who are freed to pursue other opportunities.
- Like children’s education in general, preschools are of great and immediate psychological value during war, providing a safe space for children to gather, and offering structure and hope in chaotic and otherwise seemingly hopeless situations
- A preschool programme is of virtually no value to criminal elements and political forces in lawless and war-torn societies in which the theft or control of humanitarian aid is a serious operational and security problem.

(UNESCO 2002; Nixon et al. 1996)³³

In summary, ECCE in emergencies supports the wider EFA goals of:

- *Universal primary education* (Goal 2): ECCE programmes promote school readiness and encourage children to complete primary school, often reducing drop-out and failure rates.
- *Life skills* (Goal 3) and *Adult Literacy* (Goal 4): quality ECCE which target wider family structures often provide caregivers with access to parental education and literacy programmes
- *Gender Equality* (Goal 5): School-aged girls are more likely to attend school if they are not caring for younger children. ECCE encourages parents to teach young girls and can overcome stereotypes about traditional gender roles
- *Quality* (Goal 6): Children who attend quality ECCE are more likely to have better educational outcomes when they attend school, and often improve the quality of primary education.

2.0 THE SCALE OF THE PROBLEM

The damage of war and natural disasters is easy to see in terms of devastation of the material aspects of life. However, the impact a crisis can have on the social, economic, political and cultural fabric of communities can be just as damaging for children's development and hence success in later life (Williams et al. 2004).³⁴

The difficulty of measuring the impact of conflict and displacement on children and their education has been noted elsewhere (Bensalah et al, 2001; Talbot, 2001)³⁵. The field of ECCE in emergency and post-emergency situations, in particular, is rather new and poorly documented. Sommers (2002)³⁶ contends that the statistical imprecision of data on populations affected by wars presents a serious constraint on the ability to accurately estimate war's impact on education systems, administrators, teachers and students. Moreover, the often weak pre-existing system of indicators, especially for pre-primary care which is multi-sectoral in scope, further compounds the problem.

However, while it is difficult to measure the impact of conflict and crisis on children, some basic facts and figures speak for themselves. In terms of numbers, as of 2001, the total number of refugees was estimated at 15.8 million. Internally displaced persons (IDPs) are estimated at around 25 million worldwide, the majority fleeing conflicts, although some are displaced by natural disasters. This includes over 13 million IDPs in Africa, over four million in Asia and another three million in Eastern Europe. In addition, there are millions of people who have returned to their home areas in recent years, and who face the difficult process of rebuilding their lives. In total, some 50 to 60 million people live under emergency conditions or are in the early stages of rebuilding shattered lives. Overall, this constitutes about 1% of the world population. (UNESCO, 2003)³⁷.

Although IDP numbers are notoriously difficult to estimate, a recent study listed 39 countries as having internally displaced populations of 50,000 or over, with six countries (Afghanistan, Angola, Colombia, Democratic Republic of Congo, Iraq, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, and the Sudan) cited as having internally displaced populations approaching or exceeding one million.³⁸

UNICEF estimates that, in the last decade alone, two million children have died from armed conflict, together with six million children seriously injured, one million orphaned or separated from their families, and twelve million left homeless.³⁹ Globally, some 20 million children are currently affected directly by armed conflict. These figures do not include natural disasters, such as the Asian Tsunami, and the Niger Drought, which have caused mass devastation and

displacement.⁴⁰ If one includes natural disasters, a recent estimate by the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (ICRC) lists 242 million people as affected by natural disasters and armed conflict between 1991 and 2000. Of this number, at least 76.5 million were children under the age of 15. The vast majority, some 75 million, live in developing countries (Plan, 2005)⁴¹

2.1 THE IMPACTS ON EDUCATION

In terms of achieving EFA and MDG goals, *currently, 52 countries are considered ‘Conflict countries’, and 68% of them are assessed to be “off-track” in their trajectory to meet the EFA goals* (Buckland, 2003)⁴². A 2000 calculation based on the twelve countries⁴³ that contain the highest total number of forced migrants in the world, found that all of these countries are presumed to be at the highest risk of failing to reach current EFA targets by 2015.⁴⁴ A more recent estimate, based on the 10 territories that have produced the greatest number of forced migrants in 2002 according to the U.S Committee for Refugees (USCR 2003)⁴⁵, lists the total number of out of school children in those countries to be between 1.4-1.7 million refugees and 25.47-27.77 million out of school IDP and non-refugee children (Table 2).

Table 2. Estimated refugee and IDP children and adolescents in and not in school, 2002

Refugees (in millions)				Non-refugee children affected by conflict, including IDPs (in millions)		
Country of origin	Estimated school-aged population (5-17)	In school	NOT in school	Estimated school-aged population (5-17)	In school	NOT in school
Sudan	0.16	0.11	0.05	1.06*	0.24	0.82
Afghanistan	1.20	0.40	0.80	8.00	3.20	4.80
Occupied Palestinian Territories	1.20	0.99	0.21			
Colombia	0.10	0.05	0.05	10.88	7.88	3.00
Angola	0.21	0.05	0.16	4.0	1.30–1.90	2.10–2.70
Congo-Kinshasa	0.14	0.03	0.11	15.40	4.70–6.40	9.00–10.70
Iraq**	0.30	***	0-0.30	8.20	5.30	2.90
Burma	0.05	0.04	0.01	2.70	0.70	2.00
Burundi	0.14	0.10	0.04	1.10	0.55	0.55
Uganda	0.01	0.00	0.01	0.33	0.03	0.30
Total	3.51	1.77	1.44–1.74	51.67	23.90–26.20	25.47–27.77

Notes * Estimates are for primary school only. ** Estimates are for the year 2000. *** It is not known how many Iraqi refugees had access to education. Many Iraqis took refuge in Iran, Jordan and Syria where they were not granted official refugee status and were often considered illegal immigrants; it is likely that most Iraqi refugees had no access to schooling.

Sources: Refugees (except Occupied Palestinian Territories): UNHCR education and population statistics for 2002. Sudan: UNICEF/OLS and Africa Educational Trust *School Baseline Assessment*; Afghanistan: Afghan Interim Administration et al. *Afghanistan: Comprehensive Needs Assessment in Education* and UNICEF Afghanistan Donor Update No. 15; Occupied Palestinian Territories: Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics; Colombia: Watchlist on Children in Armed Conflict, *Colombia's War on Children*, UN Secretariat *World Population Prospects* for population data; Angola: Women's Commission: *Global Survey Report on Education in Angola*; Congo-Kinshasa: see Part II section on the Democratic Republic of Congo; Iraq: UNESCO *Situation Analysis of Education in Iraq*; 2003; Burma: see Part II section on Burma; Burundi: UN OCHA *Consolidated Inter-Agency Appeal for Burundi for 2003* and UNESCO *IBE World Data on Education*; Uganda: see Part II section on Uganda.

Global Survey on Education in Emergencies, 2004)⁴⁶

Internally displaced children fare even worse. Access to education in parts of Angola, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Somalia and Southern Sudan are minimal (Nicholi and Triplehorn, 2003). In Somalia, it is estimated that only 9% of school aged children – and only 6% of school aged girls- are attending school (UNESCO, 1999⁴⁷).

The staggering scale of the problem demonstrates the magnitude of the impact emergencies have on the lives of children, and the challenge that lies ahead for countries affected by conflict to reach MDG and EFA goals for universal primary education and the elimination of gender disparity by 2015. ECCE, often overlooked by many as a luxury in emergencies (Sinclair, 2001)⁴⁸, is the first and essential step towards achieving those goals. Apart from direct reference to expanding ECCE provisions in international agreements and frameworks, educators and researchers increasingly view the early years of children's lives as the first phase of life long learning, a key component of which is successful education (Young, 2002)⁴⁹ (Box 2).

Box 2: Early Childhood Care and Education for Future Learning

A substantial body of international literature shows that a child who is ready for school has a combination of resilience promoting characteristics. Key factors are self-confidence, the ability and anticipate consequences and the ability to cooperate with others (Smith, Fairchild and Groginsky, 1997 as quoted Young 2002). Children who have participated in quality ECD programmes tend to be more successful in school because they are better prepared, demonstrate higher language development, and have greater skills on cognitive assessments. They are likely to stay in school longer and are less likely to need special education programmes. A study of eighth graders in the USA reported that children's performance in later years correlates with exposure to early interventions (Fuchs and Recklis, 1994).

A review of nineteen evaluations of ECD programs in developing countries confirms that early education in the developing world correlates highly with improved school readiness, probability of on-time enrolment in primary school, lower rates of grade repetition and drop-out, and improved academic performance overall (Myers, 1995). Taken together, the studies demonstrate that, when children's basic needs (i.e. quality care that includes nutrition, health care, and stimulation) are met, children gain improved critical thinking skills, self-confidence, problem-solving abilities, and the capacity to cooperate with others. These skills will determine children's overall performance in school, and possibly alter their developmental trajectory (Ramsey et al. 2000). These factors underscore the central importance of providing early childhood care and education programmes in countries where emergencies have undermined or destroyed education systems, and are thus at risk of not being able to reach MDG and EFA goals by 2015.

(Young, 2002)⁵⁰

A strong rationale for ECCE in emergencies is in its potential of improving the quality of formal education. Sommers (2002)⁵¹ has noted the dramatic drop in the quality of primary education during emergencies. Often, schools may be badly equipped and classroom structures may be in poor condition or may not exist. Teacher performance may plummet and authoritarian teaching methods that are pervasive in many war-torn countries may reinforce the sense of powerlessness that children may already feel. Schools located in zones of war or instability may be disconnected from a larger school system. Basic issues of school administration, including providing adequate materials, following a curriculum, supervising teachers, participating in national examinations, and paying off salaries may be, at best, irregular, poorly conceived and ineffectively carried out. Many refugees and IDPs will also often miss years of schooling, leading to large class sizes and multi-age/multi-grade classrooms.⁵² Because it prepares children for school, good quality ECCE interventions mitigate against poor quality primary education characteristic of emergency situations.

Beyond education, war, devastation, and displacement impose particular conditions on the coping mechanisms of children and their families that go beyond educational attainment per se. In the next section, the impact of calamities on children's lives is reviewed, and the literature on mitigating

factors promoting resilience in children and families is examined in what it can reveal about principles and best practice for ECCE response in emergency situations.

2.2 THE IMPACTS ON CHILDREN'S LIVES

The importance of ECCE must be seen, not only in terms of addressing the wider EFA and MDG education goals, but also in the intrinsic benefits it brings to children and their families in times of instability and beyond. This viewpoint is supported by strong evidence that the psychosocial and cognitive implications for the youngest children suffering the impact of conflict or devastation may be particularly serious and long lasting (Dubrow and Garbarino, 1989).⁵³ Findings from studies suggest that basic protective systems that characterize resilience are severely hindered or damaged by war (Flores, 1999),⁵⁴ and that, lacking protective factors, children became more vulnerable to the risks of war.⁵⁵

For young children during times of crisis, the most profound impact is often that their carers (be they mothers, grandparents or older siblings) are unable to meet their needs for nurturing and support. They may be missing, wounded or dead, or they may be emotionally and physically exhausted and be unable to call on the usual support networks that are available at times of family crisis (Williams et al. 2005).⁵⁶

Indeed, the loss of a parent is highlighted as one of the more immediate traumatising events for a child, linked with later psychiatric disorders, particularly depression (Boyden and Mann, 2005)⁵⁷. This concurs with resilience research indicating that one of the most widely found predictors of resilience has been the presence of parental figures (Masten & Coatsworth, 1998⁵⁸). Researchers agree (Rutter, 1987⁵⁹; Sameroff et al., 1993⁶⁰; Werner, 1990⁶¹) that parental availability may provide a significant buffer for the child's experience of war-trauma exposure, and parental separation may lead to a higher incidence of traumatic experiences that have an adverse impact on children. The critical factor in loss or separation from a primary caregiver appears to rest, not on physical availability of a primary caregiver but on *emotional availability* which is fundamental to the quality of *attachment* and, which can deteriorate as a result of *caregiver depression* which is often brought on by prolonged stress, such as in times of crisis (Box 3).

Box 3: Emotional Availability, Attachment, and the Effects of Depression

For very young children, *emotional availability* describes the caregiver's supportiveness and encouragement of the child. A related term, emotional unavailability, has been used by Egeland and Erickson (1987) in their work with abusive mothers. Emotional unavailability describes the caregiver's unresponsiveness to infant distress and attempts to elicit interaction, and a detachment and lack of pleasure during interactions with the child. Emotional unavailability can also describe depressed caregivers (Cohn et al., 1986).

A WHO study notes a substantial attachment literature linking caregiver responsiveness to positive child outcomes and identifies a number of component features of caregiver-infant interactions which have been identified as being associated with later social and cognitive development in the child (WHO 2004). These include sensitivity and responsiveness, interactional synchrony, contingency and social referencing (Belsky, Taylor & Rovine, 1984; Clarke-Stewart, 1988; Isabella, Belsky & von Eye, 1989; Maccoby & Martin, 1983; Schölmerich et al., 1995; Wachs & Gruen, 1982). Caregiver responsiveness has been linked to a sense of competence and self-worth (Bretherton, 1987b; Denham, 2002; Stern, 1985), greater security and more interest in environmental exploration (Pridham, Becker & Brown, 2000), enhanced communicative abilities (Bell & Ainsworth, 1972), more advanced cognitive activity (Lewis & Goldberg, 1969), and greater assertiveness and peer competence (Sroufe & Fleeson, 1986). Positive and stable caregiver-child relationships in the early years have been found to be associated with better social adjustment and protection from psychopathology in long-term studies of child outcomes (Garnezy, 1985;1988; Werner, 1989; Werner & Smith, 1992; Zuravin, 1989

The centrality of *emotional attachment* to and support from a significant reference person is revealed in its absence. Studies of young children in institutions provide the most robust evidence for the importance of nurturing caregiver-child interactions for children's healthy development. In one of the first intervention studies for children in institutions, Skeels and Dye (1939; Skeels, 1966) placed 13 institutionalized infants in the care of older girls, who "adopted" them and provided them with consistent care from 6 months of age. At 2 years, these children were found to have made dramatic gains in IQ (average of 28 points), while the matched control group dropped an average of 26 points over the same period. A 21-year follow-up of the two groups showed that the divergent pattern was maintained. All the experimental children were self-supporting, while five of the control children remained in institutions for mentally handicapped individuals.

The links between stressful life events and *depression* are well documented (Capsi et al. 2003) and mirror the stressors found during emergencies, and particularly ongoing complex emergencies where caregivers are often subjected to high levels of stress over prolonged periods of time. There is a general consensus that caregiver depression during the early years of children's lives has long-term effects on their development well into childhood and early adolescence in the form of behaviour disorders, anxiety, depression and attentional problems (Cox et al., 1987; Galler et al., 2000; Goodman et al., 1993; Kurstjens & Wolke, 2001; Murray, 1992; Murray et al., 1999; Petterson & Albers, 2001).

WHO (2004)⁶²

Taken together, the research findings show that children face potentially long-lasting vulnerabilities as young as 6 months, and certainly by the age of four. The relatively little attention that under four year olds receive in humanitarian assistance efforts implies that empirical evidence from developmental psychology has not been well translated into ECCE principles and practice in a systematised way, despite calls to the contrary. This is especially so as it relates to the need for more systematic attention to the psycho-social vulnerabilities of under four year old children- and to the centrality of their care-giving environments- in providing the necessary social supports during times when their emotional and other resources are overstretched or absent altogether.

"The quality of psychosocial care provided the young child is reflected in the caregiver's responsiveness, warmth and affection, involvement with the child, and encouragement of autonomy and exploration... There is considerable correlational and some experiment evidence [for the link

between] the quality of psychosocial care to a child's development of mental abilities, and to his or her growth and nutritional status". Engle & Ricciuti (1995)⁶³

Apart from the empirical literature from developmental psychology, children's reactions to stressful life events has been characterised in the psychiatric literature on Post –Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) or 'war trauma'. The use of these terms, and their concomitant assumptions regarding conceptualisations of childhood, has led to heated debates around the use of these diagnostic categories, and calls of 'do no harm'. In the following section, this debate is briefly outlined.

2.3 SOME ASSUMPTIONS AND MISCONCEPTIONS

2.3.1 Jo versus the Volcano: PTSD

"...a focus on normative patterns of development has sometimes meant that, in practice, resilience is conceived of more as the absence of pathology rather than the presence of personal agency in children...in many studies of war-affected and displaced children, resilience is tantamount to the lack of trauma or psychiatric disorder; the notion that children's own resourcefulness may promote their mental health is, in many cases, entirely foreign." (Boyden et al. 2005)⁶⁴

There is growing consensus that the view of children as dependent and of limited competencies encourages an understanding of children exposed to calamities as helpless and traumatised. Children are thus treated as passive victims, as opposed to competent survivors (Bracken and Petty, 1998)⁶⁵. Linked to this is the universalistic perspective of child development, promoted largely in the psychiatric literature, that children's responses to catastrophic events follow uniform patterns. Many label those most stressful events 'traumatic' and link them with the diagnostic category of post-traumatic stress syndrome (PTSD).

The alternative view point, espoused by Boyden and others, stresses the importance of the social milieu and activity, rather than the individual, as the basic unit of analysis (Boyden and Mann, 2005). In Vygotskyian theory "Activity" from this perspective includes not only the task at hand but also people, interpersonal relations, goal-directed behaviour, and shared understandings (Box 4). In this view, individuals are active agents in their own environment, they engage with the world around them, and in some senses, create for themselves the circumstances of their own development.

Box 4: Child Development in Social Context

Jean Piaget's theory depicted the cognitive growth of a child as occurring largely as a result of the child's maturation, of capacities maturing within the child leading to more differentiated development of capacities. The Russian psychologist, Lev Vygotsky, challenged this notion. Instead, Vygotsky asserted, as did George Mead, that mental processes have social origins (Feinman, 1991; Wertsch & Tulviste, 1992).

According to Vygotsky's theory of cultural development, "Any function in the child's cultural development appears twice, or on two planes. First it appears on the social plane, and then on the psychological plane. First it appears between people as an inter-psychological category, and then within the child as an intrapsychological category. This is equally true with regard to voluntary attention, logical memory, the formation of concepts, and the development of volition...It goes without saying that the internalization transforms the process itself and changes its structure and functions. Social relations or relationships among people genetically underlie all higher functions and their relationships." (Vygotsky, 1981, p.163).

(WHO 2004, *ibid*)⁶⁶

The tension between these two perspectives is at the root of the heated arguments that surround PTSD and its universality or otherwise. Those mental health experts who do not accept PTSD as a valid diagnostic category in relation to children in particular argue that the symptoms associated with the syndrome do not occur just in response to major stressful events (Richman, 1993)⁶⁷; that symptoms such as bedwetting and nightmares do not constitute ‘sickness’ but a normal physiological reaction to shock, that these medicalised accounts of human responses to misfortune detract from the political, economic and social nature of much of the adversity in the world today (Eisenbruch, 1991)⁶⁸; and that they seriously underestimate the differences between cultural groups in understandings of and responses to stressful events (Bracken et al., 1995)⁶⁹. This view is echoed by many (Friedman and Marsella, 1996; Nsamwenang and Dawes, 1998; Panumaki, 1998)⁷⁰ who support this argument:

“In examining psychosocial needs and structuring interventions in war-torn contexts, Western-trained psychologists tend naturally to focus on well-validated concepts such as ‘trauma’ and ‘post-traumatic stress disorder’...whereas in war zones, people face multiple, chronic stressors, not least of which is poverty...the use of such terms tends to medicalise problems that are profoundly political and social” (Wessells and Monteiro, 2004, p. 328).⁷¹

This suggests that the focus should be on the restoration of supportive social structures broken by conflict and displacement (Summerfield, 1999; Bracken et al., 1997; Parker, 1996; IFRCS, 1999)⁷². In the next section, we will review evidence from empirical studies which corroborates these arguments, and we will examine the factors that promote resilience and recovery in children under eight in emergency ECD interventions.

2.4 MITIGATING FACTORS PROMOTING RESILIENCE IN CHILDREN

As noted above, the literature points not just to children’s own inner resources and competencies but also to their interpersonal relationships as essential factors mediating risk and resilience. Thus, the presence of at least one supportive adult can have an enormous impact on a child’s resilience (see, e.g. Ressler, Boothby, & Steinbock, 1988; Werner & Smith, 1992)⁷³. Family members and significant others can play a major role in helping children interpret, “process,” and adjust to, or overcome, difficult life experiences (Dawes, 1992)⁷⁴. Acting as mentors, adults can provide models of and reinforcement for problem solving, motivation, and other coping skills (McCallin & Fozzard, 1991; Richman & Bowen, 1997)⁷⁵

An extensive review (Lloyd et al. 2005)⁷⁶ of how effective measures are to mitigate the impact of armed conflict on the psychosocial and cognitive development of children aged 0-8 points to a significant body of empirical literature on the subject and corroborates the theoretical and anecdotal literature. Two studies by Paardekooper (2002)⁷⁷ and Dybdahl (2001)⁷⁸ using control group comparisons in Bosnia and amongst Sudanese refugees respectively found statistically significant evidence of a beneficial impact of ECCE interventions on children (Box 6).

Box 6: Strengthening coping strategies through ECCE programmes

Providing Social Support to Caregivers

Empirical evidence shows that traumatised children might best be helped by supporting their mothers' or caregivers' role in children's healing, helping them cope with their own grief and difficulties, and helping them provide a well-functioning family environment, particularly when fathers are lost or missing (Hundeide, 1991; Kalantari et al., 1993). The Bosnia study (Dybdahl 2001) was conducted during the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina. A sample of 87 mother-child dyads with a mean age of child of 5.5 years were divided into a control group and an intervention group.

Intervention lasted 5 months and consisted of weekly group meetings for mothers and emphasised coping with their problems, promoting good mother-child interaction as well as peer support among mothers, and increasing their knowledge and understanding of child development and child trauma reactions. The intervention was complemented by regular basic healthcare provision. Meetings were semi-structured and dedicated to education and discussions about specific topics, such as child development, mother-child interaction, trauma and coping strategies. This non-formal programme tried to support the mothers so that the normal basic communications and skills that already existed were reinforced. The support also involved direct attention to the mothers and their mental health, to their beliefs and knowledge about children, and the reactions and needs of adults and children following traumatic events...The mothers would then share their experiences about this topic, their feelings, and their coping strategies, as well as discuss the suggestions proposed by the group leader.

Both mother's and children's 'degree of traumatisation' and well-being were inferred from baseline comparisons of interviews with the children, the mothers, psychological tests, and observations of the children and their problems.

Significant post-intervention differences were found between the mothers in the two groups on measures of maternal well-being and mental health. For children, the intervention group showed fewer problems, and rated as significantly happier than children in the control group. The authors conclude that, "results showed that...the intervention programme had a positive effect on mothers' mental health, children's weight gain, and several measures of children's psychosocial functioning and mental health" (Dybdahl, 2001,p. 1214).

Promoting Skills-mastery and Problem-solving Group Activities

A study of 207 child refugees from Southern Sudan living in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia with their caregivers examined the effects of two types of interventions on the psychosocial functioning of traumatised children against a control group of no intervention (Paardekooper 2002). As with the Bosnia study, which supported Bosnian mothers to recreate some 'normality' in the daily lives of their children through quality mother/child interaction, this study attempted to support the 'normalisation' of child refugees' daily lives via 'contextual, problem-focused' intervention compared with another intervention which deliberately lacked this contextual focus. The children were randomly assigned to a control group of no intervention, the problem focused intervention, and a 'psychodynamic' intervention promoting emotion-focused coping strategies. Baselines were obtained through a battery of tests, such as the Harvard Trauma Questionnaire, and measures of 'daily stressors'. After seven weeks, retest comparisons revealed that children from the 'contextual problem-solving' intervention showed significant improvements in psychosocial trauma symptoms, reduced behaviour and concentration problems, post-traumatic depression, improved coping and social support network, and an improvement in daily stressors. Children from the 'psychodynamic' programme promoting emotion focused coping strategies did not yield better results than those of the control group.

(Lloyd et al. 2005)⁷⁹

In both cases, the interventions found to be beneficial focused on 'normalisation' of children's daily living situation and on strengthening their coping mechanisms. The review concluded that, "as a whole, interventions that could be characterised as focused on 'normalisation' of children's daily living situation and strengthening their coping mechanisms were more successful for psychosocial outcomes than either a psychodynamic intervention or 'usual services'" (Lloyd et al., 2005). The authors point to the notable lack of studies examining the effect of interventions on cognitive functioning per se.

It appears that children who try to actively overcome adversity- by attempting to resolve the problems they face, regulate their emotions, protect their self-esteem and manage their social interactions- are likely to be more resilient than children who passively accept their fate, especially in the long run (Cairns, 1996; Beristain, Valdosedá and Paez, 1996; Gabarino, 1999).⁸⁰ The ability

to think critically can enhance coping because it facilitates identification of valid alternatives and solutions to difficulties.

The evidence reinforces the principles that children are best served by ECCE interventions that:

- normalise their daily lives
- are supportive of enhancing the quality of caregiver/child interactions and
- are able to provide a platform where children are actively engaged in solving their own problems with others. Paardekooper, in her study, conjectures that the nature of activities promoting 'normalisation' was significant. The part played by children themselves in identifying relevant strategies and activities was crucial to their success (Paardekooper, 2002, p. 174).

It further supports the contention that western based psychiatric interventions based on psychodynamic models which implicitly view the child as a passive individual may not be effective strategies in promoting children's social, psychological or cognitive development in times of crisis in the majority world. And finally, it demonstrates the important characteristics of play and recreation- which stress agency, mastery and problem solving - as effective strategies in promoting resilience for children affected by disaster.

Some of these dimensions have been translated into recommendations in international guidelines for assisting young children in emergencies. Evans (1996) and Macksoud (1993)⁸¹, for example, suggest local means of expression such as singing, dancing, drama, drawing, painting, reading, or writing are a way of enhancing coping strategies (Box 5).

Box 5: The central importance of play for children affected by disaster

Play is the work of children. Throughout an emergency situation, it is important to encourage and provide recreational facilities that children need. Immensely popular are socio-cultural and recreational activities, such as musical groups, dance ensembles, art festivals, sports competitions, football games and group outings. Such activities can be organized by the teachers and community workers. These activities may, in some way, compensate for the hardships of an uprooted life and facilitate the healing process that these traumatic experiences require.

For example, in Lebanon there are a number of centres for Palestinian children and young people supported by Save the Children Fund (SCF/UK), which provide a variety of informal activities. These include sports and other activities in clubs, residential summer camps for vulnerable children and programmes for working children. Volunteers of 16-17 years of age help to run the clubs. These activities are seen as having a preventive role, bolstering cultural identity and self-esteem and providing informal support to those living in the most extreme adversity.

Among children, *play is an adaptive mechanism*:

One of the earliest signs of emotional disturbance in a child is the inability to mix and play with contemporaries. In contrast, psychiatrists learn that if a child has many friends of his/her own age with whom he/she happily plays, it is unlikely that there is a great deal wrong with him/her emotionally, even if the parents have many concerns about the child.

Expression and play can be fundamental in building the resilience for the lives of children who have been the victims of armed conflict. Resilient children have the capacity to make sense of stressful and traumatic events confronting them. Helping children to understand their traumatic experiences and express them is a fundamental operating principle of successful programmes for children living in especially difficult circumstances.

UNESCO: Ginie Website

Beyond normalising routines, promoting agency and encouraging play to bolster resilience, ECCE programmes need to fulfil a number of other functions related to maintaining the integrity of the social and political environment around the child in times of disaster. These broader dimensions of assistance relate to the phasing of interventions and to the basic principles that are applied to ECCE interventions in different country contexts. In the next and final section, the review will articulate a set of basic principles for ECCE emergency interventions and examine case studies from around the world to uncover best practices and lessons learnt. The review will conclude with a set of recommendations to bridge gaps and strengthen emergency responsiveness in ECCE interventions and in post-crisis reconstruction.

3.0 EXPERIENCE AND BEST PRACTICE FROM THE FIELD: CASE STUDIES FROM AROUND THE WORLD

Pre-school initiatives, child-centred and child-friendly spaces, and community based family support services are some of the activities initiated to promote the education and care of young children where humanitarian organisations have had access and when funds have been available. The best field situations involve NGOs with the capacity, ingenuity and adaptability to develop synergies with local communities to stabilise, expand and formalise positive and productive ECCE initiatives.

A review of case studies shows that ECCE in emergencies is still in its infancy and needs to be organised into a manageable discipline through further analysis and documentation. Sommers (2004)⁸² notes, “Accumulated institutional memories and knowledge in governments, agencies and NGOS on education [and ECCE] in emergencies are in danger of being lost due both to the dispersion and disappearance of documents, and to high staff turnover in both national and international contexts.” Indeed, “Most of the expertise is still in the heads of practitioners and needs to be collected, since memories fade fast. Diverse experience of educational [*sic* ECCE] reconstruction must now be more thoroughly documented and analysed before they disappear” (Ibid, p.7)

The following section is based on those case studies that have been documented, and examines principles and best practices from the field in order to articulate some essential operational dimensions of ECCE interventions in crisis situations.

3.1 EMERGENCY PHASES AND SEQUENCING INTERVENTIONS

It has been noted that little consensus exists on the definition of “phases” of emergency and post-emergency reconstruction (World Bank, 2005)⁸³. As with the definition of conflict, there is a wide range of interpretations regarding whether and how different stages in an emergency are described. Rather than debating what constitutes a ‘phased approach’ in emergencies, it is perhaps more constructive to adhere to a set of key principles of ECCE programming in emergencies (Box 7), while recognising that the sequence of interventions is more of a key factor to successful *post-conflict or crisis* reconstruction efforts (ibid). The rationale for this is best captured in a recent interview with Dominic Xavier, Director of Reaching the Unreached Trust (RTUT) commenting on RTUT’s ECD emergency response to the Indian Tsunami:

“You have to first of all listen to what people are asking and you have to hear what they are telling you. You have to look at the needs. You must find out what the people themselves can offer, the resources they carry within them, and finally you have to assess your assets and resources to see what you can do. That is how we knew what we could do right away,

what must be done within a few months, and what is going to take two or three years” (quoted in McClellan, 2005)⁸⁴

Box 7: Key Principles of ECCE in Emergencies

Access

- ✚ The right of access to [early childhood] education, recreation and related activities must be ensured, even in crisis situations
- ✚ Rapid access to education, recreation and related activities must be ensured, and followed by steady improvement in quality and coverage
- ✚ ECCE should serve as a tool for child protection and harm prevention

Resources

- ✚ ECCE programmes should use a community-based participatory approach, with emphasis on capacity building
- ✚ ECCE programmes should include a major component of training for teachers and educators and provide incentives to avoid teacher turnover
- ✚ Crisis and recovery programmes should develop and document locally appropriate targets for resource standards, adequate to meet their educational and psychosocial objectives

Activities/Curriculum

- ✚ Curriculum policy should support the long-term development and be supportive of durable solutions
- ✚ ECCE programs should be based on a holistic approach which includes dimensions of health and nutrition, water and sanitation, etc...
- ✚ ECCE programs should be enriched to include education for tolerance, human rights and citizenship in cases of

(Adapted from Sinclair, 2003)⁸⁵

3.2 ACCESS

The principle of access embodies the premise that all children have an *equal* right to ECCE provisions during times of crisis, and encompasses the goals of *child protection* and *harm prevention*.

“In emergency situations, assistance to children, including ECD supports, needs to be enveloped in a wider penumbra of child protection. The importance of the child protection frame is visible in the diverse, interacting risks that face children under eight years of age. These risks include separation, loss, HIV/AIDs, trafficking, being part of child-headed households, chronic poverty, child labor, and loss of social and spiritual supports, among others. The prevalence and severity of these risks challenges us to avoid the conduct of stand-alone ECD interventions and to integrate ECD with child protection.” (Wessels, 2005)⁸⁶

Implicit in this formulation is the principle of *inclusion*. Translated into practice, it means that all actors have a responsibility to reach the most vulnerable of the vulnerable in a crisis: the separated, the orphaned, the disabled, children of HIV/AIDs and children of nomadic and other minority groups. By and large, emergency interventions for young children neglect the equal rights of the ‘invisible’ children. Children of nomadic and other minority groups are a particular case in point. Without directed efforts to target attitudinal, institutional and environmental barriers, the principle of inclusion and respect for the full human rights of every person, particularly the most vulnerable groups of children, will continue to be marginalised and excluded in relief and development efforts (van der Kroft, 2005).⁸⁷

It is encouraging to note a few examples which have emerged recently to change the tide in the wake of the Asian Tsunami. Two sets of guidelines were drawn up in January 2005 by the

International Rescue Committee, Save the Children UK, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and World Vision International (WVI). The principles are notable in their focus on the most vulnerable children in the Tsunami, and draw heavily on the Inter-agency Guiding Principles on Unaccompanied and Separated children (Bernard van Leer, 2005)⁸⁸. The emphasis is on preventing separation, preserving family unity, rapid reunification and, in the case of orphans, community based care as opposed to residential care (Tolfree, 2005)⁸⁹. In addition to locating and assisting separated children, the guidelines call for the need to identify other groups of children such as children associated with armed groups, disabled or sick children, children living on the streets, child victims of trafficking, and abducted children (Bernard van Leer, 2005).⁹⁰ However, principles are often not well translated into action, and much more needs to be done to ensure that the principle of access includes the most marginalised children, and that special efforts are put in place to ensure that ECCE programmes reach the most vulnerable groups.

3.2.1 Pre-Emergency Preparedness: The Provisions of ECD kits

Preparedness is the key to a rapid response in an emergency and yet it is often the area most neglected aspect of ECCE programs in emergencies, or indeed education emergency intervention in general (Pigozzi, 1999)⁹¹. As Sommers (2002) notes, of preparedness dimensions, emergency kits have received the greatest amount of attention, but are arguably the most controversial (Box 8).

Box 8: the Debate on Emergency Kits - Quality Dimensions

Inflexibility and appropriateness: A major problem is that pre-designed kits never quite fit any user situation. This has been found to be the case with primary education kits, but holds even truer for ECD kits, which have an emphasis on recreational materials. Forms of recreation vary widely, as do the discrepancies between activities considered appropriate for boys and girls (Sinclair, 2001). Related to this is that often preschool teachers and child minders do not understand the use of unfamiliar materials in the kits and cannot relate them easily to the cultural context in which they are working with children (personal observation, UNICEF Sri Lanka).

Training and resource mobilisation: Perhaps the greatest drawback of a kitted approach is that with increasing emphasis on rapid response, and meeting the needs of diverse operational situations, agencies have tended to separate the supply of kits from the process of developing the ECCE interventions themselves. Perhaps even more significant is that a preoccupation with material resources detracts from the process of community involvement and mobilisation, so critical to the success of ECCE in emergencies.

This led UNICEF in its rapid emergency response to primary education, to separate the supply of emergency materials from the process of teacher training.

“ The reason that we [UNICEF] have moved away from the name ‘school in a box’ is that, despite its appeal to donors, it tends to create the impression that the box contains the school, when it can only contain supplies. No amount of kits will replace all the other work that it takes to get education going- community mobilisation, identifying an appropriate curriculum, obtaining or developing learning and teaching materials, identifying, orienting and training teachers, monitoring standards, and so forth” .

The danger is magnified in the case of ECCE interventions. Often paraprofessionals take on the role of preschool teachers or child care minders with little or no previous training. Varying lengths, intensities and modalities of training between agencies, result in uneven quality. For example, it is debatable whether a 2 day orientation-delivered by some agencies using kits- is sufficient to ensure sufficient competency of preschool teachers to adequately deliver benefits from the use of the kits. Additionally, to be effective, training needs to be accompanied by ‘Activity Guides’ for preschool teachers to work with the kits and the children. In Bosnia Herzegovina, for example, SC (US) devoted time and effort in developing a ‘resource manual’ for preschool teachers to accompany preschool materials, and developed a cadre of ‘paraprofessionals’ through an intensive three week training module.

Costs: A final consideration is the cost of ECD emergency kits. Currently, UNICEF's ECD emergency kits cost \$336 per kit, higher than the cost of a TEP (\$280), or the current costs of UNICEF education and recreation kits, which are \$287.80 and \$269.36 respectively. If the ECD kit is used by 30 children per kit, this would mean a per child cost of \$11.20.¹ This figure does not include shipping costs from Copenhagen. Compared to locally assembled kits of, for example, Redd Barna in Bosnia Herzegovina (\$120.04),¹ it is perhaps not surprising that there is considerable debate regarding the cost-efficiency of using pre-assembled ECD emergency kits rather than developing and locally procuring ECD resource materials relevant to the context and culture in which the crisis has occurred.

(Sinclair, 2001)⁹²

In the field of ECCE, most ECD kits have been assembled by various agencies based on local context, and after the crisis has occurred. For example, Save the Children US developed a simple pack for preschool teachers and paraprofessionals during the Bosnia crisis. UNICEF has responded to several countries in crisis though developing its own locally assembled ECD emergency kits (although not necessarily for emergencies) such as in Bangladesh, South Africa and Kosovo (UNICEF, 2005)⁹³. Recently, UNICEF has developed a standardised emergency ECD kit, similar to a 'School in a Box'. The ECD Emergency Kit consists of a list of ECD materials for 0-3 and 3-6 year olds, and guidelines suggesting activities for caregivers. Although still its experimental stages, at the time of writing procurements had been made to deliver the Kits to 6 UNICEF offices: Iraq, Yemen, Chad, Guinea, Maldives and Jamaica (UNICEF ECD PO, personal communication). The kits were developed based on experience from UNICEF field offices of locally assembled kits in previous crisis, such as in Iran in response to the earthquake, Uganda, and Indonesia.

In her comprehensive examination of the debate on emergency kits, Margaret Sinclair notes that "as far as refugees are concerned, the use of kits has not been and should not be a major feature of refugee education, since local procurement of materials through NGOs is normally a better option" (2001:57). Although kits are useful in resource-poor environments, where locally produced materials are scarce or unobtainable, Sommers (2002) observes that the kit is of limited utility given its short-term timeline for use, the inflexibility of the contents and approach of kits, the controversy over their applicability, and most importantly, the comparative inattention to developing the capacity in agencies and governments to prepare and plan for implementing education and ECCE during times of severe crisis.

3.2.2 From Kits to Child-Friendly Spaces

A number of child focused agencies have employed the use of child friendly spaces in the early phases of a crisis. UNICEF, in collaboration with NGOs such as Christian Children's Fund and Save the Children, has recently adopted the concept within a broader approach to emergency response (Box 9) which is being developed within the framework of UNICEF's Core Corporate Commitments to Children in Emergencies (CCCs).⁹⁴

Christian Children's Fund's Child Centred Spaces is both child focused and context sensitive, based on a well articulated methodology for assessing and responding to the immediate need of young children in emergencies (Beckland et al., 2005)⁹⁵. For example, following a rapid assessment, CCF established more than 100 CCSs in three tsunami ravaged countries: India, Indonesia and Sri Lanka. These spaces

- Give children a safe place to play that supports their social integration and enables their emotional expression so as to help them come to terms with difficult experiences and heal from the trauma of natural disasters or war;
- Offers children a sense of safety and security, helps to normalise their lives, and teaches them about risks;
- Provides a platform for restarting some form of preschool education to develop age appropriate competencies (social, cognitive, etc.) and doing detailed planning for longer-term projects;
- Often provide basic health care, supplementary feeding and other necessities.

To complement these spaces, CCF strives to achieve a greater impact to its intervention through the formation of Child Well-Being Committees (CWBCs). The committees are comprised of parents,

community leaders and youth increase communities' capacities to address numerous issues affecting the protection, wellbeing and health of children, families and vulnerable groups. They also allow an entry point for dialogue for mothers about risks to children, such as HIV/AIDS, nutrition, etc.

Box 9: Post cards from the Edge - Child Friendly Spaces

Child friendly spaces fulfil several important functions during an emergency. They ensure access of children to ECCE services, and they incorporate several dimensions of care, and including creating a sense of security for mothers and children. For example, in *Liberia*, where decades of fighting has led to multiple internal displacement of hundreds of thousands of Liberians, disrupted basic social services, and increased vulnerability of large populations especially women and children, UNICEF established four child friendly spaces which included early childhood development programmes. The spaces provided mothers with a comfortable space to breastfeed babies. They also provided early childhood development care classes which contained components of hygiene, nutrition, the importance of play and so on. The centres delivered services related to health, nutrition, early stimulation and learning, water-hygiene-sanitation, and protection to young children.¹ Similar spaces have been set up in *DRC* at community based early childhood development centres within already revitalised health zones, as well as in other locations

In *Angola*, when the long-running civil war came to an end, a network of national and international NGOs supported the implementation of CFS in war-affected communities, including ECD programmes. It served over 30,000 children in 17 provinces. With UNICEF support, two international NGOs developed and conducted a training of trainers' package for the CFS in family settlement areas, and the training of parents on child development. Over 450 IDP community volunteers were trained to conduct child development activities

In *Burkina Faso*, following the exodus of more than 300,000 people since September 2002, about 7,000 returned under the government organised operation "Biyari", of which the great majority (90%) were children and adolescents. In response to this emergency situation, UNICEF established CCFs, together with the government of Burkina Faso, and in partnership with WFP, WHO and the Red Cross. The contribution of UNICEF and its partners included equipping of reception sites with water; learning materials; toys; and pedagogical tools; family relief supplies. 'Bisongo Bayari' are temporary Early Childhood Development Centres that are equipped as reception or transit sites to provide healthy, nutritious, stimulating care for children aged 0-8 years. The holistic approach to ECD includes some psychosocial assistance, in addition to toys, clothes, vaccines, and psycho-pedagogical tools.

(UNICEF, 2005, *ibid*)

The lessons distilled from these programmes are similar, and can be summarised by the approach developed by Save the Children in emergencies using the STOP framework. The framework, first devised by Swedish Save the Children, sets out an easy way to remember ways of ensuring that the key principles of good early years practice to support children affected by calamities are in place, and can apply not just to the provision of early years services in an emergency situation, but also once children are in the stage of post-emergency scenarios (Box 10)

Box 10: The STOP Model

S- Structure and Space
T- Talking
O- Organised Play
P- Parental Support

Space and structure are vital to normalising routines and providing opportunities for interaction. To mitigate the chaos *within* the child of incomprehension in the face of events and losses outside of his or her control, kindergartens, clubs, theatre groups etc are “islands of normality”. For a child, getting to know the predictable routine of a setting will be an antidote to the chaos they may have experienced. For adults they remain as networks where adults can take responsibility in a world of violence, fear and chaos.

Talking, making sense of one’s experience is a vital component of the healing process. Allowing children to express their feelings is an important part of the programme, as is the realisation that the child needs *time*, and a person to *trust* and who is ready to listen.

Organised Play can range from group activities such as games, to dancing and singing, to explorative play using a wide range of materials. The common goal of these activities is to strengthen the resilience of the child by providing ways for children to safely express their feelings through drawing or painting, poetry, essays, story or letter writing, puppetry. Additionally, children, preschool and older, benefit from concrete ways of helping others. It builds compassion and gives children some sense of control. If appropriately involved through group activities, children can discover what it means to be compassionate. Helping others, even in the smallest ways, builds children’s self-confidence. It’s an antidote to the feelings of helplessness and hopelessness all encounter during disaster.

Parental Support is essential to assist children in emergencies. Supporting the family in taking care of their own children must be a basic principle of all interventions.

(Gustafsson, 1986; Williams et al. 2005)⁹⁶

3.3 RESOURCES

3.3.1 Community Participation with an emphasis on Capacity Building

Community participation throughout an emergency education project is encouraged by leading assistance agencies as a precondition for its success (Bird, 1999; Brown, 2001; Lange, 1998; Midttun, 1998; Nicolai, 2000; Sinclair, 2001)⁹⁷ and holds especially true in the case of ECCE interventions. This is firstly because it is widely acknowledged that the well being of young children is inextricably linked to their principle caregivers and to the social milieu in which the family unit exists. Indeed, community participation is regarded as a precondition for the success of any good quality ECCE programme.

Secondly, under conditions which create weak governments, communities often resort to self help despite their lack of means. Generally speaking, the partial or total collapse of government structures and the institutional chaos which follow a conflict or serious natural disaster seriously reduce or totally disable the operational capacity of a country and pose significant problems for international aid programmes. In order to be effective, external assistance needs to build upon this large-scale grass-roots motivation.

Thirdly, ECCE programmes are entry points for community development. A salient example is the family focused ECD programme of the Community of Learner Foundation (COLF) in the Philippines following the eruption of the Mt. Pinatubo volcano in 1991 which displaced 10,200 Aeta families from ancestral homes (Box 11).

Box 11: The COLF Programme in the Philippines

Set up in the aftermath of the Philippines Mt. Pinatubo volcano eruption the Community of Learners Foundation (COLF) used an ecological model of child development which emphasised family and community empowerment to support children in the aftermath of mass displacement and resettlement. The central feature of the programme was to provide a means of ensuring that displaced families were empowered to care for the children at the family, community, and societal levels. Parent education programmes (PEP) served the multiple purposes of delivering child health and education messages, socio-economic projects, and community organising efforts. Home based programmes consisting of playgroups for children and parent education were anchored to family groups. The later addition of a livelihood component became the basis of community organisation.

Parental attitudes changed towards their children's play, discipline, and their views on children's social and emotional life, language development, education and schooling. They took more time to play with the younger children, and allowed their children more time to play with their peers. They appreciated the value of play and created playthings for their children from recyclable materials, and there were significant changes in their child care practices and their interactions with their children. Their attitude towards education changed dramatically and it became key to seek education for their children. Parents also requested to read and write themselves, as part of the PEP. Mothers in particular benefited by gaining a greater appreciation of how much they also contribute to their family income, or as resources for other family members and neighbours. When the PEP programme came to an end, COLF introduced an economic component anchored in natural family groupings to create formal organisations which started livelihood projects such as a cooperative store, basket making, food processing, planning fruit trees, rice production and animal-raising. The parent education groups, playgroups, parent volunteer apprenticeship teachers, the people's organisations and cooperatives which became responsible for the livelihood projects would continue to be closely linked and survive after the COLF phases out of the resettlement sites.

(De los Angeles-Bautista, unpublished)⁹⁸

Fourthly, as well as being a principle means of filling the capacity gap in the wake of a crisis, community participation has been found to be instrumental to ensuring sustainability of interventions (in terms of attitudes and activities) in the aftermath of an emergency. Drawing on the Mt. Pinatubo experience, parental participation in the programme changed their attitudes towards their children in many crucial ways and extended the life of ECD initiatives.

The Philippines programme is an example of how ECD interventions can serve as a community building tool. The level of community participation in ECCE interventions can vary and can have dramatically different impacts. Involving parents though participating in preschools classes, establishing maternal/family or community groups, providing training on how to organise and support activities for young children; establishing preschool-parent associations, or enlisting the direct assistance of families in establishing self-sustaining people's associations to set up and run preschools themselves all qualify as parental or community participation. However, to the degree that they participatively involve parents and community members in the decision making process, they will vary in the magnitude to which they can benefit young children and their families, and be sustainable beyond the external assistance phase of an emergency.

3.3.2 Human Resource Development (Sinclair, 2002)

During emergencies, preschool teachers and childcare professionals are likely to be in short supply, or absent altogether. Those that do exist are likely to have poor levels of qualifications, and little experience. Indeed, it has been noted that teacher qualifications, often low to begin with, tend to drop significantly during and after emergencies (World Bank, 2005; Buckland, 2003)⁹⁹ In many such instances, ECCE interventions need to draw on a cadre of para-professionals from within displaced communities. SC (US), for example, recruited and trained local women from within the community as paraprofessionals to run pre-school classes despite the existence of a government preschool programmes and qualified ECCE professionals before the conflict in Bosnia-Hertzevina SC (US). In the aftermath of the Tsunami, UN agencies and others, such as Plan

International (Plan, 2005)¹⁰⁰, trained volunteers to deliver basic education and KGs in camps for the displaced in India, Indonesia and Sri Lanka. Lessons learned which were found to determine the suitability, quality, and suitability of human resource development in ECCE are summarised in Box 12.

Box 12: Factors affecting human resource provisions in the delivery of quality ECCE

Lessons from around the world have shown that the provision of adequate human resources rests on:

- *The willingness of the donor agency to pay teachers salaries for a time to prevent high teacher turnover*
- *Ensuring funding beyond the life of the project through a) the integration of ECCE programmes and trained professionals into local or municipal government structures, b) securing continued funding through local governments and municipalities for teacher salaries, c) securing sustainable community funding, d) continued external donor assistance.*
- *Accrediting qualifications and certification: ensuring that paraprofessionals and community volunteers receive government accreditation for qualifications once authority was handed back to the administering authority*
- *The training of teachers is adapted to local needs and contexts*
- *Ensuring community participation in the setting up and management of ECD centres from the start*
- *Providing on going training and support (eg. Burma SC experience, SC and Redd Barna Bosnia, Philippines Pinatibu programme)*
- *Realistically capitalising on opportunities provided by the crisis to insert elements of reform in teacher training way from a focus on 'chalk and talk' and rote learning, and to take into account the special needs of children exposed to some form of crisis (SC US/Redd Barna).*

Triplehorn (2001)¹⁰¹ notes a particular difficulty confronting external agencies in paying teacher salaries. Teachers will not usually continue to work without appropriate compensation (usually from external sources), yet paying teachers undermines the government's role and responsibility. In the absence of consistent salary arrangements, teachers will often require families to pay fees or provide in-kind contributions, which reduces access for the most vulnerable children. This puts agencies in a dilemma: They need to ensure adequate and rapid deployment of human resource, while at the same time prevent undermining of the government's roles and responsibilities, and promote equitable and quality-focused post-crisis reform in the long run. While solutions need to fit the situation, and hence perhaps no hard and fast rule can be applied, humanitarian agencies need to make provisions for ensuring continuity of human resources during the crisis, and plan for handover of these personnel once government systems are up and running again.

3.4 ACTIVITIES AND CURRICULA

3.4.1 Curricula and Educational Resources

Although ECCE programmes are usually exempt from the tensions which usually accompany curricula setting in post-conflict re-construction reform efforts, they are not without their perils. It is notable that there is generally no commonly accepted or established standard for ECCE curricular setting and educational resourcing in crises, with agencies setting their own resourcing standards to cater to the unique characteristics of each situation. While this has the advantage of allowing

flexibility in response to changing local realities, it may sometimes obscure the importance of providing the right type of educational resources and curricula for very young children.

For example, a unique characteristic of preschool education not reflected in primary education provisions is the importance of having educational resources appropriate for children under 6. Agencies working in this sector have laid emphasis, to varying degrees, on providing child friendly furniture (small desks, climbing frames), age appropriate early learning materials such as toys, sports equipment, videos, books, colouring sets, preschool library etc (Plan, 2005)¹⁰² cups for drinking, soap to wash hands and to locally suitable ‘activity manuals’ for teachers which can be adapted to post-conflict reconstruction reforms (SC US). A caveat to the above is that in deciding on standards and methodologies of ECCE emergency resourcing agencies must include local and municipal government right from the start to ensure consensus in longer term reform and reconstruction efforts. How, to what extent, and when this happens determines to a large extent the success of mainstreaming gains in human and other resource development beyond the phase of the crisis and as part of the development continuum. Efforts by external actors to introduce ECCE reform in pre-existing preschool curricula and teaching methods have noted some resistance depending on how the changes were introduced (Burde, 1999)¹⁰³.

3.4.2 Holistic integrated models of intervention

An integrated approach for early childhood development in emergencies is based on the premise that the physical, psychological, and social aspects of a child’s development are narrowly inter-related and inter-dependent, and hence intervention in a single field will provide only limited results. Coordinated action in the fields of health and nutrition; water sanitation and hygiene; early stimulation and learning; and protection are regarded as vital ingredients for effectively caring for young children in emergencies. Working with families and communities and having children actively participate in their own development are at the heart of strategies to bring this about (UNICEF, 2004).¹⁰⁴

The International Rescue Committee (IRC) “Healing Classrooms Initiative” in Shimelba Refugee camp in Northern Ethiopia, for example, works on the principles of psychosocial wellbeing and the healing of children and teachers, and integrates these with culturally appropriate notions of good teaching (Kirk et al., in press)¹. The establishment of a separate preschool programme, in the context of nine classrooms to form a “children’s village” inside the refugee camp with the close participation of the camp community resulted in both collective and individual child benefits. The compound has an adjacent school feeding centre, play/group room, age-appropriate segregated latrines, and an outdoor playground. The classrooms have been furnished with mats, chairs, and tables appropriate for young children and age appropriate school materials, recreational activities, art, music and pre-literacy classes. The feeding centre provides children with a meal a day.

The programme uses learner-centred methodologies that promote problem solving and creative thinking in the classroom. It addresses the holistic development of the child by including the basic themes of health, environment, language, and physical education. The programme also affords early outreach to young children, youth leaders and greater opportunities for engaging parents in dialogue concerning the needs of their refugee children. In particular, young girls benefit from not having to care for their younger siblings, leading to girls’ increased enrolment and retention in

¹ Kirk, J., Sklar, J., Mikre, T. (in press) Creating Healing Classrooms for Pre-school Children in Simbela Refugee Camp, Ethiopia. Forthcoming issue Early Childhood Development in Emergencies. *Coordinators Handbook*. Consultative Group in Early Childhood Care and Development.

school. IRC further targeted female heads of households for its vocational training, adult education, and income generation programmes, creating a demand for structured activities for preschool aged children while their mothers participated in trainings and classrooms.

Similar interventions have been made in communities affected by natural disasters, such as the work of Plan International in the aftermath of the South East Asian Tsunami (Box 13). The case studies collectively demonstrate the potential for holistic principles of development to work together in practice to respond to different local conditions and contexts, and demonstrates how a holistic ECD model can provide a powerful and responsive tool for child protection and community building following mass disruption.

Box 13: An example of a holistic integrated emergency ECCE response: Plan's Response to the Tsunami in Indonesia

Health and Nutrition

- Supported the distribution of nutrients for 160,000 children and pregnant women in more than 126 camps of Banda Aceh and Banda Besar
- Conducted two training courses in partnership with the Ministry of Health, Provincial PKB-NAD, local Indonesian Midwives Association (IBI) at provincial levels, and women NGO networks such as Solidaritas Perempuan (Women's Solidarity), Flower Aceh and Serikat Inong Aceh. The training was provided to 109 health unit cadres in 20 IDP camps
- Provided 50 health units/village midwives with health equipment such as scales, height charts and delivery kits

Education

- Assisted in the establishment of temporary schools and early childhood care and development centres in 24 IDP camps
- Supplied school tents, uniforms, equipment, educational tools, interactive games and school feeding to 2,600 children
- Organised two ECCD and Primary Education training courses and teacher honoraria for 138 volunteer teachers
- Finished design for reconstruction of 2 child-friendly schools in three villages in the Masjid Raya sub district
- Established two additional ECCD centres in the Masjid Raya subdistrict
- Installed and managed 1 library for children
- Trained 70 teachers on child rights and child centred community development theory and methodology
- Trained 30 teachers on trauma counselling and early detection of signs of stress in children
- Conducted monthly teacher meetings

Water and Sanitation

- Provided funding and logistical support to government agencies for the operation of 5 water tankers of 4,000 to 6,000 litres capacity
- Provide 5 water tankers to local NGO partners which serve 60 IDP camps covering an estimated 55,000 people
- Cleaned existing units of dug wells benefiting 600 people
- Provided 1,000-litre water tanks and jerry cans to IDP camps and semi-permanent housing "barracks"
- Provided training to volunteers and IDP camp leaders on water, environment and sanitation management and water quality management involving 100,000 people.

Community development for camp organisation

- Provided child centred community development training in 10 IDP camps to enable displaced people to identify their problems, existing resources, and priorities in camps so that together with Plan, other agencies and local government can improve camp organisation and management

Child protection

- Helped tsunami-affected children in 23 IDP camps
- Supported specialised training on 'Trauma' reduction for 40 men and women ECCE, primary education teachers, volunteers camp coordinators and health unit cadres some of whom were tsunami survivors themselves
- Began development of child help line services in Aceh in collaboration with the Directorate of Post and Telecommunications, the Women's Empowerment Ministry and the Social Department
- Began planning birth registration campaign to be implemented in partnership with government agencies and community groups
- Organised 3-day children's events where 1,500 children competed in dancing, singing, drawing and sports.

Plan (2005)¹⁰⁵

3.4.3 Peace, democracy and reconciliation

Many international organisations believe that education during crises can offer a window of opportunity to prevent conflict and foster peaceful society building and tolerance of diversity. Often these programmes are targeted at the older age groups in the belief that children under 8 are too young to notice. However, research reveals otherwise.

Children as young as 4 and 5 have already begun to discriminate social groups and to form stereotypes. Research on children in Northern Ireland has shown that children as young as five or six are already developing awareness of one or both of the two main categories Catholic and Protestant (Connolly, 1999)¹⁰⁶. Although the conclusions need to be substantiated with more qualitative and in-depth research, it seems reasonable to assume that children from the age of three onwards are capable of developing awareness of different ethno-religious groups, and to assign negative traits to them (Box 14). This has important implications for the type of learning one provides very young children in complex emergencies. Curricula/activities should encourage empathy, a focus on the positive effects of pro-social behaviour, reinforcing positive intentions, and modelling appropriate responses to the needs of others (Connolly, 1998)¹⁰⁷.

As Connolly (1998) notes, “There is a need to recognise the central importance of broader social and political contexts within which children are located and the inevitable pivotal influences these exert on their motivations to develop and maintain sectarian attitudes and behaviour....changes in attitudes can only be effective alongside changes in the broader environment that give rise to such attitudes...television programmes [for example] can play an important role” (ibid).

Box 14: Too Young to Notice?

Research from Northern Ireland based on a survey of children aged 3 to 6 years provides insight into the cultural and political awareness of young children:

- From the age of three, children were found to show small but significant differences in their preference for names, flags etc representing particular ethno-religious groups
- Over 50% of three year olds are able to demonstrate some awareness of the cultural/political significance of at least one object or event. By six years old, 90% of children were able to do so.
- Children as young as 5 years old were able to identify with a particular community, rising to one in three children by age six.

In analysing the responses of the children, three factors appeared to be influential in increasing children’s awareness and attitudes in relation to these matters. These were: the family, the local community and the school. Connolly et al (2002) conclude that while these results are hardly surprising, it does highlight the limitations of strategies aimed at addressing prejudices and discriminatory behaviour among children that are not oriented towards the family and local community.

Connolly et al. (2002)¹⁰⁸

Others have urged that educational provisions for young children be inclusive to avoid further perpetuating conflicts arising from impediments to access, gender, and disability of membership of a particular social or ethnic group. In the same vein, curricula should encourage respect for human rights (Nicholi and Triplehorn, 2003).¹⁰⁹

Strengthening democracy is implicit in the civil society building which usually underpins ECCE programmes Burde (1999). Through their use of education to stabilise communities, ECCE programmes foster increased parental participation in public life, and increase the number of civic associations. For example, in the surge among US agencies to support democratic reform in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, the Soros Step by Step programme in Eastern Europe was evaluated for its impact on democracy building. According to this evaluation, child-centered learning based on the Head Start model can foster democratic notions at an early age (Brady et al. 1999).¹¹⁰

However, bridging ethnic and religious divides and building community incentives can fall short in the absence of a true understanding of the histories and dynamics that underlie community divides, and calls for a more nuanced approach. A recent World Bank report concedes, “Ensuring that

education plays a role in reversing the damaging effects of conflict and building or rebuilding social cohesion requires a deeper analysis of the way education impacts conflict” (World Bank, 2005)¹¹¹

3.4.4 Coordination and Capacity building for Sustainability: Opportunities and Challenges

“The fundamental challenge to reaching EFA targets in countries during conflicts is the lack of an effective, widely-accepted policy or strategy to tackle the dual problems of weakened governments in war zones and the absence of clear mandates and coordinated action plans for international response.” (Sommers, 2002, p.20)

How does one move from relief to reconstruction?

There is a growing consensus that crisis interventions should be considered as part of the business of development rather than as an ad hoc response. As Talbot (2002) notes, one major problem faced by the ministries responsible for education and other provisions stems from the approach adopted by donors, both of the UN system and the NGO sector. Most donor governments have a structure that splits policy and operational responsibility between development programmes and humanitarian relief activities, and their funding mechanism tends to follow this division. NGOs and multilateral agencies, including those of the UN also separate relief and development functions. Organisational mandates and funding cycles often make it difficult to support necessary long-term investments in ECCE. Indeed, the problematic division between relief and development has led to calls by donor agencies to close the relief development ‘gap’, and to adopt the more realistic approach of considering socio-economic development as a single process that includes catastrophes, response and reconstruction.

Talbot (2002), for example, argues that the

*“relief-development dichotomy is an artificial one....children need a quality education whether they are living in peaceful or conflicted societies. A more realistic approach is to consider socio-economic development as a single process that *includes* catastrophes, responses to them and recovery from them.” (Talbot, 2002: 47)¹¹²*

He goes on to point to evidence of this notable lack of integration in the absence of emergency ECCE or education provisions in EFA National Plans of Action (NPAs):

“So far, unfortunately, only three countries- Canada, Norway and Sweden- have made firm commitments to education for emergencies and declared that in such situations, education will be a major priority.” (2003:71)¹¹³

This calls for relevant line ministries to be at the heart of strategies, investments and institutional arrangements when humanitarian actors step in to respond to crises situations:

“Past experience shows that learning to prepare for, adapt to and respond to crises that can render education systems dysfunctional requires a proactive response. Accordingly, international actors accustomed to working with national education ministries (such as the World Bank, regional development banks, donor governments and UN agencies) should.. work with ministries to grapple with education in crisis situations on preparedness concerns...(..Through contingency planning), establish an active, supportive, accountable presence during crises, and commence planning for post-war situations before they arrive “(Sommers 2002: 24).¹¹⁴

Beyond the initial stages of a crisis, ECCE programmes can present *opportunities* for development. When systems break down, external agencies are presented with the potential and space to introduce reform. Reconstruction of children's quality environments in post-emergency scenarios presents opportunities to bolster and consolidate community participation and involvement in ECCE. During instability, highly centralised systems tend to fragment as the capacity of the central authorities is stretched, allowing more political space for reform to open up. This often presents valuable scope to a) demonstrate early visible impact to sustain popular support for the reform process, b) introduce a stronger sense of ownership at local level, and c) introduce a greater responsiveness to local conditions. Finally, with the injection of financial resources that accompanies a crisis, there will be opportunities to expand ECCE provisions and build on the strengths of previously existing initiatives.

In this regard, building partnerships for effective coordination is key. ECCE is the concern of many government sectors, notably the education, social affairs, and health sectors. Co-ordination among these sectors is essential for ensuring holistic development and the efficient use of donor and government resources. Indeed, with resources in the aftermath of a crisis often being over-stretched there is usually increased involvement by the private sector and community associations, adding to the challenge of coordination and integration (Choi, 2003)¹¹⁵.

In summarising the challenges facing ECD implementation Young points out that, "a) in-country institutional capacity to implement these projects is often lacking, b) the integrated projects often are a new approach...and c) the expertise to implement large-scale ECD projects is often not available "(2002:20)¹¹⁶. She cautions that policy makers should be aware that successful implementation must rest on supportive institutional frameworks as much as on support from parents, communities, non-governmental organisations and societal institutions. In effect, "reconstruction needs to operate simultaneously at both ends of the spectrum, re-building local communities' ability to support their children's education at one end, and at the other, rehabilitating capacities at the centre to manage and develop the education system as a whole." (Buckland, 2003:76)¹¹⁷.

In post-crisis situations, demands for reform efforts driven by external assistance agencies need to be sensitive to the limited capacity of government ministries to initiate extensive reforms too soon after a crisis, adding to already overburdened and weakened systems. In Rwanda, for example, education reforms in the aftermath of the civil war were not well received. Obura notes that attempts by external agencies to change the familiar pattern of the curriculum and teaching activities in the post-crisis reconstruction phase did not go down well with the ministry of education, and even led to serious disagreements (Obura, 2003)¹¹⁸. SC (US)'s experiences in Bosnia-Hertzeogovina similarly shows that, once the emergency phase of the crisis is over, attempts to maintain teaching reforms at municipal government level can meet with resistance, and pre-school curricula and methods reconstructed with little incorporation of the crisis-initiated reforms. Failure to receive accreditation by municipal government, and lack of viable teacher salaries was found to lead to loss of most of the trained paraprofessionals despite attempts by community associations to seek funding. This underscores the central importance of gaining national support of ECCE programmes in post-crisis reconstruction efforts for them to become financially sustainable.

An ongoing concern with delivering ECCE provisions in emergencies (including reconstruction) is who decides and who pays? As bi-lateral, multi-national and non-governmental actors assume responsibility for meeting the needs of populations affected by crisis, government planners often feel marginalised and demoralised. The problem is exacerbated by the multi-sectoral nature of ECCE interventions. So while education in emergencies is "critically underfunded" (Heninger

2005)¹⁹, the challenge facing ECCE is even more daunting given that donors need to prioritise funding for health, social welfare, etc. as well. The potential of uncoordinated donor action to play off one government agency against another is great in this case, and can lead to further fragmentation and constraints to progress rather than instigating positive reform and reconstruction. A particular challenge for ECCE programmes is that costs and financing, notoriously difficult to estimate even in peaceful contexts, are even more so in crises, relying as they do on a plethora of formal and non-formal funding mechanisms.

Finally, the sectoral imbalance of funding emergency education which prioritises primary education further challenges ECCE reconstruction efforts. A recent World Bank report contends that “Much of the energy and resources of the international community have been directed at basic education, while education authorities have been left to their own resources to deal with the needs of other sub-sectors. The result has been that system recovery has in some instances been out of balance in ways that will directly affect economic and social development in the longer term.” (2003:63).

This imbalance is likely to continue without greater advocacy and awareness raising of the importance of Early Childhood interventions in crisis settings. Agencies working to promote Early Childhood interventions need to encourage greater recognition and understanding of the benefits of ECCE as a central tool in reaching MDG and EFA goals for pre-primary and primary education for governments in the midst of recovery. It also calls for greater awareness amongst donors and humanitarian actors of the intersecting needs of children, the role of ECCE as a vital child protection tool, and the importance of integrating and coordinating action to ensure successful post crisis recovery and reform.

4.0 CONCLUDING REMARKS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The present review has examined the status of ECCE in emergency situations. In doing so it has found the world’s commitments to young children still leave much to be desired. The Geneva Convention, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Jomtien Declaration and other instruments make specific mention of children affected by conflict and in other difficult circumstances. However, implementation lags far behind international agreements, and child rights have yet to be implemented to a sufficient degree in humanitarian and national action plans.

The review has found a notable dearth of systematic attempts to evaluate and assess progress in meeting the needs of young children in emergencies. Part of the oversight is attributable to the lack of effective mechanisms to monitor the rights of children in all types of disaster. The customary absence of a coordinated system for data collection on displaced children receiving assistance, and the often fragmentary and inaccurate information and statistics about refugees and IDPs, particularly those falling within the 0-8 year old age group has made it difficult to systematically assess the extent to which intervention efforts have been effective in addressing young children’s needs and designing appropriate policies and interventions.

The following recommendations are intended to provide an overview of the action points and lessons learnt which have emerged from the above analysis and to provide guiding principles for policy, planning and implementation to ensure the effective delivery of ECCE in emergency situations. In this regard they complement and reinforce recommendations made by other international agencies in recent reviews of the same sector (Bernard van Leer, in press; Ogara, Long and Triplehorn, in press)²

² Forthcoming issues of the Bernard Van Leer Early childhood Counts, and the Consultative Group Notebook. References to be clarified when published.

Advocacy, Research and Policy Development:

- There remains an urgent need to raise public awareness about the plight of young children in emergencies amongst national governments, multilateral, bilateral and international organisations. All parties responding to a disaster must be advised of young children's rights and the need for an integrated holistic approach in meeting them.
- Absence of data on young children means relevant ministries have insufficient information to plan and implement ECCE programmes as the population moves towards reconstruction. This can cause reconstruction efforts to be stymied from the start (Talbot, 2002).¹²⁰ Greater efforts to disaggregate data on children in crisis and emergencies need to be put in place, and to integrate ECCE assessments in emergency structures.
- Systematic evaluations of ECCE interventions and documentation of lessons learnt is urgently required.
- International commitments need to be further articulated and developed. In particular, the findings of the present report call for including children in crises in national data gathering and reporting, such to the CRC Committee and EFA Committee.
- Better co-ordination and articulation of donor mandates, coupled with gaining national support of ECCE programmes at both central and decentralised levels in post-crisis reconstruction efforts needs to be fostered. The costs of financing initial crisis responses and reconstruction efforts need to be systematically assessed.

Programme Development

- ECCE plans, including emergency contingency plans, should to be established as part of National Plans of Action. Despite their devastating impacts, crises can provide a window of opportunity to expand ECCE at national levels while encouraging private sector and community based programming. This means that agencies need to work at both ends of the spectrum, and to develop capacity at both central and decentralised levels.
- Targeted interventions are required for especially vulnerable groups. This holds particularly true for **3-6 year olds** who benefit the least from care provisions during calamities, and for the particularly **at risk groups** such as orphans, separated children, and children with disabilities.
- Better translation of empirical findings into practice for the under 3 or four year olds, and for ensuring **quality** of child care is needed. This is especially so as it relates to the need for more systematic attention to the psycho-social vulnerabilities of children and to the centrality of their care giving environments in providing the necessary social supports during times when their emotional and other resources are overstretched or absent altogether. Emergency interventions need to incorporate best practice and empirical evidence which highlights the central importance of eliciting the active participation of children in arriving at their own solutions, the need for play and recreation, and the centrality of establishing emotionally stable and supportive environments during times of crisis and beyond
- Greater use of participatory community based approaches to meeting the needs of children in conflict and calamity needs to take place to encourage community building with a view to sustainable development.

Implementation Mechanisms

- Who decides and who pays? The issue of funding remains a major obstacle to timely, quality interventions for young children during emergencies. Redress the sectoral imbalance of donors' prioritisation of formal education through advocacy and policy development with donors.
- Another factor is the absence of studies or systematic research on the cost and financing of ECCE in unstable situations which may assist policy makers in deciding the costs and benefits of funding allocations. Greater efforts need to be exerted to examine and analyse funding options of ECCE in emergencies with an emphasis on supporting the holistic application of ECCE interventions in disaster situations.
- Reconstruction needs to operate simultaneously at both ends of the spectrum, re-building local communities' ability to support their children's education at one end, and at the other, rehabilitating capacities at the centre to manage and develop the education system as a whole.
- Building partnerships for effective coordination is key. ECCE is the concern of many government sectors, notably the education, social affairs, and health sectors. Co-ordination among these sectors is essential for ensuring holistic development and the efficient use of donor and government resources

Ensuring young children have adequate care and education during times of instability is a fundamental human right. Although emergencies have devastating impacts on children's lives, they can also present valuable scope to demonstrate early visible impact to sustain popular support for the ECCE reform process, introduce a stronger sense of ownership at local level and introduce a greater responsiveness to local conditions. The injection of financial resources that accompanies a crisis will also present opportunities to expand ECCE provisions and build on the strengths of previously existing initiatives. The report has highlighted the importance of ECCE, not just in its benefits of addressing the EFA goals, but also as an important community building tool which has multiple benefits for both children and their communities extending far beyond crisis and post-crisis situations to longer term benefits for improving human and social capital.

¹ Bensalah, K, Sinclair, M., Hadj Nacer, F., Commisso, A., and Bokhari, S. (2001) *Education in Situations of Emergency and Crisis: Challenges for the New Century. Thematic Studies*. Paris: UNESCO

² Kaldor, M., (1999) *New and Old Wars: organised violence in a global era*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

³ UNICEF (2002) *The State of the World's Children 2002: Early Childhood*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

⁴ Lloyd, E., Penn, H., Barea, S., Burton, V., Davis, R., Potter, S. Sayeed, R (2005) How effective are measures taken to mitigate the impact of direct experience of armed conflict on the psychosocial and cognitive development of children aged 0-8? In: *Research Evidence in Education Library*. London: EPPI-Centre, Social Science Research Unit, Institute of Education, University of London.

⁵ Although ECCE is commonly defined as provision for children from birth to eight, this paper will focus on 3-6 year olds, but will refer to efforts for younger children (0-3) and older (6-8) where literature is available.

⁶ Nixon, A, Kessler, D., Nuttall, J.(1996) Ex-Yugoslavia Emergency Education: Save the Children/US (SC) Early Childhood Program in Ex-Yugoslavia. *The Coordinator's Notebook*. Vol 19.

Burde, D. (1999). *Communities, Conflicts and Preschools: An evaluation of Save the Children's Early Childhood Education Program in Croatia and Bosnia-Hertzegovina, 1993-1999*. Westport: Save the Children Federation/USA

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⁷ INEE (2004) *Minimum Standards for Education in Emergencies, Chronic Crisis and Early Reconstruction*. Paris: UNESCO

⁸ Aguilar, P. Retamel, G. (1998) *Rapid educational response in complex emergencies: a discussion document*. Hamburg; Paris: UNESCO/IIEP (www.ginie.org)

⁹ Retamel, G.; Aedo-Richmond R. (Eds.) (1998) *Education as a Humanitarian Response*. London: Cassell.

¹⁰ Sinclair, M. (2002) *Planning Education in and after Emergencies*. Fundamentals of Educational Planning -73. Paris: UNESCO

¹¹ Sinclair, M. (2002), *ibid*

¹² UNESCO (1999) *The Right to Education: an emergency strategy*. Paris: UNESCO

¹³ Pigozzi, M (1999) Education in emergencies and for reconstruction: a developmental approach. New York: UNICEF.

¹⁴ *Ibid*.

¹⁵ Significantly, there is little reference to ECCE in the Minimum Standards handbook which assumes as its starting point the pre-existence of formal education systems before the onset of a crisis. Because of the sometimes non-formal education status of ECCE in many countries, further guidelines are needed to direct action and response in this sector. Specific mention of ECCE is made only once (?) on the INEE website, www.inee.org, which lists a model of response for ECCE in Emergencies with an accompanying checklist for ECCE activities.

¹⁶ UNESCO (2002a) Guidelines for Education in Situations of Emergency and Crisis. Paris: UNESCO.

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¹⁷ Nicoli, S. and Triplehorn, C. (2003) *the Role of Education in Protecting Children in Conflict*. HNP Network Series 42. London: ODI

¹⁸ UNHCR (2003) *Education: Field Guidelines*. Revised Version 2003. UNHCR: Geneva

¹⁹ World Bank (2005) *Reshaping the Future: Education and Post-conflict Reconstruction*. Washington DC: World Bank

²⁰ Mcleod, H. (2000). *Holistic Care of Children in Complex Humanitarian Emergencies*. In M. Janz and J. Slead (Eds.) *Complex Humanitarian Emergencies*. Monrovia CA: World Vision International

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²² Jabry A. [Ed]. (2005) *After the Cameras have Gone*. Plan International. Woking UK: Plan Ltd

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²⁴ UNHCR Valid International (2003). *Meeting the rights and protection needs of refugee children: an independent evaluation of the impct of UNHCR's activities*. Geneva: UNHCR

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²⁶ Sommers, M. *Children, Education and War* (2002) *Reaching Education for All (EFA) Objectives in Countries affected by Conflict*. Conflict Prevention and Reconstruction Unit. Working Paper No.1 June. Washington: World Bank

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²⁹ Nicholi, S., Triplehorn, C. (2003) *The Role of Education in Protecting Children in Conflict*. Humanitarian Practice Network. London: ODI.

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³¹ A website-based review of donor policies on another education topic, namely secondary education in developing countries, showed that there was limited public information on the details of education assistance policies, at least on

the web (Dampare and McClure, 2000). The list of “eligible expenditure” on the European Community Humanitarian Office website (www.europa.eu.int/comm/echo) includes staff, food, medical, relief items, shelter, water and sanitation, training and other relevant headings, but appears to have inadvertently (?) omitted education, a very serious omission. The ECHO office did, however, support a Psychosocial Unit in the European Community Task Force working in Bosnia and Croatia (after a mission by a female expert to investigate rape), and this too is not listed explicitly as an eligible item (Agger and Mimica, 1996). Regarding the policy commitments of non-governmental organizations, several major NGOs are committed to emergency education as a core activity and strongly advocate rapid and effective educational response, including ECCE, psychosocial and peace-building elements (Sinclair, 2002).

³² Bensalah, K., Sinclair, M., Nacer, F.H., Commisso, A.m, and Bokhari, S. (2001) *Thematic Studies: Education in Emergency and Crisis: Challenges for the New Century*. Paris: UNESCO.

³³ UNESCO (2002) *Guidelines for Education in Situations of Emergency and Crisis: EFA Strategic Planning*. K. Bensalah (Ed.) Division of Policies and Strategies of Education. Paris: UNESCO

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³⁴ Williams, J.R.A, Hyder, T., and Nicoli, S. (2004) *ECD in Emergencies: Save the Children's Experience*. London: Save the Children UK.

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³⁷ UNESCO (2003) *Education in Situations of Emergency, Crisis and Reconstruction: UNESCO Strategy*. Working Paper: Division of Policies and Strategies for Education, ED-2003/WS/48. Paris: UNESCO.

³⁸ See Internally Displaced People: Global IDP Survey. Norwegian Refugee Council/Earthscan.

³⁹ UNICEF (1999). *State of the World's Children*. New York: UNICEF.

⁴⁰ War and violent conflict often cause greater damage than natural disasters, affecting the whole fabric of education and child care systems. There are often dramatic falls in student numbers, due to ongoing fear of attacks, displacement of teachers, destruction and looting of infrastructure and materials, and collapse of local and sometimes national educational administration (Bensalah et al. 2001. *Thematic Studies, Education in Situations of Emergency and Crisis: Challenges for the New Century*. Paris: UNESCO).

⁴¹ Plan (2005) *After the Cameras have gone*. A. Jabry (Ed). Working UK: Plan Ltd.

⁴² Buckland, P. (2003) *Education and Post-Conflict Reconstruction*. In: *Critical issues in Education for All: gender, parity emergencies*. UNESCO International Institute for Educational Planning. Paris, UNESCO.

⁴³ Comprises countries engulfed in conflict currently: Angola, Burundi, D.R Congo, Somalia, Sudan, West Bank/Gaza), and countries recovering from recent conflicts: Bosnia-Herzegovina, Iraq, Liberia, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Yugoslavia).

⁴⁴ Sommers, M. (2002) *Children, Education and War: Reaching Education for All (EFA) Objectives in Countries Affected by Conflict*. World Bank Working paper No 1 Conflict Prevention and Reconstruction Unit. Washington.

⁴⁵ . U.S. Committee for refugees (USCR) 2003. *World refugee Survey 2003*. Washington D.C.: Immigration and Refugee Services of America.

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⁴⁹ Young, M.E. (2002) *Early Child Development: A Stepping Stone to Success in School and Lifelong Learning*. Human Development Network Education Group. Washington: World Bank.

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⁵¹ Sommers M, 2002. *Children, Education and War: Reaching EFA Objectives in Countries affected by Conflict*. World Bank.

⁵² *Global Survey on Education in Emergencies (2004)*. New York: Women's Commission of Refugee Women and Children.

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- ⁵⁵ While recognising that there are distinctive features to each of a range of adversities in which children find themselves, such as armed conflict, or environmental disasters, it has been proposed that similar factors may underlie children's vulnerability, resilience and coping in such situations and different cultural and social settings (Boyden and Mann 2005, *ibid*)
- ⁵⁶ Williams, J.R.A., Hyder, T., and Nicoli, S. (2005) Save the Children's Experience: ECD in Emergencies. *Early Childhood Matters*. Responses to Young Children in post-emergency situations. Vol. 124, July.
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