

Case Study on the Utilization of the INEE Minimum Standards: Participatory assessment and teacher training in the aftermath of the Tsunami

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Organisation: **International Rescue Committee (at time of case study – presently, Norwegian Refugee Council, Uganda).**

Location: **Aceh, Indonesia**

Date of programme: **2005**

Case Study Themes: **Participatory assessment, teacher training and the utilization of local resources.**

All referenced materials are available online: **www.ineesite.org**

They can also be found in the INEE Toolkit CD Rom, to request a free copy contact: **minimumstandards@ineesite.org**

BACKGROUND

Indonesia sustained the worst human losses and physical damage in the tsunami and earthquake of 26 December 2004. In the province of Aceh over 44,000 students and 2,500 teachers and education personnel were killed. Some 2,135 schools were damaged, including kindergartens, primary, junior and senior high schools and universities, and 150,000 students lost access to proper education facilities. Schools opened again on 26 February, two months after the tsunami. In many locations, makeshift tents were used, or students and teachers from destroyed schools were absorbed into surviving ones.

Operating in Indonesia since 1999, the International Rescue Committee used its local knowledge and expertise to respond to the tsunami within days. The IRC is also a member of the INEE Working Group on Minimum Standards and has been instrumental in the development, dissemination, promotion and implementation of the Minimum Standards.

HOW THE INEE MINIMUM STANDARDS WERE USED IN THE PROGRAMME:

The IRC distributed the Minimum Standards handbook to their staff in Aceh, who used it to develop and coordinate their education and child protection responses. The IRC was also part of a coordinated inter-agency response to the disaster, participating in Education Coordination Meetings and INEE Minimum Standards Working Group Meetings in Banda Aceh.

It was during one of these Inter-Agency meetings that the need to more fully understand and build upon the education system prior to the tsunami became apparent. The IRC decided to use the Minimum Standards handbook to develop a 'Focused Conversation' template, an assessment tool to help international agency staff better understand the education situation, and design interventions with an emphasis on learning from communities themselves. In this process the Minimum Standards relating to Community Resources was particularly relevant: "Stakeholders recognize and support the capacity of communities, and education programming is designed to maximize the use of local skills and capacities" (Minimum Standards p. 18). The IRC team also drew upon the Minimum Standards' sample Information Gathering and Needs Assessment Questionnaire, as the Focused Conversation tool was developed (Minimum Standards p. 33).

In early May, following community assessments using the 'Focused Conversation' tool and discussions in the Banda Aceh INEE Minimum Standards Working Group, the idea began to germinate to revitalise the system of grouping schools, known as *Gugus* in Indonesian. The *Gugus* system grouped schools, and designated one school as the central meeting and training place for teachers and administrators from surrounding schools. The *Gugus* system had been shut down prior to the tsunami because of the conflict in Aceh. The IRC decided to

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build upon this organisational system, as a way of tackling the desperate shortage of trained teachers and meeting the Teaching and Learning Minimum Standard on Training, which states: “Teachers and other education personnel receive periodic, relevant and structured training according to need and circumstances” (Minimum Standards p. 59).

In coordination with the Ministry of Education, and in partnership with Syiah Kuala University and the University of Pennsylvania, the IRC began training teachers from the designated *Gugus* schools who could later act as mentor teachers to new, untrained teachers within their school groupings. As a result of this initiative, 100 teachers have been trained as mentors, who have in turn trained new teachers and lessened the severe teacher shortage in the area. The Teacher Training Coordination Group meets regularly, and is now looking at approaching various agencies to support a longer-term initiative to sustain the *Gugus* system.

CHALLENGES OF IMPLEMENTING THE MINIMUM STANDARDS

The major challenge in this situation was the issue of contextualisation. The INEE Minimum Standards are globally relevant, and can and should be applied in any educational context. However, how to achieve the Minimum Standards in particular emergency situations demands a deep understanding of the local contexts and pre-existing educational structures and policies. The development of locally applicable indicators and programmes that are tailored to the specific context and meet the Minimum Standards of quality, accessibility and accountability is challenging.

The Focused Conversation tool successfully drew upon the experience and knowledge of the communities, and helped the IRC staff develop a relevant and familiar teacher training programme which not only responded to the particularly acute teacher shortages, but did so in a way that was innovative while also being locally appropriate and participatory.

LESSONS LEARNT AND GOOD PRACTICES

Discussions on implementing the INEE Minimum Standards in inter-agency coordination meetings in Aceh provided a space to think innovatively about potential solutions to some of the particular challenges posed by the post-Tsunami context. Through in-depth discussions on implementing the INEE Minimum Standards, actors were able to gain a better understanding of how to strengthen and build upon previous systems of education, and consequently established sustainable and participatory quality education interventions.