



Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies
Réseau Inter-Agences pour l'Éducation en Situations d'Urgence
La Red Interagencial para Educación en Situaciones de Emergencia

INEE Good Practice Guide

Adult Education

In emergency situations, education programs for adults are of special significance as communities are disrupted and individuals, especially women, must take on new roles and responsibilities. In these cases, the ability for adults to speak a second language, read, and do math is of life saving importance as it determines whether they are able to support themselves and their families. Specifically, these skills enable them to be employed, receive information, buy or sell materials, as well as access health and social services.

Strategies

- **Use adult learning methods**

Adults learn differently than children and therefore adult learning methodologies emphasizing self-enquiring and participation should be emphasized. Language and numeracy skills should be linked students daily lives such as health topics, taking medicines, market skills, etc. In many cases, students in adult education classes are mobilized to use the skills they are learning to identify, discuss and address issues within their community.

- **Identify barriers for attendance**

In emergency situations, many barriers may exist for adults attending classes. Primary barriers may include where and when classes are held, as well as attitudes towards adults, specifically when being educated. To facilitate student attendance, the education programs must be scheduled around adults' other commitments. For example, in some areas adult education activities are not held on market days or days of worship. Additionally, when the activities are offered during the day should be carefully considered to avoid conflicts with meal preparation, water or food distributions, and heat. In most situations, evening classes for women should be discouraged due to security concerns. Classes should be offered in areas that are easily assessable, such as churches, town meeting halls, schools or under trees. Where movement is limited for women educational activities can be held in individual homes. To address issues of the importance of women's education, awareness campaigns targeting the community at large as well as leaders should be initiated.

- **Targeting specific skills or knowledge**

In an emergency situation, it can be expected that students' attendance may be inconsistent and that many individuals will be unable to stay with the program for extended periods of time. While pursuing the overall goal of functional literacy and numeracy, adult education activities should be divided into achieving very specific skills, such as conducting market transactions, going to the doctor, writing ones name and birth date, reading community signs, etc.

Checklists

Assessment

- Are there adults in the community who are illiterate? (These learners cannot take notes and therefore learning can be more challenging and often needs the development of separate classes.)
- Are there adults who are semi-literate?

- How does the illiteracy relate to the demographics of those affected by the conflict? Young adults? Women? Elderly? Minorities?
- What skills do each of these groups need? What do they need to be able to read? Medicines? Newspapers? Voting materials? Registration forms? Vaccination forms?
- What areas do they need to do math? Markets? Household budgets?
- Where do they need second language skills? Markets? Police checks? Can they express community problems?
- Can joint classes for pre-school and mothers be combined?
- When can the adults in the community attend education activities? Do women need to have day care services?
- Is it appropriate for men and women to go to class together? Is this appropriate? Do they have the same educational needs?
- How do the learners expect to use their literacy skills within their family? Their community? Their occupation?
- Was there an adult education program prior to the conflict? What kinds of texts exist in the language for teaching adults?

Program

- How is success measured? Improvements in skills as measured by tests? Confidence of learners in using their skills? Use of new skills on a daily, weekly or monthly basis? Self-sufficiency? Is part of the benefit of the program improving the learners social connectedness?
- How many hours a week on average do the students participate in the program? Is this sufficient to gain literacy and numeracy skills?
- How regular was student attendance? Do students stay with the program for a long or short time? Why? Can intermediate goals be set to give a sense of achievement?
- How were the adult education teachers trained? Has in-service training been offered? Are teachers monitored within the classroom?
- Are the adult education activities free? Check with students to see whether there are any hidden fees.
- How are adult education teachers compensated for their time? Are they full time or part time? How does their compensation rate to full time primary and secondary school teachers?
- What do students do once they have achieved basic literacy? Are their programs for them to continue learning?
- Who attends the classes? Who is not able to attend classes? Why?
- Are data kept of who is attending classes? Are these disaggregated by gender and ethnicity? Can any trends be seen in class attendance?
- Do students have access to additional reading materials?
- Are the literacy activities recognized by any organization or government? Would this ultimately be a means for adults to achieve a recognized level of education, such as a primary school leaving certificate?