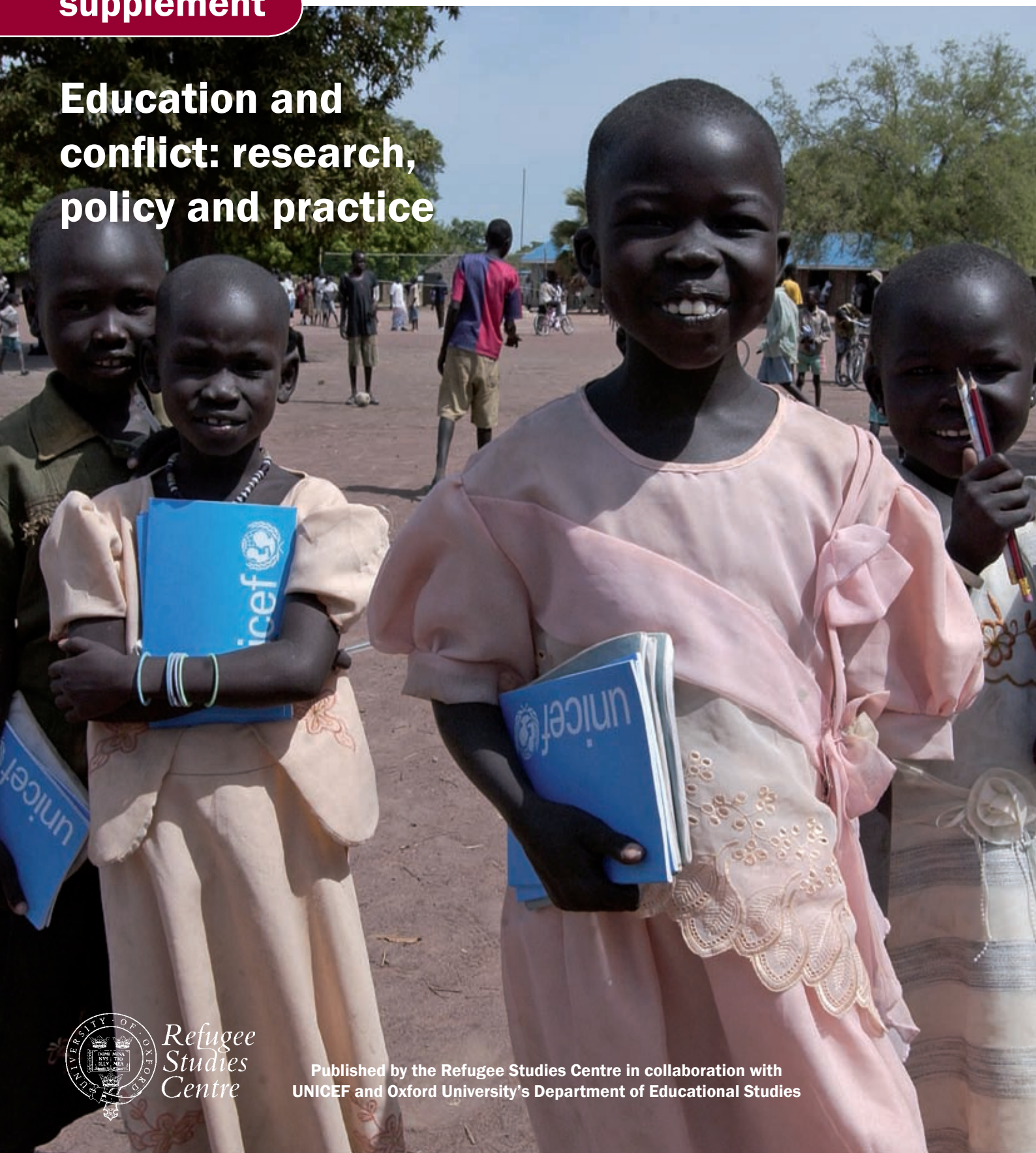


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supplement

Education and
conflict: research,
policy and practice



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Children with new exercise books and pencils after a distribution of school supplies – supplied by UNICEF – at Comboni Primary School in Rumbek, southern Sudan. UNICEF/HQ06-0876/Mariella Furrer

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contents

Editorial

by David Johnson and Ellen van Kalmthout..... 3

UNICEF Education Strategy 2006-2015

by Cream Wright..... 4

Post-conflict education: time for a reality check?

by Peter Buckland..... 7

Putting children in the picture

by Jason Hart..... 9

UNHCR's education challenges

by Eva Ahlen..... 11

Emergencies, education and innovation

by Rebecca Winthrop..... 12

Understanding the education-war interface

by Lynn Davies..... 13

Learning to deliver education in fragile states

by Martin Greeley and Pauline Rose..... 14

Education, reconstruction and state building in Afghanistan

by Jeaniene Spink..... 15

Impact of conflict in Africa

by Kathryn Touré..... 17

Rebuilding education from scratch in Liberia

by Diana Quick..... 18

Northern Ireland: post-conflict education model?

by Paul Nolan..... 19

South Sudan education emergency

by Tim Brown..... 20

Getting Southern Sudanese children to school

by Sibeso Luswata..... 22

Rebuilding Timor-Leste's education system

by Susan Nicolai..... 23

Education and chronic crisis in Palestine

by Susan Nicolai..... 24

USAID, education and conflict in Asia and the Near East

by Vijitha Eyango..... 26

Learning away from home: the BEFARe project

by Shakir Ishaq and Atle Hetland..... 28

Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies

by Allison Anderson and Mary Mendenhall..... 29

Education and conflict: an NGO perspective

by Lyndsay Bird..... 30

The precious chance to go to school

by Isabella Kitari Feliciano..... 31

Chance to learn for refugee schoolgirl in Chad

back cover story..... 32

Editorial

by David Johnson and Ellen van Kalmthout

Education is increasingly accepted as an integral part of humanitarian response in emergencies. It can help restore normalcy, safeguard the most vulnerable, provide psycho-social care, promote tolerance, unify divided communities and begin the process of reconstruction and peace building.

Research also suggests education can entrench intolerance, create or perpetuate inequality and intensify social tensions that can lead to civil conflict and violence. Education is a key determinant of income, influence and power. Inequalities in educational access can lead to other inequalities – in income, employment, nutrition and health as well as political position, which can be an important source of conflict.

Interest in education and conflict issues and recognition of the importance of education provision in crisis situations are growing. Within the UN system, the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC)¹ recognises education as an important part of humanitarian response. Education is included both in Common Humanitarian Action Plans (CHAPs) – which lay out response strategies and plans for individual emergency countries or regions – and in the Consolidated Appeals Process (CAP), the UN mechanism to raise funds for humanitarian action.²

The Education for All Framework for Action³ adopted at the World Education Forum in 2000 in Dakar included an explicit call for support to education in emergencies. Growing concern also led to the creation of the Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE). Created in 2001, INEE – the flagship in the EFA movement for education in emergencies – now has over 1,300 members from a wide range of organisations.

Donors are also increasingly supportive of education in emergencies, transition and post-conflict situations. The OECD/DAC Fragile States Group is undertaking analytical work on service delivery in key sectors (including education) in order to improve aid provision in fragile states.⁴ Donors are also exploring possible ways to support

education in fragile states as part of the work of the EFA Fast Track Initiative (EFA-FTI)⁵, a partnership of bilateral donors, multilateral agencies, civil society and developing countries working to accelerate progress towards the Millennium Development Goal of universal primary education by 2015.

There is also increased academic attention to education and conflict issues. Research is still limited but there are increasing efforts at documentation, research and evaluation – as evidenced by studies from the World Bank and UNESCO's International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP).⁶ While individual practitioners typically lack the necessary time and resources to document experiences, UN agencies and NGOs are now making more efforts to document and evaluate their work. As a result, a considerable 'grey literature' on education in emergencies now exists.

UNICEF is a major player in this field because of its concern for children's rights. UNICEF actively supports education in all countries affected by natural disasters and civil conflict. UNICEF is now strengthening mechanisms for generating and applying experiential knowledge based on lessons from the field, to inform policy and design intervention strategies, as well as identifying and promoting 'recommended practices' that are supported by evidence.

Oxford University is increasingly engaged in research and knowledge generation in this emerging discipline. A UNESCO chair in Education as a Humanitarian Response was recently established in the Centre for Comparative and International Studies in Education.⁷

Given the rapid growth of and converging interests in the field of education and conflict, there is

a need to bring research, policy and practice more closely together through an inter-disciplinary effort that draws on the policy-research work of academic institutions and the strategic programming practices of development agencies. To further the dialogue and to shape such a research agenda, Oxford University and UNICEF co-convened a conference at Oxford University on 'Education and Conflict: Research, Policy and Practice', 11-12 April 2006. The conference aimed to develop a better understanding of the interrelationship between education and conflict, with contributions from theory and research, and practical field-based examples of conflict resolution and post-conflict reconstruction. The conference brought together representatives from UN agencies, the World Bank, bilateral organisations, donors, NGOs and academia.

This supplement complements the FMR issue on education and emergencies – 'Education in emergencies: learning for a peaceful future' – published in January 2005.⁸ It includes summaries of key presentations to the conference and includes additional contributions, in particular from the field. We hope that it will contribute to sharing insights from theory and practice with a broad audience and stimulate and inform further documentation and research that will in turn strengthen policy, practice and theory.

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1. www.humanitarianinfo.org/iasc

2. <http://ochaonline.un.org/cap>

3. www.unesco.org/education/efa/ed_for_all/dakfram_eng.shtml

4. www.oecd.org/department/0,2688,en_2649_33693550_1_1_1_1_1,00.html

5. www1.worldbank.org/education/efaffi

6. www.unesco.org/iiep/eng/focus/emergency/emergency_1.htm

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UNICEF Education Strategy 2006-2015

by Cream Wright

UNICEF supports education in all countries with natural disasters and civil conflict. Humanitarian response activities, including in education, are an essential part of UNICEF’s work because of its concern with children’s rights in all circumstances.

UNICEF is developing an Education Strategy for 2006-2015 to highlight the contribution it can make to education up to and beyond 2015, the target date for achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). This strategy is being developed through a consultation process with partners and will later be formally presented for approval to UNICEF’s Executive Board. The strategy provides a broad vision on how UNICEF can work with partners to contribute to education and gender equality. It serves as a supporting platform and guiding framework for UNICEF’s Medium Term Strategic Plan (MTSP) for 2006-2009.¹ The MTSP highlights ‘basic education and gender equality’ as one of the agency’s five focus areas.

UNICEF’s education programmes and expenditures in crisis-affected contexts have increased significantly in recent years. Its record in helping to restore and improve education in emergency and post-crisis situations has resulted in a lead-agency role in many countries. It is further strengthening its capacities to work in post-crisis transition and is engaged in discussions around education service delivery in fragile states. Restoring education in emergencies and post-crisis situations and safe-guarding education systems against decline therefore feature prominently in the MTSP. Similarly, the Education Strategy emphasises education in emergencies and post-crisis transition, and makes clear UNICEF’s willingness to play a coordinating role under the new cluster system for humanitarian support to countries in an emergency.

The Education and Conflict conference in Oxford provided an important forum to consult on the strategy with actors from the humanitarian and academic communities engaged in education. This article presents an excerpt of the draft strategy, with emphasis on the emergency, transition and post-crisis aspects.

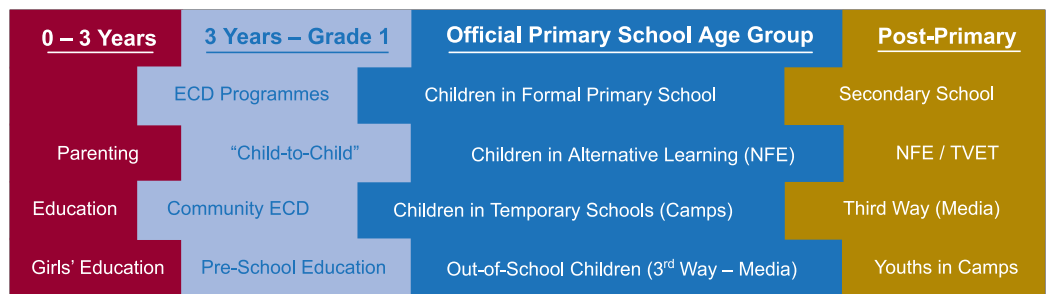
Vision and scope

UNICEF is oriented to children’s rights based on the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC).² It gives priority to the most deprived children in the poorest countries, including those affected by crisis. It advocates for and facilitates education as a right, and uses education to support results in health, nutrition and protection for the realisation of other rights. Its work covers the 0-18 year age range in segments that reflect the life cycle as well as the structure of the school system and alternative forms of education:

- schools are prepared to receive children and resourced to support their learning in conducive environments
- parents are empowered to support children’s learning
- children can freely access and complete school
- teachers are competent and well supported
- education systems are accountable, well managed and focused on challenges that affect children.

The chances of achieving this vision are jeopardised in emergency situations, making it essential for education to be an integral part of interventions, before, during and after emergencies. In general, UNICEF’s education priorities relate to access, gender, quality, achievement and emergencies and post-crisis transition. It has developed a strong track record in emergency response, including working on complex multi-country emergencies like the Indian Ocean tsunami, earthquakes in India (Gujarat), Iran (Bam) and Pakistan and post-conflict needs in countries like Timor-Leste, Afghanistan, Liberia and Sudan.

The Scope of Basic Education in UNICEF’s Education Strategy



UNICEF’s strategy is informed by a vision of good governance in rights-respecting societies, where:

- children are prepared for school and start at the appropriate age

UNICEF has learned much from these experiences to become a reliable leader and capable coordinator for the urgent and complex services required in emergencies.

Building on this growing expertise and experience, UNICEF will continue to be a first responder in education during the humanitarian response phase of an emergency. This role will involve improving staff preparedness and strengthening surge capacity to bring the right levels of expertise to bear on an emergency situation. The agency will be guided by its Core Commitments for Children in Emergencies (CCCs), which defines what UNICEF does for children in an emergency.³ It will also be guided by the Minimum Standards for Education in Emergencies, Chronic Crises and Early Reconstruction.⁴ These were developed by the Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE) – a network in which UNICEF plays a major role.

Apart from improving its emergency response preparedness UNICEF will improve its capacity to help address challenges faced by countries as they make the transition from emergency to reconstruction and development. It will work closely with other partners – such as national governments, the World Bank, UNESCO and international NGOs – as effectively and efficiently as

possible. It will focus on defining roles and responsibilities more clearly so learning opportunities can be rapidly restored for affected children. Education needs to be provided within safe environments that offer a wide range of support for children's needs – including nutrition, psychosocial care and support, health checks and protection – which cannot be properly met when institutions, agencies and governance systems are affected by crisis. In supporting countries in transition, UNICEF will work with others, using the principle of 'building back better', to help rebuild the key institutions needed to service a viable education system – schools, teacher training and support institutions, school management agencies, education planning authorities, financial management agencies and inspection and regulatory authorities.

In addition, UNICEF will strongly engage in important new work on the dynamics of change in conflict-affected countries and what this implies for effective and efficient education service delivery. In development work, attention is now more focused on the impact of civil conflict, social violence,

health pandemics, natural disasters, breakdown of governance systems and ideological fundamentalism – and no longer simply on economic growth. These factors increasingly determine the ability and/or willingness of governments to exercise full jurisdiction over national territory and to create/maintain the conditions for effective and efficient delivery of education and other services for children. Addressing these problems requires a combination of theoretical knowledge and practical experience from a wide range of country situations. UNICEF will draw on its knowledge and experience and work with other agencies, civil society, academic and research institutions to support education service delivery and wider social change in such post-conflict and fragile states.

Partnerships are central to UNICEF's work in emergencies and transition situations. It is essential to make the expertise, competencies and comparative advantages of different partners (such as INEE, the World Bank, UNESCO, UNICEF, WFP, UNDP, local and international NGOs and national governments) available to support affected countries across

Language teaching for Burmese refugees in Buthidang Township, Bangladesh.



the spectrum from emergency relief to development and growth. UNICEF will work closely with these partners to support affected countries with a seamless flow of technical expertise to provide support and to build local capacity. Work in this area is in progress through sharing of experience and initiating dialogue with key partners on the theory and practice of evidence-based work in education and conflict.

Access remains a key UNICEF priority. Its strategic intent is to help countries achieve the Millennium Development Goals and EFA goals, with all children prepared for and able to access primary school by 2015 and be on track to complete full primary school education. Priority is given to countries with the highest percentage of children out of school. This includes many affected by or recovering from crisis such as Afghanistan, Burundi, Chad, Haiti, Nepal, Sudan and Somalia.

Girl does her homework in camp for displaced people near village of Tche, Ituri, DRC



UNICEF/H005-1235/Roger Lemoyne

On gender, UNICEF supports international goals to make education systems more gender equitable in order to advance the empowerment of girls and women. Countries that have poor education and gender-related indicators will be targeted. Many countries affected by crisis also have large gender gaps, as girls' vulnerability is increased in crisis situations. Addressing gender barriers to enrolment and achievement in these contexts is an important focus for UNICEF. Typical strategies are targeted gender interventions at local levels and advocacy to ensure gender is integrated in policy and budgets. Technical support to ensure gender is better addressed in UNICEF education in emergency interventions will also be an important part of the strategy, especially through partners in the UN Girls' Education Initiative.⁵

UNICEF's key contribution to education quality is the child-friendly school model, a holistic concept which promotes a safe, healthy and protective environment for learning.⁶ This is vital in situations of conflict or after natural disasters, where ensuring education in safe places is a key means of providing psychosocial support and protecting children against harm. The concept also urges development of child-friendly standards for school architecture in order to take advantages of opportunities during the major school (re)construction programmes initiated after natural disasters or conflicts.

Other areas of focus that are particularly relevant to emergency and post-crisis contexts include supporting the right start for children through conventional early childhood development (ECD) programmes that involve parenting

education (for childcare), as well as through institutional provision for pre-school children, and community-based childcare and development initiatives that build on good traditional practices while introducing modern elements of early childhood care and development.

UNICEF promotes inclusive education by targeting excluded and marginalised children. Interventions aim to support education for children in child labour and other forms of exploitation, those from ethnic minorities and other disadvantaged groups, or those in so-called 'fragile states' or countries where governments are unable or unwilling to provide services to the whole population. UNICEF will work with partners to develop innovative models that can benefit national policies and strategies or can be scaled up as good practices for the education system as a whole. These initiatives may include alternative learning centres, distance and accelerated learning. The preference in most cases is, however, to integrate children into existing school systems.

All of UNICEF's work in education is underpinned by a commitment to an inter-sectoral approach. Experience indicates that work in such areas as food and nutrition, safety and security, child labour, child trafficking, water and sanitation all contribute to access, regular attendance, quality of the learning environment, learning and achievement. In return, practitioners in these other sectors expect that education will contribute to addressing major problems relating to their own work. This inter-sectoral approach to education is therefore mutually beneficial and takes on extra significance in emergencies where schools provide an opportunity to bring together services for children in a safe and protective environment.

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1. Investing in children: the UNICEF contribution to poverty reduction and the Millennium Summit agenda www.unicef.org/aids/files/05-11_MTSP.pdf
2. www.unicef.org/crc
3. www.unicef.se/media/pdf/
4. www.ineesite.org/page.asp?pid=1240
5. www.ungei.org
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Post-conflict education: time for a reality check?

by Peter Buckland

While education does not cause wars, nor end them, every education system has the potential either to exacerbate or to mitigate the conditions that contribute to violent conflict.

Education is expected to contribute significantly to rebuilding shattered societies. Policymakers assert that it can heal the psychosocial wounds of war, solve youth unemployment, deliver decentralisation and democracy, build peace and promote economic and social development. Evaluations routinely fail to test whether these expectations are realistic.

The recognition that education systems are almost always complicit in conflict, that they rarely completely cease to function and that they rapidly resume operations with or without outside support as violence subsides is an important factor responsible for the growing interest in early education response. Humanitarian agencies are starting to recognise that schools can reproduce the skills, values, attitudes and social relations of dominant groups. They are learning that schools and education systems are often surprisingly resilient and that disruption caused by conflict offers opportunities as well as challenges for social reconstruction.

When conflict ceases, education systems must be rebuilt in a context where political authority and civil administration are weakened, compromised or inexperienced. Civil society is in disarray – and more accustomed to opposing than working with governments – and financial sources are constrained and unpredictable.

Yet each of these constraints also contains possibilities. New political authorities are more likely to seek education reform to distance themselves from the previous regime, particularly where international aid provides additional incentives. Weakened bureaucracies are less able to resist reform. Civil society

often focuses on education as an activity around which it can coalesce. Publicity around the end of conflict and getting kids into classrooms often attracts an injection of external resources to kick-start reform.

Problems common to many post-conflict states are:

- inability of recovering states to fund either capital or recurrent expenditure: few states have access to domestic revenue sufficient to keep systems running
- chronic shortages of qualified teachers – many have been killed or fled, and many of those who remain or return are often snapped up by international agencies and NGOs
- oversupply of under-qualified or unqualified teachers
- the sheer numbers of war-affected youth, demobilised soldiers and young people who have not completed basic education
- poor record keeping, corruption and lack of transparency in education governance: salaries are often paid to ‘ghost’ teachers
- the ‘relief bubble’ in international financial support often subsides before a more predictable flow of reconstruction resources can be mobilised: relief agencies often scale back operations before development-focused agencies can be mobilised
- skills training for youth is seriously under-resourced: even when available, vocational training programmes often fail to prepare

people for locally available employment opportunities

- coordination challenges: as education involves an interface of humanitarian action and development in complex ways there is often a plethora of coordination mechanisms
- failure to develop successful initiatives to build the skills of young people and prevent their recruitment into military or criminal activity: youth are seen as a threat to stability and few programmes value young people as an important resource for development and reconstruction.

Donors offer only minimal support to secondary education. This is despite evidence that secondary and higher education suffer a more rapid decline during conflict and a more gradual recovery from it. The most common experience of youth in post-conflict reconstruction is one of exclusion. The slow progress in re-establishing secondary and tertiary educational opportunities, and the marginal status of most adult education programmes and accelerated learning opportunities, add to this frustration at a time when involvement in conflict often leaves youth with a new sense of empowerment.

Neglect of refugees and IDPs

Another area of serious neglect is failure to reintegrate refugees and IDPs into mainstream national education systems. While there is general consensus that the ideal curriculum in refugee education is, in principle at least, that of the country of origin, this is frequently not possible. This creates problems of accreditation of learning, especially for returnees who may be forced to re-enter the system at lower levels because prior learning is not recognised.

The neglect of secondary and post-secondary education typical of post-conflict environments is even more pronounced in refugee education. Only 6% of all refugee students are in secondary education. In both refugee and IDP camps this creates significant problems in terms of motivation for primary students, supply of teachers for the primary schools and cohorts of youth who are frustrated, unemployed and unemployable. Host governments are often unsupportive and concerned about the politicisation of secondary and post-secondary institutions, as well as the possibility of competition for jobs from educated refugees.

Returnees often include the best educated students and the most qualified teachers. Teachers in refugee camps often develop skills that equip them to make a useful contribution to education on their return. They are more likely to be engaged in curriculum development work, more likely to have experience of multi-grade teaching and often have more exposure to international expertise and alternative pedagogical approaches. Yet upon return to their home countries, they often have difficulties finding employment because of lack of recognition of qualifications and teaching experience.

The way ahead

Provision of education to refugees and displaced persons (even during conflict) is a reconstruction and development issue that warrants the attention of agencies committed to reconstruction and development and should not be viewed simply as a humanitarian activity. Donors and relief and development agencies are improving coordination and sharing knowledge as a result of such initiatives as the Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE).¹ There is emerging consensus over the need for:

- early focus on getting schools functioning so that the return of young people to classes can be seen as a 'peace dividend' and shore up support for peace
- bold symbolic actions (such as purging inflammatory textbooks) to signal that, while

much about the system remains unchanged, reform has started

- decentralisation reforms to allow parents space to be involved in school governance
- acknowledgement that creating an equitable system able to deliver quality education is an incremental and ongoing process that takes decades and will require national consensus around a wider development vision of where a country is heading
- capacity building, encouragement of participation and coordination between communities, teachers and their organisations, local authorities and other stakeholders
- recognition that returning refugees, and especially youth, can contribute to the process of education reconstruction
- ensuring that external support for education builds on – and does not compete with – the efforts of local communities and authorities already active in supporting education.

The nature of post-conflict reconstruction makes inter-sectoral collaboration particularly urgent. Education systems need to collaborate across sectors on HIV/AIDS programmes, health education, safety and security in schools, landmines awareness and psychosocial support. Education reconstruction must be aligned with social and economic development planning and public sector and labour markets reform.

Education does not cause wars, nor does it end them. It does, however, frequently contribute to the factors that underlie conflict and also has the potential to play a significant role both directly and indirectly in building peace, restoring countries to a positive development path and reversing the damage wrought by civil war. Early investment in education is thus an essential prerequisite for sustainable peace.

The World Bank has long recognised the importance of early engagement



in post-conflict reconstruction of education systems as a key element in conflict prevention and reconstruction. Since the mid 1990s it has adapted its operating procedures to facilitate early engagement. Support for education reconstruction has been a significant element of its emergency response in many post-conflict contexts, including Sierra Leone, Angola, Mozambique, Kosovo, Timor-Leste, Afghanistan and Iraq.

Education has a role to play in preventing conflict and promoting reconstruction but only as part of wider social, economic and political efforts. Without these linkages and sustained and strategic investment, education reconstruction will fail to deliver on the often unrealistic expectations placed on it. The relationship of education to peace-building and social reconstruction has recently come under greater scrutiny with international attention focused on 'fragile states'. This creates an opportunity for more systematic and rigorous case studies and meta-analyses to identify which interventions have the greatest impact in which contexts.

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1. See pages 29-30 and www.ineesite.org

Putting children in the picture

by Jason Hart

How can children-focused research enhance understanding of the role and impact of educational provision in conflict and post-conflict settings?

Most research into education and conflict focuses on the school system rather than on children. The general failure of educationalists to engage with the reality of children's lives has serious implications for the timing, design and evaluation of educational initiatives.

Much recent literature on education and conflict pays scant attention to children. Analysis is often shaped by the 'threat' or 'promise' mindset: young people are either potential threats to stability – should they engage in military or criminal activities – or an important potential resource for development and reconstruction. Statements are made about the young when we should be producing knowledge with them.

The constrained nature of discussion about the impacts of war on children is in sharp contrast to the extensive analysis of the impact on education systems. Attention to the experiences, roles, needs and aspirations of young people in specific conflict zones is rendered impossible by an approach that assumes 'trauma', 'vulnerability' and 'victimhood' as defining and universal characteristics of children who have lived through war.

A children-focused approach to research in conflict settings does not assume uniformity in the psychological, material or social situation of children. It instead seeks to discover the complex ways in which conflict affects different children's lives, creating opportunities as well as new challenges. Conventional, school system-focused research tends to assume vulnerability as an inherent property of children in conflict zones but what we need is an approach that seeks to understand how vulnerability – as a condition – is produced and mitigated.

Children-focused research assumes that the impact of conflict on each child will be different. The Canadian

general Roméo Dallaire,¹ for example, has argued against programmes which ignore the special needs of children who have been leaders within military groups. Such ex-combatants cannot simply be inserted into a system that treats them as no different from their peers.

Children-focused research implicitly rejects the notion that children's ideas, experiences, needs and aspirations are adequately articulated by adults, however well-intentioned. The role of the researcher should be to enable young people to participate in research as fully as they wish, sharing

their views safely and to their own satisfaction. That even young children are fully capable of articulating important insights into their lives has been amply demonstrated in numerous research settings.

I am not dismissing the value of the currently dominant approach to field research. Rather, I am recommending that such study and the interventions that it helps to shape would be greatly enriched by engaging more seriously with children themselves. Understanding the situation of children more fully would enable the content of schooling, the mode of delivery and timing and location of activities to be designed in a way that ensures the greatest relevance and therefore greatest uptake.

Former child soldier Mohammad Amin, now 18, is shown posters illustrating different trades during a job-counselling session. Bagram, Afghanistan.



Where the situation of children is properly understood, innovative programmes can be developed that provide meaningful learning opportunities. During the Lebanese civil war the UNICEF-supported Sawa project engaged children in active learning by means of a magazine with entertaining and amusing articles, games, exercises and problems. Rather than the children coming to school, SAWA took the written word, pictures, amusement and messages of solidarity to the children and was able to reach young people stranded in their homes during the height of the war. In Afghanistan the BBC and UNICEF overcame Taliban restrictions on education by a radio series – Radio Education For Afghan Children (REACH) – which stimulated curiosity by helping children to ask questions about the world, understand the events shaping their lives and Afghanistan’s traditions, culture and history, as well as receive information about mine awareness and health education.

Both these examples come from settings where conditions prevented the conduct of ‘regular’ school-based activities. Agencies involved were compelled to take innovative steps in accordance with the children’s situation. Although the circumstances may be less extreme elsewhere, such willingness to innovate in order to

ensure relevance should be replicated. Unfortunately, however, the general trend appears to be toward ‘one size fits all’ in terms of curriculum, teacher training and mode of delivery. Much of the current abundance of advice and material on peace education appears to have evolved without much understanding of children’s perspectives, knowledge or concerns.

I have been particularly struck by these shortcomings through my research with Palestinian children. In recent years the international community has made considerable efforts to teach young Palestinians about rights, peace and tolerance. For some this is motivated by the wish to counter the presumed efforts made by teachers or the Palestinian media to encourage children to hate Israelis. Generally absent from the studies supporting this view – and equally absent from the design of interventions – is serious engagement with children themselves. From what I have seen, efforts to impart, for example, the principles of International Humanitarian Law or to encourage conciliatory attitudes towards Israeli peers often fail to have any impact.

The overriding reason for this failure seems clear: such initiatives pay no attention to the experience of children. They fail to appreciate, for example, that the tense and unpredictable

passage through Israeli checkpoints on the way to school may impart more profound lessons than anything that is taught in the classroom. Since children are not usually involved in meaningful evaluation of interventions, this failure rarely comes to light. Faith in the efficacy of educational strategies often designed far away from actual conflict zones remains apparently unshaken.

Conflict changes young people’s lives in many ways that must be understood if education is to be relevant, meaningful and productive. Post-conflict education specialists make much of the need to understand the impact of educational initiatives but fail to realise that this cannot be done without understanding the lives of the children who are the intended beneficiaries. Only by understanding children’s lives in an holistic way – their experiences, attitudes, aspirations, as well as their everyday roles and responsibilities – can we design more relevant activities and identify the indicators that might be used to evaluate genuine impact.

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1. Interviewed in FMR 15, www.fmreview.org/FMRpdfs/FMR15/fmr15.3.pdf

UNHCR’s education challenges

by Eva Ahlen

UNHCR is committed to realising the right to free and safe quality education for refugees but funding is limited and education has not been included in the Cluster Approach.¹

“We thank you for helping us, giving us food, shelter, medicines, but the best that you have done for us was to give our children education. Food and other things we will finish but education will always be there wherever we go.”

(Ethiopian refugee father, 2003)

UNHCR has education programmes in 97 countries, implemented by 200 international or national NGOs. However the agency has only two dedicated education posts, one at Geneva HQ and the other in South Sudan. UNHCR has recognised

serious gaps in provision and quality of its education support:

- A third of refugee children and adolescents are out of school in the 23 countries for which reliable data is available: the actual

figure of refugee children not attending school is far higher.

- Only a third of refugee students in secondary school are girls.
- Less than two thirds of teachers in refugee schools have qualifications and only a third of female teachers are qualified.
- Early marriage and gender discrimination deprive many girls of educational opportunities.
- Vocational training, non-formal and secondary education are often neglected and receive insufficient



support. This means adolescents face major protection risks.

- refugee and host communities often fail to monitor the quality and safety of the education of their children.
- education ministries – in host countries and countries of origin – are often insufficiently engaged with refugee education programmes.
- accurate data on the situation of urban refugee children is not available.

UNHCR will focus attention on the right of refugees to education in order to support their capacity to find durable solutions and to enhance their own protection. The agency will:

- strengthen the capacity of its staff and partners through training and dissemination of policies and guidelines
- undertake annual country reviews and data compilation and analysis based on minimum standards and indicators in education.
- support countries in which gaps are identified
- facilitate establishment of national and community-based education committees comprising refugee communities, local authorities, relevant organisations and agencies
- develop a standardised refugee teachers' training manual prioritising prevention

of gender-based violence, addressing HIV/AIDS and tackling in-school violence and discrimination in order to ensure safe access to school and provide life skills training

- endeavour to include non-formal education and vocational training in UNHCR education programmes
- advocate for increased and improved access to secondary education, especially for refugee girls through community-based activities and partnerships
- continue support for tertiary education through the DAFI initiative²
- increase the number of education officers: they will be deployed in partnership with the Norwegian Refugee Council
- develop guidelines on safety in school to address protection risks especially for girls
- develop an Education Assessment and Programming Tool to enable staff to undertake situation analysis and develop education strategies
- compile a handbook on good practice
- strengthen partnerships with sister UN agencies through revision and operationalisation of memoranda of understanding
- work closely with other partners and alliances such as the Inter-

Agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE).

Education can save lives and promote a productive life. It provides protection from recruitment and exploitation (although educational institutions themselves can become targets) and it offers stability and normalcy.

It is unfortunate that repatriation processes often result in premature termination of refugee education programmes in host countries before proper mechanisms have been established in countries of origin. Closing of schools can push refugees to return to insecure circumstances, often increasing protection risks, especially for girls.

In post-conflict situations it is important that all stakeholders are mobilised to plan educational programmes prior to return. Curricula, teacher training and certification procedures in host countries must be recognised in the country of origin. Cross-border coordination is required to organise 'go and see' and 'come and tell' visits to reassure returnees that education is to be provided. The conditions in areas of return should be improved by renovation of schools, training of teachers and provision of materials. Teachers must be provided with incentives to return – for often salaries are higher and more dependable in host countries. Recruitment of teachers upon return – particularly female teachers – needs to be ensured.

It is time that education became an integral part of all reintegration programmes to ensure continuity and a holistic approach to protection.

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This article is written in a personal capacity and does not necessarily represent the views of UNHCR.

1. See Tim Morris, 'UNHCR, IDPs and clusters', FMR25, www.fmreview.org/FMRpdfs/FMR25/FMR2531.pdf
2. Funded by the German government, and jointly administered by the Albert Einstein German Academic Refugee Initiative Fund and UNHCR, the DAFI scholarship scheme contributes to the self-reliance of refugees by enabling them to secure professional qualifications for future employment.

Emergencies, education and innovation

by Rebecca Winthrop

Armed conflict and natural disasters disrupt ways in which education is delivered and accessed. Disruptions may be traumatic but they provide opportunities.

The term 'education in emergencies' can be misleading, conjuring up images of tent schools, copybook distributions and other interim measures to keep schooling going during crises. However, for those working in this new and emerging field, the term generally serves as shorthand for diverse formal and non-formal educational interventions in a range of different contexts, including acute emergencies, on-going or 'chronic' crises, protracted refugee and early reconstruction and recovery settings.

Can education in emergencies provide opportunities for educational innovations that support quality? If so, can these innovations be leveraged to support quality education over the long term? These questions are critical ones for the field, and can be explored by looking at the history of home-based schools in Afghanistan.

Developed in response to the Taliban's active repression of schooling for girls and women, the International Rescue Committee began supporting clandestine home-based schools in 1997. In the most difficult circumstances, trusted members of the community opened their houses while the IRC provided educational materials and teacher training. The Taliban regime was overthrown in 2001 but the home-based schools programme continues. Its goal is now to provide schooling for rural girls and boys with no access to government schools. Respected members of the community continue to hold classes inside their homes and some mullahs organise classes in local mosques. Classes follow the government primary school curriculum. Teachers are not paid

and most have not completed 12th grade, a requirement of government teachers. IRC continues to train teachers, provide educational materials and monitor and evaluate the progress and quality of the programme. IRC works closely with the Ministry of Education to ensure that the home-based school project supports the growing capacity of state education and does not develop into a parallel system.



Despite the unconventional nature of the learning environments recent research has shown the home-based schools to be quite effective in terms of access, completion, learning, cost and student wellbeing. USAID research found that IRC-supported home-based schools provide almost the only access to school for girls, and in some cases for boys too, in the communities in which they are located.¹ Completion rates are 68%, which is double that of government schools. Ninety-nine per cent of students in IRC-supported home-based schools pass end-of-year exams. This more effective teaching is also cheaper – the annual cost per student is \$18, compared with \$31 in government schools. Home-based students appear not only to be learning and progressing through their grades but also to be having a positive school experience. Teacher-student

relationships are characterised by mentoring, encouragement and advice – and hardly any of the corporal punishment or psychological humiliation often found in government schools.²

Home-based schools are helping to extend coverage of the government education system. As the Afghan education system recovers and state capacity moves outward from urban areas, students and teachers from home-based schools are being integrated into state schools. Thousands of students from IRC-supported home-based schools are now learning in government schools.

However, access is only one part of quality. How can the other components of quality – such as learning, completion, and student wellbeing – be assimilated by the recovering government system? It is unclear whether the features that made home-based schooling successful – small class size and close relationships between teachers and students and their families – will continue. Will the Ministry of Education allow space within the government education system for home-based schools or other similar community-based schooling alternatives?

In Afghanistan, as elsewhere, the question of how innovations can be captured in order to sustainably support education quality merits greater attention and investigation.

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1. Kirk, Jackie and Winthrop, Rebecca (2006) *Meeting EFA: Afghanistan – Home-Based Schools*, Academy for Educational Development.

2. Kirk, Jackie and Winthrop, Rebecca (2006) *Creating Healing Classrooms: Education in Crisis and Post-Crisis Transition*, IRC

Understanding the education-war interface

by Lynn Davies

There is an urgent need to improve understanding of education's role in contributing to conflict. The Birmingham International Education Security Index is an attempt to generate qualitative and quantitative indicators to assess the contribution of education to human security/insecurity

Schooling potentially contributes to conflict by reproducing or hardening inequality, exclusion, social polarisation, ethnic/religious identities, aggressive masculinity, fear and militarism. Schools may legitimate inequality and act to suppress action to challenge it. Schools engage in 'war education' through supporting or condoning physical and symbolic violence and fostering cycles of revenge and punishment.

Schools need to challenge fundamentalist beliefs by teaching alternative realities and encouraging students to develop secure identities. Schools must be enabled to improve skills in political analysis and to gain confidence to teach about conflict. In order to help them do so, we have been preparing a typology of how war and peace are taught. It is a continuum of ten modes, some of which contribute to negative conflict, some appear neutral and some contribute to positive conflict.

The extreme poles both represent an 'active' approach and the middle a more passive one.

Moving down the negative pole:

1. The 'hate' curriculum denigrates the enemy and extols the virtues of one's own side.
2. The 'defence' curriculum presents conflict as a constant threat and teaches students to use weapons.
3. Stereotypes about 'peoples' or religions promote cross-border solidarity with those 'like us'.

4. War is presented as routine, normal and continuous: history lessons are mostly devoted to conflict, not peace.
5. Schools, particularly in conflict zones, omit mention of conflict lest it raise tensions.

Moving up the more positive side comes:

1. teaching of 'tolerance' and respect for diversity – this can be dangerous if everything is to be tolerated without tools for analysis
2. teaching of conflict resolution techniques
3. projects specifically focused on humanitarian law and rights during hostilities

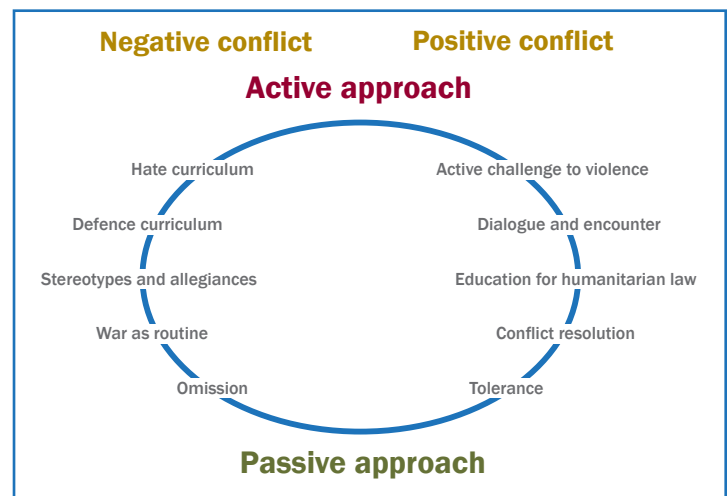
4. projects in divided communities encouraging dialogue, encounter and bringing people together
5. active teaching about local, national and global conflict, providing skills to challenge aggression and to hold governments to account.

We are working to assess the contribution of education to human security in four interlinked areas:

- economic security (employment destinations, skills base for social and cultural capital,

inclusion and exclusion, and measures of corruption)

- national security (degree of segregation or integration, policies on racism, stereotypes in curriculum materials, how conflict is taught)
- political security (active citizenship education, critical thinking, practice in democracy, building civil society)
- personal security (protection of rights, policy on non-violence, health/sex/relationships/ HIV/AIDs education, secure buildings)



The aim of the index is to act as a counter to the conventional comparative achievement studies to scrutinise the much more important and broader role of the school in the key area of human survival.

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Learning to deliver education in fragile states

by Martin Greeley and Pauline Rose

The Fragile States Group within the Development Assistance Committee (DAC)¹ of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development is working to advise donors on provision of education (and other) services in ‘fragile states’.

The Fragile States Group brings together experts on governance, conflict prevention and reconstruction from bilateral and multilateral development agencies to facilitate coordination and share good practice to enhance development effectiveness in ‘fragile states’.

The DAC characterises fragile states as those countries where there is a lack of political commitment or weak capacity to develop and implement pro-poor policies. Such countries tend to be characterised by poor governance and are prone to violent conflict. They are home to a seventh of the world’s population, a third of those who live on less than \$1/day and half the children who die before the age of five. More than half of the approximately 115 million children not enrolled in primary school live in fragile states.

DAC identifies four types of fragile states: deteriorating; arrested development; early recovery; and post-conflict. Such a typology is useful in thinking of different strategic responses. For example, in deteriorating conditions it may be neither feasible nor appropriate to work with the state, even though it may be possible to work with communities with the intention of planning for longer-term, sustainable support to the education system as state willingness develops. During early recovery donors can work alongside government partners with a gradual transition to the state playing a greater role in education service delivery. However, there is recognition of the need to take account of local realities in planning responses in particular contexts.

Education has only recently been included as the fourth pillar of

humanitarian support. Even so, it is not necessarily included within international agency humanitarian responses. This is despite the fact that education is an acknowledged human right with likely lifecycle and intergenerational benefits for growth, security and development. Education plays a key role in national identity formation and can



be both a weapon and a promoter of peace. Fortunately, there is now growing acknowledgement among educationalists that the relief-development dichotomy is artificial and that education must be planned as a long-term endeavour. This recognition needs to extend beyond educationalists, however, if it is to be addressed within the humanitarian-development nexus.

If interventions in fragile states are not developed in a holistic, sector-wide approach problems are likely to arise. Prospects for sustainable development can be set back by absence of post-primary education opportunities. It is also essential to focus on teacher training – particularly training of female teachers – even in deteriorating or arrested development conditions, as teaching can play a key role in

supporting post-conflict transition. If vocational training is not provided to out-of-school youth their frustrations can trigger a move back into deteriorating conditions. It should be noted, however, that vocational training has a mixed record, especially when job opportunities are not subsequently available.

It is important to build on spontaneous community-based initiatives which often precede externally-supported education provision. However, there is a need for caution. Reliance on communities can intensify inequality, particularly where communities are fractured as a result of conflict. School management committees can be captured by local elites, and can themselves give rise to conflict. Moving from voluntary community initiatives to a state-supported system-wide approach requires large expenditures for teachers’ salaries which may not be initially available. Attention to external support, for example through a transitional trust fund to ensure that teachers can be paid, is likely to be key in ensuring a smooth transition.

Innovative forms of coordination must be found in order to ensure education sector strategy plans are consistent with country-level multiple-donor cross-sectoral support. Involving NGOs with experience of service delivery in early phases in the planning, as well as UN agencies with prior coordination experience, provides an opportunity to ensure that the system is developed in a sustainable way that addresses local concerns and which can help to develop sector-wide approaches. Intra-agency coordination is also essential – for humanitarian and development wings of donor agencies still often fail to liaise.

It is important to:

- endeavour to pool donor funds and ensure timely, predictable and

Makeshift classroom in IDP camp where IRC, with UNICEF support, is running a school programme combining education, recreation and psychosocial therapy. Southern Province, Sierra Leone.

effective cash flows – particularly to secure teacher salaries

- merge the agendas of the Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE)² and that of the Education for All Fast Track Initiative (FTI)³ in order to build on each of their strengths, and not maintain the current distinct tracks of emergency short-term response versus attention to long-term aid
- forge national consensus around curriculum reform
- avoid the dangers of over-focusing

on technical assistance while ignoring political realities

- make criteria for allocating funds to fragile states more transparent and less subject to strategic considerations
- ensure that mechanisms of accountability developed during the period of fragility are not ignored when government is strengthened.

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Rose is a Senior Lecturer at the University of Sussex's Centre for International Education. Email: p.m.rose@sussex.ac.uk This article sets out preliminary findings from a study commissioned by the UK Department for International Development (DFID) to assist the DAC's Fragile States Group to identify best practice and learn lessons for international agency approaches to support education in fragile state environments.⁴

1. www.oecd.org/dac

2. www.ineesite.org

3. www.fasttrackinitiative.org/education/efafti/

4. www.ids.ac.uk/ids/pvty/pdf-files/Education_and_Fragile_States.pdf

Education, reconstruction and state building in Afghanistan

by Jeaniene Spink

Since the December 2001 Bonn Agreement, Afghanistan has adopted a new constitution, held democratic elections and established a national army. Education, however, has been treated as merely an 'add on' to the process of nation building.

Education systems are complex and shaped by a country's economic, social and political history. The various education curricula and textbooks employed in Afghanistan mirror the country's turbulent political development.

In the 1970s the Daoud government promoted its claim to annex Pakistan's North West Frontier Province by teaching children the geographic boundaries of 'Pashtunistan'. Following the communist coup in 1978 and Soviet invasion in 1979 students began to learn a new vocabulary – 'revolution', 'people's democracy' and 'rights of the workers' – and came home from school singing socialist songs and telling their parents that religion was no longer important. The reaction was often extreme. Schools were burnt and teachers killed as many argued that education itself was a threat to the very existence of Afghan and Islamic values. As Afghanistan became a Cold War frontline, fundamentalist

militant groups started receiving international assistance. Various political groups had their own schools inside Afghanistan and in refugee camps. Textbooks developed for the alliance of seven Sunni parties based in Peshawar eventually became official textbooks and were widely used in schools in Afghanistan and in refugee camps for many years. Some Mujahideen groups developed maths exercises with examples of how to divide ammunition to maximise Soviet fatalities. Inflammatory textbooks perverted history by describing the Prophet Muhammad's struggle against non-Sunni Muslims, infidels and communists. Afghan Shi'a refugees in the Pakistani city Quetta also developed their own books with support from Iran.

By the time the Taliban were overthrown in November 2001 Afghanistan had witnessed a period of 23 years during which there had been little or no investment in a quality education system that

valued scholastic achievement and social responsibility.

Over 80% of the population were illiterate and a third of the country's 8,000 schools had been destroyed. The extraordinary return to school in 2002 – a 400% increase in enrolment – exceeded all national and international expectations and gave the war-torn country a sense of hope and stability.¹ However, this unprecedented demand for education – particularly for girls – has again given way to doubts. Parents no longer have whole-hearted trust in education. Simply returning to school has not been enough.

Ninety per cent of international assistance to education is in the primary sector in an effort to achieve Education for All (EFA) goals by 2015. There is proportionately little or no support for pre-primary, secondary or tertiary education. Frustrated in their educational ambitions, many children are forced to leave school after primary completion. Lack of opportunities to train as doctors, nurses, lawyers, teachers or engineers means that many Afghans are now choosing to return to Pakistan where there are better educational prospects.

Limitations of reforms

As in many other post-conflict contexts, Afghanistan experienced a bubble of financial support between 2002 and 2003. Resources flowed into the country but absorptive and technical capacity was limited. There was focus on access, supplies and physical rehabilitation as a succession of education ministers sought to flaunt visible outcomes of their leadership. Complex tasks of curriculum development, teacher training and system reform were not

school curriculum and a proposed public consultation never took place. Knowledge is power, and central government administrators saw no need to discuss plans with provincial authorities, communities, parents or children. Relations between central and provincial education authorities are often strained as even supplies of stationery can be held up in order to demonstrate bureaucratic control.

Teacher training and professional development in Afghanistan have focused on the pedagogical aspects of teaching and the primary focus of the Ministry continues to be short-term in-service teacher training. Teacher training colleges are obsolete socialist-style institutions rather than environments for learning and teaching. Until 2004 teacher training was ad hoc and uncoordinated as many providers developed their own teacher training

as they have teachers. The exact size of the teaching force is unknown and many suspect there are large numbers of 'ghost' teachers. In early 2006 funds were made available to recruit an additional 10,000 teachers per year but this is unlikely to solve the country's teacher shortage. There is no agreed system to recruit teachers, accredit their qualifications, evaluate their competence and performance or even to assess where they are most needed. Teacher morale is dropping.

There is considerable evidence that teachers discriminate against students along ethnic, religious, political and socio-economic lines by means of corporal punishment, denial of access or non-recognition of achievement. NGO efforts to address these problems through 'peace education' programmes do not adequately address the roots of social division. Scattered initiatives cannot succeed while the overall system remains unreformed and secondary school books continue to extol violence.

As Afghanistan attempts to rebuild itself, the engagement of its young people is critically important in view of the country's recent history of violent conflict generated by disaffected youth. The assassination of Daoud in 1978 was instigated by university students. The Taliban – an Arabic/Pushtu word for students/seekers of Islamic knowledge – started as a youth movement. If youth are to help build and not again destabilise Afghanistan they need a quality secondary and tertiary education system that actively engages students in reconstruction and peace building. It is encouraging that recent political reforms have led to an upgrading of the status of the Ministry of Education and recognition of its pivotal role in reconstruction. Afghanistan teaches us that it is no longer acceptable for education to be a post-conflict 'add on': it must be the cornerstone of state building and reconstruction.

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1. See 'Logistics under pressure: UNICEF's Back to School programme in Afghanistan' by Paul Molinaro and Sandie Blanchet, FMR18 www.fmreview.org/FMRpdfs/FMR18/fmr1809.pdf



Judy Benjamin

adequately addressed. In 2001 the new interim government approved the use of curriculum text books which were identical to those used by the Mujahideen – apart from removal of some of the most overt references to violence. The Basic Competencies of Learning materials developed with UNICEF and Save the Children assistance were not distributed as the education authorities deemed them to be insufficiently religious.

Curriculum and textbook reform remains fraught with political agendas. There is ongoing debate about religious textbooks, particularly how to present non-Sunni religious practices. Ethnic interest groups are vying for influence over how history is taught. Educational administrators have long memories of how a succession of foreign governments manipulated curricula. It took six months to convince the education ministry to accept a UNICEF offer of funds to assist reform of the primary

curricula. Education donors have driven efforts to consolidate funding and resources for teacher professional development. An in-service teacher training curriculum was developed which provided a four-week intensive training course for the country's 100,000 teachers. However, opposing political agendas and corruption within the education ministry have prevented its national roll-out.

Many have assumed that the greatest problem with teachers in Afghanistan is lack of exposure to modern pedagogical skills. However, a study conducted in the north of the country in 2005 revealed a far greater problem – lack of knowledge of the subjects they teach. When 200 primary school teachers were asked to sit the same exams as their students, only ten passed.

Recruitment and remuneration policies must be urgently reviewed. Most schools have as many cleaners

Impact of conflict in Africa

by Kathryn Touré

Since independence, few African countries have been spared violence and armed conflict. Two West African research networks recently organised an international colloquium to assess the impact and develop linkages between education, peace and democracy.

Conflict is a major obstacle to the development of education in Africa and is a problem that deserves to be more clearly identified. There is only limited literature. We urgently need more research and wider understanding of the role of education in generating conflict, the impact of conflict on education systems and the careers of learners and how to work towards non-violent schools which can promote a culture of peace.

The initiative to hold a colloquium in Yaoundé, Cameroon in March 2006 was spearheaded by the Education Research Network for West and Central Africa/Réseau Ouest et Centre Africain de Recherche en Education (ERNWACA/ROCARE) headquartered in Bamako, Mali and the Family and Schooling in Africa/Famille et Scolarisation en Afrique (FASAF) network¹, based in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso. The event was hosted by the Cameroonian Ministry of Higher Education and UNESCO and funded by Plan International², Diakonia³, the Centre for Population and Development (CEPED)⁴ and the Institute for Research for Development (IRD).⁵ It was attended by decision makers, civil society, researchers, education practitioners and young people. Participants from 24 countries sought to develop strategies to better understand conflict and to promote conflict prevention via research, research-based programming and listening to children's voices. The meeting has generated momentum to encourage partnership between practitioners and researchers.

Papers and discussions dealt with the sources, forms and consequences of violence, especially relating to children (and girls in particular) and to vulnerable groups such as refugees and other displaced persons. Physical, psychological and social consequences of violence and conflict

were discussed and the effectiveness of response interventions assessed.

The case studies analysed:

- causes of conflict and violence in Sierra Leone
- the impact of conflict on girls in Côte d'Ivoire
- education for Togolese refugees in Benin
- increasing in-school violence in Burkina Faso
- realising the right to education for young refugees in Cameroon
- the impact of restrictions on school enrolment in creating and sustaining conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo
- the disastrous impact of Zimbabwe's 'Operation Clean Up' (the Mugabe regime's forced eviction of 'illegal' rural inhabitants) on school enrolment
- post-conflict peace education in Burundi
- violence in Koranic schools in Niger
- sexual harassment in schools in Cameroon and Congo
- the role of life skills education
- education for demobilised child soldiers in Congo
- the impact of lack of in-school sanitation on pupils, especially girls
- HIV/AIDS education in Ugandan primary schools.

As part of the colloquium, the University of Yaoundé I organised a roundtable discussion at the Ecole Normale Supérieure (teaching training college) on the reality of sexual harassment in educational institutions. The issue of gender-based symbolic and sexual violence within schools and the impact of sexist stereotypes in school textbooks remain little documented.

Participants insisted on a holistic approach, because violence in schools is not made up of isolated cases of violence but rather flows from society and the family.

The impact of crisis situations on educational systems is significant and of a variety of kinds. Violence and conflict have become a part of everyday life and threaten education and societal development on the African continent. Studies and actions should therefore be included as part of prevention and reconciliation, and in the framework of peace building leading toward attainment of quality Education for All (EFA) and the Millennium Development Goals (MDG).

Growing levels of violence and conflict in homes, schools and communities require research-based and community-supported action. As more and more initiatives are undertaken to institute democratic values, African researchers must also study how tradition promotes conflict and the value of traditional practices in conflict prevention and resolution. As rules and institutional mediation are not sufficient for peace we need to use ethnographic and other qualitative approaches to study lived experience. Above all, we need to value teachers as the most critical resource in education reconstruction and we need to listen to young people – for their voices are often silenced by those of adults.

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1. www.fasaf.org
 2. www.plan-international.org
 3. www.diakonia-world.org
 4. <http://ceped.cirad.fr>
 5. www.ird.fr

Rebuilding education from scratch in Liberia

by Diana Quick

After 14 years of on-off civil war, 150,000 deaths and the displacement of almost the entire population, Liberia's education system lies in ruins. Donors must work with the recently-elected government to make education for all a reality.

The Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children is dedicated to ensuring that all children and youth, particularly young refugees and IDPs, have access to quality, appropriate education both during and after displacement.¹ The Women's Commission introduced the Global Survey on Education in Emergencies in 2004, a landmark document on education in emergencies.² In December 2005 a delegation from the Commission visited Liberia and interviewed government officials – including Africa's first female head of state, President-elect Ellen Johnson Sirleaf – donors, UN agencies, international NGOs, community organisations, educators and parents.

In Liberia corruption has been rampant at all levels of government. Infrastructure, including school buildings, teacher training colleges, latrines and roads, has been decimated. There is a dearth of trained teachers (especially female teachers), the curriculum is outdated and there are not enough textbooks or school supplies. Data on enrolment numbers is unavailable and children and youth have missed years of schooling.

Education levels are shaped by the legacy of war. The education system was more fully functional 25 years ago than it is now, with the result that the adult literacy rate is higher than the child rate. During the conflict refugees received better education than IDPs due to the discrepancy in access to humanitarian relief and funding sources for the two populations. Education was disrupted for so long that today around two-thirds of those enrolled in primary school are over-aged:

having grown up without access to education they are now too old to sit in classes with first-graders. In secondary schools 45% of boys and 27% of girls are aged between 20 and 24. Peace has not brought an end to gender-based violence and sexual exploitation. Girls are harassed by male teachers or classmates and when travelling to and from school. Fewer girls than boys enrol and they are more likely to drop out.

As they value education, both refugees and IDPs are reluctant to leave camps because, unlike places of origin, they have functioning schools. This has resulted in the separation of families. Refugee children have been left in Guinea where they are able to attend secondary school, while the rest of the family returns to Liberia, where there are very few secondary schools. To encourage repatriation, schooling needs to be available in the areas of origin, and schools in the camps need to be closed.

Liberia faces many constraints in its quest for stability:

- the absence of local authorities, including administrative and law enforcement institutions
- lack of funding for rehabilitation and reintegration of demobilised ex-combatants – leaving them vulnerable to recruitment by non-state actors within and across Liberia's borders
- lack of property restitution mechanisms: many returnees are likely to come home to find their land and houses occupied by ex-combatants and others
- economic activities are limited and unemployment exceeds 80%.

Liberia must rebuild its education system in a transparent manner and eliminate corruption. The peace, stability and economic development of the country depend on an educated workforce with access to jobs that pay a living wage. The new government is taking the right steps in working to eliminate corruption and involve the people of Liberia in the development of the education system. Parents and students see education as one of their top priorities.

The Women's Commission delegation called for:

- the government of Liberia to commit at least 10% of its budget to education
- donors to pledge long-term assistance, including – at least until government capacity is restored – for the salaries of teachers and for incentive payments for volunteers filling gaps in the absence of certified teachers
- building education facilities and infrastructure in and around home communities in conjunction with, if not prior to, the withdrawal of support from IDP and refugee camps
- UNHCR and UNICEF to team up to provide basic education materials in the return package which a family or individual receives when leaving a camp
- NGOs and the UN to coordinate collection and use of education data: without accurate information on numbers of school-age children and youth in specific geographic areas, the government cannot determine where to refurbish or build schools and where teachers are most needed, nor can they ensure accurate disbursement of funds

- evaluation of accelerated learning programmes in total and disaggregated by sex regarding learning, retention and success in passing the West African Examination Council exams
- the government and international community to offer more support to teacher training in refugee and IDP camps and to offer incentives to encourage teachers to return – perhaps asking communities to provide food, housing and childcare
- urgent revision and roll-out of a new curriculum
- mobile teacher training units
- guarantees that teacher training programmes focus on human/women's rights, include a code of conduct for educators and ensure zero tolerance of in-school sexual abuse
- culturally appropriate community sensitisation projects to educate communities and parents about the importance of girls' education and the harmful



nature of such traditional practices as early marriage

- measures to encourage girls and women with children to continue in school (allowing them to bring their babies to class and/or providing child care)
- encouragement of community participation in improving school facilities, building furniture and latrines and supporting teachers
- provision of adequate latrine facilities for girls in all

schools: these must include washrooms, not just toilets.

This is a summary of Help Us Help Ourselves: Education in the Conflict to Post-Conflict Transition in Liberia, by Lori Heninger, Carolyn Makinson, Faye Richardson, Miranda Kaiser and Julia Aker Duany, March 2006, www.womenscommission.org/pdf/lr_ed.pdf Diana Quick is the Commission's Director of Communications. Email: diana@womenscommission.org

1. See FMR22 www.fmreview.org/FMRpdfs/FMR22/FMR2203.pdf

2. www.womenscommission.org/pdf/Ed_Emerg.pdf

Northern Ireland: post-conflict education model?

by Paul Nolan

Northern Ireland's Good Friday Agreement of 1998 called for "initiatives to facilitate and encourage integrated education" but progress has been painfully slow. Only 5% of the total school population are in integrated schools (those bringing together students and staff from both the Protestant and Catholic traditions). Only 1.4% of the adult population has experienced integrated schooling.

Under the terms of the Agreement, Northern Ireland has a unique form of governance – consociationalism. Formulated by the Dutch political scientist Arend Lijphard, it seeks to promote democracy in segmented societies by power-sharing, a Grand Coalition of all political parties with no form of parliamentary opposition. Consociationalism has excluded the

significant numbers of residents of Northern Ireland who choose not to designate themselves as Catholic or Protestant. By empowering ethnic entrepreneurs and promoting homogenisation of identity, it has led to a shrinking of the political centre. Since 1997 the combined vote of the extreme parties, Sinn Fein and the Democratic Unionist Party, has

risen from 29.7% to 52.6%. This same model of consociational government is now being imposed elsewhere – most notably in Iraq – and the same consequences are becoming apparent.

Northern Ireland's post-conflict drift to entrenched extremes shows the need to heed the warning of the political theorist, Giovanni Sartori: "If you reward divisions and divisiveness ... you increase and eventually heighten divisions and divisiveness."

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South Sudan education emergency

by Tim Brown

UNHCR's education challenges in South Sudan highlight the gap between relief and development.

UNHCR's leading role with refugees in countries of asylum is not in doubt. However, when refugees return to their countries of origin – which are often trying to recover from the devastation of war – donors do not agree on the extent of UNHCR's involvement in reintegration activities. Some donors say that UNHCR is not a development agency and reintegration is not its job while others say that UNHCR should be helping devastated countries to absorb returning



Kinji Primary School, Yei, South Sudan

refugees by building schools and health centres. After decades of discussion about closing the gap between relief and development the international community needs to settle this problem once and for all. Development agencies have a different sense of urgency, timing and culture and they do not come onto the scene soon enough. UNHCR has a crucial reintegration role to play during transitional recovery periods.

UNHCR has been engaged in the education of Sudanese refugees for many years and is now working in South Sudan to assist their return. The education gaps are strikingly evident in this vast region devastated by 21 years of civil war from which half a million refugees and four million IDPs have been displaced.¹ Eighteen months after the January 2005 signing of the Comprehensive

Peace Agreement – which sets out a framework for a transitional regional government pending a decision on future independence for southern Sudan – the capacity of the Government of Southern Sudan remains weak. Most government officials have not received salaries and almost all teachers continue to work on a voluntary basis. Inter-ethnic clashes, LRA rebel attacks, disaffected ex-soldiers and banditry continue to make the security situation precarious (two UNHCR colleagues were killed in Yei in March 2006). Destruction of infrastructure, the impassable state of many roads during the wet season and extensive presence of landmines and unexploded ordnance continue to obstruct movement of people and goods. The spontaneous return of refugees and IDPs to major towns has led to acute congestion and several cholera outbreaks. How will these conditions improve in the six-year interim period leading up to the elections – during which time hundreds of thousands, if not millions, more refugees and IDPs are expected to return?

The situation in South Sudan is unique in terms of gender inequalities and violation of girls' rights to education. South Sudan has proportionately fewer girls going to school than any country in the world. According to UNICEF, fewer than one per cent of girls complete primary education and only one schoolchild in four is a girl. The lack of female teachers – just 7% of the teaching force – reinforces this gender imbalance. It is estimated that around 90% of women in South Sudan are illiterate.

Education is a priority for the southern Sudanese and they are keen to make efforts to improve the education system. Sudan is potentially a rich country, with abundant natural resources and fertile land. There are many educated

Sudanese in the diaspora – including educated females – who could return with skills and new attitudes. Those who stayed behind during conflict have adopted remarkable coping strategies and many communities remain resilient. If provided with government support and help from the international donors, community-based initiatives and local education opportunities could drive sustainable and equitable development.

UNHCR has been helping to create conditions conducive for the return and reintegration of refugees and IDPs by building, renovating and expanding schools and training centres as well as providing educational materials and equipment. UNHCR has also been training and supporting teachers, promoting female education and sensitising communities on peace-building, HIV/AIDS, sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) and gender issues. UNHCR has opened 11 offices in key return areas.

Challenges are enormous:

- There are great disparities in education provision between locations.
- Huge numbers of youths and adults have completely missed out on education.
- Schools have no capacity to absorb large numbers of returning refugees and IDPs – most are temporary structures, often under trees.
- Many teachers themselves have not completed primary education.
- Various curricula (used by Uganda, Kenya and the Khartoum government) are taught in South Sudan and progress on developing a unified curriculum is slow.
- English is to be the language of instruction, yet many students

– especially those in towns formerly garrisoned by the Khartoum government troops
– have only been taught in Arabic and some returning from neighbouring Francophone states know little English.

- There are few secondary schools and post-primary/technical institutions in South Sudan. Southern universities which relocated to Khartoum during the civil war have yet to return.
- Many communities have negative attitudes towards female education.
- Education fails to provide relevant practical experience or teach marketable vocational skills.

If care is not taken boys will benefit more from the few post-conflict education chances available and gender-based discrimination will be further entrenched.² Experience elsewhere suggests the need for affirmative action:

- appointing female education coordinators and teachers to mentor girls
- including gender issues in all teacher training
- providing scholarships to ensure more girls complete secondary education and can become teachers and role models
- building girls' schools and female dormitories to encourage girls to remain in school in a safe learning environment
- constructing girl-only school latrines and providing female

students with sanitary materials and decent clothing.

Inadequate and irregular funding hampers reconstruction of education. There is no evidence yet that funds from the World Bank-administered Multi-Donor Trust Fund (MDTF) for Sudan have provided any support for education in South Sudan. Unfairly blaming UNHCR for the low rate of official refugee returns in 2005, some donors are pressing the agency to focus on the return itself and to abandon development-type activities such as school construction even in areas where UNHCR is the only agency on the ground. UNHCR has had to severely cut plans and divert from its earlier strategy of providing schools, health centres and boreholes which would have encouraged refugees to return.

The Government of Southern Sudan, UNICEF (the lead education agency in South Sudan), UNHCR and international NGOs need to:

- ensure that all communities – whether returning refugees and IDPs or those who never left – benefit from assistance to create conducive education environments
- promote affirmative action in support of the education of women and girls
- support education decentralisation – to promote democracy and reduce inequalities, the capacity of education authorities must be built at local levels and not just at the centre
- assist schools in rural areas to avoid concentration of returnees in major towns

- engage communities in supporting schools and education activities – a challenging task in urban areas where a sense of community is often lacking
- urge the authorities – in Khartoum and in the Government of Southern Sudan – to start using oil revenues to ensure teachers receive salaries
- prioritise teacher training, especially in the English language
- urgently finalise a curriculum for South Sudan – including life-skills issues around HIV/AIDS, peace and reconciliation, SGBV, gender and human rights
- develop policies on vocational and higher education.

How can we expect displaced people to return if there is nothing to come back to? Donors need to be informed and educated on UNHCR's broad protection role in returnee situations which is a crucial element in successful post-conflict recovery. Agreement is needed on a coordinated response which will bridge the gap between relief and development. When donors make visits, fieldworkers need to highlight realities on the ground and show donors how the slow response of development agencies is hindering the sustainable return of displaced people.

By building schools and supporting education in this transition period UNHCR and the international community have an ideal opportunity to stabilise peace in South Sudan. Without adequate education and other vital services, the volatile mix of thousands of returning refugees and IDPs with impoverished host communities is a recipe for future conflict.

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1. See FMR24 'Sudan: prospects for peace' www.fmreview.org/FMRpdfs/FMR24/FMR24contents.pdf

2. See Tim Brown, 'Promoting the education rights of girls in south Sudan', *Human Rights Tribune* 12, www.hri.ca/tribune/12-1-2.html

Falling between relief and development

Kinji Primary School on the outskirts of Yei town was built with UNHCR funding on the site of a school completely destroyed by war. A hand-over ceremony at the end of April 2006 was well attended. As UNHCR anticipated, the school is a magnet, encouraging people to return and settle nearby. By the time of the official opening about 1,300 students – over half of them girls – had already enrolled. Teachers are dedicated, well-regarded by pupils and prepared to put up with low wages. Children are keen to go to school, with some boys working as labourers to pay their school fees of about \$5 per term. Communities are digging latrines and offering other practical support. However, each classroom has more than 100 students. There are few Ugandan textbooks although the students are following the Ugandan curriculum. There is no source of water nearby. None of the teachers, as in all the neighbouring schools, has been paid a salary by the government. Many children go hungry because food is not provided at school. Support is urgently required for this and all other schools in South Sudan.

Getting southern Sudanese children to school

by Sibeso Luswata

The Government of Southern Sudan's Go to School Initiative, supported by UNICEF, which seeks to get 1.6 million children back in school by the end of 2007, incorporates key elements of the INEE Minimum Standards for Education in Emergencies, Chronic Crises and Early Reconstruction.

So far, unofficial reports show that 558,713 primary school pupils have enrolled for the 2006 academic year and 16,614 teachers are working throughout southern Sudan. Four million textbooks and teachers' guides are being delivered. Basic school supplies for up to 1.6 million children have been purchased and are being delivered to schools. Accelerated training is being developed for the 9,000 new teachers required to ensure the success of the initiative. There is special emphasis on intensive English language training. The Ministry of Education,

April 2006
launch of 'Go
to School'
campaign, Juba,
southern Sudan.



Science and Technology is being helped to develop a standardised curriculum, school calendar, syllabus and examination schedule, as well as a clear language policy. Planning has begun for an Institute of Education to ensure long-term technical expertise in rebuilding the education system. Public awareness campaigns are mobilising communities to send children to school, especially girls.

A central element of the Go to School Initiative is the Rapid Assessment of Learning Spaces exercise currently underway in all ten states of

southern Sudan. Survey teams are crossing the vast region, recording even the smallest schools under trees to produce a comprehensive list for planning purposes and to know exactly how many children are attending school. The RALS exercise will provide badly-needed baseline data on: locations of schools/learning spaces; access to schools; presence and condition of physical structures; access to water and sanitation facilities; enrolment numbers, disaggregated by gender and grade; numbers of teachers, disaggregated by gender and qualification; availability of learning/teaching materials; and languages taught and used for instruction.

Special provisions are being made to address the needs of IDPs, former child soldiers and others directly affected by the war. There is intensive focus on supplies to regions reporting high numbers of returnees. UNICEF education staff are liaising with protection colleagues to keep track of demobilised ex-child combatants. Adult learning and vocational classes are being planned for those who did not have a chance to attend school during the conflict. Children with disabilities are being identified with the help of WFP and will be provided with additional support through school feeding programmes.

Key decisions are being made by the new government rather than UNICEF or other external agencies. Decisions about school locations and facilities are taken with substantive community input. UNICEF is promoting children's participation by:

- mobilising girls and boys to act as advocates within

their communities through 'creative facilitation'

- helping to publicise children's voices in the media
- ensuring children's visibility in Go to School launches, marches and other public events.

Following the national launch of the Go to School campaign on 1 April 2006, a series of local events has helped to raise visibility for education and generate enthusiasm in each of the ten states of southern Sudan. In Rumbek, the capital of Lakes State, tangible results are already being felt. During the campaign launch, the town square overflowed with people who had gathered to celebrate the initiative and listen to local leaders call for free primary education for all children. As banners waved, folk dancers twirled and thousands of schoolchildren marched proudly to the sound of beating drums, the crowd chanted in unison: "My child, my daughter, my son, my brother, my sister, my mother, my father – all of us, go to school!"

As politicians debate the shape of southern Sudan's new education policy, the rising calls for free primary education have led many schools to abolish school fees. Last year, it cost about \$5 annually for a child to attend the Ager Gum Primary School in Rumbek. But in 2006 the school eliminated even this minimal requirement. "We heard that education should be free," says Samuel Deng Majur, a teacher at Ager Gum. "This is what was told to us at the launch, and this is how we want our country to be. So we must follow, although it is not always easy."

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Rebuilding Timor-Leste's education system

by Susan Nicolai

Timor-Leste is a classic example of a post-conflict fragile state. Political will and popular enthusiasm rapidly restored a shattered education system but as donor interest wanes the new state cannot deliver services.

When the people of Timor-Leste chose independence from Indonesia in September 1999, pro-Indonesian militias responded with brutality. At the beginning of what was supposed to be the 1999-2000 school year, three quarters of the population fled across the border into the Indonesian province of West Timor or into the mountains. In West Timor the numbers of refugee children overwhelmed poorly resourced schools and in Timor-Leste only 5% of education institutions were left standing. Schools were

local people. UNICEF temporarily became the de facto ministry of education as the UN, NGOs and communities worked to build schools. The budget for education relied almost entirely on external funds. Adoption of a sector-wide approach contributed significantly to early educational reconstruction.

Abolition of school fees, school feeding programmes and nationalist fervour for a Timorese education system drove recovery and extraordinary progress was made.

Within two years of the crisis the primary school enrolment rate had risen to 70%, significantly higher than the 51% pre-conflict rate.

Debates about language issues (in a country with around 30 languages or dialects) have distracted attention from education

quality. The decision to phase out the use of Indonesian in favour of Portuguese is controversial.

Although four fifths of the population speak Tetum, it is primarily an oral language. Around 43% of Timor-Leste people are fluent in Indonesian and most teachers and students would prefer to continue to use it. There are few young people among the 5% of the population able to speak Portuguese and hardly any Portuguese-proficient teachers.

Major problems remain. Timor-Leste has boosted school enrolments but one in five school-aged children still does not attend school, two thirds of adult women are illiterate and 60% of the population have never attended school. Trained teachers are in short supply and morale and teaching quality are low.

Lessons learned from Timor-Leste are that:

- In the rush to return children to schools, prioritisation of infrastructure can lead to neglect of teacher training, capacity building, curriculum issues and sustainable financing.
- Community participation should not be confined to mobilising labour to rebuild and repair schools.
- Teacher training cannot be postponed until an education system is fully functioning and the curriculum known – especially in places where the teaching force is inexperienced and untrained in child-centred approaches.
- The question of language competencies and mother tongue should play a role in determining the language of instruction.
- Young people who have been involved in resistance struggles may make schools more violent and their experiences need to be addressed.

Oecussi Learning Centre, Timor Leste



systematically looted and teachers – most of them from Indonesia – fled. East Timor was left without a government, official language, currency, legal system or schooling.

The UN dispatched peacekeeping forces, restored order and set up a transitional authority that ruled until independence in 2002. Hardly any of the international staff who flooded into Timor-Leste understood Timorese culture or shared a common language with

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Education and chronic crisis in Palestine

by Susan Nicolai

Development of a largely secular and modern education system in the Occupied Palestinian Territory over the past decade was mainly due to strong local leadership and external support.

The Palestinian education system has emerged through its formative years against a backdrop of on-going crisis, repeated emergency and intensifying restrictions on movement. When the Palestinian Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MoEHE) was established as a result of the Oslo Accords, Palestinians were in charge of their own education system for the first time in history. Since 1994, when the Palestinian Authority (PA) was formed, enrolment in all schools has risen from 650,000 children to over a million, an increase of more than 50% in a decade. During this time, the MoEHE has struggled to establish mechanisms for planning, budgeting and coordination while coping with student growth and the chronic crisis of occupation.

(the Civil Administration) had full authority over all education matters in the West Bank and Gaza. Government schools reported to the occupying administration which was staffed by uniformed military personnel. Only minimal funding was provided, almost entirely to cover teachers' salaries. Construction of new schools and teacher training were virtually non-existent. The management

discrimination and closures by establishing a parallel system of 'popular education'. Schools began working with university faculties and with NGOs to create home schools and prepare take-home lessons. The Israeli Civil Administration responded by criminalising home education and imposing jail sentences and heavy fines on organisers. The impact of these years continues to be felt: increased discipline problems and fascination with resistance appear to have contributed to a drop in academic standards at various levels of education.

Hebron
checkpoint



Arrested development

In 2000, after six years of struggle to establish an education system, just as focus began to shift to improving quality by creating a new curriculum and improving teaching, the second *intifada* – the al-Aqsa *intifada* – began. Even before this, the creation of the new education system occurred

In the Occupied Palestinian Territory (OPT), education is compulsory for ten years, followed by two non-compulsory years of secondary education culminating in the Tawjihi general examination. The PA – through the MoEHE – runs 76% of all schools and educates 67% of all school children. The UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) administers 13% of schools and teaches 24% of the students, while the private sector caters for 6% of students. Schools run by UNRWA offer grades 1-10 but do not provide secondary education.

The starting point

Prior to the Oslo Accords, from 1967-1994 the Israeli military government

system was highly centralised and information was withheld from teachers and administrators. Any mention of Palestinian heritage, culture or geography was forbidden.

When the first *intifada* erupted in December 1987, the impact on education was dramatic. Many teachers were forced to retire, teachers unions were prohibited and students were expelled, arrested and prevented from travelling abroad. Palestinian schools were closed for extended periods and some universities shut down for more than four years. A number of schools were taken over as detention centres.

Education became a centre of nationalist struggle during this time, with Palestinians battling

within an increasingly fractured geography. Oslo created a 'cartographic cheeseboard', and as Israeli settlements grew, the already separate West Bank and Gaza were further sectioned into a series of enclaves. Areas over which the PA had jurisdiction were often physically separate, with movement between them requiring Israeli permission. Restrictions have increased to the extent that movement between MoEHE headquarters in Ramallah and offices in Gaza is now impossible.

A new Palestinian curriculum has been developed and introduced progressively since 2000. With the conflict at centre stage, this effort has been politicised from many angles. Allegations that Palestinian textbooks incite hatred received international

attention. While unsubstantiated, they have had major impact with some donors shifting funding away from education. Many schools have photos of children and youths shot dead by Israeli soldiers prominently displayed. These posters of 'martyrs' – as they are commonly referred to – become the theme of long discussions. One teacher from Gaza explained that "Our kids have become politicians; they are still young children but they think and act much older than their age."

Palestinian school days are lost due to curfews and other movement restrictions, with students detained and lives lost during military incursions. In April 2002, the Ministry building in Ramallah was severely damaged by the Israeli military who confiscated equipment and records. The 275 schools within 500 metres of an Israeli military post are particularly unsafe. Since the outbreak of the Al Aqsa *intifada* MoEHE reports that 43 schools have at some point been occupied and turned into Israeli military bases. Between 2000-2005, around three thousand schoolchildren were detained by the occupying forces.

While the occupation has been the main factor causing these difficulties, internal Palestinian political divisions, corruption and incompetence have played their own part in holding back educational progress. Coping with the occupation has been a necessary fact of life for administrators, teachers and students. During the second *intifada*, closures, curfews, permits, demolitions and the separation wall have made coordination and development of the education sector nearly impossible.

Rights and violations

International law enshrines a right to education for every child. In the OPT those with the duty to fulfil this right – the PA, MoEHE, district education authorities, principals, teachers and parents – are for the large part constrained by the occupation authorities who do little to respect or protect education and other related rights.

Despite the ostensible post-Oslo transfer of powers, the PA has not taken on full sovereign control.

In practice Israel continues its jurisdiction throughout the OPT through an extensive system of curfews and closures. Aimed at protecting civilians under military occupation, the Fourth Geneva Convention Relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War and its related Protocols comprise the applicable body of international humanitarian law (IHL), although application is disputed by Israel. Obligations in relation to education are enshrined in both IHL, human rights law and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child which Israel has ratified:

- Schools are guaranteed protection from military attacks and attacking schools is classed as a war crime.
- In situations of military occupation, the occupying power must facilitate institutions devoted to the care and education of children and ensure provision of free and compulsory education at primary level, with accessible secondary and technical education.
- Education should be non-discriminatory and gender-equitable with access for children with disabilities, ethnic minorities and unaccompanied children.
- Education must strengthen respect for human rights, promote peace, build on a child's potential and support their cultural identity.

It is difficult for schools to escape violence when surrounded by it. A teacher frames the obvious question: "How can schools be non-violent when there is violence all around ...? If world powers use force to achieve their aims, can less be expected here?" Efforts to forbid corporal punishment, humiliation and collective punishment in schools have only been partially successful.

It is not just violence or its ever-present threat that affects children, but also the daily process of dealing with checkpoints, waiting in queues or elaborate diversions to attempt to bypass military checkpoints. Boredom due to stringent safety restrictions and movement controls adds additional stress to children's lives and can lead to aggression against younger children.

Hope is in short supply. A Save the Children survey found that only two out of 120 children asked thought they would see a Palestinian state in the next decade. Amidst such despair, children and their families see education as their one hope and a way to keep safe. Education is a key strategy for keeping children out of violent clashes, since having young people at school helps reduce the risk of confrontation with Israeli troops and settlers. When no place is safe for a child, schools and teachers represent some type of authority. Schools are generally seen to be safer than nearly anywhere else – yet little is being done to openly discuss or address violence in Palestinian society and its impact on school life.

Conclusion

Given that the Palestinian education system only started to be developed in 1994, following a century of outside rule, there is much to be proud of. However, over the past decade the OPT has slid back and forth along the continuum of acute conflict to post-conflict, through chronic crises and then back to an acute stage. This analysis of Palestinian education concludes, as other studies have done, that fulfilling Palestinian children's educational and other rights is crucially dependent on an end to the occupation. Going to school continues to put students and teachers at risk as they cope with the violence in their everyday lives. Strict movement controls, humiliation at checkpoints and loss of land and livelihoods have led to a feeling that even education has little hope to offer the average child. But Palestinians also know that to give up on education would be to give up on hope all together.

While drawn from a specific context of prolonged occupation, several lessons from OPT may be applicable in other situations of chronic crisis:

- The inclusion of education in a peace agreement is vital in clarifying authority. Palestinian negotiators ensured that education was among the first sectors handed over in the Oslo Accords, significant as it is one of the largest and most visible services of any governing authority.

- When a formal system has broken down, non-formal education can be an important strategy in maintaining learning. During the first intifada, 'popular education' was an attempt to make up for a collapsing education system, made possible through grassroots organisations, charitable societies and NGOs.
- Criticism of curriculum content is likely to reflect the wider political environment. The Palestinian curriculum on the whole withstands the harsher accusations of those who claim it incites hatred; however awkward in parts, it could arguably have done more to promote an understanding of the 'other'.
- If harsh controls affecting education are external to the system, little can be done to stop these actions and focus shifts to mitigating the consequences. In Palestinian education, the human suffering, infrastructure damage and interruption of services have largely been outside of educationalists' control.
- An accumulation of risk factors can lead to a situation that jeopardises children's development and should be addressed in the school environment. Palestinian children themselves say they need to develop skills to stay safe, focus on personal improvement and strengthen relationships with others. They also say that

education is their main means to improve their situation.

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*This is a summary of her forthcoming book, **Fragmented foundations: education and chronic crisis in the Occupied Palestinian Territory**, International Institute for Educational Planning, UNESCO, 2006, soon to be available online at www.unesco.org/iiep/PDF/pubs.*

*For more information about the lives of Palestinian children, see **Eye-to-Eye** www.savethechildren.org.uk/eyetoeye.*

USAID, education and conflict in Asia and the Near East

by Vijitha Eyango

Over the past five years USAID has learned lessons from critical education programmes in response to conflict and natural disasters in the Asia and Near East Region.

USAID emergency education programmes have ranged from rebuilding education systems in Afghanistan to supporting the tsunami-affected countries and post-earthquake Pakistan with education programmes that quickly begin to restore order, create stability and regenerate public sector capacities. The challenge has been to develop a twinned approach for education programming which balances practical needs with longer-term strategic programmes, thus responding to the key immediate and longer-term needs of the population and country at large.

USAID's experience in conflict situations has shown that it is critical to design country-specific interventions that take into consideration basic security concerns, government capacity (both institutional and absorptive), areas

of greatest need and how best to coordinate with other donor and local efforts on the ground. The challenge is to look at the agency's comparative advantage as a donor agency and work out appropriate scenarios for action that enable us to respond swiftly in conflict situations to ensure an education response that is both broad and flexible.

In countries such as Iraq, USAID's immediate programmatic response included school construction and rehabilitation and provision of book-bags, coupled with accelerated learning programmes aimed at reintegrating out-of-school children into age-appropriate grades. In addition to formal school-based interventions, we employ a variety of non-formal education and training approaches ranging from programmes for marginalised populations, such as skills training

for IDPs and out-of-school youth in Aceh, to functional literacy programmes for adults in Pakistan.

These immediate practical responses run simultaneously with longer-term strategic programmes aimed at improving access to quality education. Getting children back into school re-establishes order for children and their parents. Stable conditions keep children safe and allow schools to be repaired and re-supplied and basic services restored. In Afghanistan, for example, USAID's immediate post-9/11 education response focused on rebuilding schools and distributing textbooks and book-bags to get children back into schools. This approach is complemented with longer-term programmes to provide radio-based training, literacy and skills training to enable illiterate women to become community health workers and support to upgrade teacher training at Afghanistan's universities.

While the focus of USAID's education response is on basic

education, supporting higher education's capacity to contribute to development is critical in the more strategic phase of education development programming in conflict contexts. USAID has provided substantial support for higher education programmes in Afghanistan, Iraq and Pakistan, including, scholarships for graduate study and exchanges, university partnerships and also places an emphasis on strengthening overall capacity of host-country institutions.

One of the most difficult challenges is to design an expanded humanitarian response that builds the capacity of local government and mitigates the impact of conflict. Designing and implementing a programme that takes into consideration all these parameters is very complex and includes trade-offs as programme options are weighed within the context of USAID's comparative advantage in the country at large. Nepal, for example, has poor basic education indicators, ranging from 70.5% net enrolment rate in primary school to a female illiteracy rate of 35%. Access to the education system is further constrained along caste and gender lines, and by the return of uneducated youth after working in the Gulf countries. Given the context of the Maoist insurgency coupled with the lack of viable jobs, USAID's comparative advantage in this arena is to structure a programme that provides training and functional literacy to out-of-school youth as opposed to a basic education programme that focuses solely on improving access to education.

In positioning programmes, it is critical to balance resource and capacity limitations of the government with a flexible and systematic plan for improving government capacity and ensuring long-term sustainability. For example, in 2004 USAID committed to rehabilitating Kabul women's dormitory that enables 1,400 girls and



UNICEF/HQ03-0236/Patrick Andrade

women from rural Afghanistan to attend higher education institutions in Kabul. With public sector capacities so limited both in terms of capacity and resources, USAID's approach was to go beyond the bricks and mortar of building this dormitory and work out a phased sustainability plan. This plan includes USAID support for furniture and operating costs, while slowly phasing out responsibility as the Ministry takes over responsibility and ownership of the process.

While designing a viable education programme is highly dependent on reliable education statistics, donors should be flexible enough to design immediate programme responses in the absence of valid statistics. For example, following the 2005 Pakistan earthquake, it took months to get an accurate picture of the extent of the damage to schools and the community. In order to immediately respond to the crisis at hand, USAID had to design interventions based on limited sampling, and sometimes anecdotal evidence, and to shift to more evidence-based programming once the extent of the damage became clearer. The immediate response – to provide tent schools and schooling supplies – has now been expanded to provide skills training

and education system support for the earthquake-affected region at large. It is equally critical to design rigorous monitoring and evaluation guidelines and steps to ensure that both practical and strategic indicators (qualitative and quantitative) measure the on-going progress of our education programmes.

USAID's education programmes in conflict-affected countries in Asia and the Near East are driven by country-specific priorities aimed at balancing immediate with longer-term systemic and strategic goals. Programmes need to aim to build the foundation for sound government management and accountability of the education sector and overall system strengthening, while providing immediate programmes that restore order, create stability and regenerate public sector capacity.

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This primary school in Baghdad, Iraq, is still littered with leftover live ammunition.

Learning away from home: the BEFARe project

by Shakir Ishaq and Atle Hetland

BEFARe – Basic Education For Afghan Refugees – administers the world’s largest and longest-running emergency education project for refugees.

Established in the mid 1980s and funded primarily by Germany and UNHCR, BEFARe runs formal and non-formal educational (FE/NFE) activities for both the local population and Afghan refugees. It has been involved in operating over 300 schools and over a thousand non-formal education courses – funded mainly by the World Bank – for some 20,000 participants. It has developed and produced more than 100 textbooks and teachers’ guides and has an extensive teacher-training programme complemented by regular monitoring and supervision of teachers. Local communities have been mobilised to provide support via school management committees. BEFARe promotes peace, health, female education and women’s rights.

In Peshawar and the North-West Frontier Province, where over three quarters of Afghan refugees in camps/villages are to be found, the quality of the services provided has been consistently good. BEFARe has facilitated the highest primary school enrolment of refugee children in Pakistan. Figures are rarely accurate, especially not at times of repatriation, but BEFARe estimates the enrolment rate to be 50-60% of school-age children. The percentage of girls enrolled in school peaked at 35%, yet is still impressive considering the extent of earlier resistance to girls’ education and restrictions over how it should be provided. The percentage of female teachers, however, has been lower (25%), and the percentage of female managers lower still.

There are still many refugees, in the camps/villages and particularly in urban areas, who have never had an opportunity to enrol their children in school. Literacy and other youth and adult education opportunities are still few. Secondary education opportunities, in academic and

vocational subjects, have always been limited, and higher education remains for the select few.

NFE is a cornerstone of any early response, and also forms part of the long-term response to a refugee crisis and early reconstruction. BEFARe’s NFE programme started in 1989. Over the years, the programme has expanded in the number of learners, range of activities, and quality and quantity of teacher training courses and teaching materials. It includes a wide range of activities, such as basic literacy, civics education, mother and child health care, home schools for girls and boys, vocational and skills training, teacher training courses and community development activities for adolescents and adults. More recently, special attention has been given to psychosocial aspects, human rights, peace education, democratisation and conflict resolution. However, due to low priority by donors, by the end of 2005, the NFE Programme had been reduced to a side-activity with a small budget and vastly reduced number of learners.

BEFARe (formerly GTZ-BEFARe) is now a registered Pakistani NGO with a board of trustees.¹ It remains an implementing partner for UNHCR but has been badly affected by the agency’s recent budget cuts. In spring 2005 BEFARe was running schools for about 100,000 pupils with 2,500 teachers; by autumn, due to budget constraints, numbers had fallen to 80,000 pupils and 1,700 teachers. Further cuts in 2006 have brought down the numbers of students and teachers to 70,000 and 1,400 respectively. This clearly shows that BEFARe alone has lost an alarming number of 45,000 students over the past year. It is obviously a matter of great concern for all those involved in refugee education, and needs immediate attention of the

international community. Although large numbers of refugees have repatriated – including some three million from Pakistan – Pakistan is still host to some 2.55 million Afghan refugees out of which around 1.8 million reside in NWFP. Pakistan has been a generous host, but cannot meet the needs of the large number who remain without international assistance. Assisted by UNHCR, the government plans an assessment of all refugees in late 2006 in order to decide on various durable solutions.

The Afghan refugee situation, one of the world’s largest and longest lasting, now has the dubious honour of celebrating its quarter century. BEFARe is a treasure chest for educationalists interested in refugee education. The history, achievements and lessons learned from emergency education projects are, unfortunately, rarely documented.

BEFARe’s experience has demonstrated that education is a key throughout the ‘refugee cycle’ – from exodus to refugee life to repatriation, resettlement or integration. It is vital that donors do not close down assistance for refugee education in Pakistan at this crucial point but instead continue to provide bridging assistance to returnees. While it is important to give large amounts of aid to Afghanistan, it should not be given at the expense of aid to the Afghan refugees who need to be prepared to return home in dignity, with skills, knowledge and prospects for livelihoods and further education.

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1. www.befare.org

Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies

by Allison Anderson and Mary Mendenhall

In December 2004, the Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE) launched the first global tool to define a minimum level of educational quality and help ensure the right to education for people affected by crises.

The Minimum Standards for Education in Emergencies, Chronic Crises and Early Reconstruction were developed in a consultative process by over 2,250 individuals from more than 50 countries, including students, teachers and staff of NGOs, UN agencies, donors, governments and universities. The Minimum Standards augment the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child,¹ the Dakar 2000 Education for All (EFA) goals² and the Sphere Project's Humanitarian Charter and the Minimum Standards in Disaster Response.³ They hold the humanitarian community accountable for providing quality education without discrimination. The standards are flexible enough to be a practical guide for response at the community level while also providing national governments, other authorities, funding agencies and national and international agencies with a harmonised framework to coordinate their education activities.

Demand for the Minimum Standards handbook has been high, and over 17,000 copies have been distributed globally. The INEE Minimum Standards have been used in over 60 countries for planning, assessment, design, implementation, training, capacity building and monitoring and evaluation. In the aftermath of the tsunami in Aceh, IRC/CARDI⁴ used the standards to conduct a rapid and holistic needs assessment for emergency education and to plan a response to fill identified gaps. In Chad, UNICEF and its NGO partners have used INEE's Minimum Standards to assist with decisions about codes of conduct for teachers and to assess the effectiveness of work plans. In Cambodia, the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport has been using INEE's Minimum Standards as an advocacy and capacity-building tool to further

plans to achieve EFA goals. After Hurricane Stan devastated Guatemala in October 2005, CARE used the Minimum Standards while facilitating formation of a group of teachers to help provide psychosocial and other support to local communities.

Strengthening capacity

The successful launch and subsequent promotional activities throughout 2005 highlighted the need for training on the standards. As a result, INEE's 20-person Working Group⁵ facilitated the development of training materials and, with the help of numerous member organisations, is offering training workshops throughout 2006. Training materials piloted in Nepal, northern Uganda and Pakistan in late 2005 are being used in nine regional three-day Training of Trainers (TOT) workshops, each of which will train approximately 25 education and humanitarian trainers to apply the Minimum Standards. Each graduate from an INEE TOT workshop is required to conduct a minimum of two training courses for managers and practitioners in education and emergency work within 12 months of completing the INEE workshop. Over the next year some 225 government, UN and NGO trainers are expected to train thousands of humanitarian workers, equipping them to provide the psychosocial, physical and cognitive protection that quality education in emergencies can afford to communities in crisis and the coordinated, holistic response needed to lay a solid and sound basis for post-conflict and disaster reconstruction.

INEE encourages members to adopt and disseminate the Minimum Standards. To help them do so, a range of promotional materials is available on the INEE website

(www.ineesite.org/standards), including French, Spanish, Arabic, Portuguese and Bahasa Indonesia translations of the standards.

Qualitative and quantitative evaluation methodologies are being used to conduct case studies on initial application. The Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children is assessing use of the standards in Darfur and Creative Associates International Inc is examining their application in northern Uganda. Their reports will be posted on the INEE website.

INEE's growing network of over 1,300 members represents diverse groups of NGOs, UN agencies, donors, governments, academics and individuals from affected populations. The network has increased awareness of the critical role that education plays within humanitarian response. The INEE Steering Group,⁶ the Secretariat staff and members advocate for:

- inclusion of education in all humanitarian response
- access for all young people to relevant education opportunities without discrimination
- use and implementation of the Minimum Standards for Education in Emergencies, Chronic Crises and Early Reconstruction
- sustainable efforts to improve quality in formal and non-formal education
- governments to have the capacity and resources to assume responsibility for education provision
- promotion and investment in Education for All (EFA) by international stakeholders.

INEE works to improve communication, coordination and access to resources for practitioners and other stakeholders working in

the field of education in emergencies and post-crisis reconstruction through its website and listserv. INEE's website contains good practice guides, training resources, evaluation materials and advocacy tools – a comprehensive resource for practitioners, academics, policymakers, donors and governments. The INEE listserv allows members to exchange information about training opportunities, new resources and tools while also providing a forum for discussion about current challenges and innovative practices.

INEE was honoured by the Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children at the annual Voices of Courage luncheon in New York

in May 2006, a much deserved recognition of the dedication and perseverance of all the INEE members who have worked to ensure the right to education in emergencies and post-crisis reconstruction.⁷

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1. www.unicef.org/crc
2. www.unesco.org/education/efa
3. www.sphereproject.org
4. The Consortium for Assistance and Recovery toward Development in Indonesia is a coalition of four specialised refugee agencies, spearheaded by the International Rescue Committee.
5. The Working Group on Minimum Standards currently includes: Academy for Educational Development, AVSI, BEFAre, CARE India, CARE USA, Catholic Relief Services, Fundación dos Mundos, GTZ, International Rescue Committee, Ministry of Education-France, Norwegian Church Aid, Norwegian Refugee Council, Foundation for the Refugee Education Trust (RET), International Save the Children Alliance, UNESCO-IIEP, UNHCR, UNICEF, USAID, Windle Trust, World Education.
6. The INEE Steering Group brings together representatives from CARE USA, Christian Children's Fund, International Rescue Committee, International Save the Children Alliance, Norwegian Refugee Council, UNESCO, UNHCR, UNICEF and the World Bank.
7. www.womenscommission.org/about/Lunch06/INEESpeech.shtml

Education and conflict: an NGO perspective

by Lyndsay Bird

NGOs working in education in conflict-affected areas have realised the importance of listening to children, encouraging their genuine participation in programmes and publicising and scaling up the innovations which often arise in the aftermath of war.

Many meetings on education and conflict fail to consider the perspectives of children. Children should be considered as 'clients' and as the reason for education interventions. Frequently, however, children are alluded to from a theoretical perspective. The emphasis on the effect of conflict on educational systems – rather than on children's lives – compounds this.

As Jason Hart reminds us¹ there is a need to listen to children in more concrete and effective ways. Children should be placed within the context of the community they live in and the learning processes they are engaged in through community life. This implies consideration not only of formal schooling but also of the informal educative processes that can often be more significant – especially in times of conflict when access to formal schooling may

be jeopardised. Determining how and what children learn in times of conflict depends on understanding how they receive information – from teachers in schools, parents, radio, gossip with their peers or storytelling from their elders. By genuinely listening to children and taking note of their concerns and needs in our programming interventions, the policy and research debate can be better informed from a truly 'grounded' perspective.

NGOs and civil society groups – being close to the areas of conflict – become aware of and therefore take advantage of opportunities for innovation that arise during conflict. These may include new curricula, methods of teaching or home-based learning. NGOs, state authorities and donors supporting post-conflict reconstruction need to capture small-scale innovations

and to scale up or mainstream them without losing the freshness and direct approach that give them an innovative edge. We need to ask if the current funding modalities of post-conflict reconstruction – focusing on sector or budget support rather than projects – provide less opportunity for support of innovation? Should donors set aside funds for innovation and directly support the scaling up of innovative approaches? How can academic research institutions be encouraged to support such innovation?

A 'disconnect' still exists – despite the best efforts of events such as the University of Oxford and UNICEF Education and Conflict Conference – between the field and the research communities. There is a need to build on work already being done by some NGOs/agencies to build a research component into country programmes and/or to establish linkages between academic institutions and field-level NGO staff in order to support in-country research, document lessons learned and more widely disseminate best practice.

NGOs represented at the conference set themselves a challenge – to identify ‘something to rally round’. It is evident that the INEE Minimum Standards for Education in Emergencies² have been bought into at national and international levels,

by academics and practitioners alike. What other key education initiative in conflict situations would we, as an education community, be prepared to advocate for? Perhaps ‘children at the centre of innovation’?

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1. See page 9

2. See article by Rebecca Winthrop on page 12

The precious chance to go to school

I am a student at Comboni Secondary School in the south Sudan capital, Juba. I am a leader in the local chapter of the Girls' Education Movement. GEM is a pan-African initiative to bring about positive change in the lives of girls.



Less than two years ago I spent my schooldays wondering if I would have to run from the classroom to escape shooting. Today I am eighteen years old, in my first year of secondary school. And instead of worrying about bullets, I am raising my voice on behalf of other young people. Juba saw a lot of fighting. Many of us died. People couldn't even walk across the main bridge for fear of being beaten by soldiers. There were bombs everywhere. Soldiers would harass us, searching our bags, saying that they were looking for explosives. Landmines kept us at home. I remember a day when we weren't allowed to go to a prayer meeting unless we were accompanied by an armed soldier. What kind

of childhood is it when you can't even go to church without a gun?

The war has made us poor. Many children in the villages don't go to school because they can't pay school fees. These children are mostly girls – because people think girls don't need education, and because they think that a girl's destiny is just to be a wife. I don't see things that way. There are so few girls who complete their education here. Only one girl in a hundred even finishes primary school. But I am going to school so I can gain the knowledge that will help me rebuild my country. When I grow up, I want to become a lawyer so I can oppose the things that are wrong – in southern Sudan and in the

by Isabella Kitari Feliciano

whole world. I want to change all the things that keep girls out of school. I want to change the fact that girls have to get married even if they're just twelve or thirteen. I want to make sure that girls don't leave school because they get pregnant. I want to make sure that no-one laughs at a girl because she is menstruating and doesn't have the money she needs to buy sanitary supplies. I want to make sure that girls like these don't say, "it is better for me not to go to school."

Through GEM, this year I participated in the launch of the Go To School initiative and even sang in front of the President of South Sudan. In front of so many people, I called out, "Good morning southern Sudan, let all children go to school!" I learned that day that my voice is strong and powerful. Now I want to use my voice to help other children go to school. I want to tell the world that education should be free, that it is the right of every child. I want the world to know that we are grateful for peace but that we are eager for much more. We need teachers who will encourage our spirits. We need schools that have desks and chairs; food to keep us from hunger; uniforms, shoes and school supplies. June 16th is the Day of the African Child. It commemorates a time when thousands of children in South Africa marched in the streets to protest discrimination and demand equality in education. Today marks 30 years since that march in Soweto. I'm glad that I can be part of a tradition of young people working for justice. And I'm proud that today my voice is strong enough to join in the calls for change.

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Chance to learn for refugee schoolgirl in Chad

Just across the border from the conflict-ravaged Sudanese region of Darfur, in the arid countryside of eastern Chad, wind and dust whip through an open-air class where groups of girls struggle to study. Scattered trees offer little shelter but, in spite of the difficult conditions, the children persevere with their lessons. They are among the tens of thousands of refugees from Darfur, and many have never been to school. For girls in particular, this is probably their first opportunity.

Fatna is a 14-year-old schoolgirl. "In Darfur we went to my mother's village which was very far from the nearest school, so after year two I had to drop out," says Fatna. "I hope I can stay in school. This would be advantageous to me. Once

I know how to read and write and everything, maybe I can become someone in a good position with a responsible job." Fatna and her family fled Darfur after an armed raid on their community in which her sister was killed. "She died in front of us," the teenager recalls. "We weren't even able to bury her. We had to run. We had to leave her there."

UNICEF has set up temporary schools at 12 camps for the Darfur refugee communities in Chad, supplying teaching equipment and materials and helping to train teachers. Lessons follow the Sudanese curriculum so that the children can continue their education when they return home. UNICEF is working to stress the importance of girls' education – and almost every child in the camps is

now enrolled in a school. Going to school offers children like Fatna a safe space to regain a sense of stability and normalcy. It also helps protect them from violence, abuse and exploitation.

Getting girls to school is a challenge because of discrimination and cultural traditions. They are expected to work in the home and look after other children, and are sometimes forced into early marriage. However, attitudes are changing. Fatna's father is now convinced of the benefits of sending his daughter to school. "It's important to educate girls," he says. "If the girl goes to school then she knows everything. Sometimes it's even good for the family. If a girl goes to school then she can aid her family."

