

The Inter-Agency Network on Education in Emergencies

by Allison Anderson and Beverly Roberts

The Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE) builds on the work of its members – UN agencies, NGOs, practitioners, donors and researchers – to ensure the right to education in emergencies and post-crisis reconstruction.



Guinea in 1996 highlighted the then state of education in emergencies. An already under-resourced education system was coming under strain due to the presence of large numbers of refugees from neighbouring Sierra Leone and Liberia. As refugee and Guinean students competed for limited places in state schools and Guinea struggled to pay teachers' salaries, a large number of international NGOs established a complementary network of schools in the refugee camps.

During that same year Graça Machel, in her landmark report to the UN¹, recommended that education should "be established as a priority component of all humanitarian assistance." At the time a number of NGO and UN actors were working to ensure the right to education for those affected by crisis and conflict.² While some worked alongside national and regional authorities and occasionally collaborated and shared resources, more often than not each did their own thing. Although the Machel

report galvanised the humanitarian community to do more to ensure the rights of children affected by conflict, most efforts on behalf of displaced children continued to be un-coordinated.

One exception to this pattern was found in Guinea where the International Rescue Committee (IRC) worked as a UNHCR-implementing partner to establish schools. UNHCR, IRC and the Guinean government sat down and began to look at how they might better work together. Working relationships with regional education authorities improved when Guinea passed a law reinforcing the 1951 Refugee Convention and acknowledging the right of refugee children to education. IRC and UNHCR pledged to assist Guinea by handing over newly-delivered resources, particularly school buildings, when the refugees repatriated.

The Dakar World Education Forum in 2000 developed a Framework for Action to achieve basic Education

for All (EFA) by 2015. Delegates recognised that governments and the international community were not going to reach EFA targets unless they paid especial attention to the education of those affected by crisis. Strategy Five of the Framework declared a commitment to "meet the needs of education systems affected by conflict, natural calamities and instability, and conduct educational programmes in ways that promote mutual understanding, peace and tolerance, and that help to prevent violence and conflict."

Charged with taking forward Strategy Five, UNESCO, UNICEF and UNHCR convened the First Global Consultation on Education in Emergencies in November 2000. Participants representing civil society, governments, NGOs and UN agencies acknowledged the need to learn from successes and failures in countries such as Guinea and elsewhere, share resources, develop consensual guidelines and work collectively to create awareness of the plight of millions of children and youth denied access to quality education.

From their deliberations emerged the Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE). INEE members pledged to work collectively to:

- share knowledge and experience through electronic and other means
- promote better collaboration and coordination among NGOs, UN agencies and governments
- promote greater donor understanding of education in emergencies
- advocate for education to be included in emergency response

Refugee girls getting ready to attend school in Goz-Amer camp, Eastern Chad, May 2004.



UNHCR/Helen Caux

- document and disseminate best practices in the field
- move towards consensual guidelines on education in emergencies.

INEE is led by a Steering Group³ which provides regular strategic guidance to the Secretariat based at UNESCO's headquarters in Paris. Four years after its launch as a dynamic, flexible and 'light' network, INEE connects over 900 individuals and over 100 organisations working to achieve not only the EFA goals but also the Millennium Development Goals relating to universal primary education, gender equality, empowerment of women and development of global partnerships for development.

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INEE members communicate principally through a moderated list-serve (discussion group), allowing them to pose challenging implementation and policy questions, share new resources and highlight model programmes. INEE's website covers all topics of education in crisis through the posting of model and successful programmes, up-to-date resources, good practice guides and links to other helpful web tools and sites. Recognising that many INEE members and partners lack Internet access, INEE has prepared a CD-ROM of almost all of its collected education in crisis materials, including accelerated learning curricula, HIV/AIDS education tools and guides, advocacy materials and evaluations.

After almost four years of network building and engagement in international and national advocacy, INEE members have recognised that much more must be done to make education in emergencies one of the key pillars of humanitarian response and a priority in early reconstruction.

Mr Saitoti, Hon-ourable Minister of Education for Kenya, and Eldrid Midtun of the INEE Steering Group at the Second Global Consultation, December 2004

Pamela Baxter

The first Global Survey on Education in Emergencies [see p7] reminds us that in ten conflict-affected states over 27 million children and youth are denied access to education.

In response, INEE and other actors decided in 2003 to undertake two important initiatives. The first was the development of consensual guidelines, which became the Minimum Standards in Education Emergencies (MSEE) process. Secondly, agreement was reached to convene the Second Global Inter-Agency Consultation on Education in Emergencies and Early Recovery in December 2004 in Cape Town, a forum to review INEE's purpose and direction, launch the minimum standards, galvanise member advocacy activities around the right to education in emergency situations and share good practices and programme strategies.

Minimum Standards for Education in Emergencies

The MSEE process has demonstrated how modern communications allow communities, governments and the international community to work together to achieve a common goal. The Cape Town meeting witnessed the culmination of a highly consultative process to develop a universal tool to help ensure the right to education for all people affected by crisis and to define a minimum level

of educational quality to help maintain or restore the dignity of people affected by crisis.

During the year and a half long process, the Working Group on Minimum Standards for Education in Emergencies (WGMSEE) harnessed the experience and enthusiasm of 13 organisations with expertise in education in crisis and early reconstruction situations.⁴

WGMSEE has facilitated a broad base of stakeholders to develop standards, indicators and guidance notes that articulate the minimum level of educational access and provision to be attained in emergencies through to early reconstruction. The main components of the standards development process were national, sub-regional and regional consultations; on-line consultation inputs via the INEE list-serve; and a peer review process. Information gathered from each step was used to inform the next phase of the process. This model reflects lessons learned from the Sphere Project⁵ and emphasises transparent, cost-effective and consultative decision making.

Over 2,250 individuals from more than 50 countries contributed to the development of the minimum standards for education in emergencies. More than 1,900 of them participated by holding local, national or sub-regional consultations within the communities in which they work. In order to facilitate this process and ensure standardisation of reporting and feedback the WGMSEE developed





Somali IDPs,
Hargeisa
Kandahar IDP
camp

UNHCR/Taylor

a facilitator's guide to help ensure the widest possible contribution to the process of developing minimum standards.

The results from these consultations were used as the basis of deliberations at four regional consultations on minimum standards, which took place in Nairobi, Kathmandu, Amman and Panama City during the first half of 2004. INEE members also participated through INEE list-serve consultations, the responses to which were shared with INEE members and presented to delegates prior to each regional consultation.

A peer review process followed, involving analysis and convergence of the four sets of regional standards. WGMSEE and INEE Steering Group members were engaged in the final review steps of providing substantive feedback as well as feedback on the clarity of the minimum standards. During September 2004, the final draft of the global minimum standards, indicators and guidance notes were posted on the INEE website and members were invited to give their feedback.

Now that the standards have been launched, INEE is focusing on

disseminating and promoting the minimum standards handbook and CD-ROM and operationalising the standards through training and field piloting. The consultative process has strengthened the education and humanitarian community by linking people affected by crisis, practitioners, policy makers and academics through discussions on best practice.

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1 *The Impact of Armed Conflict on Children*, available online at: www.unicef.org/graca

2 As an example, the Norwegian Afghanistan Committee, CARE, the Forum for African Women Educators (FAWE), the International Rescue Committee, the International Save the Children Alliance, Jesuit Refugee Services, the Norwegian Refugee Council, UNICEF, UNESCO, UNHCR and the World Food Programme all operated education in emergency programmes in the 1990s.

3 Currently including UNESCO, UNHCR, UNICEF, the World Bank, CARE USA, the International Rescue Committee, the International Save the Children Alliance and the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC).

4 CARE Canada, CARE USA, Catholic Relief Services, International Rescue Committee, Norwegian Church Aid, Norwegian Refugee Council, United Nations Association of Norway, Save the Children UK, Save the Children USA, Refugee Education Trust, UNESCO, UNHCR, UNICEF and World Education.

5 See www.sphereproject.org

INEE network and resources

INEE welcomes FMR readers to help carry forward the momentum on education in emergencies advocacy and response being galvanised by INEE and its members.

In order to join the open INEE network and view its multiple resources please visit www.ineesite.org.

To receive a copy of the minimum standards please email Allison Anderson at allison@theirc.org, specifying handbook and/or CD-ROM.