

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