

Education and Crisis: Toward Strengthened Response

Report from the INEE Steering Group and Working Group
Consultation for the Oslo Background Paper

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Teachers College, Columbia University

Contents

- I. Consultation background
- II. Analysis of discussion
- III. Next steps
- IV. Annex
 - a. Annex I: List of discussion questions
 - b. Annex II: List of participants

I. Consultation background

In preparation for the Oslo Summit on Education for Development (July 6-7, 2015), the Overseas Development Institute (ODI) has been commissioned by the Government of Norway to develop a background paper that sets out key issues in relation to the field of education in emergencies. Using existing evidence and through new analysis, the paper will review; a) the challenge of maintaining provision of safe and quality education services in emergencies, including protracted crisis; b) the current architecture including humanitarian and development approaches; and c) potential solutions to address gaps.

During the INEE Steering Group and Working Group spring meetings, held at Teachers College, Columbia University, the INEE Secretariat facilitated a consultation on April 29, 2015. At the outset of the meeting, participants shared their knowledge of the discussions around the possibility of establishing a new education in emergencies fund or platform. This includes a series of meetings in April called by the UN Special Envoy for Global Education and GPE with partners, including the World Bank, UNICEF, DFID, Save the Children and others. These discussions highlighted the need for more, and more consistent, funding for the field of education in emergencies, particularly in the emergency stage through to the transition from an acute emergency to recovery, when humanitarian funding is dwindling but development funding has not yet materialized. In one discussion, policy makers and practitioners alike tried, unsuccessfully, to diagram how existing humanitarian funding mechanisms for education work. Given the current complexity, discussions then explored how an alternate mechanism for collecting funds could improve upon the existing aid architecture and funding process.

While there is currently strong high-level political support for and momentum around the development of a new platform for education in emergencies funding, critical questions remain unanswered, such as:

- What are the current gaps, challenges and/or bottlenecks in the existing funding architecture and mechanisms?
- Can we strengthen the existing aid architecture and funding mechanisms rather than creating a new fund that could further complicate the process for actors trying to access funding? If not, what would a new fund look like and where would it be best placed?
- How can this effort leverage existing resources to ensure new and additional funding to strengthen response rather diluting current funding streams?

Given these questions, and the fact that discussions thus far have been at a high political level, the INEE Secretariat has been asked to lead a transparent global consultation to ensure that the experiences of practitioners and policy makers across the field are heard and utilized in these discussions. Moreover, since it is necessary to understand the broad challenges of the field of education in emergencies in order to discuss funding gaps and strengthening the response system, this consultation is necessarily broader than just funding issues. INEE is pleased to leverage the opportunity provided by this ground swell of high-level political will to facilitate member input into discussions to ensure that the best solutions are provided, based on the experiences and lessons learned from practitioners and policy makers alike.

II. Analysis of discussion

Participants broke into two groups to discuss questions shared by ODI for this consultation (see Annex I), beginning by deliberating about critical challenges that are not well understood by political actors and suggesting changes to the response architecture in order to better ensure quality education is available to all children in crisis. The following is a summary of key discussion points:

Several of the key challenges in the field of education in emergencies relate to the on-going difficulty of convincing humanitarian and political actors that education in emergency contexts is both a) live-saving and b) a critical long-term investment. The lack of understanding of these points by political actors results in insufficient funding and political barriers that lead to insufficient policies and incomplete programs. Participants highlighted that the lifesaving value of education is not understood by many humanitarian actors and not taken as seriously as other humanitarian sectors, such as food and shelter. At the same time, there is little recognition among political actors and high-level policy-makers of the value of the sector to long-term stability, prosperity and sustainable development.

A related challenge cited by participants is the lack of understanding by political actors about the nature of violent extremism, and its inter-sectionality with education: education is impacted by violent extremism and access to and the quality of education impacts violence. This links to the fact that the provision of education can be damaging (i.e. biased content, exclusion and discrimination in access, inaccessible language of instruction and/or instruction in non-mother tongue language, etc.) if not properly programmed and well-supported. This overall challenge is related to another central challenge cited as critical by consultation participants, that of funding (see below). Participants noted that political actors' lack of understanding about the long-term investment benefits of education in emergencies directly corresponds to their lack of understanding about the negative impact of short-term funding; short-term funding is too often allocated in an emergency without consideration of the long-term impact that insufficient funding can have, not only on the education system but also on the wider crisis environment. One solution suggested is a multi-year investment in evidence-based research of both short- and long-term gains, impacts, costs and what works where.

Another central challenge is insufficient funding and complex aid architecture. One participant noted that agencies often apply for only 50% of the funds needed to support an education response, and typically receive only 50% of that request. In this environment, funding does not meet the real needs of the population. Participants cited the need to ensure that donor driven priorities do not drive programming (such as primary education vs. youth or ECD, disasters vs. conflict, funding the building of schools vs. funding teacher salaries, etc); one solution suggested is to strengthen the role of needs assessments in funding processes. In addition, current funding mechanisms are so complex that some people making decisions do not understand aid flows in humanitarian crises. Participants recommended more and clearer information about the structure and governance of aid architecture and training on how to access the right fund at the right time (emergency, transition, development) for all actors,

particularly national decision-makers. Moreover, there is a need for more and clearer information about pooled funds, including greater transparency and accountability.

When the discussion turned to changes needed in the funding architecture, participants cited the need for more predictable and flexible multi-year funding for the field of education in emergencies, particularly in the emergency stage through to the transition from an acute emergency to recovery. What is needed is more donors giving more, and more consistent, funding, to education in a way that connects humanitarian and development funding and programming. A critical component of any such connector of humanitarian and development response is strengthened prevention and preparedness funding and activities, which would in turn help to ensure a more coordinated response in the acute phase of a crisis. Moreover, funding needs to be more flexible, allowing for programmatic changes to ensure appropriate spending given rapidly changing contexts on the ground. Such funding could also provide a bridge between donors and implementing partners, linking continuity of programming across boundaries and borders for affected populations to avoid gaps in refugee crises. Another recommendation involves transforming donor behavior to avoid the fragmentation of funding and to ensure that funds can be a catalyst for leveraging other funds and influencing decision-makers.

The lack of information, sustained capacity-building and funding that leads to a lack of capacity of national education authorities, local community organizations and the responding agencies themselves is a central barrier to quality education in crisis contexts, and one likewise linked to the overall funding challenge. In particular, local and national organizations, which are essential in mobilizing community support and response at the on-set of an emergency, not just in the recovery phase, cannot access emergency funds under the current funding architecture. One commonly voiced challenge is the fact that donors give large pots of money in an emergency to a small number of large international organizations, and smaller organizations cannot compete. Therefore, there is a need to more effectively diversify education in emergencies responders through building the capacity of and funding local civil society organizations.

In answering the question of how to best improve the functioning and capacity of the current architecture, participants focused on local governments and communities, which are often the first responders. Their knowledge of the affected communities can play an important role in ensuring that funds are distributed equitably. Humanitarian actors need to recognize and capitalize on this, including by investing in preparedness at the local government and community level. At the same time, funds need to reach this local level; this isn't the case now, as only large international actors can access funds in an emergency. A rapid response seed fund could help to develop the response capacity of these local actors through training at the national and local level, which would mean more, and more prepared, partners at the national and local level.

Other challenges highlighted during the consultation as both egregious and not well-understood by political actors include:

- The impact of poverty on educational access and learning in emergencies
- Weak institutions and the lack of political will and political capacity to implement quality education response in emergencies
- The lack of protection and psychosocial support for teachers and learners
- The absence of a system for teacher recognition and/or accreditation
- The control of education by non-state actors
- The prioritization of primary education in emergency contexts at the expense of programming for all life stages (EDC through to tertiary), particularly youth
- The rise of inter-state youth violence, gangs and crime, which do not receive the same kind of international response as cross-border conflicts, nor can actors access humanitarian funding for response
- The move of the global education agenda from access to access *plus* learning; the focus on learning while dealing with safe access for increasingly large numbers of displaced children is particularly challenging for the education in emergencies community

Next, the discussion turned to whether a set of principles agreed at a high political level could make a difference in current governance and funding challenges. Participants asserted that while principles already exist (developed through the [OECD Development Assistance Committee](#) (DAC) processes around enhancing aid effectiveness, including those contained within the [Paris Declaration for Aid Effectiveness](#) (2005) and the [Busan Partnership](#) (2011)), they are not applied. The question of how can the field of education in emergencies better hold governments and UN agencies accountable is one that participants deemed important but did not make headway on during this consultation.

Finally, the discussion turned back to funding and the idea of a new fund or platform for education in emergencies. Consultation participants unanimously agreed that more funding is needed and that existing humanitarian and development funding mechanisms need to be improved. In discussing the possibility of a new global fund for education in emergencies, several participants questioned whether a new fund is the right direction to capitalize on the current high-level interest in the field of education in emergencies; instead, some participants asserted that discussions should focus on making changes to the existing architecture rather than create something new. Common questions and concerns about a new fund included where such a fund would sit, how it would interact with the existing aid architecture, and how it would overcome problems with existing architecture. In addition, many participants voiced concern about a new fund displacing current funds rather than adding new, additional funding to the field. Others asserted that what is needed is a platform for education in emergencies, which could include a new funding modality and technical support for accessing that funding, rather than creating a new fund itself. However, there was neither a concrete nor common understanding about what such a 'platform' would look like or how it would work.

At the same time, consultation participants noted that political interest in a new fund provides a window of opportunity to secure not only new funding for the acute phase, but also funding for the critical and oft unfunded transition phase between the humanitarian and development phases. It was agreed that in discussing a new fund and/or how to improve current funding, there is a need for the following:

- Additional, new funds
- Flexible, multi-year funding
- Funding available from the outset of an emergency through to the transition phase, including preparedness and prevention activities, such that the funds will allow actors to successfully begin to make the transition from humanitarian to development programming in a way that builds resilience

Several items are required before such a fund or platform can be developed or an improvement to current funding mechanisms can be made, including a clear definition of the phases of “acute emergency”, “transition” and “recovery/development” as well as a statement of outcomes for funding in each phase. In addition, a costing of the actions related to the transition phase and an analysis of existing and potential new donors, including restrictions to their donations, are needed.

III. Next Steps

This consultation report is one of several face-to-face consultations that, along with voices from an online global consultation forum organized by INEE in May 2015, will feed into an ODI issues paper that will help to inform policy makers’ discussions about how to better support and finance for education in emergencies at the [Oslo Summit](#) on Education for Development in early July. The Oslo Summit will build on the conclusions of the [World Education Forum](#) in Korea in May and will provide input to the third [International Conference on Financing for Development](#) in Ethiopia in July as well as the [UN Summit to adopt the post-2015 development agenda](#) in September. The Oslo Summit will explore deliverables in four areas, including education in emergencies. In particular, the Oslo Summit aims to ensure increased and targeted humanitarian and post-crisis support for education, with a particular focus on marginalized groups. Consequently, INEE members are encouraged to add their voices to the discussion via an [online consultation](#), which will be held over the INEE website between 14-22 May. This is a strategic opportunity for members to recommend options to high-level policy makers on critical education in emergencies issues.

Annex I.

ODI Discussion Questions for the INEE Steering Group and Working Group Consultation

The Challenge

1. There are a large number of 'challenges' associated with education and crisis. Which of these are (a) the most egregious and (b) least understood by political actors?

Architecture

2. What are the top 3-5 issues in terms of response architecture that should be addressed in order to better ensure quality education is available to all children in crisis?

Solutions

A number of solutions are being discussed to address the overarching challenges and bridge some of the gaps in terms of humanitarian and development architecture.

3. Would a set of *principles* agreed at a high political level make a difference? How would they be used? What would be the link and/or differentiation from the INEE MS?
4. How might we best improve the functioning and capacity of current architecture? What key changes could:
 - a) Improve needs assessment
 - b) Increase number of capable partners for delivery
 - c) Link humanitarian and development coordination
 - d) Advance recovery and transition planning and costing
 - e) Strengthen information management / monitoring and reporting
 - f) Lead to better response in regional crises, in particular for refugees?
 - g) Other suggestions
5. How might a global fund for education and crises, or other additional money, best be used?
 - a) In what types of crises
 - b) Over what kind of timeframe
 - c) Who leads request (organization, coordination group, etc.)
 - d) Who is eligible to receive funds
 - e) Who should be involved in (i) in-country and (ii) global governance
 - f) Other suggestions
6. Other comments

Annex II.

List of participants at the INEE Consultation, April 29, 2015

Name	Organization
Friedrich Affolter	UNICEF
Anita Anastacio	ChildFund
Allison Anderson	Independent Consultant working with INEE
Marina Anselme	RET
Anna Azaryeva Valente	UNICEF
Lisa Bender	UNICEF
Dean Brooks	INEE
Dana Burde	NYU
Clementine Cholat	AVSI
Lindsey Fraser	INEE
Randi Gramshaug	NORAD
Ronja Hoelzer	GIZ
Kerstin Holst	UNESCO
Julia Lerch	Stanford
Ian Macpherson	OSF
Rachel Mckinney	Save the Children
Arianna Pacifico	INEE
Nina Papadopoulos	USAID
Gustavo Payan	EDC
Joel Reyes	The World Bank
Bente Sandal-Aasen	Save the Children
Pete Simms	Children in Crisis
Margaret Sinclair	PEIC
Silje Skeie	NRC
Jennifer Sklar	IRC
Wendy Smith	World Vision International
Alan Smith	Ulster
Marc Sommers	EDC
Peter Transburg	INEE
Howard Williams	American Institutes for Research (AIR)