GENDER AND EDUCATION IN EMERGENCIES

Crises have serious and different impacts on the lives of women, girls, boys and men. Educational needs change, and the ability of girls and boys to attend school changes. Male and female teachers have different experiences and priorities that need to be addressed. To ensure that all girls and boys benefit equally from education in emergencies it is critical to understand the social and gender dynamics that might affect or place constraints on them.

The differing constraints facing girls and boys are apparent on both the supply and the demand side of education. Usually, girls are more disadvantaged.

EDUCATION IS A BASIC HUMAN RIGHT FOR EVERYONE

- The right to education is protected by article 26 of the UDHR, articles 13 and 14 of the ICESCR, articles 28 and 29 of the CRC, article 10 of CEDAW and article 5(e) of ICERD. It entails the right to receive and choose an education in conformity with one's convictions.

- Education is both a human right and an indispensable means of realizing other human rights. It has a vital role in empowering women and girls and can lift economically and socially marginalized adults and children out of poverty and provide them with the means to participate fully in their communities. For too long, those affected by humanitarian emergencies, especially girls and young women, have been deprived of education.

- **On the supply side**, schools are often far away and not accessible to girls, especially disabled girls. Women and girls may only be able to travel very short distances without male companions. So even if there are all-girl schools, it may be too far them to attend.

Often schools are staffed exclusively by male teachers. Minimal or no sanitation facilities can result in low attendance and high dropout rates among adolescent girls who are menstruating. In some instances, being in school, or travelling to and from school, places girls at considerable risk of sexual violence, abuse and exploitation. These factors affect girls' enrolment and attendance. Going to school may place boys at risk from different dangers, such as forced recruitment.

- **On the demand side**, impoverished families may prioritize boys' education and not have the money to pay for girls' school fees, uniforms and other supplies. Also, families often rely on girls to do household chores, care for siblings and generate family income. Early marriage and pregnancy are additional barriers to girls taking up or continuing their schooling. Even where girls are enrolled in high numbers, dropout rates towards the end of primary school are usually high.

In crisis situations, the right to gender-sensitive education is critical and should be fulfilled without discrimination of any kind. In emergency situations, providing educational facilities and opportunities contributes immensely to a range of short- and long-term issues of critical importance for girls and boys, including:

- **Provides safety:** Educational facilities can provide a safe physical space for children and youth, sheltering them from violence, including — especially for girls — sexual and gender-based violence.

- **Promotes well-being and normalcy:** Schooling helps to promote and sustain the physical, social and emotional well-being of all learners. Providing structure and stability is particularly important for children and youth who may be traumatized by displacement. Girls

and boys have different experiences of the emergency to cope with; they may also have different coping strategies, and these should be acknowledged and built on in schools.

- **Channels health and survival messages:** Education in emergencies provides a channel for conveying health and survival messages; for teaching new skills and values, such as peace, tolerance, conflict resolution, democracy, human rights and environmental conservation. An emergency can be a time to show and teach the value of respecting women, girls, boys and men equally in society.

- **Builds the future:** At the same time, ensuring children and youth access to education during times of humanitarian emergencies provides the essential foundation for successful economic, social and political systems upon returning home. It is vital to the reconstruction of the economic basis of family, local and national life and for sustainable development and peace building. Ensuring girls' access to quality education prepares them to play significant roles in reconstruction efforts in their communities and beyond.

- **Builds community capacity:** Community participation is critical; it can be enhanced through capacity-building activities with youth leaders and school management committees. Teacher training and capacity-building support for education officials are also important, especially in chronic crisis and early reconstruction contexts. These activities must engage women, girls, boys and men, and be mindful of the differing perspectives and approaches that women, girls, boys and men may have. Capacity-building and training programmes are also a venue to highlight issues of gender inequality in education so that trainees are more sensitive to the issues and are assisted in trying to overcome them.

Where this *window of opportunity* for gender-responsive education in emergencies is seized, it can also result in long-term changes in educational systems, in relationships and in power- and opportunity-sharing between women, girls, boys and men.

Using a gender lens when planning education: How to do it

Basic information about the numbers of girls and boys, their location and the cultural context in which you are operating can help improve your programming. Information about their experiences is also important. For example how many were involved with fighting forces? How many girl-mothers are there? What responsibilities are they shouldering now? Often girls (particularly girl-mothers) are unable to attend school as they are the sole

caretakers of their families. The provision of child care facilities, food and shelter are means to ensure these girls can enrol in school.

> **TEACHER QUALIFICATIONS**
>
> In many situations, such as Timor Leste, the formal qualifications required for teachers resulted in the exclusion of many experienced female teachers who did not have formal training.

The location of schools and time of classes can have different impacts on different groups. If girls and young women cannot walk alone, you may need to provide escorts or protection to and from school. From the standpoint of teachers, it is important to consider issues such as recruitment and training from a gender perspective.

WHAT DO WE NEED TO KNOW TO DESIGN AND IMPLEMENT GENDER-RESPONSIVE EDUCATION IN EMERGENCIES?

Note: This section is based on, and should be used with, the checklist from the *INEE Minimum Standards for Education in Emergencies, Chronic Crises and Early Reconstruction* handbook, p.33.

What is the nature of the crisis and its impact on education?

- What is the impact of the crisis on the lives of girls and boys (e.g. recruitment, abduction, increased household chores), including access to education?

- How has the crisis affected women and men, including teachers?

- What has been the impact on education in the host community?

What are the education-related demographics?

- Number of displaced girls and boys. Where are they? Are they in camps or not? How long have they been there?

- Numbers of girls and boys in the host communities and their access to education.

- Breakdown by sex and age and, if relevant, by ethnic group for all levels (pre-school, primary, secondary).

- What is the economic situation of families and how does this affect girls and boys?

- Number of girls or boys heading households. Number of girl-mothers.

EDUCATION

- Number of girls and boys separated from their family. Where are they living? Are they caring for others, or being cared for?

- Number of out-of-school adolescent girls and boys.

- Literacy rates for women and men.

What has changed?

- Explain any differences between current and pre-emergency scenarios from a gender perspective in regards to education. Will the emphasis be on re-enrolment and retention or on new enrolments and retention?

What languages are used by the children?

- What is the mother tongue/other languages spoken? Written?

- Do girls and women have the same proficiency in any official language as boys and men?

What are the safety and access issues for the learning environments?

- Are women and men involved in decisions regarding the location of learning environments?

- Are the possible locations equally accessible to girls and boys (e.g. in a mosque) and at all levels of schooling (i.e. not only lower grades)?

- Are there girls and boys suffering from stigma because of specific war experiences (e.g. rape survivors, ex-child soldiers)? Does the stigma prohibit access to education?

- What are the direct and indirect costs for girls and boys to attend school?

- Is the distance to be travelled to school acceptable to parents for girls? Boys? Is the route to school safe for girls and boys?

- What safety precautions are expected for girls by the parents?

- Are learning environments secure, and do they promote the protection and mental and emotional well-being of learners?

- Are latrines accessible, located safely and adequate in number? Are there separate latrines for girls and boys? Is water available?

- If required, can sanitary pads be made available in schools?

- Has a code of conduct for teachers and other education personnel that addresses sexual harassment, abuse and exploitation been developed in a participatory manner and signed and followed? Are appropriate measures documented and applied in cases of misconduct and/or violations of the code of conduct?

What is the division of household chores and other work?

- What sort of work do girls and boys typically do?

- How many hours a day? What time of day?

- Where does it take place? (At home? In fields?)

- Does this work put girls and boys at any serious risk?

- Does it interfere with the school day and work?

What learning materials exist?

- Do they provide critical information on issues such as self-protection, landmines, etc.?

- Are the learning materials inclusive of and relevant to girls? Do they perpetuate gender stereotypes?

What is the situation with teachers, training, support and materials?

- Are male and female teachers available? At all grade levels? What are their levels of qualification and experience?

- Are there para-professionals? Other women in the community who could support girls in school and be involved in teaching and/or mentoring?

- Are teaching materials and trainings available to help teachers address specific topics needed by girls and boys (e.g. sexual and reproductive health)?

- Are there female teacher trainers and support staff?

What is the situation regarding parental/ community involvement (in education)?

- Do Parent Teacher Associations (PTAs) — or similar — exist? To what extent are women and men involved? Are there any cultural restrictions on women's involvement?

- Has training been provided to the PTA? If so, has gender been addressed?

- What is the history of overcoming gender-based obstacles in the community? Which community members have been active and how?

EDUCATION

EDUCATION

What are the gender-specific vulnerabilities and protection needs?

- Are there groups of girls who are doubly disadvantaged (e.g. disabled girls, young mothers, former girl soldiers)?

- Are messages conveyed in a gender-sensitive manner for topics such as HIV/AIDS and STI, early pregnancy and childbirth, child and baby care, healthy menstruation management and GBV?

- Is information provided on reporting mechanisms and follow-up for harassment and GBV? Are there gender- and age-responsive materials and services available to support survivors of GBV and are these linked to the school?

ACTIONS TO ENSURE GENDER EQUALITY PROGRAMMING IN EDUCATION

Community participation

- Sensitize communities to the importance of girls' and women's access to education, especially in emergencies.

- Develop strategies to ensure that women, girls, boys and men actively participate in education meetings and in trainings (e.g. pay attention to appropriate meeting timings and locations, provide child care facilities and consider single-sex meetings).

- Include women and men on community education committees and provide gender training if necessary to ensure their voices are heard and taken seriously.

- Engage women and men in school-related activities such as school feeding, arranging escorts to school, parents' mobilization.

- Engage the local community, especially women and girls, in the design and location of school sanitation facilities.

Analysis

- Include gender dimensions in the initial assessment and ongoing monitoring and evaluation of education in emergencies.

- Collect and analyse all data related to education by sex and age.

- Consult regularly with women, girls, boys and men as part of monitoring and evaluation activities.

Access and learning environment

- In refugee and IDP contexts, provide access to education for all girls and boys.

- Create access for all to quality and relevant education opportunities; pay particular attention to marginalized girls and boys (e.g. girl-mothers, working boys and former girl soldiers) and provide flexibility and "open" programmes, with early childhood education programmes if needed.

- Set the hours for classes at convenient times for those children involved with household chores and field work.

- Involve female and male youth in the development and implementation of varied recreational and sports activities and ensure their constructive initiatives are supported by relevant stakeholders.

- Provide other gender-specific extra-curricular activities that promote resilience and healing for girls and boys in emergencies.

- Ensure that learning environments are secure and promote the protection and physical, mental and emotional well-being of learners. Pay particular attention to disproportionate impacts of insecurity on girls and women and vulnerability to GBV (e.g. provide escorts to and from school for girls, employ classroom assistants, provide girls with reporting guidelines and follow-up procedures, establish codes of conduct for teachers).

- Monitor sexual harassment; provide confidential complaint reporting mechanisms and follow-up with clear procedures.

- Where single-sex classes are preferred, provide separate classrooms/locations or timings for girls and boys.

- Provide separate female and male latrines — in safe places.

- Provide appropriate clothing and sanitary supplies to girls so they can attend school and fully participate in class.

Teaching and learning

- Promote learner-centred, participatory and inclusive instruction, reaching out to and engaging girls actively in class.

- Develop gender-sensitive curricula addressing the specific needs, perspectives and experiences of girls and boys, including reproductive health and HIV/AIDS content.

- Ensure learning materials such as "School in a Box" and other emergency kits are gender sensitive and responsive to girls' and boys' needs

- Include gender equality and gender-sensitive teaching strategies in teacher training courses to ensure that teachers are able to create gender-sensitive learning environments.

- Establish ethical assessment and examination processes that protect women and girls (e.g. ensure teachers cannot use grade allocation to exploit girls).

Teachers and other education personnel

- Work with the community to develop and implement a code of conduct for teachers and other education personnel that addresses sexual harassment, abuse and exploitation. Ensure that it is consistently applied and that appropriate and agreed-upon measures are documented and applied in cases of misconduct and/or violation of the code of conduct.

- Use creative strategies to proactively recruit and retain women teachers (e.g. entry through classroom assistants programme, part-time positions).

- Ensure that women teachers are equally able to participate in school meetings and professional development (e.g. select timing carefully and provide child care).

- Where possible, ensure that women teachers are placed in high-profile positions (not only in early year classes and "soft" subjects).

- Include gender equality and girl-friendly teaching strategies in the criteria for teacher supervision.

Education policy and coordination

- Advocate for policy decisions to reduce the cost of schooling, especially for girls' families (e.g. feeding programmes, take-home rations and items).

- Consider how resources can be coordinated (inter-agency, inter-organization) to expand programming to include hard-to-reach girls (e.g. IDPs, young mothers, urban refugees).

- Include specific commitment to gender equality in coordination statements/agreements between partners (e.g. UNHCR, NGOs and governments).

- Explicitly locate emergency education within the CRC, Education for All and Millennium Development Goals (MDG) frameworks.

- Support and promote education policies and laws that protect against gender discrimination in education.

- Ensure commitment from education partners to common standards of culturally and gender-sensitive project implementation and management from the outset.

EDUCATION

CHECKLIST FOR ASSESSING GENDER EQUALITY PROGRAMMING IN THE EDUCATION SECTOR

Educators should review the list below and select the items relevant to your context to develop measurable indicators. For further reference, the INEE *Minimum Standards for Education in Emergencies, Chronic Crises and Early Reconstruction* provide a broader set of indicators.

EDUCATION

EDUCATION — GENDER CHECKLIST
Community participation
1. Number of women and men involved in community education committees on a regular basis. 2. Number of women and men involved in community education plans. 3. Number and type of gender-specific issues in education plans. 4. Percentage of girls involved in child/youth participation activities. 5. Number of community members provided with gender training.
Analysis
1. Percentage of relevant and available sex- and age-disaggregated data collected. 2. Number and type of references to gender-specific issues in assessment planning, tools design and data analysis. 3. Number of women, girls, boys and men consulted in assessment, monitoring and evaluation processes.
Access and learning environment
1. Net enrolment ratio of girls and boys. 2. Sex-disaggregated enrolment rates by grade level. 3. Sex-disaggregated school attendance rates. 4. Sex- and grade level-disaggregated dropout rates. 5. Number of reported incidents of sexual abuse and exploitation. 6. Existence of a "safe school" policy with clear implementation actions.
Teaching and learning
1. Percentage of teachers who demonstrate attempts to create girl-friendly classroom environments and use teaching strategies to engage girls. 2. Number of gender-specific lessons and topics in the school curriculum. 3. Sex-disaggregated achievement measures (e.g. exam results). 4. Percentage of teachers (women/men) involved in in-service training. 5. Number of women/men involved in pre-service teacher programmes. 6. Percentage of teachers (women/men) provided with gender training.
Teachers and other education personnel
1. Number of male and female teachers, head teachers, teacher trainers/supervisors and other educational personnel (disaggregated by ethnic/caste groups). 2. Percentage of women teachers who feel safe and respected in school and in the community and are fully involved in education decision-making. 4. Percentage of teachers (women/men) trained on and have signed a code of conduct.
Education policy and coordination
1. Number and type of references to gender-specific issues in coordination meetings. 2. Number and type of references to gender-specific issues in coordination statements/agreements. 3. Development of materials that address/challenge gender stereotypes and reflect new realities in society.

RESOURCES

1. Mugisha, Catherine Howgego. Gender Imbalance in Secondary Schools. *Forced Migration Review 22*. January 2005. http://www.fmreview.org/FMRpdfs/FMR22/FMR2216.pdf

2. Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE). www.ineesite.org

3. INEE. *Good Practice Guide: Towards gender equality/girls and women's education*. http://www.ineesite.org/page.asp?pid=1149

4. INEE. *Minimum Standards for Education in Emergencies, Chronic Crises and Early Reconstruction*. December 2004. http://www.ineesite.org/standards/MSEE_report.pdf

5. International Institute for Educational Planning — UNESCO. *The Guidebook for Planning Education in Emergencies and Reconstruction* (Chapter 6: Gender). 2006. http://www.unesco.org/iiep/eng/focus/emergency/guidebook.htm

6. Kirk, Jackie. *Advocacy Brief: Education in Emergencies: The Gender Implications.* UNESCO, Bangkok, 2006. http://www2.unescobkk.org/elib/publications/092/

7. Kirk, Jackie. Teachers Creating Change: Working for Girls' Education and Gender Equity in South Sudan. *Equals, Beyond Access: Gender, Education and Development*. November/December 2004. http://k1.ioe.ac.uk/schools/efps/GenderEducDev/IOE%20EQUALS%20NO.9.pdf

8. Kirk, Jackie. Promoting a Gender-Just Peace: the Roles of Women Teachers in Peace Building and Reconstruction. Gender and Development. November 2004. http://www.oxfam.org.uk/what_we_do/resources/downloads/gender_peacebuilding_and_reconstruction_kirk.pdf

9. Sinclair, Margaret. *Planning Education In and After Emergencies*. 2002. Available for purchase from http://www.unesco.org/iiep/eng/publications/pubs.htm

10. Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children. *Don't Forget Us: The Education and Gender-Based Violence Protection Needs of Adolescent Girls from Darfur in Chad*. July 2005. http://www.womenscommission.org/pdf/Td_ed2.pdf

11. Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children. *Right to Education during Displacement. A resource for organizations working with refugees and internally displaced persons*. New York, 2006. http://www.womenscommission.org/pdf/right_to_ed.pdf

EDUCATION