

## Case Study on the Utilization 15/10/07 of the INEE Minimum Standards: Post-Conflict Basic Education Programmes in Burundi and DRC

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Organisation: **Jesuit Refugee Service**

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All referenced materials are available online: **[www.ineesite.org](http://www.ineesite.org)**

They can also be found in the INEE Toolkit CD Rom, to request a free copy contact: **[minimumstandards@ineesite.org](mailto:minimumstandards@ineesite.org)**

### BACKGROUND

The Jesuit Refugee Service has provided education for more than 25 years in Africa among forcibly displaced and conflict-affected people in camps, urban and rural areas. The Africa Education Project with the Resource Base for Refugee Education situated in Nairobi, Kenya was initiated in 1997 to provide a resource to JRS education personnel and displaced communities facing numerous challenges of providing quality teaching and learning and to facilitate a holistic and coordinated JRS educational response throughout Africa. The aim of the project is to ensure quality education programmes through projects visits, consultations, assessments, monitoring and evaluations, whether in refugee camps or in the early reconstruction phase in a country.

JRS has worked in many countries with refugees and internally displaced people and witnessed the dire educational situation following years of conflict. In the Great Lakes Region, JRS developed a Basic Education Programme to respond to the needs of war-affected populations in the DRC and Burundi during the post-conflict and early reconstruction phases. From 2003 areas and schools in great need, particularly those most affected by war, isolated and with a number of displaced people returning, were identified for assistance. Through this intervention JRS wanted to affirm and encourage the communities in their efforts in provision of education, give support to the revitalization of primary school education, and improve access to quality education. This Case Study focuses on the value of the INEE Minimum Standards during the monitoring and evaluation of the early stages of the Basic Education Programme in several project locations in the DRC and Burundi.

### HOW THE INEE MINIMUM STANDARDS WERE USED IN THE PROGRAMME:

JRS conducted an evaluation of the Basic Education Programme in several project locations. Follow-up workshops were also organised with key project staff, where evaluation findings and lessons learned were discussed and recommendations were made for refining and updating the programme. The INEE Minimum Standards were a central part of the evaluation and follow-up processes.

The evaluation report uses the Minimum Standards as a key framework and reference guide. The Minimum Standard on Analysis provides specific standards and indicators for monitoring and evaluation: "Evaluation of policies, programmes and outcomes of interventions is conducted at appropriate intervals against overall response strategies, specific educational and child protection objectives, and minimum standards" (Minimum Standards p. 27). As this indicator suggests, not only were the monitoring and evaluation indicators referred to, but all of the Minimum Standards were used as they provide comprehensive guidance and indicators relating to all key components of effective programming and implementation. The INEE Minimum Standards are quoted in the text of the report, and relevant Standards are included in full in the Annexes of every section of the study.

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while all the other Minimum Standards are relevant as they indicate key components of effective programming and implementation. All of the Minimum Standards categories are referred to in the report (Minimum Standards p. 9).

The Minimum Standard on Community Participation has been particularly helpful, giving guidance on how to strengthen this component of the programme (Minimum Standards p. 14). Moreover, the advocacy language within the INEE Minimum Standards Handbook is useful when making the case for particular interventions (Minimum Standards p. 5). In terms of long term positive impact, community participation is critical, and in a particular situation the role of the community and the level of participation become evident not only in seeing who is doing what, where, but also in listening to view points in the conversations with community members, teachers, local authorities, and project staff: “The term ‘community participation’ refers both to the processes and activities that allow members of an affected population to be heard, empowering them to be part of decision-making processes and enabling them to take direct action on education issues” (Minimum Standards p. 12).

### CHALLENGES OF IMPLEMENTING THE MINIMUM STANDARDS

The first Minimum Standard on Community Participation states: “Emergency-affected community members actively participate in assessing, planning, implementing, monitoring and evaluating the education programme” (Minimum Standards p. 15). Yet frequently, JRS has found that the level of community participation is weak, and so our evaluation studies and follow-up workshops aim to explore, understand and work with the reasons for this limited community involvement.

From the experience of monitoring and evaluating programs in early reconstruction phases, one of the greatest challenges has been to convince key stakeholders of the right and responsibility of the community to fully participate in all aspects of the education programme. Each group seems ready to put limitations on what can be expected or required, and communities become or remain disempowered. For example, local authorities and even the NGOs will limit the community’s role to just providing some material resources and labour. It seems quite difficult for most to acknowledge the community’s right and responsibility in other areas, i.e. developing programmes, decision-making, management, and advocacy.

Some project implementers have suggested that it is faster and easier to work without the community - to provide and do everything alone or for the community. In most cases, participation only includes directors and head teachers, rather than a more representative range of stakeholders from the communities. In these situations it becomes quite evident that there is little ownership or acceptance of responsibility by parents or the wider community.

JRS has been working to more fully meet the Community Participation Minimum Standards. In the evaluation of the Basic Education Programmes, recommendations were made that drew from the INEE Minimum Standards including:

- Community education committees and parent teacher associations should be formed (Minimum Standards p. 15)
- Monitoring and evaluation should be in part the responsibility of local communities (Minimum Standards p. 25)
- Local communities should be encouraged to advocate for and support teachers (e.g. advocacy with the government or local authorities, giving advice, helping to develop codes of conduct etc.) (Minimum Standards p. 67)

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The Minimum Standards on Community Participation were also a valuable tool during the follow-up workshops with JRS project staff, where these recommendations were discussed. The Guidance Notes were particularly useful, as were the [INEE Good Practice Guides](http://www.ineesite.org/gpg) (www.ineesite.org/gpg), which provided more detailed explanations and checklists. Training sessions were conducted with JRS staff, allowing field teams time to fully understand the Minimum Standards, consider how to apply them in situations relevant to their programs, and develop activities or interventions which lead to achievement of one or more of the standards.

### **LESSONS LEARNT AND GOOD PRACTICES**

The experience of monitoring and carrying out evaluations of education programs in the post-conflict early reconstruction phase in various countries has indicated that a variety of educational interventions can be effective and have a positive impact. In other words, there is not just one right way of doing things or one kind of intervention or program that is better.

The impact of the project or educational intervention is maximized with strong community participation and effective communication, coordination and collaboration among all stakeholders. A synergy is generated, which seems to enhance the commitment of everyone. The level of ownership and responsibility by the community increases and they are willing to take on or continue with responsibilities that later will be taken over by the government, ministries and local authorities once their structures are (re)established. In a context of inclusive participation, education programs seem to improve in quality more rapidly: Teachers show unusual dedication and willingness to struggle through difficult circumstances, even when compensation may be inadequate, and ultimately, more children, youth and adults are involved in learning.