

## **INEE Guidance on Education in Conflict-Affected Countries: Responsive education from project to system**

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*Education in emergencies in places affected by conflict emphasizes system development, particularly of primary education systems. This paper suggests that education in conflict-affected countries requires greater coordination and intentional connections between projects and programs than in places where educational institutions are well developed. The bridge between a standalone project and an educational system appears to be networked connections. In a departure from project-based approaches to education, educational system development through networks in conflict affected countries appears to be an emerging theme. This paper suggests a framework for reconsidering how educational systems are developed from institutional structures of semi-permanent systems toward networked forms of organizations to develop institutions over time that form a culture of being responsive to their society.*

**Key Words:** *Education Emergencies Conflict System*

The Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE) was created to form a network for educational professionals and standards for places affected by disaster or conflict. INEE provides researchers and practitioners at various levels with a professional community to discuss education during or after disaster or conflict. This article will focus specifically on post-conflict education with special attention to the needs of youth. The INEE situation specific minimum standards are often attributed to post-conflict circumstances. This paper will argue the situation specific standards provide valuable guidance on developing educational systems beyond short-term or stand-alone projects.

A second observation has emerged as research regarding education for youth in post-conflict countries and also making preparations shift from a researcher to a practitioner in Southern Sudan. First, INEE provides researchers and practitioners a forum and framework to discuss our work professionally with emphasis on applied research and implementation. Having INEE as a resource has been invaluable to this researcher in preparing for a practitioner role. A persistent question that remains is: How do those involved in education in emergencies view their projects as a part of a larger system? This question will likely have to be a part of a larger debate that could potentially occur through INEE or another network of post-conflict education professionals.

To examine these issues, this paper will first provide a brief overview of education in emergencies, including the cross cutting standards and situation specific standards. Next, this researcher will suggest that cross cutting standards focus on project characteristics while situation specific standards focus more on developing educational systems. Following this discussion, an example from Uganda will be used to illustrate the complications and rewards of system development beyond focus on projects alone. Lastly, a brief reflection on INEE as a professional resource and community will be provided.

### Post-Conflict Education

Education in conflict-affected countries gained increased attention upon preparations for the Dakar World Education Forum meeting (Buckland, 2004; Tomlinson & Benefield, 2005). Since this meeting in 2000, standards have been put in place through an extensive consultative process and the formation of the Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE). Educational norms and practices have influenced the INEE (2004, p. 9).

The review of Education for All (EFA) in preparation for Dakar in 2000 revealed that the locations of the world with the least progress in basic education delivery were in countries affected by conflict and disaster (Bensalah, Sinclair, Nacer, Commisso, & Bokhari, 2000). Though it is not surprising that education lags behind in countries affected by conflict, international recognition at this forum helped to create INEE (Tomlinson & Benefield, 2005). In the Dakar Framework for Action (Education for All, 2000), education in conflict-affected areas was highlighted as an area of concern toward reaching EFA goals, as was the lack of attention on youth and adults. This view provided in Dakar presents the primary problem of education in emergencies as one of educational access, curiously one of the situation specific standards later formed by INEE in 2003 and 2004.

### Education in Emergencies and INEE

The INEE is in a unique position as a consortium of agencies to draw attention to the provision of education as a part of humanitarian assistance, to set standards for educational services and to advocate for education to be included in humanitarian assistance efforts (INEE, 2007b). The INEE serves as an advocacy network (Sikkink & Keck, 1998) on an international level for emergency education together with the United Nations Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) and collaborating organizations (INEE, 2007a). The INEE also serves to define emergency education through its member organizations and what they define as best or good practices (Anderson, Martone, Robinson, Rognerud, & Sullivan-Owomoyela, 2006; Ibrahim, 2005; INEE, 2007b).

Education in emergencies as a field is often broadly defined. For instance UNESCO documents have at least two somewhat different descriptions for education in emergencies. The first see emergencies as “a humanitarian imperative which has development-promoting outcomes” (Bensalah et al. 2000, p. 9). The second as a response to the destabilization, disorganized or destroyed education system that is a result of conflict or disaster (Sinclair, 2002, p. 22). Both descriptions describe education in emergencies as the matter of creating an educational system. Yet another view considers education seen as the “fourth pillar of humanitarian assistance” (Buckland, 2004; Sommers, 2004) after food, clothing, and shelter (UNESCO, 2003). Here education could be a part of a system as with basic needs and social safety nets, or it can be a temporary or long-lasting stand-alone project. This distinction between being a part of a system or a stand-alone project will be discussed later in this paper. First, some theoretical and conceptual aspects of education and conflict will be examined.

### Education and Conflict

Education can help prevent conflict, but can also cause conflict to spread (Buckland, 2004; Davies, 2004; UNESCO, 2003). Peter Buckland (2006) clearly states “education does not cause wars, nor does it end them (p. 6).” Education can help to reduce the impact of a conflict, but is only one part of post-conflict response and remains a development activity that requires a long-term vision (Buckland, 2004; Save the Children, 2006; Sommers, 2004). Though education is often seen as transformational (Davies, 2004; Machel, 2001), its affects are built and revealed slowly through phased response according to the severity of state fragility (Barakat, Karpinska, & Paulson, 2008).

Phasing in educational services during “early reconstruction” is common (Buckland, 2004; INEE, 2004), but the bridge from relief to development is often difficult to identify.

Post-conflict countries that already have a population base that is fairly well educated are more likely to recover from conflict at a faster pace than places that have experienced long-term conflict or genocide (Buckland, 2004). Logically, teachers who are barely literate themselves will be more challenging to train, as has been found in Cambodia (Dy, 2004; Dykstra & Kucita, 1997) and Southern Sudan (Sommers, 2005). Secondary education attainment of fragile states has been found to be an important factor indicative of a turnaround toward increased stability in a country (Chauvet & Collier, 2004). Although education has intentionally been kept separate from humanitarian assistance standards (Sommers, 2006; Sphere Project, 2004), it is widely seen as a development initiative with important implications to conflict (Buckland, 2004; UNDP, 2006; UNESCO, 2002). Therefore, long-term system thinking is required to ensure that educational projects are not only sustained, but also recognized and integrated into a system from relief or reconstruction to development.

### Standards of Education in Emergencies, Specifically Conflict

INEE (2004) minimum standards serve as a framework or guide for implementation to those involved in education, namely local and national governments, NGOs, communities, youth and donors. The INEE has cross cutting standards that apply to all emergencies, both conflict and disaster. A second set of INEE standards are seen as “situation specific”, which tend to apply to conflict-affected countries. The overall descriptions of the minimum standards are listed below.

Figure 1: INEE (2004) Minimum Standard Categories.

<p>Cross-cutting standards:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• community participation</li> <li>• the use of local resources</li> <li>• an initial assessment</li> <li>• a response strategy</li> <li>• monitoring and evaluation</li> </ul>	<p>Situation specific standards:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• access and the learning environment</li> <li>• priorities for teaching and learning</li> <li>• personnel for educational delivery</li> <li>• policy and coordination needs</li> </ul>
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The INEE (2004) cross cutting minimum standards all appear to be process oriented. That is, they focus on implementation guidelines for NGOs in particular, but also governments, to provide educational services. The INEE (2004) cross cutting Minimum Standards all appear to be process oriented toward the delivery of projects. It is possible under the cross-cutting standards to implement highly localized projects that do include community participation, the use of local resources, an initial assessment, a response strategy and monitoring and evaluation; yet do not connect with national education systems or even regional education systems. This possibility of project-focused implementation can potentially be done at the expense of integration of the project within the larger aims of the society recovering from or experiencing conflict. Cross-cutting standards focus on implementation guidelines for NGOs in particular, but also governments, to provide educational services. Under the cross cutting standards one can assume involving functional government institutions, but not necessarily their inclusion in a project or a program.

The situation specific standards tend to be more system oriented in their focus on educational access, teaching and learning, personnel, policy and coordination. Here, the provision of education as a national, local or community endeavor is not necessary, but the standards suggest a national

orientation toward educational system development (INEE, 2004). How a system is to develop based on INEE minimum standards is situation specific, the standards and associated indicators are intended to provide guidance for consideration for researchers and practitioners.

INEE standards (2004) set the stage for learning to be able to occur, but do not focus much on the content. The standards emphasize the learning environment and the rights of learners. Basic subjects and topics relevant to the emergency situation are emphasized in the standards (INEE, 2004, p. 54), but there is little guidance or information on what is considered appropriate learning. Therefore, standards do not necessarily indicate the content or meaning of learning in education in emergencies, but rather the process by which the conditions for learning can occur. Defining what is minimal for learning is context specific; however literacy and numeracy are emphasized (INEE, 2004, p. 26; 43).

Absent from the INEE Minimum Standards is direct guidance for supporting an educational system. Its focus tends to be for practitioners implementing an educational program to consider how that project or program fits within both the local and national context. Since INEE standards were developed primarily by NGOs, UN agencies and donors, the stance of the documents is from those agencies. Direct perspectives from the Ministries of Education are limited, apart from indications that government should be included (INEE, 2004, 2006).

When projects are implemented in relative isolation or when government is excluded from educational systems, what prevents educational systems from becoming what Davies (2004) calls a “frozen accident” of a stagnant systems with little feedback and tendency for tension to arise due to its lack of responsiveness to societal change? How can NGOs use their efforts to help create responsive, or “complex adaptive” (Davies, 2004) educational systems? The next section will provide an overview of some of the current thinking regarding post-conflict education, and then suggest ways in which INEE standards can be used to enhance responsive educational systems.

### Educational Projects and System Development

A key contribution of the INEE network has been to consolidate opinion on best practices on working in education in conflict and disaster. The focus on access, inputs, policy and coordination suggests an orientation toward educational system-formation. Coordination is among the most important standard for cohesion between educational approaches and also can lead to formal or intentional acceptance of variation of educational approaches in different areas or for different populations (Sommers, 2004). With the absence of educational policy, the elements of the situation specific standards frame educational system-formation possibilities in a self-organizing manner (Davies, 2004). Self-organizing networks can emerge when partners embark on joint efforts. A system may be self-organizing even without coordination, but coordination helps to form a system through the recognition and acceptance of its component parts (Sommers, 2004).

Holohan (2005) has found through humanitarian efforts in Kosovo more democratic institutions emerged. These informal networks led to mutually agreed upon aims based on social and networked relationships and led to relatively dispersed, but effective democratic structures. Davies (2004) makes a similar suggestion proposing nested structures with diverse components are more likely to bring about an educational system responsive to decreasing tensions. Holohan (2005) also found in Kosovo that people from organizations that were more concerned with making on the ground connections were more successful in creating lasting and viable programs even if it meant going against some of their own organization’s policies than those who kept closely to organizational plans and mandates.

The situation specific standards appear to compensate for the lack of strong government institutions to provide educational services. INEE Minimum Standard (2004) focused on access calls for equal access, protection and well-being and attentiveness to facilities, which reminds those involved in project implementation to consider the social forces underway in the locations where they work to ensure the possibility for learning to occur. Since government institutions are likely weak or non-existent, the second situation specific standard, “priorities for teaching and learning,” provide guidance about curricula, training, instruction and assessment (INEE, 2004) since it is likely that these either do not exist, are outdated, or are not conducive to reduce tensions. The third situation specific standard, “personnel for educational delivery,” includes recruitment and selection, conditions of work, and support and supervision considerations since one cannot assume that schools or communities would have personnel in place for schooling or other educational activities. The fourth situation specific standards, “policy and coordination needs,” includes policy formation and enactment, planning and implementation, and coordination (INEE, 2004). INEE minimum standards frequently suggest working with government to ensure the sustainability and recognition of educational efforts, but the situation specific standards provide greater detail on just how to ensure that educational efforts will be grounded sufficiently in the local educational system.

System formation can occur on local levels, regional or national levels. Situation specific standards are system-forming because they attend to project level decision factors in the absence of clear or recognized decision making bodies on a national level. For instance, a government may not have the will (UNESCO, 2003) or the means to provide educational services. Consequently, bottom-up approaches to education emerge in conflict-affected countries (Rose & Greeley, 2006). Some approaches are intended to be temporary and others long term. In the next section examples of education for youth will further examine this project-based versus system-formation distinction.

One limitation of standards in general is that token participation can certainly occur where discussions and decisions are done without clear discussion and consideration, but instead serve as a necessary step to simply check off a list of things to do. Meaningful interaction with local educational institutions, whether on the local or national government levels, is beneficial in several ways. First, though INEE standards (2004) do not suggest that there needs to be one national institution or endeavor overseeing education, government and communities are encouraged to be included as key stakeholders in the decision making and partners to sustain and support educational efforts. Notably, community education committees are viewed as the institution to be developed in the reconstruction phase (INEE, 2004, p. 16). Second, governments or other educational institutions role in the process is one of recognition of curricula and degrees (INEE, 2004, p. 54). Third, though work with local and regional trainers and institutions is emphasized in INEE guidance notes (INEE, 2004, p. 60), building the capacity of regional or national institutions is not necessarily included as part of the standards. The project-focused approach emphasized in the INEE standards is realistic for the way that the vast majority of organizations work in conflict-affected countries. However, institutional development and change could be examined further so that during the course of project implementation implementing organizations can also help to facilitate the advancement of educational development by feeding their projects into a national or regional framework.

INEE’s Minimum Standards (2004) cross-cutting and situation specific standards are illustrated in the figure below to indicate how stand-alone projects can occur with cross cutting standards alone, but situation specific standards are more likely to help for a system.

Figure 2: INEE Minimum Standards – stand alone projects versus projects that contribute to system development

<p>Stand-alone projects</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• (Cross-cutting standards)</li> <li>• community participation</li> <li>• the use of local resources</li> <li>• an initial assessment</li> <li>• a response strategy</li> <li>• monitoring and evaluation</li> </ul> <p>Note – all of these activities can be done in relative isolation without contribution or recognition of an educational system.</p> <p>Risks if stand-alone projects are done in isolation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• could increase community isolation or animosity through lack of engagement with differing communities</li> <li>• degrees may not be recognized</li> <li>• more difficult to learn from comparison of programs since one model is known</li> </ul> <p>Analogy: ■ A box.</p> <p>Programs can be planned and prepared along with communities, but lack connection to challenge further advancement.</p>	<p>System development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• (Situation specific standards)</li> <li>• access and the learning environment</li> <li>• priorities for teaching and learning</li> <li>• personnel for educational delivery</li> <li>• policy and coordination needs</li> </ul> <p>Note – all of these activities require connection to something larger than themselves. Projects are interdependent on each other for support, guidance and to challenge each other for improvements.</p> <p>Risks of system-based project development:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• can be confusing if many are involved</li> <li>• patience and active networking are needed to use project lessons to guide future efforts.</li> <li>• Projects can be either in or out, recognized or not recognized, which can anger some. Decisions are made for the system, requiring policy standards and possible exclusion.</li> </ul> <p>Analogy: ✕ A vine.</p> <p>Programs can be varied, but are intertwined in a common network. Though vines may look messy, they can intertwine and benefit from the experiences of other vines (i.e. projects).</p>
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Save the Children’s Rewrite the Future campaign (Save the Children, 2006) goes further to suggest that national governments need to be true partners in educational system development. Perhaps in years to come after the standards have been used further, greater insight will emerge as a result of their use about how educational system development can be advanced further. Perhaps those who created the INEE standards make a conscious decision not to include national level processes within the standards since those actors on this level are fewer or the suggestion of a national education system is too political amid greater globalization of education.

### Lessons from Uganda

Engaging youth in conflict-affected societies is often done both in and outside of school. Part of this effort is to include youth voices within educational programming, both formal and non-formal including gender implications and analysis (Kirk, 2006). INEE (2004) standards on participation, planning and implementation suggest the involvement of all stakeholders, including youth. In a review of peace education programs by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Sommers (2006) recommends that peace education programs need to be connected with a wide range of people, through community centers and schools and need to have regional focus. Even when peace education programs focus on interpersonal relationships and conflict resolution skills,

there are benefits to consider peace education as more than a project and as a lever in a system. Like formal education, peace education, conflict resolution and gender-focused programs are inherently focused on change that to have any effect need to expand beyond a singular project to have an effect on society.

In a review of the perspectives and experiences of youth in Northern Uganda, youth indicated that they want formal education and other support through youth centers and groups (Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children, 2007). Youth centers and groups were viewed as helpful for civic engagement, conflict resolution skills, health training, security training and information and also psycho-social support networks. When informal youth centers are combined with formal schooling, youth have greater balance toward meeting both social and educational needs (Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children, 2007).

The Women's Commission study (2007) demonstrated that youth in Northern Uganda are interested in identifying their current learning environment and future priorities. Individuals and groups want to have a voice in their system. The Women's Commission (2007) work with Ugandan youth shows that INEE (2004) standards regarding the learning environment and policy needs can be applied to local levels. This example shows the interrelated nature of the cross cutting standards of participation with system-focused situation specific standards of policy and priority setting. What this example shows is the will for stakeholders to have a direct line of feedback into educational programs, both formal and non-formal. To influence a system requires the will and means to provide youth and gender analysis as a part of educational programs and discussions with a wide range of projects in order to form a system.

Inviting and using the voices of youth and other less privileged persons in developing their own educational system may seem like separate activities, but can contribute to a culture of addressing tensions as they arise to inform program development. Davies (2004) observes that projects that have an effect may not be stabilizing and could provide increased tensions that can be successful if the process of educational development helps to learn how to address conflict within a system. Furthermore, Davies (2004) recognizes that conflict can be a positive influence to bring about social changes as has been the case in civil rights and social movements. Gender analysis, like including youth voices often challenges existing norms. Gender analysis and inclusion of disadvantaged populations is becoming increasingly recognized as an important part of any program (International Institute for Educational Planning, 2006; Kirk, 2006), including in post-conflict environments.

#### INEE as a Professional Resource – Networked Forms of Organization for Practitioners

The INEE (2004) standards stress forming connections early on through assessments, keeping a view of the long term through partnering with government and key stakeholders, and collaboration generally between organizations, agencies, communities and even individuals, such as parents and youth. Though not explicitly stated in the INEE standards, NGOs working in conflict-affected countries, either in conflict or recovering from conflict, would benefit from considering the situation specific standards with scrutiny since these help to develop a system. Furthermore, shared collaboration and ownership of programs and educational institutions along with communities could be expanded further. Simply considering the role of governments, the challenges it faces and the considerations a newly forming or recovering government faces could go a long way.

It is logical for complex systems to emerge from complex environments. An important educational aim then in these conflict-affected areas is to correct previous practices in educational systems that may have contributed to conflict (Davies, 2004). Holohan (2005) suggests networked forms of

organization. Davies (2004) suggests embracing complexity and variety toward the formation of complex systems. Both these forms suggest a departure from aims of stability alone and more toward responsiveness of systems likely with multiple institutions. Under this view, practitioners in emergency education need to search more than plan (Easterly, 2006), need to form a shared understanding of each other's objectives and actions (Holohan, 2005), and need to gain comfort with systems that invite feedback, variety and complexity (Davies, 2004). The Women's Commission project in Uganda invited in greater complexity into educational decision making by doing a study to include the voices of youth. Gender studies in all fields including education in emergencies (Kirk, 2006) invites another layer of considerations to weigh when designing educational projects and programs, but the benefits of this exercise reflect the values of the implementers themselves and a necessary complication.

Although looking beyond simple coordination mechanisms toward a collaborative model of networked organizations would add even more to the heavy workload of organizations working in conflict-affected countries, the payoff for increased engagement is high assuming Holohan (2005) and Davies (2004) are correct to suggest that contributions to system development are just as important as project implementation. INEE (2004) standards already suggest that how programs and projects are implemented makes a difference in their guidance on the cross-cutting standards to the quality of educational programs or projects. Further examination on how the situation specific standards (access to learning, teaching and learning, education personnel, and policy and coordination) can be further developed to ensure that projects and programs developed with INEE standards in mind do not forget to seriously consider how their projects help to support an emerging educational system rather than hide from it or not recognize the importance of system development.

The INEE and its component organizations have done a remarkable job of assembling standards and good practice guides for education in emergencies and continue to engage in a discussion. Though there has been various informal professional networks that are involved in related fields, having the standards and guides provided by INEE helps to advance the professional discussion of how to work best in these environments. The framework has begun, but tackling the challenging issues of ensuring both access to education and educational institutions that are responsive to the society they serve are the challenges for those working in the field. In examining the current literature outline in this paper, it appears that networked forms of organization hold great process to foster the development of systems through active engagement.

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