

**Critical analysis of providing Education in humanitarian crises**

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## **Abstract**

Using the guidance notes and Key actions of five out of nineteen standards listed in the International Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE), the paper will link these standards' key actions and guidance notes with the field of humanitarian and emergency assistance and will try to critically analyse their suitability and relevancy. Then, it will provide some discussion on the relation and role of Education in Emergencies with Human Rights and specific gender group who are ex-child combatants.

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### **1- Introduction:**

Using the guidelines provided in the Minimum standards for education by the International Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE) this paper will provide discussion and analysis of the current concepts of education in emergencies and their suitability in ground-level humanitarian delivery. The paper will start with the definition of Education during Humanitarian crisis and emergencies and then discussion about the current concepts of Education in Emergencies using INEE and analysis of its relevancy and suitability in the field, then providing some examples of the relation between Education in Emergencies and Human Rights, Community and gender like ex child combatants.

### **2- What is Education in Humanitarian Crisis and Emergencies:**

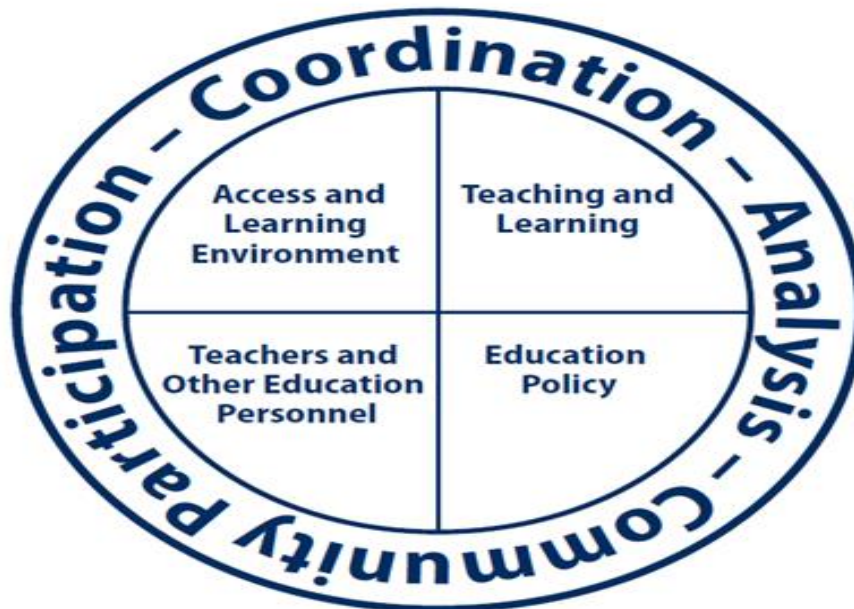
Humanitarian crisis and emergencies are whether man-made causing conflict and war or natural like earthquakes, typhoons and cyclones. Both types of humanitarian crisis and emergencies can cause internal displacement of population from their homes to another place inside their country or moving to another countries seeking refuge and protection resulting in delay in their education process till they settle in a new and safe place. Also, they can cause destruction in the infrastructures where education and teaching takes place, like schools and universities, preventing access to education for a certain period of time till they find a new place for continuing education or waiting till the reconstruction of educational facilities (Pigozzi, 1999; Kagawa, 2005; Smith, 2011).

Education became an integral part of the humanitarian assistance projects of many United Nations agencies like the United Nations Children Fund (UNICEF) and United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and International Non-Governmental organizations (NGO) like Save the Children. By creating children friendly spaces inside Internal Displaced People (IDPs) and Refugees camps to somehow substitute the normal schools that these children fled or by providing education grants and scholarships mainly for urban refugees to be able to pay for the school fees in their new settled country. The reason for trying to integrate education in the humanitarian assistance response is also to provide psychological support for the children and allowing their interaction with children of their same age and not allow only the impact of disaster to affect their minds (INEE, 2010).

### **3- Concepts, standards and Guidelines of the INEE and its suitability and relevancy:**

The Handbook by the International Network for Education in Emergencies was developed to provide the "minimum standards" for providing Education during Humanitarian crisis, same

as “SPHERE” project which is the “Humanitarian Charter and minimum standards in Humanitarian response” INEE contains nineteen standards accompanied with their “key actions and guidance notes” to provide humanitarian practitioners a step by step counseling to reach an effective and collaborated response related to Education in Emergency situation. The nineteen standards are divided between five areas which are “foundational standards, access and learning environment, teaching and learning, teachers and other education personnel and education policy” (INEE, 2010).



*Image 1: The Classification of INEE nineteen standards (INEE, 2010, p. 8)*

The paper will now list some of the concepts in the INEE standards and provide an argument and analysis about their relevancy and suitability in the field:

a- Community Participation Standard: Participation and Resources

This standard focuses on involvement of the affected communities in the planning and decision making in the educational projects that will be implemented by the International NGOs together by involving the educational authorities. Unfortunately, during emergencies there are no education authorities that takes care of education and if there is, it will not be functional and this mainly during conflict where the communities fled their own houses and communities and displace in camps whether inside or outside their home country and then the humanitarian organizations become responsible for their health, hygiene, protection, shelter and education.

Also, as justified by all the humanitarian organizations, the emergency nature of any crisis make them plan, design and implement fast without proper involvement of the communities and ignoring the community centered approach advocated by the INEE and the community leaders can control the direction of assistance most of the time with no transparency and with distinction because of genders, religious and political beliefs (INEE, 2010, pp. 22 - 30).

b- Coordination standard

This standard mainly talks about the role of the Inter-agency Standing Committee (IASC) and the Education Cluster in coordinating between different UN, NGOs and donor agencies for

better response through filling real gaps and avoiding duplication using “Resources mobilization, Information and Knowledge management, Joint Assessments and results oriented approach”. This role of the IASC and Education cluster proved to be very successful and had a good impact in the projects in the field but need to be strengthened and cover more humanitarian organizations because usually coordination occurs between UN agencies alone and rarely between UN and International NGOs (INEE, 2010, pp. 31 - 34).

c- Analysis standard: Assessment, Response, Monitoring and Evaluation

This section discusses the standards to do a correct and timely assessment which the Education in Emergency program will be based on and later will be monitored and evaluated and I think that this standard is very relevant to the field level implementation because it covers data collection and analysis which the NGOs usually concentrate on for calculating the number of beneficiaries with the breakdown of age and gender groups to be submitted to their donors for justification of activities and applying for new funds, together with the Monitoring and Evaluation phase that became very much needed these days especially in remote management projects to check if the response was performed in the field as planned initially or not (INEE, 2010, pp. 35 - 50).

d- Access and Learning Environment: Facilities and Services

This standard provide guidance about choosing the suitable place for conducting education and teaching programs and certain criteria for it, this standard might be difficult to be followed especially in camp setting because of the very limited resources and space and most probably the education program will be given one or two tents to perform their intended activities to all the age, gender and physical disability groups (INEE, 2010, pp. 68 - 72).

e- Teaching and Learning:

The teaching and learning standard mainly provide key actions and guidance notes about choosing the appropriate curriculum, its teaching processes and the assessment of the teaching results. The standard goes deep and emphasizes the importance of providing an education standard for the affected communities similar or near to what they used to before crisis whether by creating new curricula that suits that situation and context or adapting the national previously used one.

I think that this standard is optimistic and its more likely to be read by humanitarian education professionals and not fully or rightly implemented, because in normal settings, it takes countries long time to develop a curriculum for every educational level that suits the context, culture and background of their communities together with the political objectives of the government itself. So, it is not practical to see a humanitarian organization developing curriculum for primary grade children in an emergency situation inside a refugee camp. This standard is more needed in a developmental or post-recovery approach rather than Education in Emergencies though it might be implemented in case of long term crisis were the communities will be dependent on humanitarian assistance for more than five years for example (INEE, 2010, pp. 76 - 90).

**4- Suitability and Relevancy of INEE standards and concepts:**

The INEE standards and concepts as stated in the guidebook were set on “high standards” though it is called the “minimum standards of Education in emergencies” (INEE, 2010, p. 17) and this take us to the point that discussed above before, which is since the INEE is an international standard so certain guidelines should be written in the standards that might not be applicable in the field but should be read by humanitarian professionals, for two reasons, one so that in case if there is an opportunity of improvement they can start setting high standards and second is that the authors of these standards not to be blamed later that they did not link these standards with laws like the Human Rights law which states the right to education is one of the fundamental human rights whatever the circumstances was (Bromely and Andina, 2010).

#### **5- Relation between Education in Emergencies and Human Rights:**

The “right to education” is one of the fundamentals of the International Human Rights Law (IHRL) and the International Bill of Human Rights and it is clarified into four parts “Availability, Accessibility, Acceptability and Adaptability” and they should be applicable during the periods of humanitarian crisis or normal settings. Also, there is a “Human Rights based approach” to education which is consisted of five concepts called “PANEL” an abbreviation for “Participation, Accountability, Non-Discrimination, Empowerment and Link to the Law” (OHCHR, 1948; INEE, 2011).

#### **6- Relation between Education in Emergencies and gender:**

This section will talk about the relation between Education in Emergencies and Gender especially the use of children as soldiers or what is called “ex-child combatants” and depriving their right of education compared with children of the same age, living in the same area and affected with the same crisis. It is very difficult for a humanitarian organization or a family to prevent the recruitment of children to be soldiers and making them participate in battlefields and being used as shields for the purpose of protection of high ranked adult soldiers, but what education in emergencies can do for this special group of children is to help them in gaining their resilience and be incorporated with their previous communities or with even new communities.

In a paper written by Susan Nicholai and Carl Triplehorn titled “The Role of Education in protection Children in conflict” (2003) they argued, concluded and recommended that for children, education is not only about learning and being taught curricula but also “education may facilitate the integration of children”, “education should be recognized as a core part of child protection” and “schools and educational facilities should be designated as safe areas”. Moreover, Ishmael Beah, an ex-child soldier during Sierra Leone war, wrote his story of being a child soldier till he resettled in the United States of America (USA) and started his new life there. It all started when group of UNICEF staff moved him and other children from the camp where they were soldiers to one of their children friendly spaces and safe areas built for the purpose of preventing the phenomenon of child soldiers that was very common during the war time in Sierra Leone. This child friendly space tried to provide education and resilience for the children till the UNICEF is able later to find a resettlement solution for the children or connecting them again with their families if they were still alive after the war (Beah, 2008).

#### **7- Conclusion:**

A joint report that was published by Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) and Save the Children titled “Walk the Talk: Review of Donors’ Humanitarian Policies on Education” (2015) concluded that Education in emergencies became of a very great importance and its integration in the humanitarian sector much more increased nowadays if compared with previous years in matters of donors allocation of funds for Education in Emergencies project and International NGOs strategies and they provided some recommendations to humanitarian organizations and donors like:

*“...Improve allocation of aid to Education in Emergencies and bridging the gap between emergencies and development...Enhance donor policy frameworks to ensure predictable, consistent and transparent support for quality Education in Emergencies...Make sure that funding intended for education reaches its final destination...Investment in monitoring and evaluation to develop substantive evidence for improved decision-making in support of quality Education in Emergencies” (NRC, 2015, pp. 73 - 77)*

Finally, the standards, key actions and guidance notes published by the International Network of Education in Emergencies is written by experts in the education and teaching field and humanitarian aid workers worked in the field of humanitarian assistance covering education and other cross-cutting areas. So, they tried to have an answer for every small question or an inquiry arising from an aid worker planning and implementing an Education in Emergencies project which means we can find some standards, key actions and guidance notes that are very optimistic and will never be done and others that can be very easily implemented. That is why we can never say that the INEE guidebook is relevant or not relevant to ground-level humanitarian delivery, because one specific context can benefit from only one standard written and implement it very well in the field and the other standards can be of no application in real life for this specific context and vice versa.

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