

post conflict

communicating international development research

Education and health for adolescent girls in Chad's refugee camps

More than 220,000 Sudanese from Darfur have fled the ongoing violence in their region and crossed the border into the desert of eastern Chad. Most of the refugees are now in camps; however, several thousand remain outside camps, waiting to be registered. It is estimated that many more refugees will flee to eastern Chad. In the midst of this crisis is the education and reproductive health of adolescent girls being neglected?

In 2005 the Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children visited 10 of the 11 refugee camps in eastern Chad to examine the protection of adolescent girls, with a particular focus on education and reproductive health.

All camps had education programmes and many girls were given an opportunity

to attend school, which they would not have had in Darfur. However, a lack of funding and the difficult conditions led to a number of problems:

- UNICEF had not provided adequate shelters for schools, materials, or guidance to teachers.
- Teachers leave their jobs to make more money in other ways, such as selling firewood or working for non-governmental organisations (NGOs).
- The few women teachers in the camp teach only the lowest grades.
- Young people who have completed grade 8 have no opportunities for further education or skills training.

Violence against girls and women is also a problem. Thousands have been beaten and raped in Darfur by military forces from the 'opposing side' and in Chad, often by members of the local community around the camp when the women and girls are collecting firewood. Women often do not report rape because of the social stigma attached and there were reports of some abandoned babies born as a result of rape. Although in some camps programmes are being developed, there is little help for victims of gender-based violence.

Other problems include:

- lack of assistance for unregistered refugees

- overcrowding
- water shortages
- increasing tension because host communities often lack the basic amenities that many of the refugees have access to.

The UN and NGOs need to:

- encourage young women and girls to take part in decision-making in camp management, youth communities, women's groups and in schools
- provide funds for a gender specialist and implement all projects with a gender perspective.
- care for survivors of violence and ensure safe systems for gathering firewood
- provide semi-permanent classrooms, furniture and school supplies
- encourage parents to send girls to school
- establish literacy classes for all
- provide resources for local communities.

Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children

122 East 42nd Street, 12th Floor, New York, NY 10168-1289, USA

T +1 212 551-3088 F +1 212 551-3180

info@womenscommission.org

'Don't Forget Us': The Education and Gender-Based Violence Protection Needs of Adolescent Girls from Darfur in Chad, Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children, January 2005

www.womenscommission.org/pdf/Td_ed2.pdf

Coordinating local ownership

The fifth target adopted by the Dakar World Education Forum in 2000 focuses on the rights of children to education in emergency situations. Achieving this goal, however, is complicated by the lack of clarity concerning the responsibilities of international and local stakeholders during emergencies and the early stages of reconstruction.

A book from UNESCO's International Institute for Educational Planning examines the coordination – or lack of it – of education in emergencies and early reconstruction. Examples of good practice show how organised educational provision can bring together fractured states and limit the trauma, abduction or forced labour of children affected by war. Planning during emergencies and early reconstruction periods needs to be organised and well-documented.

Education is rarely given a high priority during emergencies – even when vast

numbers of children seek to receive schooling. Curriculum and accreditation issues which require liaison between ministries of education and aid agencies may be significantly delayed for years.

In a country emerging from conflict, well-resourced international non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and United Nations agencies may temporarily assume the responsibility for educational management. Local education authorities may be further weakened by better qualified civil servants taking up better-paid jobs with international organisations.

The author describes how:

- Overlapping mandates of UN agencies can lead to tensions, as UNESCO, UNICEF, UNDP and sometimes UNHCR compete to be recognised as the lead agency for education.
- NGOs may operate in a fairly independent fashion, with their own funding systems, mandates and relationships.
- During high profile emergencies, the search for favourable media attention – and the funding it helps secure – may undermine cooperation among agencies.
- While relations between communities affected by war and relief agencies may

improve over time, teachers, children and their families are often seen as beneficiaries rather than partners.

International agencies and donors must:

- coordinate a framework that features the role of the national government
- start training national and international educators and develop long-term solutions as soon as possible to avoid misunderstandings and resentments arising
- start working early with national local staff to develop joint policies on paying teachers and supporting teacher training activities, student achievement and national examinations
- be prepared for local education authorities to decline aid that does not fulfil the objectives of agreed and publicised plans, insuring international donor coordination
- clarify the role of UNESCO in relation to UNHCR and UNICEF.

Marc Sommers

African Studies Center, Boston University, 270 Bay State Road, Boston, Massachusetts 02215, USA
msommers@bu.edu

Co-ordinating Education During Emergencies and Reconstruction: Challenges and Responsibilities, International Institute for Educational Planning, UNESCO, by Marc Sommers 2004

www.unesco.org/iiep/PDF/pubs/A245.pdf

Flexible education in Somaliland

International initiatives aim to achieve universal basic education and gender equality in education by 2015. What factors affect the likelihood of success in Somaliland? In a country where over 80 percent of the school age population are receiving little meaningful education, research examines how more Flexible Approaches to Education (FAE) can benefit children and disadvantaged adults?

In Somaliland civil conflict and growing poverty has complicated and impacted upon basic education. Problems remain despite a high demand for education and some progress in restoring the system since the end of the civil conflict in the early 1990s. Even where schools are made available, a significant proportion of children and adults have chosen not to attend and others have dropped out, many only after a year or two.

Girls are reported to be dropping out earlier than boys. Factors include:

- There is a lack of secondary schools, text books and other learning materials, and trained teachers, particularly women.

- Costs of travel to school, text books, stationery, fees and uniforms can outweigh the benefits of schooling, especially in a time of uncertain employment prospects. Such costs impact more on girls.
- Girls are needed for domestic work, particularly as their mothers spend more time working outside the home.
- Parents feel that the benefits of educating their daughter will leave with her when she marries, providing little return to them.
- Parents are concerned for safety: once girls reach puberty the distance between home and school is crucial as parents fear that their daughter may be abducted or get a bad reputation through meeting sexually-active males.

Formal schools are not flexible enough to meet the circumstances of most families. FAE offers more adaptable hours, curriculum and location, providing a variety of basic and vocational education to those who have no access to the formal system. They also benefit those who need to supplement education already received, or pursue objectives not catered for by formal schools. The informal centres in Somaliland have proved popular and have nearly an equal number of boys and girls. Other benefits of FAE include:

- reduced time and financial costs for families because of the closer location and flexible lesson times
- involving local influential figures and parents in setting up the programme, persuading community members of the importance of educating all children regardless of gender
- reduced cost to families, communities, and the government, because existing community facilities are used and local instructors are trained on the job.

However FAE requires:

- greater national and international support, as under-trained teachers with little resources are unlikely to provide high quality instruction
- more information on the effectiveness and quality of FAE provision and formal education in Somaliland, as well as what the true costs of these different approaches are.

Geoff Welford

1 Westville Avenue, Ilkley, LS29 9AH, UK

T +44 (0)1943 602839

a.g.welford@education.leeds.ac.uk

'The Development of Education in Post-Conflict 'Somaliland', *International Journal of Education Development* 23, 459-475 by S. A. Bekalo, M. Brophy, and A.G. Welford, 2003

Rebuilding Timor-Leste's education system

When the people of Timor-Leste chose independence from Indonesia in 1999, pro-Indonesian militias, supported by the Indonesian army, responded with violence. The impact on education was massive. A report from UNESCO's International Institute for Educational Planning examines steps taken by the UN to restore the shattered education system before Timor-Leste became an independent state in 2002.

At the beginning of the 1999/2000 school year three quarters of the population fled across the border into the Indonesian province of West Timor or into the mountains. The number of refugee children overwhelmed local schools with few resources and in Timor-Leste only five percent of education institutions were left standing: schools were looted and teachers, mostly from Indonesia, fled.

The United Nations Transitional Authority and several international non-governmental organisations (NGOs) working in Timor-Leste did not understand the culture or share a common language with local people.

The UNESCO report shows that:

- Indonesia's 24 year occupation of Timor-Leste had dramatic effects on education.
- The Indonesian authorities and the international community were slow to address the needs of children while they were displaced in West Timor: UNICEF 'tent' schools in refugee camps were abruptly closed when the UN pulled out.
- In the rush to return Timor-Leste children

to schools, the government prioritised infrastructure and gave little attention to teacher training, curriculum issues and sustainable financing.

- Political disputes, pre-planned donor programmes and exclusion of international NGOs slowed educational reform in Timor-Leste.
- Community participation has been largely confined to rebuilding and repairing schools.

Debates about language issues (in a country with around 30 languages or dialects) have distracted attention from issues of quality of education. The decision of the Timor-Leste leadership to favour Portuguese over Indonesian is controversial. Although four fifths of people speak Tetum, it is primarily an oral language and lacks technical vocabulary. Around 43 percent of people are fluent in Indonesian and most teachers and students would prefer the continued use of Indonesian. There are few young people among the five percent who speak Portuguese and a chronic shortage of primary teachers able to teach in Portuguese.

Major problems remain. Timor-Leste

has boosted school enrolments but one in five children still do not attend school, two thirds of adult women are illiterate and 60 percent of the population have never attended school. Trained teachers are in short supply and teaching quality is low. Lessons learned in both West Timor and Timor-Leste are:

- Supporting local schools to integrate

refugee children (rather than providing separate schooling) can accelerate integration.

- Decision-making needs to be shared between local and international communities.
- Teacher training cannot be postponed until an education system is fully functioning and the curriculum is known.
- The question of language competencies and mother tongue should play a role in determining the language of instruction.
- Children and youth who have been involved in resistance struggles may make schools more violent and their experiences need to be addressed.

Susan Nicolai

Save the Children UK, 17 Grove Lane, London SE5 8RD, UK

T +44 (0)20 7703 5400 F +44 (0)20 7703 2278

s.nicolai@scfuk.org.uk

Learning Independence: Education in Emergency and Transition in Timor-Leste since 1999, International Institute for Educational Planning, UNESCO, by Susan Nicolai, 2004

www.unesco.org/iiep/PDF/pubs/East_timor.pdf

id21
Institute of Development Studies
University of Sussex
Brighton, BN1 9RE UK
T +44 (0) 1273 678787
F +44 (0) 1273 877335
E id21@ids.ac.uk



id21 education highlights bring the latest research to education policymakers and practitioners with limited internet access. Please photocopy and distribute them to your colleagues. If you would like to subscribe free of charge, please send your contact details to the address above. id21 is hosted by the Institute of Development Studies and supported by the UK Department for International Development.

Keywords: conflict, emergencies, post conflict, coordination, refugees, NGOs, UN, resources, aid, funding, skills, protection, flexible, non-formal