

CHAPTER 12

PARTICIPATION AND EDUCATION

Education traditionally falls within the development sphere; it is not generally considered to be a part of humanitarian interventions in crisis situations. However, education is increasingly a key component of humanitarian responses, and often accompanies other types of programmes. Shelter reconstruction programmes frequently involve the construction of schools and kindergartens, while nutrition and mother-and-child health programmes sometimes include welcome centres for women and children, with health education components.

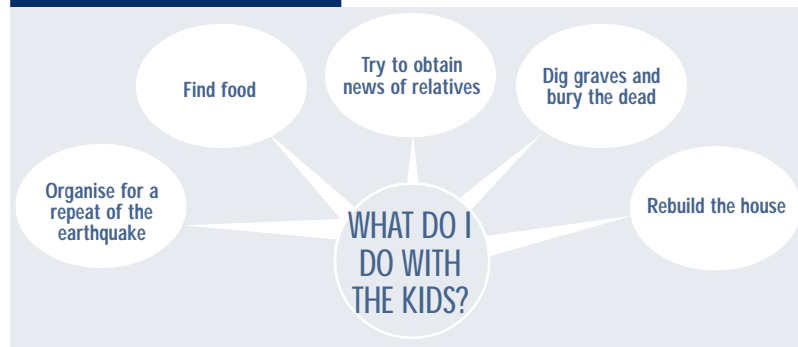
For the purpose of this handbook, this sector is defined as including all programmes that serve to respond to the educational needs of children, either temporarily (such as education centres in IDP or refugee camps and childcare facilities in welcome centres for the victims of natural disasters) or in the longer term (including the reconstruction of school buildings, and the replacement of supplies that have been lost in a crisis).

Educational programmes have several implications:

- **Gender** restoring school activities and opening childcare centres provides women with more time to engage in other activities.
- **Psychosocial issues** an educational/institutional framework can be used to manage post-traumatic syndrome.
- **Childhood issues** education contributes to the reconstruction of a support framework for child victims of a crisis, re-establishing a routine, and to re-initiating the learning process.

- **Social reconstruction** educators and the school infrastructure are pillars of social life in certain cultures. Repairing these structures and/or contributing to educational activities can play a key role in rebuilding social relations.
- **Education *per se*** education programmes can help children to integrate into new cultures or to maintain their own culture (such as in a refugee situation).

What do I do with the kids?



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Why is participation important in this sector?

- Education is, above all, about the transfer of knowledge. The participation of affected populations enables better adaptation of knowledge to local conditions and specific needs.
- Schooling and educational infrastructure, working patterns, and the content of the curriculum are often guided by principles and prerequisites that are highly specific to each country/culture/ethnic group. Engagement with affected populations is necessary to understand, respect and adopt these principles and prerequisites.
- Taking into account the expectations of the person who will receive the education, and involving him/her in the design of the learning strategy, is fundamental in certain cultures.
- Participation in this intervention sector can be an important means of enhancing the protection of children.

12.1 ASSESSMENT

The assessment should aim to clarify:

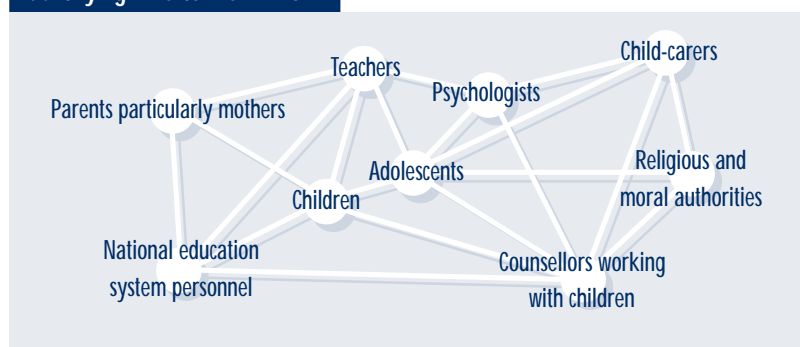
- what the education system was like before the crisis;
- who was in charge of it;
- whether there is a functioning institution and whether former staff have survived the crisis and are willing to be remobilised; and
- whether there was existing capacity for trauma management, either within the educational system or the traditional/modern health system.

This can be done through a participatory approach, in three steps.

12.1.1 IDENTIFYING WHO TO WORK WITH

Many community members will play an educative role in the life of infants, children and young adults. Whether their role is formal or informal, it is important to involve these individuals in the various stages of an education programme, in order to gain specific insights on the population's education needs, and to integrate activities into community life.

Identifying who to work with



Under the Taliban regime, in Afghanistan, the education of girls was strictly forbidden, and, in most instances, that of boys was limited to religious instruction by the village Mullah. This situation prompted some educated women to organise clandestine schools in their homes, to ensure that girls received an education and that boys' education was complemented with non-religious elements.

In post-Taliban Afghanistan, education became a priority in the reconstruction programmes. It was important to recognise the role of women who had informally acted as teachers. At the same time, ensuring the attendance of girls and introducing non-religious curricula requires that religious and moral leaders are consulted and involved in the new education process—to help overcome certain cultural and religious barriers.

12.1.2 DESCRIBING THE EDUCATION SYSTEM

A Before the crisis

Focus groups can be organised to construct a picture of the educational sector **prior to the crisis**. Elements to consider include:

- how the education system functioned;
- the type of infrastructure;
- the profile of personnel;
- the profile of those attending and not attending the schools (by gender, age group, socio-economic status);
- educational profile (agricultural schools, religious schools, national system);
- capacity, in terms of the number of students, and standard of the curriculum (primary, secondary, university);
- the role of educators in the local culture; and
- the role of parents in their children's education.

Discrete focus groups, separating parents, teachers and children, can be a useful way of garnering various perspectives.

B Understanding the impact of the crisis on the education system

Key elements that should be assessed include:

- the extent and nature of the damage to the education infrastructure;
- the availability of supplies for schooling;
- deaths, disappearances or departures of educators and teachers;
- increases and decreases in the school population (according to the level of education);
- modification of the needs/expectations/required methods of teaching due to:
 - trauma caused by the crisis;
 - changes in the average age and in gender distribution;
 - the different languages that need to be taken into account; and
 - the inter-cultural conflicts that need to be managed.
- effect of the crisis on access to schools:
 - in terms of security (children afraid to go to school alone, for fear of being raped or forcibly recruited into armed groups); and
 - in terms of physical access (destruction of roads, distance too great).
- loss of one or several school years.



A comparative analysis of the situation before and after the crisis is useful to clarify its impact. In the case of population displacement, maps can enrich the debate. Problem trees are also helpful in aiding group discussions (see chapter 3).

12.1.3 IDENTIFYING AND PRIORITISING NEEDS

This phase is fundamental because of the diverse range of needs that may have to be addressed. A participatory analysis of solutions (their advantages and disadvantages), with parents, teachers and representatives of the national or local education system, can help to identify solutions relating to:

- the type of programme (reconstruction of schools, distribution of supplies, hiring and training of staff, opening of day-care centres for children and multi-language programmes, for instance); and
- the coverage of the programme: which populations should be targeted? What are their specific needs?



Constructing **problem and solution trees** is again a useful way of defining priorities. You should be careful that the concerns of minorities or groups that were previously excluded from the education system are heard and considered.

Interviews with key informants, random interviews and focus groups can help to collect, quickly and relatively safely, the required information. It is just as important to engage with children and to solicit their views on their needs and how they might be met, as it is to question adult members of the affected population. The perspectives of children are often missing, despite the fact that they are the primary targets of such programmes.

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In Goma (DRC), many schools were destroyed as a result of the eruption of the Nyiragongo volcano. Families sought refuge in neighbouring villages and thus sent their children to local schools. While UNICEF and other organisations were rebuilding the destroyed schools, Atlas Logistics launched a programme to increase the capacity of schools in host neighbourhoods (larger classrooms, more stationery, more furniture). The needs assessment was carried out through focus groups with school staff and parents' associations.

12.2 DESIGN

The aim of the design phase is to identify:

- the objective of the intervention;
- the activities involved;
- the people who will benefit; and
- how the programme will be implemented.

12.2.1 DEFINITION OF THE OBJECTIVES AND THE TYPE OF INTERVENTION

It is very important to clarify the objectives of an education programme. A large meeting, followed by small **focus groups**, composed of educators, parents, students, and staff from the local/national education system, can help to do this.



Why put education high on the list of priorities in times of crisis?

- to ensure that children are not abandoned in the street?
- to prevent trauma?
- to prevent loss of education?
- to provide a place where they can be fed and vaccinated?
- to facilitate protection and prevent rape and other forms of aggression?
- Etc.

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Only when these questions have been answered collectively can the design process begin.

Once the objectives have been clarified, it is possible to plan and design, in a participatory manner, the required infrastructures, human resources, teaching equipment, and relations that might have to be established with the administration or institutions in charge of any remaining system of education.

Consulting children can yield original suggestions. Methods to encourage child participation can include drawing and storytelling.

- ▲ But be careful: specific skills are necessary if the participation of children is to be authentic and efficient. It may be necessary to recruit staff with experience of working with children. In many cases, children can highlight specific issues and problems that are relevant to them, such as child abuse, rape, violence, forced labour and gender segregation, especially in crisis situations.

12.2.2 TARGETING

The selection of people to be assisted from the affected population can occur in a participatory manner. Several focus groups can be convened to analyse and answer the following questions.

- Who needs the programme?
- Who will benefit most from it?
- Who, under 'normal' conditions, did not benefit from education?
- Why?
- How can these persons gain access to education?

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- ▲ You should be ready to manage situations where certain dynamics pertaining to discrimination and exclusion are inherent in the local culture (such as female access to education, and discrimination based on caste or ethnic group).

- ▶ In such situations, before targeting the marginalised groups, it may be important to work with key stakeholders who might be resistant to the process, such as heads of households and religious leaders.

It might be necessary to plan sensitisation campaigns, to ensure that members of the targeted population are able to attend education programmes, and that they are not be put at risk or exposed to discriminatory practices.


12.3 IMPLEMENTATION


12.3.1 GENERAL IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

Below are some of the key issues to consider in regard to implementation of a participatory process.


- Who will reconstruct the education infrastructure?
- Who will provide the necessary materials and supplies?
- Who will recruit the personnel?
- What will the community's contribution be?
- What is or should be the role of the national education authority, and how should I interact with it during implementation?
- Who will be responsible for the educational structure once my organisation departs?

The division of tasks between various stakeholders and participatory decision-making processes in education programmes can contribute to ensuring the continuity of the intervention. In non-conflict situations, maintaining a link with the national education system (ministry of education, for example) is desirable and even indispensable, especially when the aim is to integrate the programme into the national education system at a later stage.

 Coordination with other structures, particularly national education authorities, when they are in place, is essential, since harmonising curricula is vital to ensuring that the education provided is relevant and recognised.

 Existing committees can guarantee the participation of affected populations and can make decisions on the distribution of tasks at the community level (such as the participation of parents in the reconstruction), and can act as a link between your organisation and the national system.

Students can also be involved in programme implementation, as this can support their ownership of the school infrastructure and enhance their motivation to contribute to the school's life.

 The participation of children carries the greatest risk: on the one hand, there is a danger of manipulation or the exploitation of child labour. On the other hand, there is a risk that the programme will be conducted in a mechanistic way—the participation of children will simply amount to a 'decorative exercise'.¹⁸

In the DRC (Goma), school reconstruction programmes were set up on a participatory basis, involving teachers, parents and children. The children assisted their parents by fetching water to make bricks. Obviously, it is important that this type of participation should not detract from their schooling.

12.3.2 CHILDREN'S PARTICIPATION AS AN EDUCATIONAL METHOD

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Under normal conditions, a child will move from complete dependence on parents towards a state of interdependence. Education plays a key role in this process. During an emergency situation, education can be disrupted, and, along with it, the evolution of the child in terms of its independence. If autonomy and social processes are not stimulated, children may view dependency as the norm and hence become particularly vulnerable. The participation of children is one way of providing this encouragement.


Participatory techniques can support actions in the education sphere.


- Engaging in dialogue, as opposed to being directive, when giving information to children.
- Using drawing and games to share ideas and to communicate.

¹⁸ Hart, R. A. (1992). Children's participation: From tokenism to citizenship. Innocenti Essay 4, UNICEF, Centre international pour le développement de l'enfant, Florence (Italy).

- Taking into account voiced opinions when making decisions and negotiating.
- Inviting youngsters to participate in decision-making processes and in organising the election of committee representatives, for example.

Many tools and methods can be used to encourage children to participate and to express themselves, including drawings, storytelling and short plays.


 Remember that inviting children to express themselves through drawings, or to recount their own story, can bring back memories of traumatic events that they had buried. The personnel working with children have to be ready to manage sadness, aggressiveness, and other symptoms of post-traumatic disorder.

 Specific skills and guidance materials have been developed (manuals and case studies, for instance) to encourage the participation of children (notably by Save the Children and UNICEF). They can be very useful for preparing and training educators and facilitators involved in this kind of programme.

12.4 MONITORING

The advantage of working with existing structures (parents' committees and teachers, for example) is that monitoring can be done in a collaborative way. The affected population can be invited to follow the evolution of the education programme, to check that the curriculum is adapted to their children's needs, and to make suggestions on potential adjustments.

12.5 EVALUATION

 Social audits and focus groups with adults (parents, educators, or a combination of the two), children, or a mixture of parents and children, are distinct, but complementary means of appraising the impact of education programmes.

Always ask the people involved in the participatory process the following questions.

- Can you qualify whether the programme has made a difference to you and your children?
- How would you describe it?
- What could have been done better?

The ranking of issues that arise is a useful tool to guide future action, provided that the results are immediately shared and discussed.