

Education Support in Times of Conflict: @PKO Now!

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Educational Support and Emergency/Humanitarian Aid

The importance of educational support during emergencies has been recognized recently. Previously the main missions of Emergency / Humanitarian Aid had been the following: commodity and food distribution, water supply source securement and its distribution, environmental sanitation, health, voluntary repatriation of refugees, and so on.¹ The reconstruction of safe, clean living environments is the most important aim in the wake of any conflict, but the knowledge and skills obtained in education are also essential for people to have good lives, and for the reconstruction and development of nations.² There are many anxiety-inducing factors in emergency situations, especially during conflict time, and the access to education during this period leads children and civilians to have: physical, psychological, and cognitive protection,³ to secure space to play and to distribute food and other necessities of life with appropriate protection, and to learn knowledge and skills to protect ourselves from dangers and to live peaceful lives.⁴⁵ Thus, it's important to start programs to reconstruct education systems right after periods of conflict and emergency.

Summary of Education Support in Conflict Time

The major periods of conflict⁶ have been classified into five stages: 1) non-conflict, 2) pre-conflict, 3) in armed-conflict, 4) transition out of violence, and 5) post-conflict. The classification lies in making a distinction among education in emergencies, and education

for conflict prevention, and social and civic reconstruction undertaken by a sovereign national education authority and aid agencies.⁷ It is important for children and civilians to receive appropriate educational support during each term. The education system as well as the lives of people and community will be seriously damaged once conflict happens. Therefore, it is important not only to normalize existing education system, but also to give support by responding to the needs of each conflict victim and community. These may include, for example, refugees, IDP , returners, people who lost their houses but did not emigrate, and so on.⁸



Figure: Conflict Status and Type of Educational Initiative⁹

Education in Post Conflict

After conflict, the major purpose of educational support is the reconstruction and reintegration of damaged social, civic, and educational systems, and the prevention of conflict reoccurrence.¹⁰ Since educational systems have the potential to either aggravate the conditions that led to armed conflict or to improve them, it is important to enable people and community; to work for peace-building, to prevent unnecessary further damage caused by conflict, to carefully operate education reconciliation, and to garner support for future development.¹¹ Furthermore, schools can be not only a place for education, food distribution, and nutrition support; they can also be a place for gender disparity reduction, for communities in general, and for community development. Thus, education can protect human life, and school can be a place to maintain and develop human life.¹² For these reasons, it is essential to support and invest in education in post-conflict nations for their early recovery. It's also important that various UN organizations, international organizations, and NGO s support and work together with local governments for educational reconstruction,

and social reconstruction and reintegration through various educational support.

End Notes

¹ Sinclair, Magaret. (2002). Planning Education in and after Emergencies. UNESCO IIEP, Paris.

² Yasuhide Nakamura, Seiji Utsumi, and Yasushi Katsuma. "International Humanitarian Emergency Relief" Nakanishiya Shuppan. 2008.

³ In appropriate security conditions, physical protection may be enhanced by the provision of adult supervision and a safe place to play. Psychosocial protection is offered through opportunities for self-expression, the expansion of social networks, and access to structure and regular routines. By placing children in the social role of learners, education gives children in the social role of learners, education gives children a sense of purpose and self-worth. Finally, education contributes to the cognitive protection of children affected by conflict or crises by addressing specific living conditions that arise from conflict. This strengthens children's analytical abilities, and gives them the tools they need to develop skills for citizenship and life in peacetime. (IIEP, 2006).

⁴ International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP). (2006). Guidebook for Planning Education in Emergency and Reconstruction. IIEP funded by UNESCO .

⁵ The Sphere Project. (2011) The Sphere Project: Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Humanitarian Response. The Sphere Project.

⁶ In this paper, "times of conflict" indicates a sequence of conflict stages including pre-conflict, in conflict and post-conflict; and "in conflict" indicates the term during specifically "armed conflict."

⁷ Tawil, S. & Harley, A. (2004). Education, Conflict and Social Cohesion, UNESCO and International Bureau of Education, Geneva.

⁸ Same as endnote 4.

⁹ International Bureau of Education. (2003). Curriculum Change and Social Cohesion in Conflict Affected Societies Colloquium Report, p. 11, IBE (UNESCO) Colloquium, Geneva, 3-4 April 2003.

¹⁰ Same as endnote 5.

¹¹ The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development/The World Bank. (2005). Reshaping the Future: Education and Postconflict Reconstruction. The World Bank.

¹² Nicolai, S. & Triplehorn, C. (2003). The role of education in protecting children in conflict (Humanitarian Practice Network Paper 42). London: Overseas Development Institute.