



Photo: South Sudan, Pernille Bærendtsen

CONCEPT PAPER

EDUCATION IN FRAGILE SITUATIONS

Oxfam is guided by “Universal and Equitable access to Quality Education” and also the fact that “lack of access and poor quality of education have serious consequences for especially girls and women” (Oxfam Strategic Plan 2013-2019)..

In November 2016, in Copenhagen, in a meeting convened by Oxfam IBIS, Oxfam constituted an “Education Community of Practice and Influence” agreeing that “Strengthening transformative public education for all to fight inequality” is the overall goal of our future education work. Achieving this goal will:

1. Have a straight redistributive impact – putting ‘virtual income’ into the pocket of poor and marginalized people – particularly in relation to girls and women.
2. Enhance social mobility.
3. Strengthen political mobilization - a transformative, quality education leads to knowing your rights and responsibilities, having a voice, being able to participate and organize, and building active citizenship for children, youth and adults.

This series of Oxfam IBIS concept papers define the Oxfam IBIS’ understanding and approach in key areas.

Each paper contains the following sections:

- A) **Justification** for Oxfam IBIS’ work on the issue
- B) Brief overview of relevant **theories and definitions**
- C) Presentation of **Oxfam IBIS’ approach** and lessons learned
- D) References to **further documentation**

JUSTIFICATION

Education is a human right. However, children, youth and adults living in conflict- and disaster-affected countries are very often deprived of this right. Countries in fragile situations experience weak institutional capacity, poor governance and political instability. Globally, 58 million children of school-going age are out of school; half of them live in conflict-affected countries and the majority of these children are girls. Furthermore, every year more than 175 million children and youth are affected by natural disasters and epidemics causing disruption of their educational activities. While there has generally been much progress in education since 2000, in conflict-affected countries it is going the opposite way: The proportion of out-of-school-children has in fact increased from 30% to 36% from 2000 to 2012. In terms of funding, education receives only 1.7% (2014) of total humanitarian aid.

Fragile situations include violence, repression, corruption, inequality and exclusion, and these conditions negatively affect education provision. This in turn can exacerbate economic, social or political instability – and thereby contribute to prolonged crises. In fragile situations, a strong focus on education is critical since education promotes the stability that allows populations to gain access to opportunities for growth and social development. Also, the re-establishment of education systems provides a visible sign of a return to normalcy. Evidence shows that communities give priority to education, even in times of crisis. Schools and other learning spaces are often at the heart of the community and symbolize an opportunity for future generations and hope for a better life. If this foundation is lost, the future will be affected for many years to come producing ‘lost generations’ of citizens without a relevant education.

Education in Fragile Situations serves as social catalyst and a mean to achieve other rights.

When appropriate and relevant:

- Education contributes to normality in life and psychosocial stability for affected populations.
- Education is life-saving and can be a main factor in the protection of children and women.
- Education builds resilience and transforms communities e.g. through conflict sensitive education (CSE) and is an important element in Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR).
- Education contributes to citizenship and good governance, builds capacity at multiple levels, including government, communities, civil society and individuals.
- Education supports development of other sectors and in this way improves the livelihoods of the communities.

Oxfam IBIS works for the right to quality education for all children, youth and adults, and Oxfam IBIS’ Education for Change Strategy highlights that education is also a right in fragile situations. For Oxfam IBIS this is defined as: Emergencies (caused by conflict, disaster or epidemic), early recovery and transition to development. Often acute emergency interventions do not sufficiently include education, but for Oxfam IBIS it is imperative, that education shall always be considered an integrated part of any humanitarian intervention. Education in fragile situations tends to fall between humanitarian and development assistance, both in terms of funding and implementation. Oxfam IBIS has many years of unique experience from post-conflict situations with education interventions bridging the gaps between phases of emergencies, early recovery and transition to development (also called ‘Linking Relief, Rehabilitation and Development, LRRD). Oxfam IBIS experience places the organisation in a strong position to develop innovative models for quality education in fragile situations that bridges gaps and supports transition to more stable situations.

THEORIES AND DEFINITIONS

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) agreed upon in 2015 showed a clear ambition to fulfil the right to education for all, including those affected by crisis. The focus on education in crises and emergencies was further supported by the foundation of the Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE) in 2000 working specifically to ensure that all persons affected by conflicts and disasters have access to safe, quality, and relevant education. As noted above however, the progress on this has been very limited. In 2010, the international community therefore came together in an unprecedented effort to make the UN system reinforce the right to education of every person, including those affected by emergencies and the resulting General Assembly Resolution on the Right to Education in Emergency Situations has become a guiding document.

INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS

International Humanitarian Law, International Human Rights Law, Convention of Rights of the Child, and International Refugee Law set out fundamental legal standards relating to the education and protection of individuals and groups, and to the nature of the assistance which may be provided to them in emergencies. Furthermore, the INEE Minimum Standards gives guidance on education in emergencies and the Sphere Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Humanitarian Response sets common principles and universal minimum standards for the delivery of humanitarian response. A set of Core Humanitarian Standards (CHS), has recently been developed. Oxfam IBIS adhere to these international standards and guidelines and is committed to working towards their application. Oxfam IBIS also makes sure that tools and guidelines are contextualized to be relevant to the specific emergency and to each country's local context and any existing national standards.

COORDINATION, COLLABORATION AND ENGAGING CIVIL SOCIETY

In fragile situations, where the performance of key state functions is negligible and civil society is often weak or only emerging, international actors can add value through the provision of relevant education initiatives. Oxfam IBIS collaborates with government structures as far as possible, and also participate actively in coordination with other international actors e.g. in emergency situations via the Cluster System. Oxfam IBIS is committed to supporting civil society, also in fragile situations and works to capacitate local civil society actors such as communities, parent- and student- associations, women- and youth groups and support their engagement in education governance bodies such as School Management Committees (SMCs) and Parent/Teacher Associations (PTAs). Furthermore, Oxfam IBIS also works with local and national civil society organisations (CSOs), such as Community Based Organisations (CBOs), Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), and relevant networks.

A FRAMEWORK FOR DESIGNING EDUCATION IN DIFFERENT FRAGILE SITUATIONS

Oxfam IBIS acknowledges, along with the international community, that the context of emergency and development exists in a continuum from the acute emergency through early recovery to reconstruction and development without any strict delineation of the phases. The education interventions will depend on the context and vary accordingly. Many countries may move into and out of crises for decades and different types of interventions are often required side by side.

FRAMEWORK

Acute emergency	Emergency education interventions are implemented as part of an international emergency response closely coordinated through Clusters and/or with other sectors e.g. protection; water, sanitation and health (WASH); nutrition; and livelihood.
Protracted emergency and early recovery	Emergency education interventions are implemented with increased quality education aspects, and in collaboration with government structures, communities and civil society.
Reconstruction/transition to development	While the situation is still fragile, the education interventions support sustainability through resilience building and capacity development with particular focus on civil society at local and national levels as well as education authorities and structures, including DRR.
Development	As the situation becomes more stable, focus is on longer term education programmes including capacity development, developing quality education models and advocacy with or through support to local and national civil society actors.

OXFAM IBIS' APPROACH

ACT NOW - THINK LONG TERM: SUPPORTING EDUCATION SUSTAINABILITY IN TRANSITION

In fragile situations Oxfam IBIS will often begin working directly with local government actors and communities to implement programme activities and to influence decision-making processes. With a long-term sustainability perspective in mind, Oxfam IBIS supports a transition to increased local and national civil society involvement in education. In all types of interventions Oxfam IBIS works for inclusion of marginalized persons and groups in education including: girls and women; disabled learners; out of reach children; youth; ethnic, political and religious groups; stateless persons, refugees, Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) and returnees. Particular concern is given to the movements of these groups and supporting the return of refugees/IDPs.

EXAMPLES OF APPROACHES

Acute emergency	Protracted emergency and early recovery	Reconstruction /transition to development	Development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Basic literacy • Child/youth friendly learning spaces • Bridging courses, e.g. Teacher Emergency Package (TEP) both for students and teachers • Short vocational courses for youth 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Functional literacy • Accelerated Learning Programmes (ALP) • Community based Technical and Vocational Skills Development (TVSD) • Empowerment of Youth through Education (EYE) • Community girls schools/boarding schools for girls • Supporting the (re)establishment of formal education 		
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education Thematic Programmes 	

EXAMPLES OF OXFAM IBIS' FOCUS OF ACTION

Acute emergency	Protracted emergency and early recovery	Reconstruction /transition to development	Development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cluster coordination with other sectors. • Educator mobilization and fast track training/ support. • Distribution of pre-made/ adapted teaching and learning materials. • Providing temporary safe learning spaces. • Consultation with parents/ communities. • Providing psycho-social support and protection through education. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementing alternative/non-formal education models, e.g. second chance programs for over aged learners. • Implementing quality capacity development programmes for educators. • Capacity development of PTAs and SMCs. • Supporting content/curriculum improvements, e.g. by introducing mother tongue, gender- and conflict sensitive education. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Institutional capacity development of authorities in (re) establishment of the education system. • Influencing education reforms. • Implementing quality education models and approaches; bridging to formal system. • Supporting educators professional development and linking to existing policies/structures. • Strengthening participatory, local education governance. • Capacity development of and support to civil society at different levels 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trialling quality education models and approaches and using them for evidence based advocacy. • Advocacy for quality education (policy and financing). • Partnering with and capacity development of civil society at different levels. • Longer term support to educator professional development linking to existing policies/structures.

It is outlined below, how Oxfam IBIS two strategic lines of action (Quality Education & Education Policy and Financing) are applied in fragile situations. Oxfam IBIS is committed to quality education and the seven key quality elements presented in Oxfam IBIS' Quality Education Concept Paper. Oxfam IBIS aspire to emphasise the quality of education, but given the nature of fragile situations it is not possible to attain the same levels as in a development context. Provision of relevant education initiatives needs to go hand in hand with working for longer-term policy changes and advocacy for the much needed investment in education in situations of conflict, disaster or epidemics.

QUALITY EDUCATION IN FRAGILE SITUATIONS

A transformative and learning centred approach: A focus on Conflict Sensitive Education

In Oxfam IBIS' point of view, education is never neutral, but political and a powerful instrument to create either exclusion and oppression – or positive change, such as increased equality, peace and democracy. For education to contribute to positive social, cultural and economic development it needs to be transformative. Conflict Sensitive Education (CSE) represents an important aspect of Oxfam IBIS approach to transformative quality education in fragile situations. INEE has developed guidelines and tools on CSE, which Oxfam IBIS has

contributed to and actively uses. CSE is defined as the process of: 1) understanding the context in which the education policy/programme takes place; 2) analysing the two-way interaction between the context and the education policy/programme; and 3) acting to minimise negative impacts and maximise positive impacts of education policies and programming on conflict, within an organisation's given priorities. CSE includes guiding principles such as: Do no harm; prioritise prevention; stabilise and contribute to democratic governance; and promote equity among learners.

Qualified and motivated educators: A focus on supporting educators

In fragile situations educators are often recruited among people available who have inadequate or no training at all, and they often work with very limited or no pay. In the emergency and early recovery phases, Oxfam IBIS puts emphasis on supporting educators through training (if possible modular) at local level including aspects such as: Basics of a learning centred approach, protection, gender equality, CSE and the teaching of life skills and basic literacy/numeracy. Oxfam IBIS also provides opportunities for common planning and reflection sessions as well as readymade and adapted teaching materials that are easy to use. In the phases of recovery and transition more emphasis is laid on testing and institutionalisation of approaches and standards for professional development, and Oxfam IBIS also works to ensure that educators can be retained with salaries, that their training will be credited and that they have access to further formal training opportunities.

Mother tongue and bilingual education: Taking into account multilingual classrooms

In fragile situations the policy of language instruction must be informed by a conflict analysis and the needs of diverse learners. The high mobility of people, bringing students together in the classroom with different languages should be taken into account. This analysis provides the foundation for the possibilities of using early grade mother-tongue instruction and multilingual instruction for displaced/host communities, though in some cases this may not be feasible.

Inclusion and gender equality: Ensuring the retention and protection of girls and women

The realization of girls' and young women's right to education is particularly impacted by conflicts and disasters since they are already disproportionately under-enrolled in school and often subject to gender-based violence. Furthermore, girl's education tends to be deprioritised in situations of crisis. A special effort therefore needs to be made in fragile situations to sensitise communities on girl's education, to promote the role of women in local education governance bodies, train educators in gender sensitive approaches and to seek to employ female teachers. The empowerment and protection of girls and women is especially important in fragile situations, as they are often more at risk of sexual harassment and exploitation.

Relevant curriculum and life skills: providing TVSD to youth

In many conflict affected countries the majority of children and youth are out of school. Oxfam IBIS therefore also prioritises specific education interventions for adolescents and young people, who never went to school. Focusing on their specific challenges, needs and potentials, is key and can contribute in restoring society and building democracy after a violent conflict. Oxfam IBIS has experience from implementing condensed courses and learning programmes providing a second chance for young people (e.g. ALP and tailor made literacy/TVSD interventions). Oxfam IBIS gives priority to life skills development in all interventions with youth focusing on psychosocial support, building self-esteem, development of communication and collaboration skills. The life skills development often also includes more practical topics such as WASH or mine awareness. Elements of Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) can also be incorporated into formal curricula and in co-curricular activities from the primary to secondary levels of education.

Quality learning environment: A focus on protection

When an emergency strikes, children, youth and other vulnerable groups require special protection to ensure their safety and well-being. Oxfam IBIS supports learning spaces and structures that are appropriate, safe and easily accessible for all learners and educators. Community members participate, as far as possible, in the identification of location, and, possibly, in the construction and maintenance of learning facilities. When planning, Oxfam IBIS ensures that gender protection measures are considered, including equal access to learning, non-violence in schools, quality of teaching and learning, codes of conduct for educators and officials, separate toilets and equal access to sanitary services for both genders. Depending on the context, protection systems may cut across social welfare, education, health, and security sectors.

Well-functioning education management and citizen participation: Engaging civil society in fragile situations

The state is the primary duty bearer in terms of the fulfilment of the right to quality education, but in fragile situations it is often not able to meet this obligation. Supporting participation of local civil society groups and CSOs in relevant provision and management of education is needed. As outlined already, Oxfam IBIS works (at local and national levels) both with education authorities to strengthen education management/governance, and also with capacity-development of and joint implementation with local civil society groups and organisations. In acute emergencies the engagement of civil society is closely linked to education provision and protection, but later phases focus more on developing the capacity of civil society to engage in advocacy and participate in governance of education.

EDUCATION POLICY AND FINANCING IN FRAGILE SITUATIONS

During transition from emergency to development, Oxfam IBIS is committed to support education sustainability, and aims at using the experiences, lessons learnt and resources to support and influence relevant education policy processes (e.g. development of curriculums for alternative education systems or teacher training). Oxfam IBIS' approach also includes advocating for the imperative of sufficient funding for quality education in fragility. This is done through existing platforms/ campaigns such as the ongoing Education Can Not Wait Fund launched at the World Humanitarian Summit 2016 or through strategic work in collaboration with INEE and the Global Campaign for Education (GCE), whose 6th focus area in its recently approved strategic plan is "Education in contexts of conflict or disaster". Securing sufficient funding for quality education in fragility also requires involving and lobbying the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) and other donors.

FURTHER DOCUMENTATION AND REFERENCES

- Education for All Global Monitoring Report: The hidden crisis: Armed conflict and education, UNESCO, 2011.
- Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE): <http://www.ineesite.org/en/>.
- General Assembly Resolution A/RES/64/290 on the Right to Education in Emergency Situations, UN, 2010.
- Global Education First Initiative: <http://www.globaleducationfirst.org/>.
- INEE Minimum Standards for Education, INEE, 2010 revised edition.
- Guiding Principles on Integrating Conflict Sensitivity in Education Policy and Programming in Conflict-Affected and Fragile Contexts, INEE, 2013.
- The Sphere Project: Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Humanitarian Response <http://www.sphereproject.org/>.
- Core Humanitarian Standard on Quality and Accountability, URD, HAP International, People in Aid and the Sphere Project. First edition: 2014 <http://www.corehumanitarianstandard.org/>.
- Hear it from the children - why education in emergencies is critical, NRC and Save the Children, 2014.

ABOUT OXFAM IBIS EDUCATION FOR CHANGE CONCEPT PAPERS

Oxfam IBIS Concept Paper: Education and Gender, version 1, March 1st, 2017

This series of concept papers was introduced June 1st, 2014 with the target audience being Oxfam IBIS staff and management as well as partners and stakeholders. The papers have been developed through a participatory process and are living documents to be revised whenever needed. At this point the series includes the following concept papers:

1. Quality Education
2. Transformative Education
3. Educator Professional Development
4. Youth Education and Training
5. Mother Tongue - Bilingual Education
6. Education in Fragile Situations
7. Education and Gender Equality

All Oxfam IBIS concept papers can be found at www.oxfamibis.org

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