

# COORDINATED ACTION TO TRANSFORM EDUCATION

# WHAT'S IN IT FOR HUMANITARIAN ACTORS?



7th grader Emtinan stands by a tent class in Al-Wahdah school, Al-Jufainah camp for internally displaced persons, Marib, Yemen. March 2021  
UNICEF/UN0460317/Al-Helali

Education transformation comes about when stakeholders in a system change how they interact with one another, purposefully aligning their actions to arrive at dramatically improved outcomes. Toward this goal, the **Global Partnership for Education (GPE)** supports partner countries in getting the most out of policy dialogue and coordination. This brief is part of a companion series to the [Principles toward Effective Local Education Groups](#), although the contents can apply to any mechanism or platform where stakeholders gather to coordinate their actions around national education policy.

**With crises and conflicts disrupting education for a growing number of children, ensuring the continuity of education and that refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) do not get overlooked in policy dialogue are constant priorities. While education sector development coordination mechanisms (including local education groups) regularly consider the needs for education in emergencies, crises may also require activation of specific humanitarian response coordination structures. As such, Education Clusters function as interagency forums providing leadership in crises. Refugee coordination mechanisms (RCMs)—and their respective working groups—exist separately from Clusters, seeking to adapt strategies to address the needs of refugee groups. When the education sector, RCMs and Clusters develop coordination linkages, they can reduce duplication and achieve more cost-effective and sustainable results for crisis-affected populations.**

## WHAT DO YOU AS A HUMANITARIAN ACTOR GAIN THROUGH COORDINATED ACTION?

**An opportunity to articulate the importance of clearly communicated and coordinated humanitarian leadership, and coherent, principled emergency responses**

Clear, unambiguous leadership and appropriate modalities for coordination and collaboration are essential for timely, effective, efficient emergency responses and longer-term recovery. Your regular consultation and communication with sector coordination and dialogue bodies enables you to

- ▶ Ensure clarity and transparency around the roles, leadership functions, responsibilities and levels of involvement expected of humanitarian

(Cluster/Refugee Education Working Group) and development organizations (local education group or its equivalent) in the education response;

- Develop a shared approach to education design, programming, planning and budgeting to ensure that emergency responses align with national sector and development approaches;
- Strengthen awareness across all actors on emerging normative issues and standards for education delivery in emergency response contexts; and
- Develop a shared understanding of different terms and language to support organizations responding directly to emergencies and public-facing messaging.

### **Consideration of the financing required to meet the needs of crisis-affected children**

When crisis occurs, children are oftentimes excluded from learning because humanitarian budgets place a low priority on education and/or because national education budgets lack emergency funding to enable learning continuity.

Your participation in sector coordination and dialogue enables you to

- Suggest how the education sector can better prepare for emergencies, especially in countries with frequent climate-related crises and disasters, through coordinated joint risk and needs assessments and operational gap analysis, and by integrating education in emergencies data within education management information systems;
- Advocate for increased (and aligned) financing for education in emergencies within national education budgets, and for a continuum of support within sector planning, reporting and monitoring processes, to generate greater financial predictability and system capacities to deal with crises;
- Suggest ways to structure external financing (including innovative financing levers) in order to strengthen local coordination capacities and generate evidence of good practice; and

- Share evidence of what works to reach crisis-affected children, so that approaches can be scaled up with appropriate funding through national systems.

### **Enhancing efficiencies between refugee and sector coordination mechanisms**

Respective coordination mechanisms have different strengths—ranging from the capacity to deploy education programs rapidly in emergency situations to a focus on longer-term planning and sustainability. This makes it imperative that humanitarian and development stakeholders work together to ensure they use resources strategically and have coherent plans in place. As part of efforts to develop closer humanitarian-development linkages, and to reduce duplication and fragmentation, your participation in sector coordination and dialogue enables you to

- Understand opportunities and inefficiencies in existing sector coordination and development assistance, and suggest how partners can join forces to make the most of their comparative advantages in specific contexts; and
- Understand how data collection and analysis in refugee settlements and host communities can be strengthened, including through regular assessments of education needs and outcomes, standardized monitoring and evaluation frameworks, and ensuring the inclusion of conflict-affected or refugee-hosting communities in broader sector monitoring processes.

*"The 'whole nexus approach' is an approach based on the search for durable solutions, by addressing vulnerabilities and tackling causes, including structural causes.... Let's look for them, let's try to understand them, let's have a common understanding, with development, peace, human rights, and humanitarian actors together."*

[Bruno Lemarquis, UN Resident Coordinator and Humanitarian Coordinator, Democratic Republic of Congo](#)

## Strengthened cross-sector partnerships and approaches

Synergistic programming across the education community can amplify your effectiveness in meeting child protection, nutrition, school safety, resilience and water, sanitation, and hygiene objectives. With a clear vision of how these areas intersect, you can suggest the value of different types of financing, cost-sharing and smart partnerships.

Participation in sector coordination and dialogue enables you to

- Identify possibilities for partnering with foundations, nonprofit organizations, the private sector (telecommunications, hardware, education technology and so on) and the health sector to address education access, equity, affordability and sustainability considerations; and
- Identify possibilities for partnering with civil society and local organizations to strengthen local resilience and preparedness for future crises, as well as to reduce reliance on external assistance.

## WHY DO HUMANITARIAN ACTORS MATTER IN TRANSFORMING EDUCATION SYSTEMS?

- Your leadership, advocacy and operational know-how are key to the rapid deployment of aid in emergencies and to maintaining education when schooling has been disrupted.
- Your situational updates support all partners and stakeholders in gathering data and information

*“Systematic organisation of those supporting education in emergencies and protracted crises can, in principle, lead to more efficient, cost-effective and successful operations. Formal coordination mechanisms that typically operate in humanitarian contexts might include education clusters, refugee education working groups and local education groups.”*

[Overseas Development Institute](#)

## UGANDA

**Synergies and strong coordination between humanitarian and development partners create the foundations for quality education for refugee communities.** Uganda hosts the most refugees in Africa, with 1.5 million refugees and asylum seekers coming mainly from the Democratic Republic of Congo and South Sudan. Under the leadership of the Ministry of Education and Sports, and co-led by UNHCR and Finn Church Aid, the Education in Emergencies Working Group coordinates implementation of a comprehensive Education Response Plan offering a framework for effectively coordinating education interventions across humanitarian and development partners in refugee settlements. Regular reports are communicated at meetings of the Education Development Partners Group. Key decisions and approvals are also endorsed at the Education Sector Consultative Committee, attended by key education development partners and donors.

Additional factors for success include the integration of the ERP into the broader Education Sector Strategic Plan (which includes the Education Response Plan as an annex) and its progressive integration into district plans for Uganda’s 12 refugee-hosting districts. Moreover, it builds on the important role of local actors in delivering education to refugee communities, and thus aims to strengthen their capacity through training, mentoring and other support mechanisms. Since the introduction of the Education Response Plan, collection and analysis of education data in refugee settlements have improved and resources from a range of donors and partners have been mobilized. Gross enrollment rates in preschool and primary education grew from 32% to 39% and 79% to 86%, respectively, between 2018 and 2022; although teacher-to-pupil ratios still fall outside national standards, refugee learners largely have access to qualified, trained teachers.

# REPUBLIC OF YEMEN

**REPUBLIC OF YEMEN. In the face of protracted conflict, humanitarian and development actors are consulting more closely to enhance coherence and identify teaching and learning solutions within a “whole-of-country” approach.** The conflict, which began in 2014, has affected education service delivery as well as coordination mechanisms. To ensure effective coordination and collaboration, emergency response actors within the Education Cluster and the local education group have reviewed and adapted the Yemeni coordination mechanisms several times to clarify roles and to stimulate closer collaboration across the humanitarian–development–peace building nexus. A Cluster representative regularly attends Local Education Group meetings and maintains close coordination with the Development Partners Group.

Agreement on a whole-of-country approach has advanced dialogue on persistent issues such as irregular payment of teacher salaries and to move from short- to longer-term strategies. With regard to data, the Cluster has expanded its monitoring to capture development partners’ activities within, and outside, the cluster framework as well as work across other cluster areas such as health. USAID research and analysis on humanitarian–development response efforts have also contributed evidence to inform dialogue and decision making around education system recovery and to identify issues that are key sector priorities.

about priority education needs and in monitoring progress.

- ▶ Your productive engagement at the local level with government officials, local authorities and delivery partners enables affected populations to access different channels for advocacy, consultation and decision making.
- ▶ You play a critical role in rebuilding local systems and strengthening resilience through your efforts to strengthen the skills, knowledge and resources of schools, communities, and local organizations to anticipate and better respond to future crises.
- ▶ You play a leadership role at the national and regional levels, including where there are cross-border movements, in preparedness within the education system and in developing long-term policy approaches that benefit people affected by emergencies and longer-term protracted situations.

## ADDITIONAL READINGS:

- ▶ [5 examples of GPE support to refugee education](#). GPE. June 20, 2023.
- ▶ [Strengthening GPE’s support in fragile and conflict-affected contexts](#). GPE. July 7, 2022.
- ▶ [Education Under Attack 2022](#). ECW. June 2022.
- ▶ [Inter-Agency Toolkit on Localisation in Humanitarian Coordination](#). INEE. March 3, 2022.
- ▶ [Humanitarian-development coherence in education: Working together in crisis contexts](#). INEE. April 7, 2021.

*“Coordination is a means to an end, whose purpose is to ensure that refugees and other persons of concern receive the protection and assistance they need through the collective efforts and capacities of all stakeholders involved.”*

[United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees](#)

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