

Realising a quality, inclusive and safe education for internally displaced children and youth – a virtual roundtable discussion with the High-Level Panel on Internal Displacement

Event Report

Date: 12 May 2021

Format: Virtual roundtable

Co-hosts: Inter-agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE), IDMC, Global Education Cluster, Save the Children

High-Level Panel & EAG attendees:

Ms. Paula Gaviria Betancur

Mr. Nasser Judeh

Ms. Pauline Riak

Ms Sima Samar

Ms. Elizabeth Ferris

Members of the HLP Secretariat

Speakers:

- Dean Brooks, Director, INEE (moderator)
- Najeebullah Akhterzai, Director General, Ministry of Education, Afghanistan
- Volodymyr (teacher from Ukraine)
- Maestro Josué Trillos (teacher from Colombia)
- Michelle Brown, Global Education Cluster Coordinator (Save the Children)
- Christelle Cazabat, Research Manager, IDMC
- Kijala Shako, Head of Advocacy, East Africa Office, Save the Children
- Kate Moriarty, Senior Advisor for Strategic Engagement and Dialogue, INEE

Top 6 collective recommendations

- Listen to the voices of internally displaced children and young people and facilitate their participation in decisions affecting their education.
- Ensure equal access to formal, accredited education for all displaced children and young people. Where that is not possible it is critical that Governments invest in flexible education programmes and pathways into the formal education system to address the complex needs of internally displaced children and young people.
- Build education sector resilience to respond to conflict and disaster risks that could cause displacement.
- Protect all schools and learning spaces, and ensure they are safe places for internally displaced children and young people.
- Improve the collection of data on displaced populations.
- Governments should develop or strengthen frameworks to include internally displaced teachers in national education workforces and support all teachers' wellbeing, their professional development and certification.

Summary of the remarks:

Dean Brooks, Director, INEE

- Welcome to everyone from the co-hosts
- The aim of today's meeting is to provide further insights of the challenges, experiences, good practices and solutions, and recommendations for delivering quality, safe and inclusive education for internally displaced children and youth. We hope that our discussion today on education for internally displaced children will inform the recommendations of the High-Level Panel to the Secretary General.

Najeebullah Akhterzai, Director General, Ministry of Education, Afghanistan

- Delivering quality education to internally displaced children is a shared responsibility.

- Internally displaced populations in Afghanistan have been an issue for decades. Over 4m people are internally displaced caused by many factors. Children need quality education and this is a big challenge for the Ministry of Education.
- Development partners are doing a great job to coordinate with the MoE to provide education
- Two key initiatives have worked well:
 - Community based education format – efficient and effective. Community based classrooms can be upgraded and turned into formal classrooms over time. Reaches 'hard to reach' children.
 - Accelerated learning programmes – 3-year programmes that prepare children to enter the formal, government school.
- Challenges:
 - We do not have enough buildings to continue classes – big infrastructure challenge. 40% of schools do not have enough buildings.
 - Needs leadership attention by MoE and development partners.
- The MoE established a dedicated department for basic and secondary education on community-based education. It has technical assistance included to work with communities and CSOs together to plan, establish, implement, evaluate and handover community-based classes for formal education. In 2021 the MoE employed one coordinator for community-based education in every province – working with implementing partners.

Maestro Josué Trillos (teacher from Colombia)

- A maths teacher, also working on his PhD. Works in an area most affected by the conflict in Colombia
- In his region, 11,000 people have been internally displaced due to the armed conflict. 60 families were displaced last year. Rural areas are most affected.
- He works at secondary level in a school which delivers holistic education and provides quality education to displaced children, but also provides agricultural, citizenship and environmental education. Goes beyond academic subjects.
- They have a focus on equity and inclusion.
- Not necessary to create new tools and programmes, but important to ensure education continuity for internally displaced children – with a peace building perspective.
- 'To keep a child in the classroom, then the child will be less involved in conflict'.

Volodymyr (teacher from Ukraine)

- Government of Ukraine gives little help to immigrants/internally displaced people.
- A key problem is that parents are unemployed and cannot afford food and school materials. The conflict affects the children a lot. Schools are located in the vicinity of military action.
- Numerous violations of law.
- Many children leave school and go to work. Need an alternative to formal education – accelerated education, remedial education.

Christelle Cazabat, Research Manager, IDMC – see slides

- Global overview of the number of children currently living in internal displacement due to conflict, violence or disasters. Over 21.3 million at the end of 2019, not including displacement linked with climate change.
- DRC, Syria, Afghanistan, Yemen, Somalia, Nigeria Colombia and Sudan each have more than one million IDPs under 18.s
- Since 2019 IDMC has had more of a focus on education – highlights a knowledge gap.
- Gave an overview of internally displaced children by age
 - Using national level data from 100 countries
 - Numbers are vastly underestimated – many countries don't have accurate data and data is not disaggregated by age, gender, ethnicity etc. This means that data across and within countries cannot be easily compared.
- Huge data gap on education & internally displaced children
- Obvious barriers to education include schools destroyed & used for shelters. Less obvious barriers – low family income
- Need to collect more primary disaggregated data in sub-region and national level. With adequate data barriers to education can be better understood and overcome.

Kijala Shako, Head of Advocacy, East Africa Office, Save the Children

- Internally displaced children are a critical group for Save the Children's work.
- *"When we were in our village, we were hit by airstrikes, then we had to move to another area and we were hit again. We moved to a third place and we couldn't survive because we had no support, and now we moved again in the fourth location because of the bombings. I wish I could go back to my hometown and go back to school".* Said Beisan an 11 year old girl in Northeast Syria.
- Save the Children's new report on education for internally displaced children (featuring 5 country case studies from Ukraine, Somalia, Syria, Colombia and Afghanistan)
- Key findings:
 - Adopting legal and policy frameworks is not enough to uphold internally displaced children right to education. Effective implementation is key.
 - Growth of local, national and international efforts to address education for internally displaced children is not keeping pace with increasing displacement.
 - Internally displaced children and their parents highly value education.
 - There is an alarming lack of data on internally displaced children.
- Country case study – Somalia
 - 2.9 million IDPs as of 2021.
 - Education is not free and is mostly private. Internally displaced children face a myriad of obstacles to access and remain in education.
 - Community Education Committees play a key role in advocating for access to quality education for the most marginalised children, including IDPs and returnees.
 - Communities' role in financing education has played a role in reducing the perceived need for increased government spending.
- Recommendations.
 - It is critical that Governments invest in flexible education programmes and pathways into the formal education system to address the complex needs of internally displaced children.
 - Civil society organisations and communities can play an important role in education provision for IDPs when the state is not able. A case in point is Community Based Education. Governments should support community actors and use their unique understanding of internally displaced children's education needs to inform education policy and planning.
 - Governments should develop or strengthen regional frameworks to include internally displaced teachers in national education workforces and support all teachers' wellbeing, their professional development and certification.
 - The World Bank and other international financial institutions should encourage Governments to effectively include IDPs and returnees in economic stimulus plans, making sure that service delivery is improved and inclusive of these populations.

Kate Moriarty, Senior Advisor for Strategic Engagement and Dialogue,

- In March and April 2021 INEE brought together more than 250 internally displaced young people, IDP teachers, Ministry of Education officials, UN agencies staff and civil society organisations from multiple countries in a series of multilingual roundtables (Arabic, English, French, Portugal and Spanish language roundtables).
- The purpose of these roundtables was to listen to IDPs and those who work with them, to identify good practice examples and to discuss recommendations with the UN Secretary General's High-Level Panel on IDPs
- Quality education in crisis is life saving and life sustaining:
 - It provides a sense of normalcy for young people in the face of uncertainty, it provides them with physical, psychosocial, and cognitive protection to deal with the trauma of displacement.
- Quality education promotes social cohesion:
 - curricula that promotes peacebuilding, social transformation and inclusion
 - and pedagogical practices that promote social emotional skills and equitable education policies.
 - promotes integration between IDP and host communities
- Quality education offers opportunities:
 - offers children and young people better life chances

- helps end intergenerational cycles of poverty and conflict
- Common challenges raised during the roundtables
 - *Stigma and discrimination*: Reluctance to identify as members of the displaced community because of stigma and/or the concept of IDP is not widely known or understood - this was identified in the roundtables.
 - *Insecurity*: Many participants in both the roundtables and the survey spoke to the situation of insecurity faced by IDPs, including the risk of recruitment into armed groups for children and young people who were out of school.
 - *Lack of support for IDP and host community teachers*: Support for teachers came out as a significant area of concern for participants across all the roundtables. The survey responses further reflected the lack of support for teachers and the impact on education quality.
 - *Relevance of education tailored to IDPs' learning needs*: Participants of the roundtables noted that IDP children and youth have often been out of school for extended periods and need programs to compensate for learning loss, targeted remedial education and support with the transition into the formal system.
 - *Poverty*: Across the roundtables participants spoke about the impacts of poverty on IDP education i.e., lack of nutrition and impact on learning; children/young people need to support household income; indirect costs of school books
- Examples of best practice
 - **Key role played by Community Based Organisations (CSO's)** in establishing non-formal educational and protection programming, providing Non-Food Items (NFIs) and rehabilitating classrooms to support with the integration of IDP children into formal education.
 - **Ministry of Education (MoE) (in Colombia) has a specific legal framework** that recognizes the needs of IDP children and young people and outlines procedures to facilitate their access to education.
 - **Training programs for teachers** to strengthen capacity to respond to the psychosocial needs of displaced children but still spoke of the lack of support for the teachers themselves.
 - **CSO-led efforts to fight discrimination and harassment** of new IDP arrivals through community awareness-raising activities and advocacy to promote social cohesion.
- Recommendations for the High-Level Panel
 - Listen to the voices of internally displaced children and young people and facilitate their participation in decisions affecting their education
 - Strengthen the quality of education for IDP children and young people by focusing on the needs of teachers in displaced communities.
 - Ensure equal access to formal, accredited education for all displaced children and young people.
 - Build education sector resilience to respond to conflict and disaster risks that could cause displacement.
 - Protect all schools and ensure they are safe places for IDP children and young people.
 - Improve the collection of data on displaced populations.

Moderated discussion:

Mr. Nasser Judeh

- The numbers of internally displaced children are shocking. 43% of IDPs are children and young people.
- Thank you to everyone trying to do something about it.
- Most concerned about how the lack of education may increase instances of recruitment, into child labour and violent extremism.
- Terminology is important, many people do not know their rights.
- Keen to see that the final report of the High-Level Panel includes clear recommendations based on what has been heard today on education.

Dean Brooks, Director, INEE (moderator)

- Flagged the importance of conflict sensitive education

Michelle Brown, Global Education Cluster Coordinator (Save the Children)

- In 2019, at least 13.4 million school-age children were internally displaced due to conflict or violence, and there are millions more displaced due to other crises, such as climate change and environmental disasters.
- These challenges specific to displacement crises require us to be more efficient, agile and inclusive in how deliver education in emergency responses.
- Coordination is at the heart of this. Coordination matters because it 'connects the dots' downward and upwards -- at policy, strategic and operational levels to ensure better access and better services, with less gaps and overlaps.
- Education Clusters and education in emergencies working groups are activated in more responses and contexts than ever before. (30 activated)
- The Global Education Cluster, co-led by UNICEF and Save the Children, supported country Education Clusters and Working Groups to work towards predictable, well-coordinated response that addresses the education concerns of populations affected by humanitarian crises
- Three ways that Education Clusters/Working Groups are working to effectively coordinate and respond to the education needs of IDP children:
 - First, long term displacement requires longer term thinking
 - Education Clusters/Working Groups work with governments at the policy level in the design of IDP education responses, and in Somalia, Nigeria and Mozambique this collaboration goes so far as to inform the emergency strategy within their government's National Education Sector Plans to ensure the emergency needs are reflected and planned for.
 - The Education Cluster is, in many ways, leading the way on localization. Government and local civil society now constitute 75% of global cluster membership. We have national NGO partners on the Global Strategic Advisory Group and country clusters are actively prioritizing local partners' access to- and influence- in national coordination groups.
 - Education Clusters/Working Groups are also supporting institutional capacity strengthening of local and national NGOs to increase their access to humanitarian funding to increase their ability to deliver critical front-line services.
 - Strengthening the humanitarian-development nexus requires funding that allows us to work across both phases of a response. The unique collaboration between Education Cannot Wait and the Education Cluster – at both global and country levels -- has enabled quicker planning and disbursement of EiE resources in emergency response, as well as alignment of multi-year investments to longer-term plans and funding.
 - Second, strong cluster processes are required to be responsive to rapidly changing contexts and needs:
 - We need to understand and effectively respond to children's needs through quality education and inter-sectoral assessments, analysis, prioritization and response planning – a key priority for the Global Education Cluster.
 - We need to give children and their families the opportunity to articulate their needs and preferences with dignity so they can influence the decisions affecting them.
 - Third, Displacement can often be anticipated, and the affects mitigated through a focus on preparedness. This requires us to be better at early warning, analysis, contingency planning and preparedness actions. Effective coordination is key to this.
- An Education sector that is well-coordinated and well- prepared will be able to swiftly respond to new displacements with the materials and capacities required to return children to learning as soon as possible.

Ms. Paula Gaviria Betancur

- Great analysis and inputs.
- Thank you for the processes you undertook to consult and research the findings shared today. I can see that the voices from youth, teachers, parents and communities are there.
- Thank you for raising the importance of teachers – they are also an affected internally displaced population. They have a lot of responsibilities - as human rights defenders and leaders in their community.

- If you had to choose 1 recommendation to the panel what would it be?
 - Maestro Josué Trillos
 - Continuity and sustainable interventions – sometimes programmes end too quickly.
 - Better infrastructure for learning.
 - Najeebullah Akhterzai, Director General, Ministry of Education, Afghanistan
 - Have a quick response mechanism amongst partners
 - Reserve a dedicated national/ international fund for internally displaced students for their education.
 - Set-up international and national technical working groups for education for internally displaced children and young people. While in Afghanistan we have an Education in Emergencies Working Group, a specialist group on education for internally displaced children could be created in addition

Dean Brooks, Director, INEE (moderator)

- Thank you all for joining this event today and for all the speakers.
- We hope that the High-Level Panel includes the findings and recommendations from today's event in their final report.