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Education, Conflict, and Fragility:
Past Developments and Future Challenges

Rebecca Winthrop
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Education, Conflict, and Fragility: Past Developments and Future Challenges

By
Rebecca Winthrop¹
Center for Universal Education, The Brookings Institution

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I. Introduction

This paper reviews the development of and future challenges to a new field of theory and practice addressing education before, in and after crisis. Such crises, often referred to broadly as “emergencies”, can include contexts of armed conflict, state fragility and natural disaster. The paper argues that this field as a whole has gone through two main phases of development, proliferation and consolidation, and is now entering a third phase, integration.

The proliferation phase traces the development of the field back to World War II and includes the subsequent spread around the globe of the practice of supporting education during emergencies. The consolidation phase describes the process of moving from widespread local-level practice to a professionalized field with core sets of global actors and standards. This newly consolidated field, the paper argues, is currently entering a new outward looking phase where its major challenge will be to demonstrate its relevance to and successfully integrate its concerns within broader global issues, such as statebuilding and peacebuilding efforts, mass population displacement, climate change, and educational quality. The paper first reviews the proliferation and consolidation phases and then examines the integration phase in relation to four global issues and trends which present future challenges for the education in emergencies field to address. Specific recommendations are made on policy-oriented research needed to help the education in emergencies field meet its future challenges.

How this particular area of education theory, policy and practice has developed and evolved is important for understanding its current challenges and future direction – something which is essential for conducting effective policy-oriented research. For example, researchers with this understanding will:

1. Be familiar with the inter-disciplinary nature of this new education field. Understanding the range of perspectives – from child protection to nation-building – that have influenced the development of this field can point researchers to fruitful areas of examination. Rich data on education in conflict, for example, exists within bodies of scholarship from numerous disciplines (i.e. developmental psychology, political science, education, economics, philosophy, anthropology). Knowing where this scholarship is and how to place it in the larger context of the issue is important for successful research on this area of education.

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2. Be able to **situate policy recommendations within emerging issues.** Familiarity with the development of the field will enable researchers to craft policy-recommendations that can help the field address its future challenges. For example, understanding the importance of making education relevant to broad global issues and trends – such as statebuilding and mass population displacement - will help researchers focus their work and policy recommendations in a way that speaks both to the education community as well as to external communities of practice for which education is important.

II. Evolution of the “Education in Emergencies” Field

The term “education in emergencies” is commonly used as short-hand to refer to the theories and practices guiding the provision of education in contexts of crisis and post-crisis transition (Sinclair, 2001). It refers broadly to multiple levels and types of education (i.e., from pre-primary, primary, secondary, and tertiary to formal, non-formal, and vocational) and to multiple types of crisis (i.e., from acute emergencies, to protracted refugee contexts, to post-conflict recovery and civil war to natural disasters). While there are various terms used to describe this field (e.g. education in conflict, education and fragility, education and crisis, education and post-crisis transition), in this paper I will use the term “education in emergencies” for the sake of brevity and clarity, if not conciseness.

A common refrain by those working in education in emergencies (EE) is that it is a new field, which has just emerged within the last 10 years (Talbot, 2005). However, the practice of providing education services to individuals and communities affected by war and disaster is not new. The roots of the current education in emergencies field date back to World War II, if not before. In addition to the central role of education in the post-conflict reconstruction of Europe, many community and family-level interventions focused on continuing the education of refugee and evacuee children while the war was on-going. For example, many efforts were made to continue the schooling of British children who were evacuated from London due to the airstrikes and sent to live with family members outside of the city (Loughry and Eyber, 2003).

I argue that the education in emergencies field has gone through two main stages of development and is entering a third. The first stage, proliferation, is characterized by the spreading practice mainly at the local level of providing education services to those whose lives have been disrupted by conflict and disaster. The second stage, consolidation, is characterized by the increasing professionalization of this grass-roots practice and the establishment of a new field of theory, policy, and practice. While in the second stage, the education in emergencies field and its newly identified members were largely inward-looking. The field is currently entering a new stage of integration that is outward-looking. This new stage of integration is faced with the challenge of ensuring that education in emergencies is relevant to and included in larger debates and developments in education, development, and security arenas. While built on a legacy of local level education action, the future trajectory of the education in emergencies field has great relevance for wider audiences.
During a 50-year span in the second half of the twentieth century, the practice of supporting educational access to those caught in the midst or aftermath of war spread across the world from Europe to Asia to Africa. However, this practice was not guided by any shared assumptions or approaches, nor by any common standards or good practices.

In the aftermath of World War II, education was a central feature of the reconstruction of Europe. The Marshall Plan focused heavily on technical education and skills development linked with economic recovery and industry development. The United States, in particular, poured large scale funds into a wide array of vocational, technical and higher education, along with other forms of educational recovery (Tarnoff and Nowels, 2004; USAID, 2009). During the Cold War, millions of people fled from their homes to escape brutal violence linked with proxy-wars carried out within their countries. Afghans in refugee camps in Pakistan and Cambodian refugees in Thailand, amongst others, both received support from the international community, led by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) (Schöch, 2008; Marakanond, 1999). A range of refugee education strategies were developed and implemented in these contexts - including primary school for refugee children, hosting universities in exile and English language courses (UNHCR, 2009).

In 1990, the global community convened the World Conference on Education for All in Jomtien, Thailand, and developed global priorities enshrined in the Education for All declaration and framework for action. There was limited, and hardly significant, attention to the education needs of people affected by conflict and disaster (Kagawa, 2005). Hence the main framework guiding education development around the world took very little notice of the extensive community-level practice of education in emergencies. Similarly, the major frameworks guiding humanitarian intervention at this time, focused on traditional life-saving interventions such as health, water, and shelter, and did not include education. Humanitarian actors were guided by doctrines of neutrality, as specified in the International Committee of the Red Cross, and focused on short-term, “neutral” and life-saving interventions (Weiss and Collins, 1996).

In a post-Cold War era, increasing internal conflict gave rise to vicious violence, particularly in Africa. Mass population movements accompanied many of the conflicts and refugee education interventions were given increasing attention, especially by U.N. agencies. UNHCR dedicated resources to studying its refugee education program for Liberians in Guinea and began documenting some of its strategies. However these efforts at systematization were largely done in isolation within individual agencies, and can be characterized as experimentation and learning. In the mid-1990s, education in emergencies was still largely local-level action with diverse and isolated actors – although the education community was beginning to seriously discuss the issue of armed conflict, especially in the wake of the Rwandan genocide.
Consolidation (mid-1990s – mid-2000s)

The transition of education in emergencies from diffuse local actions to a new field of theory and practice happened over a short period of time. Over the span of a decade, from the mid-1990s to the mid-2000s, the field developed a set of basic and shared assumptions, standards, tools and a core set of actors and networks. This period of consolidation of the education in emergencies field was characterized by internal reflection, attention and focus.

However, ironically, it was external factors that in many ways helped the education in emergencies field develop so quickly. Four major external trends greatly influenced the development of the education in emergencies field over this crucial decade:

- The changing nature of conflict
- The changing nature of humanitarian action
- The increasing focus on child protection during conflict and disaster
- The increasing recognition that Education For All (EFA) and Millennium Development Goals (MDG) will not be met without a focus on conflict and disaster

Post Cold War, the nature of conflict around the globe began to change. Conflicts increased in number, were increasingly internal and more protracted, and the victims were largely civilian (Macrae, 2000; IASC, 2002; Williams, 2005). Short-term humanitarian relief no longer responded to the needs on the ground and there was growing recognition that activities that sustained lives, in addition to just saving lives, were needed. This trend, coupled with the deep crisis of conscience in the humanitarian community caused by the Rwandan genocide, led to significant shifts in humanitarian aid approaches. In education, it galvanized technical experts to think through some sort of standard approaches, such as UNICEF’s Teacher Education Package for Rwanda refugees (Bird, 2003).

The international community’s disastrous response to the Rwandan genocide, including providing a safe haven in refugee camps for genocidaires to regroup, reflected on-going criticism emerging in the 1990s that humanitarian aid can at times do more harm than good (i.e. extend the life of the conflict, create parallel war economies) (De Waal, 1997, Anderson, 1999). This led to a new paradigm for humanitarian action, which was based less on the charity of those helping and more on the rights of those receiving help. New focus was given to local ownership, accountability of those giving assistance, and ensuring those receiving assistance are able to live a life with dignity (Sphere Project, 2000). Education was seen as an important component of a life with dignity, especially since affected-communities often requested it themselves.

In 1996, a major U.N. report put the plight of children affected by armed conflict onto the world’s agenda (Machel, 1996). Graca Machel was commissioned by the Secretary General to investigate this issue. Machel’s findings revealed a massive gap in attention, systems and services in the international community and the humanitarian system. She found children in these contexts suffered immensely and much humanitarian programming was geared solely toward adults. In covering the
wide range of abuses and deprivations children suffered – from child soldiering and sexual violence to psychosocial wellbeing – Machel also included their lack of access to education. Furthermore, she framed education as a way of protecting children – both physically and psychosocially – in these most difficult contexts.

Machel’s report put the topic of education in emergencies on the agenda of global leaders, through the U.N. Secretary General, in a serious way. Child protection units and teams cropped up in major U.N. agencies and NGOs as a result of the report (e.g. UNICEF). A Special Representative on Children and Armed Conflict was appointed by the Secretary General and over the decade various U.N. resolutions and child protection monitoring systems were established (e.g. U.N. Resolution 1612). From a child protection perspective, education was seen as one of many other important interventions for children in these contexts.

From an education perspective, there was increasing recognition that the EFA goals, including the two education MDGs identified in 2000, were not going be met if increased attention was not paid to countries and communities affected by conflict and crisis given that half of the world’s children were (and still are) living in countries affected by conflict. In Dakar, the review of progress against the EFA goals made by the world’s education ministers included a much more significant mention of the need to focus attention on contexts affected by calamity and disaster (Kagawa, 2005).

These four external trends helped the education in emergencies field rapidly develop between the mid-1990s and the mid-2000s. With conflict lasting longer and widely affecting civilians, including children – the average length of time the majority of refugees are displaced is 17 years– education became seen as increasingly important in humanitarian response as entire generations needed to be educated in exile (Women’s Refugee Commission, 2009). This prolonged displacement often leads to poverty and marginalization, as evidenced in a World Bank study of conflict-induced displacement in Europe and central Asia where those who were displaced for more than ten years were poorer, more likely to be unemployed, and less like to have access to land than those who were not displaced (Holtzman and Nezam, 2004).

The shifts in humanitarian aid put an increased focus on local voices and community-driven action. Across many contexts, education was identified as an important need by those receiving assistance (Martone, 2007). The focus on child protection and the barriers to achieving EFA and the MDGs also increased a focus on education in emergencies, albeit from different perspectives and policy frameworks.

Although these trends provided fertile ground for the growth of the field, the process of consolidation itself was not easy. It only succeeded through inward-looking, strategic action – both reactive and proactive – focused on explicitly consolidating the diffuse practice of education in emergencies. Three main events are worth describing to illustrate this contentious process. In many ways these events are important markers of increasing consolidation over the decade: 1) creation of the Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE); 2) development of the INEE Minimum Standards; and 3) establishment of the U.N. Education Cluster.
INEE was established in 2000 in response to the Dakar EFA meeting. A small handful of U.N. and NGO members who were at Dakar, reacting to the increased acknowledgement that EFA would not be achieved without massively increasing attention to countries affected by conflict, decided to form a knowledge-sharing network. This was not the first attempt to share information about education in emergencies widely, however, it was the most successful and, over the course of several years, the INEE network grew from less than 100 members to thousands. The network provided a forum for a wide range of interested parties to assist in the consolidation of the field and has been at the forefront of the education in emergencies field since its inception. One of the first activities INEE undertook was developing a kit of useful guides and resource materials for education in emergencies practitioners – all contributed from different agencies – that was shipped to different field offices in a series of three blue cardboard boxes. (A detailed account of INEE’s founding and growth can be found in “INEE Case Study” (March 2009) conducted by the Overseas Development Institute.)

In 2004, INEE developed Minimum Standards for Education in Emergencies, Chronic Crisis, and Early Reconstruction. These standards were developed as a direct response to the SPHERE standards, which did not include education. A broad coalition of humanitarian NGOs jointly developed the SPHERE standards in 1997 as a response to the Rwandan genocide and the failures of the humanitarian community. The SPHERE standards included a humanitarian charter that set forth basic principles upon which humanitarian aid should be provided, including accountability of those providing aid and the right to life with dignity of those receiving aid. In a number of sectors, such as health and water and sanitation, a set of benchmarks with guidance on good practice strategies for achieving the benchmarks were developed to help standardize and guide humanitarian aid to at a minimum deliver basic quality services. The education sector was not included because it was not considered at the time to be an important part of humanitarian response. The SPHERE standards were widely seen as articulating the current best practice for humanitarian response for the sectors it covered.

Thus, shortly after INEE formed, it began the task of creating minimum standards for the education sector with the idea being that at some future point these education standards could be included as a chapter in SPHERE. The INEE standards closely followed the SPHERE standards in format and approach, and used the same graphic designer and publisher as SPHERE. However, the INEE Minimum Standards differed in three crucial ways from the SPHERE standards: 1) scope, 2) actors, and 3) process.

First, the scope of the INEE standards were not confined to acute humanitarian response, as was SPHERE. But rather in 2002 when the project began, there was increasing recognition that the nature of crisis and conflict was much more complicated than just emergency response. Ongoing, protracted, or chronic crises, as well as post-crisis reconstruction were all important contexts to consider. Therefore, the INEE standards focused on emergencies, chronic crises and early reconstruction contexts. While this wider conception of emergencies would later make the standards broadly relevant in a number of contexts, it also opened them to criticism that they are not sufficiently clear about what needs to be done in an early
emergency. Second, the INEE standards were developed not solely as a coalition of NGOs like SPHERE, but as a collaboration of U.N., NGO, donor and developing country governments, and academics. Thirdly, the process of developing the INEE standards was very participatory. More than 2,500 people from around the world, through multiple local, national and regional in-person consultations as well as online forums, participated in the development of the INEE standards.

As a result of both the broad coalition of actors and the participatory process, there was little dissent about the content and instead, a heavy focus on use when the INEE standards were launched in December 2004. Indeed, several weeks after the INEE standards were launched, the 2005 tsunami hit off the coast of Indonesia and the INEE standards were immediately put to the test, being translated into local languages and used to guide local government and civil society response. This foreshadowed the rapid uptake of the Minimum Standards around the world in the years that followed. In many ways, the development and dissemination of the INEE Minimum Standards was the most important event in consolidating the education in emergencies field, literally bringing together diffuse global good practices in one handbook.

The establishment of the Education Cluster in the U.N. Humanitarian reform process cemented the field of education in emergencies as a domain of policy and practice. Under Kofi Anan’s leadership, the U.N. initiated in 2005 a Humanitarian Reform process, which had multiple dimensions. One dimension was to clarify leadership and ensure accountability amongst U.N. agencies for humanitarian response in areas where there were gaps and confusion on the ground. To address these gaps, “clusters” would be created with lead agencies assigned. An internal study selected major areas where there were gaps, but education was not included, despite the obvious gaps in education services on the ground during humanitarian response. In fact, education was not included as a sector to examine during the study (evidence that it still was not widely considered as part of humanitarian response). However, with a strong advocacy campaign waged by INEE and its members, an Education Cluster was finally established, approximately a year after other clusters in 2006 with joint leadership by UNICEF and Save the Children (Education Cluster, 2009).

In summary, education in emergencies moved, with concerted effort from child protection and EFA communities - over the period of 10 years from isolated country-level practice to a consolidated field with shared standards, good practice strategies, and a recognized place in the global humanitarian response architecture.

III. Integration: Connecting Education in Emergencies to Broader Debates (mid-2000s - present)

The future challenges of the education in emergencies field will be centered on how to connect with a diverse array of larger debates and new global trends – from statebuilding to climate change. The long-term success of what the education in emergencies field is trying to achieve – access to quality education for all those affected by crisis – will be determined by what extent the issue is taken up by others working at a broader level (e.g. global education, security, migration). Indeed, while the field in very recent years has moved from an era of consolidation to an era of integration, there is still much farther to travel.
A little known event in 2007 signals a shifting from the internally-focused education in emergencies field into a mode focused on connecting with larger debates, policy processes and discourses. In 2007, INEE and the Canadian International Development Agency jointly hosted an international policy roundtable on education in conflict and fragility. This roundtable was one of the first times that the education in emergencies community engaged in a serious way with those working on broader education issues. Present at the meeting were representatives not only from the education in emergencies field but also from the EFA Fast Track Initiative and the fragile states community (INEE, 2007).

As part of this era of integration, the education in emergencies community has already begun to build strong linkages in certain areas, such as statebuilding and forced migration, and, to a lesser extent, climate change and education quality. A set of external trends in these four areas relevant to education in emergencies will be reviewed, including existing and possible linkages. Recommendations on important issues for policy-oriented research to focus on will be covered, with the lens of moving the education in emergencies field further along in its need to connect to broader global issues.

Statebuilding and Peacebuilding

How to build strong states and promote processes that will foster lasting peace, especially in the wake of armed conflict, is something that many actors - from populations in affected countries to international institutions like the U.N. and the World Bank – are increasingly focused on. Education has an important role to play in both statebuilding and peacebuilding, and has only recently begun to engage with these communities. However much more work is needed to demonstrate why education is a crucial sector to consider in relation to these processes.

The increased focus, especially amongst donor countries, with regards to “fragile states” and international development, provided fertile ground for the education in emergencies community to connect with external actors and processes. In many ways the fragile states lens has been the external trend that has most shaped this third era of integration. For example, the OECD-DAC focus on service delivery in fragile states in 2006 - 2007, of which education was one of four sectors studied, was a natural point of connection between the education in emergencies community and the broader educational development community (OECD/DAC, 2008). INEE also played an important role in the initial Fast Track Initiative (FTI) Fragile States Task Team, as the global EFA financing mechanism sought ways to reach children living in conflict-affected and fragile states.

In 2008/9, INEE formed a new working group on Education and Fragility. Being only the second working group that INEE has formed (the first was the Minimum Standards group), this marked an important conceptual shift in understanding education in emergencies. Prior to this, much of the practice and policy development in the education in emergencies field was based on the assumption that more education is good education. There was widespread recognition that education interventions in these contexts needed to be of high quality, or risk negative unintended consequences, such as exposing students as targets for attacks. But the relationship and role of education to conflict and fragility was not
deeply examined (although certainly academics had long been discussing this issue in diverse ways) (Bush and Saltarelli, 2000). Indeed the INEE Minimum Standards as originally developed do not include an understanding of this new way of thinking about education.

In practice, there are three main conceptual shifts that come with the new focus on fragility: 1) it bridges gaps; 2) it foregrounds the bi-directional relationship between education and fragility; and 3) it ensures attention to unintended consequences (Winthrop, 2009b). First, the concept of fragility theoretically dissolves the long-standing gap between humanitarian relief and development assistance. This is especially crucial for the education sector because of the reluctance of many humanitarian actors to address education. The concept of fragility is also agile enough to illuminate the cyclical nature of instability and conflict, allowing for increased focus on “pre-crisis” moments and preventative action (Miller-Grandvaux, 2009).

Second, the way in which educational access and quality is hampered by instability is relatively well-documented and recognized. However, this is not the case with the role that education can play in fueling or mitigating fragility itself. This bi-directional dynamic between education and fragility is especially important to understand in relation to conflict prevention, statebuilding and peacebuilding processes.

Third, understanding this bi-directional dynamic between education and fragility exhorts education actors to be much more thoughtful about policy and practice. Using a fragility lens forces educationalists to look for the negative, unintended consequences that may fuel instability and ultimately children and youth’s ability to access a quality education.

Currently, the education in emergencies community is engaged closely with the concept of fragility in a number of ways, including the activities of the INEE Working Group, which focus on improving research, financing, and policy development; the INEE Minimum Standards revision process, which incorporates a conflict-mitigation lens among other improvements; and the renewed effort to establish a mechanism in FTI that would fund education in situations of conflict and fragility.

However, high quality research on the following questions would be quite helpful in shaping the policy approaches to education, especially in relation to statebuilding and peacebuilding work.

- What is at stake if policymakers focus on statebuilding and peacebuilding ignore education? With so many competing issues and sectors, the risks of ignoring the education sector are not well-defined or communicated to policymakers.

- For example, education is often understood, in a limited way, as an important element of government service delivery. However, how an education system is governed plays an important role in statebuilding (i.e. teacher payment and placement), especially because of the wide reach of education systems, with schools in towns and villages around the country. Finding a clear way - including using economic tools to calculate possible costs or a clear narrative
framework, to describe to policymakers the risks to successful statebuilding efforts of not looking at education governance would be useful. Using USAID’s Education and Fragility Assessment Tool would be a useful resource in this exercise.

- Even if education system governance is better understood, the important role education plays in peacebuilding still needs to be considered. With education tied to national identity formation, amongst other important aspects of the values education transmits, it plays an important role in peacebuilding. However, the education metrics used as a standard (e.g. number of children in school) provide very little insight into this aspect of education. It is imperative to assist policymakers who are examining conflict risk and peacebuilding efforts better measure the ways in which education interfaces with peacebuilding. Even identifying, or developing, indicators that could feasibly be used for this would be of great assistance to the education community, as these do not commonly exist.

Mass Population Displacement – Refugees and IDPs

Mass population movement is not a new phenomena but it is an important feature of crisis. There are many causes of people leaving their homes, including conflict, climate change, economic insecurity, and, interestingly, large-scale development projects. There are also differences in the way the international community defines displacement – refugee, internally-displaced person (IDP), “environmental refugee”, migrant. The patterns of displacement, especially forced displacement are important trends to which the education in emergencies community must respond.

There is an important legal difference between refugees and IDPs. Refugees, as defined in the 1951 U.N. Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, are people who cross an internationally-recognized border and are unwilling or unable to return due to a well-founded fear of persecution on account of race, religion, nationality, membership of a social group, or political opinion. UNHCR is explicitly mandated to ensure the care and protection of refugees when the host country government is unable or unwilling to do so.

IDPs, on the other hand, do not enjoy the same legal standing as refugees. The 1998 Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, developed by the Secretary General’s Special Representative on IDPs, is the major document that guides the international community’s work with IDPs. Sometimes referred to popularly as “internal refugees,” IDPs are people who are displaced from their homes but have not crossed an internationally-recognized border. Historically IDPs have not had the same protections afforded to them by the international community as refugees:

    Internally displaced persons need not and cannot be granted a special legal status comparable to refugee status…Rather [they should be seen] as human beings who are in a situation of vulnerability, they are entitled to the enjoyment of all relevant guarantees of human rights and humanitarian law (Walter Kalin, the U.N. SRSG on IDPs, as quoted in Robinson 2003).
However, at a Special Summit of the African Union in Kampala, Uganda in October 2009, African heads of state and government adopted the Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa. This convention, the first legally-binding international instrument on IDPs, seeks to strengthen regional and national measures to prevent, mitigate, prohibit and eliminate the root causes of internal displacement and establish legal frameworks for preventing internal displacement and addressing its consequences.

Globally, IDPs greatly outnumber refugees. In 2007, there were 11.4 million refugees under UNHCR’s protection in addition to the 4.6 million Palestinian refugees served by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). Of the tens of millions of internally displaced persons in 2007, the Internal Displacement Monitoring Center estimates 26 million were displaced due to conflict, 25 million were displaced due to natural disasters, and 105 million were displaced due to development programming. The estimates for this last category are especially difficult to assess but include people involuntarily uprooted by projects focused on water supply (i.e. dams, irrigation), urban infrastructure, transportation (i.e. roads, canals), energy (i.e. mining, pipelines), agriculture expansion, and parks and forest reserves (IDMC, 2008). There are also estimates of large numbers of people potentially being displaced due to climate change.

One important feature to note across categories of people forcibly displaced from their homes is that they appear to be staying largely within host communities and not in separate camps. Elizabeth Ferris, Co-Director of the Brookings-Bern Project on Internal Displacement, has described communities hosting displaced populations as one of the most under-researched and little understood aspect of displacement studies (Ferris, 2009). Most of UNHCR’s program design and technical guidance is based on the assumption that refugees are living in camps. However, there are significant regional differences in where refugees live. While 70 percent of refugees in sub-Saharan Africa reside in camps, approximately one-third of refugees around the world live in camp settings, while the rest live in host-community settings (UNHCR, 2009).

This is especially important to consider in light of the global trend towards urban living. For the first time in history, more than half the world’s population lives in urban rather than rural areas. In 2006 there were 3.3 billion people living in urban areas and that number is expected to swell to 5 billion by 2030, with 95 percent of the growth occurring in developing countries (UNFPA, 2007). UNHCR estimates that half of all refugees live in urban areas, a setting which may make it more difficult to identify who are refugees to ensure they receive the services they need. Recent analyses of refugees highlights that this urbanization of displacement may be a positive move to counteract the concern of the “warehousing” of refugees who remain in isolated camps for an extended period of time, entirely dependent on the international community for their education and livelihoods (Agier, 2008; Smith, 2004). There is growing consensus among international organizations working with both refugees and internally displaced persons of the need for greater integration into host communities. The Brookings Institution-Bern Project on International Displacement scholar Roberta Cohen asserts that successful integration will require
a long overdue development-oriented approach to displacement that involves international financial and development institutions (Cohen, 2009).

The recent case of internal displacement in Pakistan provides an interesting example of this phenomenon. Fighting in northern Pakistan, peaking in the summer of 2009, led two million people to flee their homes and seek refuge in neighboring districts. Only 10 to 20 percent of these people were housed in camps for the internally displaced (Winthrop, 2009c). The rest were sheltered in the homes and community buildings of host communities. The impacts and strain on host communities is rarely assessed well and humanitarian strategies, such as registering displaced individuals and families so they can receive special assistance, are often not feasible in host community settings.

The education in emergencies community has done much to further the understanding of good practices for refugee education, at least for refugees living in camp settings. UNHCR has materials and guidelines for refugee education. Many civil society partners have developed good refugee education programs and initiatives. UNESCO IIEP recently released an important report on the certification of refugee student learning, which discusses important strategies such as curriculum choice, exam administration and coordination with government and de facto Ministries of Education (Kirk, 2009). Given that available data suggest that more than half of all returnees are children under the age of 18, resources that focuses on the quality of education is essential to ensuring that the education displaced students receive can be compatible with resuming schooling when they return home (UNHCR, 2009). However, very little is known or specifically developed for refugees or internally displaced populations living in host communities.

Research on the following questions would be quite helpful in shaping the policy approaches to education, especially in contexts of large-scale forced migration:

- How does existing good-practice on refugee and IDP education need to change to adapt to urban settings? Many of the program approaches and strategies that are globally considered good practice have been developed assuming displaced populations are living in rural and camp-based contexts. However, there is much to learn from how urban refugee education interventions have worked, especially in relation to service delivery models and the participation of local civil society organizations. Looking at some contexts in the Middle East would be useful here (i.e. Egypt, Palestine, Jordan, Lebanon).

- How does the education of refugees contribute to long-term statebuilding and peacebuilding efforts? The importance of educating refugees is not a difficult argument to make. However, the education sector in UNHCR is consistently underfunded. Indeed, UNHCR has initiated a campaign (www.ninemillion.org) to fundraise for its education work in an attempt to fill the large financing gap. Research tracking the costs undereducating refugees, especially in relation to post-conflict reconstruction, would be useful in teaching policymakers about the importance of adequately financing refugee education.
• Are education interventions for refugees and IDPs generally meeting their needs? There is a large focus on primary education, especially in refugee contexts. Indeed, UNHCR’s education work is largely concentrated in the primary sector. The educational needs of displaced youth, as well as adults, typically receive less attention. Types of education on available often does not meet the current or long-term needs of community members, especially with regards to the livelihood skills development.

Climate Change

One of the world’s global crises is the change in our natural environment and climate. Defined by the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), climate change is, “a change in the climate which is attributed directly or indirectly to human activity that alters the composition of the global atmosphere and which is in addition to natural climate variability observed over comparable periods” (U.N. 2007). Eleven of the past twelve years rank among the warmest years in global surface temperature since 1850. The number of natural disasters has increased greatly, with current averages up to 400-500 per year compared to the average of 125 in the early 1980s (McGrath 2007).

While numerous actors are concerned and actively addressing different aspects of climate change, the humanitarian consequences are huge and will continue to grow. According to UNHCR, there were approximately 24 million environmentally-displaced persons in 2007, more than twice the number of refugees world-wide. That number is predicted to grow to 50 million in 2010 and 200 million by 2050 (West; Abbot 2008). Water shortages from drought are part of a complex set of problems fueling conflict and violence in Afghanistan, Sudan and Nepal. Increases in competition for natural resources is estimated to play an increasingly larger role in the future as a driver of conflict (Abbot 2008).

Climate change adaptation is a crucial part of the humanitarian response to this global crisis. Supporting communities to develop new systems and coping mechanisms to better address the risks of climate change is one of the more effective and immediate actions the development community can do to address this issue. The field of Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) is focused on exactly this. The field calls for widespread integration throughout all humanitarian and development approaches of important systems and processes that would help prevent harm, reduce risk, and effectively respond to climate change crises. Indeed, the U.N.’s Inter-Agency Standing Committee argues that, in the face of climate change, the international community needs to fundamentally change how it understands crisis and conceptualizes its response.

Climate change is an additional argument for linking relief and rehabilitation with development. As a consequence, resources will have to be invested in the whole spectrum of [DRR]. This investment could also serve as a useful means of conflict prevention (IASC, 2008).

The education in emergencies community is already beginning to engage with the issue of climate change, especially in relation to specific DRR strategies. For example, INEE partnered with the World Bank’s Global Facility for Disaster
Reduction and Recovery (DRR) to develop Guidance Notes on Safer School Construction (INEE, 2009). This resource provides important strategies for building disaster-resilient schools. NGOs such as Save the Children and Teachers without Borders have developed a range of curricular and teacher training materials to incorporate DRR strategies into the content and pedagogical life of schools. However much more needs to be done to incorporate DRR strategies and specifically the issue of climate change into humanitarian and development responses. While there is a large and vibrant DRR community, the issue remains largely isolated in donor development strategies to one of short-term natural disaster response.

Research on the following questions would be quite helpful in shaping the policy approaches to education, especially in relation to climate change and climate change adaptation:

- How should donor strategies around education be changed in relation to climate change and climate change adaptation?

- What are the areas of connection between the underlying assumptions guiding education programming around disaster risk reduction versus around conflict prevention and response? It is often assumed that these areas are very far apart, but with a focus on risk reduction they could have more in common than previously thought. Leveraging each others work would be a useful way to move the education in emergencies field forward.

**Education Quality**

In Jomtien and again in Dakar, the world committed to improving the quality of education so that every child could acquire literacy, numeracy and other essential life skills. Yet the global education targets set by the U.N. MDGs have focused the majority of attention and investment on making sure that more children could access an education. While dramatic increases have been made in the number of children and youth going to school worldwide, it is clear that too few of these students are learning. In Zambia and Malawi fewer than one in four grade six students have basic literacy skills, while in Pakistan more than two-thirds of grade three students could not form a sentence in Urdu (Nkamba and Kanyika 1998; Ellis 2003; Das et al. 2006). Furthermore, recent data from several sub-Saharan African countries show high illiteracy rates even among young adults who have completed a primary cycle. In the worldwide push to get every child into school, far less attention has been paid to the quality of that education, something recent EFA-GMR reports have highlighted.

Children in countries affected by or emerging from conflict require learning opportunities and psychosocial support that a quality education can provide. Children do not enter the classroom equal, and emergencies such as conflicts and disasters create inequalities that must be considered when developing policies to improve education quality. In these contexts, access to quality education can help bridge the gap from surviving to thriving. Research has shown that the mere perception of “learning well” by children attending primary school in these most difficult contexts has given them hope for the future and a sense of self-confidence.
Quality education must be relevant, accessible, and comprehensive, extending beyond focusing on the cognitive development of its learners to include the creative and emotional growth of learners toward responsible citizenship. Emergencies, especially post-conflict recovery situations, have the potential to provide a window of opportunity to improve the overall quality of education. Post-conflict curriculum reform can be a means of changing content that may have contributed to the conflict and education systems are more open to reforms that could greatly increase levels of learning attainments. Education policy can also “leapfrog” into the 21st century, with the inclusion of a focus on providing necessary skills to rebuild communities, including conflict-mitigation and peacebuilding skills, HIV/AIDS prevention and landmine awareness.

The education in emergencies community has already begun engaging in the topic of educational quality, primarily through the development of tools for policymakers and practitioners. In 2005, UNESCO developed a training course entitled Quality Education in Conflict-Affected Countries: Translating the vision of quality education into the practical work of reconstruction. Piloted in Liberia with representatives from the Ministry of Education and NGOs working in the education and humanitarian aid sectors, the course was designed to contribute to the reconstruction of education systems by promoting the importance of safe, secure, and supportive learning environments. Although it was designed for countries in post-conflict or reconstruction phases, UNESCO believes that it could be applicable to other education settings since the principles of quality education are relevant to all learning systems. In 2009, INEE established its Teaching and Learning Initiative to identify mechanisms, approaches and tools for policymakers and practitioners to help enable learners to develop core competencies in literacy, numeracy, and life skills. Through the creation of Guidance Notes and a Resource Pack, INEE will develop a framework for planning a locally-appropriate strategy to help establish and institutionalize good practice.

During the consolidation stage, the education in emergencies community has largely been focused on figuring out the “nuts and bolts” of education access in a complex environment: building schools or learning centers, hiring teachers or paraprofessionals, developing flexible documentation requirements for enrollment and supplying learning materials. While the recent tools developed by UNESCO and INEE are an important step toward improving the quality of education in conflict settings, the education in emergencies community will need to ensure that it is linked into the broader education development community as it tackles the quality deficits. In particular, education in emergencies should make sure that it effectively links into recent efforts by the global education community to revitalize the world’s commitment to the comprehensive Education for All agenda, which calls for a quality education from early childhood to adult literacy for all boys and girls. Those who are most concerned about ensuring quality education should also be concerned that learning is happening for the children and youth who are living in the most challenging contexts.

Research on the following question would be quite helpful in shaping the policy approaches to education, especially in relation to EFA community’s effort to tackle education quality:
• What are the possibilities for “education leapfrogging” that emergencies present? Despite the multiple barriers that crises, such as conflict, present to education, there often are windows of opportunity for transformation. In these contexts, education ministries are usually much more open to new ideas than in other more stable development contexts. Important examples of educational leapfrogging exist around gender equity, alternative schooling models, curriculum reform, etc. (Nicolai, 2009).

IV. Conclusion

The field of education in emergencies, while not a new practice on the ground, has emerged rapidly as a new field of study, policy and practice. The future challenges of the field lie in connecting the education in emergency community’s work with broader debates and policy developments, especially those around statebuilding and peacebuilding, mass population displacement, climate change and education quality. High quality research can play an important role in shaping policy that recognizes education has an important role to play in these global issues. The world’s ability to achieve EFA will be closely tied with the education in emergency community’s ability to achieve its goals of ensuring access to quality education for all people affected by crisis and of finding ways to articulate the relevance and importance of education to broader issues.
Appendix 1 – Brief Review of Education in Emergencies in Academia

Many of the issues and concepts that are foundational to the education in emergencies field have been addressed in academia for some time. For example, research on trauma has evolved throughout the 1900s as the field of psychology developed. Theories around trauma and resilience are foundational to much of the existing psychosocial programming in the education in emergencies field. However, only very recently have courses been taught on education in emergencies as a specialized field of study. In the past six years, the subject of education in emergencies has quickly blossomed in academia from a topic reviewed in one day to separate semester-long courses to concentrations in master’s programs. Additionally, in 2009, the University of Nairobi launched a program to develop an entire master’s program on education in emergencies in partnership with the International Rescue Committee. Most of the courses and programs and in schools of education, schools of development or international affairs. Below is a listing of some of the academic offerings – courses and programs – that cover in education in emergencies. Doubtless there are a range of other academic institutions, especially outside the United States, with offerings on this subject, but their presence is not as visible within the global education in emergencies network.

Colombia University

School of International and Public Affairs
A number of different semester-long courses in the M.A. in International Affairs, including:

- Critical Challenges and Opportunities: Education in Emergencies, Chronic Crisis, and Early Reconstruction Contexts.
- Protection of Children in War & Disaster.
- The Politics of Peacebuilding and Post-Conflict Reconstruction.
- Education in Emergencies, Chronic Crises, and Early Reconstruction Contexts.
- Education in Emergencies Practicum.
- Psychosocial Dimensions of Disasters.

Teacher’s College

The M.A. in international education development has a concentration students can chose on education and humanitarian issues. Some courses include:

- Education in Emergencies, Chronic Crises and Reconstruction.
- Education in Emergencies: Theory and Practice.
- Politics, Education and Conflict.

**Harvard University**  
*Harvard Graduate School of Education*

- Education in Displacement: Promoting Access, Building Systems

**American University**  
*School of International Service*

- Youth and Conflict
- Youth, Participation and Peacebuilding

**George Washington University**  
*Elliot School of International Affairs*

- Care of Children in Complex Emergencies
- Internal Displacement: From the United States to Uganda
- Violence, Gender and Humanitarian Assistance

**Cornell University**  
*Graduate School of Education*

- Educational Innovations in Africa and the Diaspora

**University of Nairobi**

Armed Conflict and Peace Studies Graduate program

Education in Emergencies Master’s and certificate program (*note*: in development)

**University of Innsbruck**

Program for Peace Studies Graduate program

**Oxford University**

Houses lead academics on the issue. As well as a student consulting group: Conflict and Education Research Group that does a range of research on the issue.

**University of Sussex**

International Education and Development Graduate program

**University of Ulster**

Houses lead academics on this issue
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