

Education Cluster Somalia – 2009 Strategy Document

This annual strategy document is intended to guide cluster members in programmatic and geographic focus for their education activities to ensure a coherent and balanced emergency education response in Somalia. This document will link with the CAP as a method to further prioritize current year funding needs, as well as to prepare project proposals for the coming year. The strategy will also serve as a general reference point for the cluster to monitor and assess achievement of broad objectives each year (specific indicators for the cluster will appear in the annual CAP appeal). This document will be circulated externally as a resource on program guidelines for emergency work, as well as to increase understanding of cluster responsibilities and improve coordination with other clusters, the education sector and local authorities in Somalia.

Emergency Education Defined

When education systems are critically disrupted by crisis, a humanitarian response is required to ensure that learning opportunities are not curtailed and that the educational needs of the affected populations are met. In Somalia, emergency education activities encompass and complement many of the same interventions as developmental education, and it is therefore incumbent upon the cluster to define criteria for what will constitute an emergency intervention. In the case of Somalia, definitions of emergency criteria will be as follows:

- In the Central South Zone (CSZ): emergency education activities respond to a lack of continuous provision of government services (long or short term) in a context of continuous displacement, violence, severe political/social/economic instability and/or natural disaster.
- In Puntland and Somaliland: emergency education activities respond to the need to support growing IDP and drought-affected communities with educational and integration services, as well as responding to any outbreaks of conflict in the disputed regions of Sool and Sanaag.

Programmatic Focus for 2009

Emergency education interventions encompass activities ranging from training to reconstruction and capacity building – often with significant overlap with interventions categorized as developmental education. Education cluster members will continue to engage in a variety of interventions, dependent on localized needs assessments and their organizational experience and expertise. However, the Education Cluster in 2009 will develop a more strategic focus – encompassing on-the-ground realities, donor priorities and cross-sectoral linkages - in the following technical areas:

Educational services for IDP and other emergency-affected populations across the three zones of Somalia, with an emphasis on integration with host communities where possible (particularly in Puntland and Somaliland);

Non-formal education for children, youth and adults integrating life-saving information on hygiene, nutrition, health and protection in response to conflict-affected populations' practical learning needs (particularly in SCZ);

Construction and rehabilitation of temporary learning centers, schools and WASH facilities for emergency-affected populations across all three zones.

Advocacy

The Education Cluster will continue its outreach to donors, the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC), UN agencies and other decision-making forums to underscore the fact that *education is a life-saving intervention*. Education in emergencies reduces risks faced by children and youth and can prevent death or severe harm by conveying life saving messages on hygiene and health issues, including critical messages on HIV/AIDS prevention. Schools and learning centers can facilitate the communication of critical messaging on unexploded ordinances and unsafe spaces in both temporary camps and home communities. Emergency education also protects children and youth from recruitment into armed forces or criminal activity arising from idleness, poverty or displacement and provides a protective learning space in often unsafe environments. Education's contribution to peace dividends will be highlighted, both in terms of peace education/psycho-social care as well as providing safe spaces for parents to leave their children while they focus on other life saving activities.

Strengthening Linkages

An inter-sectoral approach to education is vital in emergency contexts, where education in emergency spaces offers a means of providing a sense of normalcy, psychosocial support, and protection against harm, as well as a place for delivery of other vital services (nutrition, WASH, health). The Education Cluster will work closely with other clusters in 2009 to promote and strengthen synergies in the following areas:

Protection: Inter-cluster work may focus on psychosocial support and protection by establishing daily routines and a more stable sense of the future; reduction of vulnerability to trafficking, exploitation and child labor; integration of victims of gender-based violence into education activities; engaging children in positive alternatives to military recruitment; providing a means to identify children with special needs; facilitation of social integration of vulnerable children.

Shelter: Inter-cluster work may focus on the joint planning of school shelters (tents, temporary structures, reconstruction of education infrastructure) to ensure that minimum standards for schools and classrooms are applied (e.g. size, construction, distance, and lighting).

WASH: Inter-cluster work may focus on the provision of safe water and gender-segregated sanitation facilities for learning spaces and schools, as well as messaging on hygiene promotion (ie hand washing).

Health: Inter-cluster work may focus on promoting access to various health services, provision of basic knowledge on health and urgent life-saving information through schools and temporary learning spaces.

Nutrition: Inter-cluster work may focus on improvement of children's nutrition through the provision of meals or nutritious snacks as part of school feeding programmes.

Logistics: Inter-cluster work may focus on provision and pre-positioning of educational materials, crucial to enabling the cluster's surge capacity.