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Contextual Challenges for Application of the Minimum Standards in Education for Emergencies

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**Contextual Challenges for Application of the Minimum Standards in
Education for Emergencies**

A Master's Project

By

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**Submitted to the Graduate School of the University of Massachusetts, Amherst in Partial
Fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
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DEDICATION

To my Children

Chuckuma, Ndomanya and Charles who had to endure the pain of my long absence from home and lived with the trauma of betrayal and disloyalty by those too close to call.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I should like to express my profound thanks to my advisor, Prof. David R. Evans for his rich advice and for exposing me to new frontiers of knowledge in development; Prof. Gretchen Rossman for helping to refine my research and writing skills and mentoring support; and Prof. Ash Hartwell for affording me the opportunity to further explore this emerging field in education.

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May the Lord richly bless you ALL!

Aiah A. S. Mbayo

ABSTRACT

Education in emergencies is a necessity that can be both *life sustaining* and *life saving*. To this end, the development of the Minimum Standards in Education for Emergencies, Chronic Crisis and Early Reconstruction (MSEE) is an expression of commitment by major stakeholders that all individuals in crisis situations deserve quality education. While development of the MSEE is a commendable effort towards addressing issues of access, quality and accountability in program implementation, achievement of the standards is contingent on factors that are far more complex and beyond the capacity and control of agencies.

This analytic study questions the fundamental assumptions that guided the development of the minimum standards and asserts that the adoption of a one-size-fits-all strategy ignominiously ignores contextual differences and complexities in the field. The study cites factors such as the dynamics and specificities of each crisis, differences in the demand and availability of resources and the existence of multiple institutional players as major challenges.

Drawing on evidence from the field and the author's experience implementing and coordinating emergency education projects with UNICEF in Sierra Leone, this study highlights some of the challenges that are likely to hinder operationalization of the MSEE as a quasi-policy instrument. It concludes that while the MSEE may be relevant and indeed a desirable goal, it is prescriptive and far too ambitious and unrealistic. Thus the achievement of the 19 minimum standards and 109 indicators may not be practicable and attainable in most contexts given the already fragile nature of institutions and systems in such countries and the resource limitations.

Finally, the author proposes actions to operationalize the MSEE at the field level, including increased advocacy for recognition of emergency education as a legitimate humanitarian activity for increased donor funding. The study also recommends the establishment of country-level and project level mechanisms and support for capacity building of government institutions to lead. These actions are critical for an improvement in education delivery in general and more specifically if the MSEE should serve its purpose of contributing to an improvement in learning outcomes at the classroom level.

ACRONYMS

ADRA	Adventist Relief and Development Agency
AIDS	Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
ALP	Accelerated Learning Program
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
CAP	Consolidated Appeal Process
CARE	Cooperative for Assistance and Relief Everywhere, Inc.
CCF	Christian Children's Fund
CFS	Child Friendly Spaces
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
CREPS	Complementary Rapid Education for Primary Schools
EDA	Education for All Development Index
EFA	Education for All
EMIS	Education Management information System
GTZ	German Technical Cooperation
GINIE	Global Information Networks in Education
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
IDP	Internally Displaced Persons
INEE	Inter-agency Network for Education in Emergencies
INGO	International Non-governmental Organizations
IRC	International Rescue Committee
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MOE	Ministry of Education
MSEE	Minimum Standards for Education in Emergencies
NaCSA	National Commission for Social Action
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NPFL	National Patriotic Front of Liberia
NRC	Norwegian Refugee Council
OCHA	UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
OHCHR	Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
PTAs	Parent-Teacher Associations
RALS	Rapid Assessment Learning Spaces
REBEP	Rehabilitation of Basic Education Project
RREP	Rapid Response Education Project
RUF	Revolutionary United Front
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific, Cultural Organization
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
USAID	United States assistance for International Development
WCRWC	Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children
WFP	World Food Programme
WGMSEE	Working Group Minimum Standards for Education in Emergencies

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

We, the governments, organizations, agencies, groups and associations represented at the *World Education Forum* pledge ourselves to:

(V) *meet the needs of education systems affected by conflict, natural calamities and instability and conduct educational programmes in ways that promote mutual understanding, peace and tolerance, and that help to prevent violence and conflict.*

(World Education Forum, 2000, p. 8)

1.0 Introduction

The history of the human race is replete with incidences of conflicts and, on the whole, conflict is apparently inherent to all societies. Quite often, these conflicts have turned out to be violent. In 2002, it was estimated that there were 37 armed conflicts in 29 countries in the world, one-fourth of which were in Africa (Project Ploughshares, 2003, p. 2). Further, some 4 million people have perished in violent conflicts worldwide since 1989 while more than 35 million people have been displaced by conflicts (Miller & Affolter, 2002). Almost always, violent conflicts have had dramatic and devastating impact on people particularly vulnerable groups like women, children, and youth.

In similar manner, crisis situations such as natural disasters can also have shattering effects on populations. One recent example is the Asian Tsunami, which has claimed the lives of an estimated 280,000 people across 13 nations including a staggering 220,000 in Indonesia alone as of January 25, 2005 (BBC, 2005). Natural disasters exert an enormous toll on development and in doing so they pose a significant threat to prospects for achieving the Millennium Development Goals, in particular the overarching target of halving extreme poverty by 2015. The UNDP (2004) estimates that annual economic losses associated with such disasters averaged US\$ 75.5 billion in the 1960s, US\$ 138.4 billion in the 1970s,

US\$ 213.9 billion in the 1980s, and US\$ 659.9 billion in the 1990s (p.13). The majority of these losses are concentrated in the developed world, yet they fail to adequately capture the impact of the disaster on the poor who often bear the greatest cost in terms of lives and livelihoods, and rebuilding their shattered communities and infrastructure. Today, 85 percent of the people exposed to earthquakes, tropical cyclones, floods and droughts live in countries having either medium or low human development as is evident with the recent Tsunami disaster.

When conflicts do occur and systems become shattered, the most immediate humanitarian actions have, as a matter of exigency, focused on the provision of shelter, health, water and sanitation. The provision of education services in emergencies has until now been perceived as relatively insignificant, and the argument has been that education is not considered a life-threatening need. However, it has become evident that the provision of education in crisis situations, particularly in conflict environments, is a critical step towards helping populations overcome their traumatic experiences. In this regard, Miller and Affolter (2002, p.1) contend that “in the face of upheaval, education has a crucial role in promoting security and stability” and more so to ‘help children outgrow war’. Above all, the World Education Forum held in Dakar in 2000 adopted a *Framework for Action* requiring countries to work towards the objective of Education for All (EFA) including the pledge to “*meet the needs of education systems affected by conflict, natural calamities and instability*”. With the growing recognition that education can contribute to conflicts as well as have mitigating effects, the call has become louder in the last five years. It requires that nations and agencies act to improve access and ensure inclusion and equity in basic education. Further, it calls for an improvement in quality and the attainment of so-called minimum standards. This call for minimum standards has elicited a number of questions: whose standards

are they? Are the standards realistic and achievable? What implications would the call for standards have on field practice and how would they be monitored? These questions indeed demand answers, which is the focus of this study based on three case studies from sub-Saharan Africa.

The study is made up of five chapters; Chapter One is the Introduction and Statement of the Problem in which a general description of the objectives and the background of the study is discussed. Chapter Two is the Literature Review, which focuses on conceptual issues relating to the paradigm Emergency Education and the justification for intervening in education in crisis situations. Chapter Three is a presentation of the Minimum Standards for Education in Emergencies (MSEE), including descriptions of the prescribed indicators. Chapter Four highlights three case studies of education programs in emergencies from Liberia, Guinea and Sierra Leone including an evaluation of the CREPS program. There is also a detailed content analysis of the standards and their practicability using evidence from the three case studies. Finally, In Chapter Five, the study draws conclusions from the analysis and makes recommendations to address the challenges that are likely to affect field implementation of the prescribed minimum standards by humanitarian agencies around the world.

1.1 Background to the Study

The challenges associated with post-conflict educational reconstruction are much larger and complex than rebuilding the shattered infrastructure of schooling. Beyond physical reconstruction, education serves the dual purpose of protection and cognitive and social development both during and after crisis situations (Bethle and Braunschweig, 2004). Sommers (2002a, p. 2) acknowledged that the sheer dominance of children in most of the world's conflict

zones means that many victims of warfare and other natural disasters are children. Although the lack of reliable data poses serious constraints in determining the number of children involved in such situations, it by no means blurs the fact that the impact on education systems has been tremendous. The Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children (WCRWC), using data obtained from UNHCR, UNICEF, UNESCO, and NGOs estimates that more than 27 million children and youth affected by armed conflicts do not have access to education; 90% of which are internally displaced persons (Bethle and Braunschweig, 2004, p. iii).

In the face of this enormity, the arguments for interventions in the education sector in complex emergencies particularly in conflict settings are not only compelling but also a moral imperative for governments, humanitarian agencies and civil society organizations. Interventions in the education sector in conflict environments involves a number of challenges which are essentially rooted in multiple demands related to “technocratic concern for system rehabilitation, humanitarian concern for healing the wounds of violence, political concern for effective civil institutions, and social concern for renewing trust and cohesion as a pillar of peace” (Miller & Affolter, 2002, p. 1).

With these considerations in mind Sinclair (2002, p. 27) noted that, “education can be seen as an investment in solutions to crises as well as being the fourth pillar of humanitarian response”. The rationale for education intervention in crisis and post-crisis situations includes the fact that it can help meet the psycho-social needs of affected populations and provide a channel for disseminating survival messages and developing conflict resolution and peace building skills. Further, education serves as leverage for reconstruction and social and economic development, and as a tool for protection. Above all, education is considered a basic human right, as defined by Article 26 of the 1948 *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*; the

1960 UNESCO *Convention against Discrimination in Education*, and the 1989 *Convention on the Rights of the Child* which has been ratified by all countries except the United States of America.

However, the forms of intervention in the education sector during emergencies may vary depending on specific contexts, although the basic principles and rationale remain the same. As a result of these differences and the need to ensure quality, the Interagency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE) developed a set of minimum standards to guide practice. According to INEE, the minimum standards are a culmination of efforts at both national and regional levels in four continents designed to not only guide field practice but to make humanitarian agencies accountable to beneficiaries (INEE, 2004).

The thrust of this study is to determine whether these standards are realistic, contextually practicable and how would it affect field practice in the short and medium terms. The study draws on evidence from ongoing projects in the West African sub-region, which has been embroiled in conflict for the last fifteen years, specifically; Sierra Leone, Liberia and Guinea. It will also draw on experiences from other parts of the world to substantiate some of the issues of critical relevance to the unfolding discussions in the study.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

While there is global consensus on the need to provide educational services in crisis situations particularly conflict-related emergencies, practitioners are yet to agree on the *modus operandi* because of contextual differences. Hence some professionals argue, “every *crisis is different*, and there are no sure formulae for successful response” (Sinclair, 2002. p. 26).

Further, even though governments are obliged by international conventions to provide equal

access to education to internally displaced populations and refugees, this can be difficult, contentious and controversial when the emergency is the result of an internal conflict (Sinclair, 2002, p. 37). The difficulty may be the result of a genuine lack of financial resources and capacity, or of technical know-how and expertise to handle such an emergency. It may be due to sheer unwillingness and lack of commitment on the part of governments to provide such services for reasons that may largely be political, such as the belief of government officials that populations in rebel-controlled areas including children do not deserve government support.

On the other hand, local authorities often described as ‘warlords’ in rebel-controlled areas may be reluctant to use existing national curricula as an indication of their resentment toward government authority and control. Moreover, mobilization of resources by implementing agencies and availability of much needed funds does not always match the needs and realities of every crisis situation, thereby forcing program adjustments and modifications. At the same time, there may be limitations in the involvement and participation of government and communities in activities such as assessment, planning, design of programs, supervision, coordination, management, and monitoring and evaluation.

Nonetheless, education practitioners are of the opinion that differences in contexts, operational philosophies and approaches, resource limitations and management hiccups need not blur the fact that there are universally acceptable practices and principles that are applicable to programs or projects in crisis situations. In fact, practitioners, with the guidance and direction of the INEE Working Group, took the challenge a step further by developing a set of Minimum Standards for Education in Emergencies (MSEE). The MSEE is a set of “minimum standards, key indicators and guidance notes that inform humanitarian action in the context of education, from the development of education programmes to their

implementation and continuity, as well as government and community support” (MSEE, 2004. p. 8). They were developed through a broad consensus of donors, executing and implementing agencies, NGOs, and governments based on a number of assumptions and launched in December 2004.

While it may be too early to assess the validity of the minimum standards, practitioners are concerned to what extent the MSEE is practicable. The question is often asked how minimal are the minimum standards and in any case whose standards are they? There are also issues of resource availability more so when such fragile governments are hard pressed to provide resources to meet the demands for education. Considering resource limitations in crisis situations (as military expenditure takes precedence over the service sector), lack of technical know-how on the part of government officials, waning political will, and an already dysfunctional education system, it is almost inconceivable that the efforts of governments as well as humanitarian agencies will match the prescriptive demands of INEE’s minimum standards.

The goal of this study, therefore, is to experiment with the minimum standards using ongoing projects and programs in sub-Saharan Africa as laboratories to determine how realistic and contextually practicable the standards are. Specifically, this study will attempt to address the following questions:

- What was the rationale for developing the minimum standards and what specific problems or set of problems do they seek to address?
- Whose standards are the MSEE and how minimal, realistic and practicable can they be?
- What are the key assumptions and principles enunciated in the standards and do these assumptions hold in the specific case studies to be examined?

- What lessons can be learned from the application of the minimum standards to ongoing emergency education programs and how would this affect practice generally?
- Finally, what are the specific implications for policy geared towards emergency education programs?

1.3 Objectives of the Study

In line with the issues outlined above and the seeming challenges that might evolve with use of the minimum standards, this study will seek to:

- Analyze the minimum standards in education in emergencies (MSEE) and determine whether the minimum standards are realistic, practicable, and generalizable.
- Apply the MSEE to ongoing emergency education programs in Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone with a view to experimenting with its prescriptions in different operational contexts;
- Propose alternate strategies and specific actions that would contribute to a further improvement of field practice based on common principles and the study findings.

1.4 Methodology

This study is primarily a content analysis although considerable effort was made to utilize primary data from the field. The analysis was carried out using relevant primary data from the field and from secondary sources including evaluative studies, surveys, and reports whenever it was deemed appropriate to ensure clarity. The choice of analytic methods was largely informed by theories and concepts relating to policy analysis since the Minimum Standards for Education in Emergencies can be perceived as an international instrument comprising a set of policy

guidelines for field practice. Thus the study uses an analytic framework based on an adaptation of relevant concepts relating to policy implementation such as participation and coordination.

As a desk study, the main method was critical analysis of the MSEE handbook and relevant contents of reports and other documents germane to the thrust of the study including Evaluation Reports, Annual Reports and Project documents. Further, an on-line questionnaire was administered to four field practitioners who either worked for or are working with either international executing or implementing agencies in Sierra Leone, Liberia, and Guinea. The information gathered was corroborated through content analysis of the script of an internet forum organized by INEE in October 2004 on emergency education which attracted inputs from several INEE practitioners and professionals including field staff and humanitarian workers. Some information was derived from personal correspondence with key program personnel attached to each of the three case studies.

1.4.1 The Author's Role.

Additionally, the author of the study served as key program personnel for three years in Sierra Leone implementing emergency education projects for UNICEF Freetown. Further, a detailed case study was carried out focusing on implementation of the CREPS program in Sierra Leone using documented evidence, informants and the researcher's personal experiences while working as project officer at UNICEF coordinating the CREPS program. Moreover, I served as the focal point at UNICEF for the United Nations Interagency coordinating sub-committee on education comprising UNHCR, WFP, and UNICEF and some partners IRC and NRC from 2002 to 2003. Finally, as the former project officer, I have also relied on participant observation to corroborate some of the findings and assertions made in the study. It should be noted however, that

a systematic effort was made to reduce personal bias from the findings and conclusions reached. At the same time, my personal experiences as a former practitioner has informed my understanding and perceptions of the critical issues highlighted in the study and can be relied upon to enrich the growing body of knowledge in this emerging field.

In the next chapter, current literature on the concept education in emergencies and its role in achieving the education for all goals will be reviewed.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Rationale for Education

Education systems around the world are profoundly engaged in a process of expansion to meet the global agenda of universal primary education as endorsed by the world community in 1948 under the aegis of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*. In many countries, education is seen as a basic human right, a call that has been articulated in a number of international conventions including the *World Education Conference* in Jomtien, Thailand (1990); the *Convention on the Rights of the Child* (1989); the *African Charter on Human and Peoples Rights* (1986); and the *World Education Forum Framework for Action* (2000) which has been the basis for Education For All (EFA) in modern times.

The thrust of the debate on reaching the EFA goal by 2015 is made explicit in the argument that education, like many other forms of investment, can contribute to human capital and ultimately to economic development (Psacharopoulos & Woodhall, 1985). Education is seen as a means to raise incomes of individuals, including the poor, thereby reducing poverty “...just as would investment in physical capital” (p. 3). This apparent shift in thinking may have been the emerging interest in the 1960s in the potential and ‘economic value of education’ and the drive to achieve sustainable development as recognized and articulated by the World Bank.

Additionally, in many Third World countries, education became a panacea in the quest for identity and nationalism, hence fundamental structural adjustments and curriculum reforms were undertaken to reach this goal. Not surprising, therefore, was the emergence of nationalism-driven

followed the declaration of universal primary education in 1948 and the subsequent agreements on targets set at the Jomtien meeting in 1990 did not match the resources available to reach these goals in many developing countries. Thus the Dakar Framework for Action (2000) provided renewed impetus for most countries in transition to re-affirm their commitment to reach the new global targets in 2015 by exploring possibilities to expand educational access, ensure equity and improve quality.

2.1 Education for All (EFA) Goals

The World Declaration on Education for All and the Framework for Action to meet Basic Learning Needs, adopted at Jomtien, Thailand in 1990, pushed for a decade-long assessment of progress as a basis for a comprehensive review of policies concerning basic education. The Jomtien conference clearly defined the basic learning needs of the child in terms of learning tools such as literacy, oral expression, numeracy, and problem solving as well as basic content such as knowledge, skills, values and attitudes. The framework for action to meet the basic learning needs identified six areas of action including expansion of early childhood care, universal access to and completion of primary education and improvement in learning achievement. In addition, the conference agreed on a number of specific goals and targets for promoting basic education across nations. Two key goals that are relevant to the current discussion were “Universal access to and 80% completion of primary education by the year 2000” and the “Reduction of Adult illiteracy rates to one-half of its 1990 level by the year 2000, with sufficient emphasis on female literacy” (UNESCO, 1990. p. 4). However, by 2000, many developing countries were way behind achieving these ambitious targets giving rise to renewed efforts, hence the Dakar Conference to reexamine priorities and develop new strategies for achieving the goals.

2.1.1 The World Education Forum-Dakar

Ten years after Jomtien, several countries and development agencies gathered in Dakar, Senegal in 2000 to reaffirm their commitments to providing Education for All. The World Education Forum convened by UNESCO, UNICEF, UNDP, UNFPA and the World Bank brought together 1,500 participants from 182 countries as well as major development agencies. The Forum ended with the adoption of the *Dakar Framework for Action* in which participants committed themselves to achieving the EFA goals and targets by 2015. Six goals and targets were agreed on at the Dakar conference including “expanding and improving comprehensive early childhood care and education, especially for the most vulnerable disadvantaged children”; and “ensuring that by 2015 all children with special emphasis on girls and *children in difficult circumstances have access to and complete free and compulsory primary education of good quality*” (UNESCO, 2000. p. 15). Other targets pertinent to the current discussion were “ensuring that the learning needs of all young people and adults are met through equitable access to appropriate learning, life skills and citizenship programs”; and “improving all aspects of the quality of education and ensuring excellence of all so that recognized and measurable learning outcomes are achieved by all, especially in literacy, numeric and essential life skills.” In order to achieve these targets, the conference also proposed various strategies amongst which was the need to “mobilize strong national and international political commitment for Education for All, develop National Action Plans and enhance significantly investments in basic education”; “ensure the engagement and participation of civil society in the formulation, implementation and monitoring of strategies for educational development”; and “create safe, healthy, inclusive and equitably resourced educational environments conducive to excellence in learning and clearly defined levels of achievement for all” (UNESCO, 2000. p. 17).

Although these targets are considered desirable, they may not be easily achievable and this fact remains a thorny issue for all those who continue to have unshakeable faith in the EFA vision. According to the EFA *Global Monitoring Report 2005*, one third of the world's population live in countries where achieving EFA goals remains a dream rather than a realistic proposition. The report acknowledges that "while progress has been made globally, over the past decade, in getting more children into school, the pace remain too slow to achieve UPE by 2015 (p. 1). The report notes also that only 51 countries have Education for All Development Index (EDI¹) values of between 0.80 and 0.94; while 31 countries (22 of which are in sub-Saharan Africa) are far from meeting the EFA goals with EDI values below 0.80.

Similarly current and ongoing research reports indicate that "unless dramatically different means of funding and offering primary education are attempted, more than 30 countries-most of them in Africa-will fall far short of achieving full primary school enrollment and gender equity by 2015" (DeStefano et al, 2004, p.1). The report further suggests that there is even less prospects that most countries, particularly in the developing world, will be able to show 'tangible learning outcomes for all students'. Not surprising therefore that countries in crisis and in conflict would be miles away from achieving these goals if concerted efforts are not directed at meeting the educational needs of children in conflict situations. Thus the report noted that greater challenges face countries experiencing civil conflicts and where institutional breakdown in all its forms has occurred thereby making "steep the human and financial costs of rebuilding the shattered education systems" (p. 3).

¹ The Education for All Development Index (EDI) measures the extent to which countries are meeting four of the six EFA goals: UPE, gender parity, literacy and quality. EDI values can range from 0 to 1. The closer the value is to 1. The closer a country is to meting its goals and the greater is its EFA achievement.

By the same token, the arguments for improving access to quality education as a necessary precondition for sustainable development are also firmly rooted in the principles embedded in the Millennium Development Goals (MDG). The MDG set a number of targets including to “ensure that by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling”; and “eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education preferably by 2005 and in all levels of education not later than 2015” (MDG, 2002, p. 10). The MDG clearly emphasizes that six of the eight MDG goals can best be met as the rights of children to health, education, protection and equality. It is within this spirit that development agencies and national governments have clamored to develop programs and projects targeted at addressing the needs of children in crisis situations, particularly in conflict and post-conflict environments.

2.2 The Concept-Emergency Education

Education in Emergencies (often referred to as Emergency Education) relates to a set of activities designed to provide “education in situations where children lack access to their national education systems, due to man-made crises or natural disasters” (Sinclair, 2001, p. 4). Man-made disasters otherwise referred to as complex emergencies are often chronic and recurring and may stretch beyond the normal usage of the word emergency by humanitarian agencies. Save the Children defined the term emergency “as a crisis situation that overwhelms the capacity of a society to cope by using its resources alone” (Emergency Section Policy Paper, 2001 as cited by Nicolai, 2002, p. 11). The paper indicates further that emergency responses can be carried out in the context of an acute or chronic emergency, with causes varying from armed conflict and political instability to natural disasters.

According to Nicolai and Triplehorn (2003), conflicts in modern times can become chronic and the use of the terminology ‘emergency’ encompasses both the first few days of the crises and reactive efforts to dealing with the resulting impact and reconstruction. They emphasize that the term ‘reconstruction’ not only relates to physical or structural reconstruction but also institutional revitalization, human capacity building and efforts intended to address the psychosocial needs of traumatized populations particularly vulnerable groups such as women and children.

Similarly, UNESCO defines educational emergency as “a crisis situation created by conflicts or disasters which have destabilized, disorganized or destroyed the education system, and which require an integrated process of crises and post-crises response” (UNESCO, 1999; as cited in Sinclair, 2001, p. 4). The United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) considers emergencies to include natural disasters such as floods and earthquakes, and human-made crises such as civil strife and war, as well as silent emergencies such as HIV/AIDS, extreme poverty and children living on the streets (Pigozzi, 1999, p. 1).

Additionally, Sommers (2004, p. 1) defined education in emergencies as “formal and non-formal education provided to children and youth whose access to education systems has been destroyed by war or other calamities.” The document identified three overlapping phases of education in emergencies: the Acute phase which features recreation activities, and literacy and numeracy programming. The next is the Stabilization phase when formal education is restricted, especially primary education. The final phase, is Reconstruction when education systems are re-established following chronic conflicts.

One underlying theme in all the above definitions is the desire to respond to the educational needs of populations in crisis situations as a form of restitution of their

fundamental right to education, knowing fully well that “conflict, insecurity and instability pose the greatest challenge to education” (Sinclair, 2000, p. 26). With this recognition that education remains a basic human right no matter the circumstance, it therefore seems incomprehensible that donor agencies and core humanitarian outfits continue to relegate education responses to incremental interventions. Many, if not all, perceive the need for education as not being life threatening even though available evidence suggests that education entities (teachers, school children, and infrastructure) are targeted more often in conflict situations than other entities such as hospitals or health centers.

In Sierra Leone, for example, the World Bank (2003) reported that out of a total number of 3,152 schools identified, only 13% were usable after the war; 35% needed to be reconstructed, and 52% needed rehabilitation (CAP 2004 Report). In East Timor, the violent conflict of 1999 destroyed between 80 and 90% of the school buildings and related infrastructure (UNDP, 2002 as cited by Nicolai and Triplehorn, 2003). Such attacks on education infrastructure are expected as schools are regarded as symbols of government authority and therefore fighting forces consider them as ‘legitimate’ targets. A more salient premise for providing education is predicated on the need to ensure the rights of children as spelled out in many international instruments.

2.3 The Evolution of Emergency Education

The concept Emergency Education or Education in Emergencies came to the fore of humanitarian work following the extensive conclusions and recommendations made by Graca Machel in the *Report on the Impact of Armed Conflict on Children* in 1996 that highlighted the needs for education in emergency situations (Machel, 1996). It was on the strength of her

report that the World Education Forum held in Dakar in April 2000 reiterated the need for interventions in the education sector as part of every humanitarian strategy in crisis situations.

There are three competing paradigms informing the ideological approach to education in emergencies. Initially, in the 1980s, the provision of education in emergencies was considered as a developmental activity to be undertaken by the state as part of its regular functions, based on the belief that education has potential to contribute to human capital development and ultimately to economic development (Psacharopoulos & Woodhall, 1985). This thinking was the thrust of the strategies adopted by donor agencies such as the World Bank, which made them increasingly reluctant to fund interventions in the education sector in crisis or conflict situations. However, in the mid 1990s, humanitarian agencies such as the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) started a massive campaign for inclusion of education as part of humanitarian relief response since it can be considered as a commodity similar to food, water and shelter. This gave birth to the humanitarian paradigm and by 1995, the Global Information Network for Education (GINIE), which serves as a virtual learning community for education innovation in nations in crisis and transition, joined the fray to advocate for inclusion of education in relief activities of humanitarian agencies. Nonetheless, it was not until the work of Graca Marcel in 1996 that donors started to focus attention on the need for education in crisis situations particularly in conflict environments. The report drew attention to the fact that education was not only a rights issue, but that the lack of it can exacerbate conflicts since children are more likely to be recruited into the fighting forces.

On the basis of the arguments put forward by Marcel, the World Bank convened a conference in 1999 on the theme “Refugee education in Complex Emergencies” which helped to establish the Inter-agency Network for Education in Emergencies to articulate the inclusion of

education in emergency responses as made explicit in the Dakar Framework in 2000. Thus the first Global Consultation on Education in Emergencies was held in Geneva in November 2000 while the second was held in Cape Town, South Africa in December 2004, coming on the heels of the launching of the Minimum Standards in Emergency Education, Chronic Crises and Early Reconstruction. The meeting in Cape Town brought together 140 participants from governments, UN agencies, International NGOs and research institutions (Forced Migration Report, 2004, Volume 22, p. 4).

2.4 Justification for Education in Emergencies.

Education in Emergencies is a relatively new field with a dearth of relevant literature (Sommers, 2002, p. 9), suggesting the lack of a corpus of relevant theory on emergency education. Talbot (2004, p. 5) noted that even though there is “growing interest in education in emergencies and reconstruction as a research field, ... there is a pressing need for more research in priority areas.” Emergency education seeks to give meaning and structure to the life of victims of conflicts and survivors of crisis; preparing them with skills to survive conflicts, and promoting a sense of justice, stability, and respect for human rights (Nicolai and Triplehorn, 2003). The aim of education in emergencies tends to be threefold according to Nicolai and Triplehorn. Firstly, it plays the role of fulfilling a child’s right to education in the immediate response phase. Secondly, it helps mitigate the psychosocial effects of conflicts by restoring the self-esteem of victims and giving all a sense of hope and renewal. Finally, emergency education programs can enhance the achievement of protection-related objectives. These aims will be further expanded on in the ensuing discussions. In recent times, education is being increasingly viewed as the ‘fourth pillar’ of humanitarian response, the others being

food, shelter and health services (Sinclair, 2001; NRC et al, 1999). Many agencies such as the UNHCR (1994) argue that education offers a second “opportunity to students, their families and communities to begin the trauma healing process and to learn the skills and values needed for a more peaceful future and better governance at local and national levels” (Sinclair, 2001. p. 2). In instances of violent conflicts, where children were part of the fighting forces, it can help them to ‘unlearn’ their obsession with violence. Beyond these justifications, education has been perceived by many countries in transition as the foundation for economic take-off and ultimately development.

In the next set of discussions on the relevant literature, an attempt is made at providing justification for intervening in education in conflict and post-conflict environments using the two main paradigms of rights-based approach and education as a protection tool.

2.4.1 The Rights-Based Argument for Education in Emergencies

Although support to education programs in crisis situations is almost always slow in coming, the rationale for such intervention remains both a legal and moral imperative. Already, several international instruments in the form of declarations and conventions such as the *1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Article 26)* and the *1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child*, which has been ratified by all countries except the United States of America, reaffirm this imperative. Sinclair (2002, p. 34) noted that “the right to education spelled out under these agreements is of greater, not lesser importance in emergencies, as it gives a lifeline of hope” to so many hopeless children.

In the case of refugees, the *Convention on the Rights of the Child* categorically specifies that governments and local authorities may not deny access to any child or adolescents in their

territory no matter their social, racial or gender orientation. It also implies that “governments should ensure full compliance with human rights obligations by verifying that school and college admissions policies do not inadvertently prevent the enrollment of individual refugee” (Sinclair, 2002, p. 36). This means in effect that institutions of learning may not insist on the production of documents, such as birth certificates, school records of progress, and Identity cards. One would assume therefore, that the right to education also includes the right for studies to be officially recognized, such as recognition of the previous studies by the government of the country of asylum. Unfortunately, this issue continues to be a contentious and contestable one as Education officials in some host countries, for example, Sierra Leone not only insist on such documentation but also refuse to validate them or provide accreditation for teachers trained by NGOs (IRC, 2002).

Further, governments are required by these instruments to provide full access to those of their populations who are internally displaced or may find themselves behind ‘rebel’ lines. Again, this has proven to be controversial in many instances, particularly emergencies that are triggered by internal conflicts with deep-seated animosity and suspicion between the protagonists. In Sierra Leone, for example, humanitarian agencies such as UNICEF were required by the government to obtain clearance to not only administer vaccines on National Immunization Days but also to provide support to teacher training and the provision of teaching and learning materials for ‘schools’ in ‘rebel-held territories’.

Thus it was this seeming deprivation of the rights of children in conflict environments that Graca Machel (2001), noted that many adolescents in conflict-affected countries have not mastered basic literacy and numeracy and that they need accelerated learning programs to help them catch up with the class level of their peers. Beyond the rights-based arguments for

education in emergencies, there is the emerging and considered more potent argument, which is the potential protective capacity of education in crisis situations particularly armed conflicts.

2.4.2 Education as a Protection Tool

According to a United Nations report, children constitute a particularly vulnerable group in times of war by virtue of their nature and dependence on adult care (OHCHR, 2001). Nicolai and Triplehorn (2003) contend that conflicts and displacement can present particular threats, such as separation from family, abduction or recruitment by fighting forces, or exposure to targeted abuse, violence or landmines. The Graca Machel (1996) study made an important first step in bringing the issue of children as soldiers, their exploitation as victims, and the rape of girls and young women onto the global agenda under the auspices of the UN Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on Involvement of Children in Armed Conflicts (UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, February 2002). The Protocol has been ratified by 66 countries as of November 2003 and remains a strong advocacy tool in mitigating the impact (both intended and unintended) on children and women caught up in armed conflicts.

While there is clearly a long way to go in eliminating the factors causing and sustaining conflicts, the importance of systematic efforts to link education and child protection within humanitarian contexts is becoming much clearer. More effective strategies and collaborative efforts are needed to mitigate the effects of war and post-war trauma on children and young people in general. Principal among these strategies are efforts that support recovery and reintegration of all children into family and community settings in ways that re-establish their self-worth, confidence, and ability to learn. Education has a central role in mitigating at least

some of the harm done to children in the context of armed conflict: "While all around may be in chaos, schooling can represent a state of normalcy; a way to normalize life, develop an identity separate from that of the soldier, re-establish peer relationships, improve self-esteem and find work" (Machel, 2001. p.185).

The Inter-Agency consultation on Education for Humanitarian Assistance and Refugees (1996) similarly urged that education be planned as part of end-of-emergency action with local, national, and regional educational and resource actors, including the World Bank. It emphasizes that there is clearly no alternative to this and that the opportunity to learn is something to which all children and adolescents involved in conflict situations have a right, whether as refugees, displaced persons, combatants or simply at-risk victims. The agency also maintains "education is something that children need if they are to maintain a sense of purpose, direction, and self-worth; have capacity to engage with new ideas, develop life skills, and become more careful and adept at negotiating with the world around them" (Inter-Agency consultation on Education for Humanitarian Assistance and Refugees, 1996, p. 10).

A number of United Nations resolutions refer to security and protection of children during emergencies. Resolutions 1261, 1314, and 1379 on children and armed conflict mandate international action to protect the security and rights of children in situations of armed conflict. Education is a cardinal part of each of these resolutions. Specifically, resolution 1379 (2001) requests the agencies, funds, and programmes of the UN to:

- *devote particular attention and adequate resources to the rehabilitation of children affected by armed conflict, particularly their counselling, education and appropriate vocational opportunities, as a preventive measure and as a means of reintegrating them into society; and*
- *promote a culture of peace , including through support for peace education programmes and other non-violent approaches to conflict prevention and resolution.*

In practice, children's protection is variously seen as a legal, social, and physical concern (IASC, 2002 as cited by Nicolai & Triplehorn (2003)) and therefore requires integrative strategies to deal with the various components. Thus, according to the authors, child protection during emergencies is best described as a continuum; one end constitutes efforts directed at addressing violations of a child's rights such as demobilizing child combatants and ensuring that schools are safer zones for children. At the opposite end are activities focused on securing governmental and community respect (as well as the respect of other fighting forces) for children's rights through training, advocacy, awareness raising, and strengthening local mechanisms of enforcement and dissemination. Some of these activities combine the delivery of assistance services to address gaps in the recognition of the rights of specific groups such as girls, minorities and children with disabilities. One example of such an integrative programme strategy is the UNICEF-supported *Accelerated Learning Project* (ALP) implemented as a component of Liberia's overall Back-to-School Initiative

2.4.3 The Long Term Benefits of Education During Conflicts.

Beyond the fulfilment of children's rights to education and its protective capacity during emergencies, there are a number of long-term benefits that are equally important. Education, according to Nicolai (2003, p. 11), helps to "strengthen human resources as children who gain useful knowledge and skills are better prepared to contribute to the process of rebuilding their lives, their communities and wider social structures following a crisis." Moreover, education serves the secondary purpose of "fostering new attitudes" through the incorporation of culturally appropriate curriculum content and relevant topics such as conflict resolution, sexual violence, peace education, trauma healing, and HIV and AIDS awareness.

Such curricular content provides mechanism for renewed hope in the future while helping to reconstruct the shattered lives of young victims.

Additionally, Nicolai contends that ensuring access to quality education services during crisis situations provides ample opportunity to restructure or reform the education system through the adoption of policies designed to eliminate pre-crisis problems such as poorly trained teachers and the near absence of structured supervision mechanisms. It may also provide opportunity to initiate the introduction of well-articulated decentralization policies as suggestive of studies carried out by Mary Pigozzi (1999) under UNICEF auspices.

Finally, notwithstanding the type of education program provided, children are almost always better off with some form of education than none because the advantages associated with such programs are not only obvious but also tangible in the short and medium terms. One advantage in creating appropriately child-friendly and inclusive education programs in situations as desperate as emergencies is that there is no choice. Traditional approaches to education provision do not apply when flexibility, responsiveness, collaboration and effectiveness must be the defining criteria (Sinclair, 2002).

Nonetheless, Machel (2001) cautions that the methods used in the delivery of education should be consistent with the cultures of the communities involved; that they ensure active and participatory learning, group discussion and problem-solving, and peer support; and that child-child arrangements are encouraged which have been proven to be successful in most cultures. Initiatives like the *Gardens of Peace* in countries as diverse as Sri Lanka and the former Yugoslavian countries hold strong potential for facilitating holistic and integrative learning (Miller and Affolter, 2002).

2.5 The Magnitude of the Problem

In war-affected areas and crisis situations, many children who are eligible for schooling are hard to find, hard to get into school, and hard to complete the learning cycle particularly primary education (Sommers, 2000). The Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children (2004), in a global survey carried out in 2003, estimated that there were 27 million children and youths affected by armed conflicts, including refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) who do not have access to education. The vast majority, over 90%, are IDPs within their countries of origin. Further, the majority of those enrolled in school are in the lower grades of primary education. Equally alarming is the fact that girls' enrolment decreases steadily after pre-primary and grade one, perhaps typical of the regular school structure in most developing countries.

The situation is even more disturbing at the country level. In Angola, for example, it was estimated that out of a total school-age population of 4 million children, 2.7 million were out of school by 1999 as a result of the civil war (Bethle and Braunschweig, 2004, p. 9). In the Democratic Republic of Congo, the report estimates that 69.5% were out of school from the total of 15 million school-age population in 2001. The situation globally remains alarming particularly in sub-Saharan Africa where there were conflicts in not less than ten countries. The table below is an estimate of refugee and IDP children in and out-of school in the main conflict areas of the world but this is by no means exhaustive.

Table I: Estimated Refugee and IDP children In and out-of School due to Conflicts, 2002

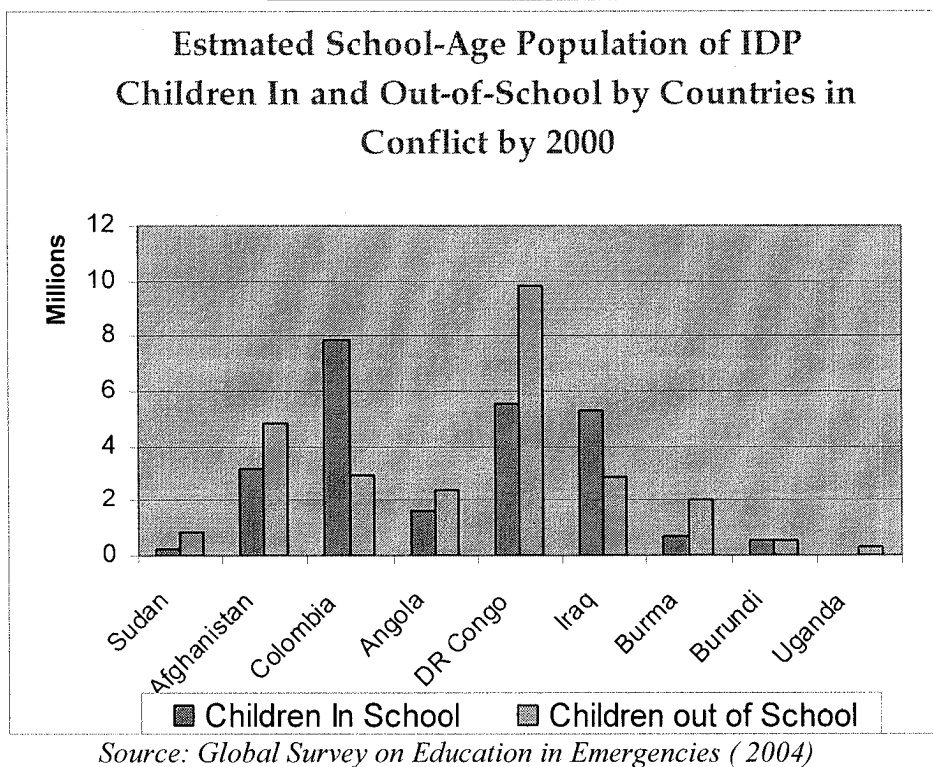
Refugees (In Millions)				Internally Displaced Persons (Non-Refugees)		
Country of Origin	Estimated School-aged Population	Number of Children In School	Children NOT In School	Estimated School-aged Population	Number of Children In School	Children NOT In School
Sudan	0.16	0.11	0.05	1.06*	0.24	0.82
Afghanistan	1.20	0.40	0.80	8.00	3.20	4.80
Palestine Territories	1.20	0.99	0.21	-	-	-
Colombia	0.10	0.05	0.05	10.88	7.88	3.00
Angola	0.21	0.05	0.16	4.0	1.30-1.90	2.10-2.70
DR Congo	0.14	0.03	0.11	15.40	4.70-6.40	9.00-10.70
Iraq**	0.30	***	0-0.30	8.20	5.30	2.90
Burma	0.05	0.04	0.01	2.70	0.70	2.00
Burundi	0.14	0.10	0.04	1.10	0.55	0.55
Uganda	0.01	0.00	0.01	0.33	0.03	0.30
TOTAL	3.51	1.77	1.44-1.74	51.67	23.90-26.20	25.47-27.77

Source: Global Survey on Education in Emergencies (WCRWC, 2004)

- Notes: * Estimates are for primary school only
 ** Estimates are for the year 2000
 *** Total number of Iraqi refugees with access to education not known.

The above data are by no means exhaustive, as many countries do not have reliable data on numbers of refugees or internally displaced persons. With the ongoing crises in Eritrea, Afghanistan, Iraq, Southern Sudan, Liberia, Somalia, and more recently in Ivory Coast, the total number of children affected by conflicts worldwide certainly more and growing. From the above data, over 50% of internally displaced children and adolescents were out of school by 2000. These figures do not include the recent violent incidences in Darfur (Sudan), Liberia, Iraq and Ivory Coast. The chart below provides a graphic representation of the situation worldwide.

Chart 1: Estimated School-Age Population of IDP children in and Out-of-school by Countries in conflict in 2000.



2.6 Strategies for Intervention in the Education Sector

A major challenge in post-conflict environments is to initiate programs that address the immediate needs of children in terms of access while ensuring equity. Some programs are basically short-term, often referred to as ‘Rapid Response programs’ to help de-traumatize children and sometimes the affected population. Other programs may be long term, particularly in chronic emergencies. There are obviously no clear-cut criteria to determine which specific program or design is the best or universally acceptable, although every intervention is driven by certain basic principles. For many agencies, the primary concern is to improve access and if possible ensure equity in education. Issues of quality, curriculum content and the extent to which learning outcomes are achieved become secondary in the learning cycle.

Meanwhile, practitioners in the field strongly argue that both equitable access and quality can be achieved even in crisis situations. Avelino² (2004) contends that “while our desire is to have as many children as possible gain access to education during and after emergencies, we should at the same time exert meaningful effort to ensure that schools are of reasonable standard and provide acceptable quality of education.” He cited many extreme cases of emergencies, like in southern Sudan where the education systems have collapsed such that there are no standardized mechanisms for assessing learning outcomes. Avelino concludes, “taking the line of ‘restoring’ education without any regard to standard and reasonable quality is not worth it”.

On the whole, education programs within the context of humanitarian emergencies needs to be based on the specifics of the situation. Marcel (2001), highlighted some of the key considerations in her report including the “degree of ‘structuredness’ in the regular school appropriate to the children involved (their physical, emotional and livelihood needs, their capacities, age and gender); the physical environment (persistence of the violence or environmental degradation); the resources available; and the expected duration and trajectory of the emergency, short-term or semi-permanent” (Marcel, 2001, para. 55). Marcel submits that in all cases, the fundamentals will be the same such as teaching which should usually be child-based and, where possible, negotiated with families in ways which facilitate re-engagement, nurturing and tolerance. Further, the teaching has to be “flexible and pedagogically effective, ensuring intellectual development, physical and emotional well-being and viable survival and coping strategies” (Marcel, para. 55).

² Charles Avelino: Comments made during INEE’s Internet Forum Discussion on the theme ‘Planning for Education in and After Emergencies’ in October 2004.

Based on the above insights, we could identify a number of approaches that have been used in specific contexts and, where possible determine the basis for such a strategy. Program designs may vary by the nature of the enrolment target, the type of educational institution, that is, whether a regular or non-formal education program. They may be Refugee/IDP schools or Complementary and/or Non-formal schools. Some programs adopt the accelerated learning model, the purpose of which is to help children catch up with their peers in formal schools.

According to Bethle and Braunschweig (2004) based on a global survey of emergency education programs carried out in 2004, activities conducted in the education sector may be categorized into nine types, which are often mutually exclusive. These are:

- Structured recreational activities;
- Youth centres;
- Formal education delivery;
- Vocational and skills training programs for youths;
- Accelerated Learning programs;
- Bridging programs;
- Life Skills Education;
- Teacher Training, and
- Distance Education programs.

Unfortunately, there is lack of substantive research or evidence to determine the depth of success of some of these strategies or approaches.

2.6.1 Structured Recreational Activities and Youth Centers.

Structured recreation is often the first response in the early stages of emergencies with the objective of giving the child a sense of normalcy and the chance to play, sing, draw or

participate in some form of recreation. Aguilar and Retamol (1998) also referred to this phase of the emergency, as Recreational/Preparatory and activities mainly constitute rapid response efforts, either on the part of communities or agencies to the psychosocial needs of traumatized children and youths. The rationale is more therapeutic than academic, aimed at a revival of the child's "destroyed world" (Aguilar & Retamol, 1998, p. 11). This approach was the driving force behind the introduction of Child Friendly Spaces (CFS) concept pioneered by UNICEF, which sought to provide health services, child-tracing and education under one umbrella. The survey report cited projects run by the Christian Children's Fund in Sierra Leone and Angola; Save the Children in Somalia; IRC in Burundi and East Timor; and UNICEF in Afghanistan, Albania, Kosovo and Liberia. To support such activities, agencies provide pre-packaged Recreation Kits consisting of footballs, volleyballs, skipping ropes, and musical instruments which children use to set up the spaces. Very little formal learning activity goes on at this phase of the response.

Youth Centers are normally targeted at adolescents and young people with the motive of keeping them engaged and immersed in some informal but guided activity. Many youth centers may have ongoing structured learning, as well as opportunities for peer education and counselling. Like structured recreation, youth centers are mostly designed to address the psychosocial needs of young people after violent conflicts. Examples include those in East Timor, Kosovo, Rwanda, and Sierra Leone by the IRC and World Vision; the Catholic Relief Organization in Sierra Leone and Save the Children in Ethiopia.

2.6.2 Regular Formal Education system.

Formal education for refugees and IDPs may be set up in refugee or IDP camps and run by implementing agencies in collaboration with established camp committees. These schools

utilize existing curricular materials and strive to maintain standards and quality that are generally acceptable to the government. Acceptance by government may not necessarily mean that the education system has been granted accreditation, particularly in the case of refugee programs. There can be inflexibility regarding re-entry of returnee children into the education system because, as Watson³ (2004) pointed out, “ministries tend to see their curricula as sacrosanct.” He recalled that refugees returning to Sierra Leone after having had secondary education could not be placed in the country’s schools because the refugee schools in Guinea did not have laboratories. Further, it was also considered that History or Social Science might be too controversial to include in refugee curricula, yet the students may be refused or downgraded when they return home, if they have not been taught according to the curriculum. The request for accreditation of teachers trained by IRC in Guinea was also rejected by the government because the training did not meet the requirements for the award of the equivalent of a Teachers’ certificate normally granted students after completion of three years of college studies.

Formal education for IDPs and returnee children may take place in government, community or religious schools. Donors or implementing agencies may provide support to these schools in the form of educational materials and supplies, infrastructure, school reconstruction, and/or rehabilitation and teacher training. Examples of this strategy abound around the world, such as the CARE projects in Afghanistan, Kenya and Sudan; IRC in Guinea, Sierra Leone, Liberia and Uganda; Save the Children in Pakistan; and NRC in Sierra Leone and Pakistan.

³ Julian Watson: Contribution made on October 9, 2004 during INEE’s Internet Forum Discussion on the theme ‘Planning for Education in and after Emergencies’

2.6.3 Vocational and/or Skills Training for Youths

Vocational and Skills training programs may take the form of a post-primary initiative and use curriculum materials appropriate for secondary education. They may be incorporated into the regular formal school system and curriculum as subject options or may be established as custom-designed centers to cater to the needs of out-of-school youths or demobilized child soldiers. Vocational/skills training programs may include apprenticeships for out-of-school youths. Some examples include the Don Bosco program in Liberia; Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) and World Vision's Youth Reintegration programs in Sierra Leone, German Technical Cooperation (GTZ) program in Liberia and Pakistan; and Save the Children in Ethiopia.

2.6.4 Accelerated Learning Programs (ALP)

Accelerated learning is defined as “an approach to learning that uses student-oriented teaching principles and practices to creatively engage students’ multiple learning capacities, resulting in faster, deeper, more effective learning” (Charlick, 2004. p. vii). In its simplest form, accelerated learning programs are designed to address the education gaps of children or young people who may have been affected by conflict or some natural disaster. In the context of emergencies, these programs are often designed to compress six years of learning into three, at the end of which the children are able to transit into post-primary education. By so doing, it is hoped that the children will catch-up with their peers in the formal school system. These programs are relatively new, and there is need for research evidence to determine the level of success with this approach. One notable ALP initiative is the Complementary Rapid Education for Primary Schools (CREPS), established in Sierra Leone in 2000 by UNICEF in

collaboration with the Ministry of Education and NRC. A similar program is being implemented in Liberia by various agencies and church organizations and in Thailand.

2.6.5 Life Skills Education Programs

The Life Skills Education concept came to the fore of education programming as part of a comprehensive response to the HIV/AIDS pandemic in many countries. Its integration into the core of emergency education programs is intended to help learners acquire knowledge and develop attitudes and skills which support the “adoption of constructive/positive behaviors” (Bethle and Braunschweig, 2004, p. 7), particularly so in circumstances such as conflicts or crises that may increasingly increase children’s vulnerability. Life skills may include communication and interpersonal skills, decision-making and critical thinking skills, and coping and self-management techniques.

Life Skills Education can be incorporated into formal schooling, as in Sierra Leone, or can be offered as separate programs for out-of school children and youths as part of the overall post-conflict recovery and development strategy. In Kenya, for example, Life skills education has been integrated into the Peace education curricula by UNHCR at the request of parents. Some other examples include the GTZ program in Pakistan; IRC in Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone; World Vision in Kosovo; and UNHCR in Congo and Eritrea.

2.6.6 Teacher Training programs

Teacher training programs constitute one of the main activities in the delivery of education programs by NGOs in conflict and early reconstruction situations. In emergencies, teacher training activities vary considerably both in terms of content, quantity, and quality;

they may consist primarily of pedagogical training or specialized training in subject matter.

Most emergency situations may require psychosocial training, gender awareness, safety issues, peace education and human rights, as well as instructions on how to adapt teaching practices to multi-grade and multi-age classrooms. Some examples include the Teacher Development Initiative (TDI) in Sierra Leone funded by UNICEF and the World Bank, NRC teacher training in Angola and Uganda, and the Karen Teacher Working Group in Burma and Thailand.

2.6.7 Distance Education Programs

The use of Distance Education programs in crisis situations is fairly old, dating back to the repressive apartheid regimes in South Africa and in Palestinian territories such as Hebron and West Bank. These programs enable refugees and displaced youths to further their education at a distance without having to be present in person. Further, Distance Education programs may be used to enable children study during active conflict situations. In Sierra Leone, the Ministry of Education introduced distance education in 2002 to train unqualified teachers mostly in rural areas enabling them to be accredited and certified teachers.

2.6.8 Limitations in the use of different approaches

It is worthy to note that emergency education is a relatively new field still lacking in relevant and substantive research. It may be therefore premature at this point to state which approach is the most formidable and successful. The choice of strategy depends entirely on the specific contexts, resources available and the capacities of implementing agencies. In the next chapter, the minimum standards for education in emergencies will be examined and analysed with a view to determining its relevance and practicability in three specific emergency education programs in Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone.

CHAPTER THREE

THE MINIMUM STANDARDS FOR EDUCATION IN EMERGENCIES, CHRONIC CRISES AND EARLY RECONSTRUCTION

The Minimum Standards for Education in Emergencies (MSEE) are both a handbook and an expression of commitment, developed through a broad process of collaboration, that all individuals - children, youth and adults - have a right to education during emergencies.

(Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies-INEE, 2004)

3.0 Rationalizing the arguments for Minimum Standards

In May 2003, the Inter-Agency Network on Education in Emergencies' (INEE) initiated a broad base consultative process by inaugurating a Working Group on Minimum Standards for Education in Emergencies (WGMSEE) to facilitate the development of standards, indicators, and guidance notes that articulate the minimum level of educational access and service to be attained in emergencies through to early reconstruction. The increasing acceptance of education in emergencies came about as a result of the first Global Consultation on Education in Emergencies, which was held in Geneva in November 2000. This consultation was followed by a series of regional workshops and meetings leading to the second Global Consultation on Education in Emergencies that was held in Cape Town, South Africa in December 2004. The handbook on Minimum Standards in Emergency Education developed by the WGMSEE was launched at the Cape Town meeting with the pledge to move forward with the promotion, training, piloting, monitoring and evaluation of the minimum standards in a consultative manner.

The MSEE is an expression of commitment by major stakeholders including governments that all individuals-children, youth and adults – in crisis situations have a right to education. The MSEE reflects the core beliefs of the Sphere Project which seeks to alleviate human suffering arising out of calamity and conflict, and that people affected by disaster have

a right to life with dignity. According to INEE, the minimum standards were developed to:

- Promote education as a core element of humanitarian assistance;
- Enhance accountability among humanitarian actors;
- Improve coordination among partners, including education authorities;
- Serve as a capacity-building and training tool to enhance education management and effectiveness;
- Provide a strong advocacy tool promoting education to humanitarian organizations, governments, donors and populations affected by crisis; and
- Serve as a tool for planning, implementing and evaluating education projects in crises situations.

The rationale for minimum standards is rooted in the arguments that education is a fundamental human right, which must be fulfilled at all times, conflict or no conflict.

Advocates contend that wars and natural disasters deny generations the knowledge and opportunities that an education can provide. Education in emergencies, chronic crises and early reconstruction is a necessity that can be both *life-sustaining* and *life-saving* (Nicolai & Triplehorn, 2003). Many educationists and practitioners agree that education “sustains life by offering structure, stability and hope for the future during a time of crisis, particularly for children and adolescents and that it helps to heal bad experiences, build skills and supports conflict resolution and peace building” (MSEE, 2004 p. 5). Finally, the MSEE reinforces the assertion that education in emergencies saves lives by directly protecting against exploitation and harm and by disseminating key survival messages, such as for landmine safety or HIV/AIDS and prevention of STDs.

However, practitioners and professionals are equally concerned that there are many gaps in the provision of quality education. According to INEE, education in emergency situations is often not seen as a humanitarian priority but a long-term development activity.

The result is that education services are left unattended. Nevertheless, INEE is concerned that uneducated children and adults are vulnerable to a future of poverty and violence and lack the more complex skills needed to contribute to their society's peaceful reconstruction and development. Education, therefore, must be recognized as one of the key pillars of humanitarian assistance, along with food and water, shelter and health care. There is thus growing sensitivity on the part of some donor agencies that education can be considered a humanitarian concern in conflict environments. According to INEE there is recognition that individuals do not forfeit their right to education during emergencies and that education must be part of any mainstream humanitarian response. Secondly, there is endorsement of the idea of “a broad-based desire and commitment to ensure a minimum level of accountability for education in situations of crises” (MSEE, 2004. p. 6).

Finally, education is primarily regarded as the responsibility of governments, as required by the constitution of many developing countries. However, governments are often unable to fulfill their roles, even at the best of times, but more so during wars and disasters. INEE, through the development of the minimum standards, views the standards as a common starting point for the international community and others in providing guidance and tools on how to reach a minimum level of educational quality. It is of the conviction that the standards will hopefully contribute to strengthening the resiliency of education ministries and equipping them to ensure that the minimum standards are implemented when conflicts or natural disasters occur.

3.1 Key Assumptions

The motivation to ensure quality education may have been the primary reason for the call by practitioners for minimum standards for interventions in education during and after emergencies. While it is not too clear what specific problems the MSEE seeks to address, one would assume that the desire for standards could be attributed to the need to harmonize field practice amongst implementing agencies and address the poor state of education programs observed over the years. Moreover, it may have been intended to enhance the effective and coordinated delivery of education services in crisis situations so as to maximize use of resources, increase program outputs, and anticipated learning outcomes at the school level.

Further, the call for standards by INEE rather than a set of guidelines or principles for interventions in education during emergencies was in itself a tacit acknowledgement that quality and accountability were indeed not satisfactory across many of the programs and they needed to be improved. For example, the pedagogic skills of teachers required improvement; monitoring and supervision of schools and teachers required systematization; the capacity of supervisory staff and officials of the ministries of education needed to be expanded beyond pre-war levels; and the delivery of education services in general required comprehensive coordination and institutionalization.

Thus a key assumption for the development of the standards is that it would inevitably translate into increased efficiency, better coordination of activities and ultimately improved learning outcomes for beneficiaries. Simply put, the standards are premised on a rather simplistic linear model of inputs and outputs that holds constant a number of intervening factors that are critical for its applicability, such as the availability of unlimited resources, and the unquestionable willingness of implementing agencies to submit to coordination and

organized control. It also assumes unfettered readiness of implementing NGOs to share their resources with other competing agencies.

Moreover, the minimum standards assumes that the prescribed indicators and guidelines are context-free and can be universalized no matter the nature of the crisis; the amount of funds available; the technical competence and adaptive capacity of implementing agencies; and the capacity of communities and the government. Finally, the developers of the minimum standards may have presumed that with the overwhelming participation of a wide spectrum of stakeholders from across the world, agencies are much more likely to use these guidelines in the field. In line with this assumption, the document envisages that “the establishment of standards along with indicators and guidance notes on how to reach the standards will give government and humanitarian workers the tools that they need to address the Education for All and UN Millennium Development Goals” (INEE, 2005. para. 7).

3.2 Development of the MSEE

The Minimum Standards for Education in Emergencies, Chronic Crises and Early Reconstruction was the result of a process which started in May 2003 when a working group was constituted to facilitate the development of ‘global minimum standards’ comprising NGOs, donors, practitioners, researchers and individuals with INEE, an open network of UN agencies taking the lead. The process involved the solicitation of inputs via the INEE list-serve; regional, sub-regional and national consultations, and a peer review process covering Africa, Latin America, Asia, the Middle East and Europe. Over 2,250 individuals from more than 50 countries contributed to the development of the standards including this writer. Between January and May 2004, the working group (WGMSEE) facilitated four regional consultations

involving 137 delegates who built upon the standards, indicators and guidance notes initially developed at local and national levels. Later, 40 experts took part in the peer review process culminating in harmonized global minimum standards. The resulting MSEE document is built on the Convention of the Rights of the Child (CRC); the Dakar Education for All (EFA) Framework; the UN Millennium Development Goals (MDG) and the Sphere Project's Humanitarian Charter.

3.3 The Minimum Standards for Education in Emergencies (MSEE)

As spelled out in the handbook, the MSEE is “a set of minimum standards, key indicators and guidance notes that inform humanitarian action in the context of education, from the development of education programmes to their implementation and continuity, as well as government and community support” (MSEE, 2004, p. 8). The term “minimum standards” articulates the minimum level of educational access and provision to be attained in a situation of humanitarian assistance. They are “qualitative in nature and meant to be universal and applicable in any environment” (p. 9) according to INEE. The indicators, on the other hand, are defined as signals that show whether the standard has been attained. They function as tools to measure and communicate the impact (or result) of programmes as well as the process (or methods) used, whether quantitative or qualitative.

Finally, the Guidance Notes refer to specific points that should be considered when applying the standard in different situations. They offer insights into priority issues and tackling practical difficulties in the implementation of programs in the field.

The Minimum standards are presented in five mutually exclusive categories:

1. Minimum Standards common to all categories

2. Access and Learning Environment
3. Teaching and Learning
4. Teachers and other educated personnel
5. Education policy and Coordination

Below is a summarized version of the Minimum Standards and the key indicators as published by INEE in December 2004 highlighting some of the issues that will inform the discussion and analysis of the standards vis-à-vis their relevance and applicability in the three case studies from Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone.

Table 2. Summary of the Minimum Standards for Education in Emergencies⁴

A. Minimum Standards Common to all Categories		
<i>Description</i>	<i>Minimum Standards</i>	<i>Key indicators</i>
Community Participation	<u>Participation</u> Affected Communities actively participate in assessing, planning, implementing, monitoring and evaluation of the education programme	1. The community or its representative is involved in prioritizing and planning education. 2. Children and youths are involved in the development/implementation of activities. 3. Community education committee conducts social audits of education activities and their budgets. 4. Training and capacity-building opportunities exist for community/youths/children
	<u>Resources</u> Local community resources are identified, mobilized and used in programmed implementation.	1. Communities, education personnel and learners identify education resources in the community 2. Community resources mobilized to induce access, protection and quality of education program 3. Stakeholders recognize and support the capacity of communities and its use is maximized.
Analysis	<u>Initial Assessment</u> A timely education assessment of the emergency situation is conducted in a holistic and participatory manner	1. Rapid education assessment is undertaken as soon as possible with security permitting 2. Core stakeholders are involved in data identification and collection; development/interpretation and refinement of indicators; information dissemination 3. Ensure education is part of an inter-sectoral assessment 4. Local capacities, resources and strategies for learning and education are identified
	<u>Response Strategy</u> A framework for an education response is developed including a strategy for action.	1. Baseline data are collected systematically at the start of a program 2. The education response strategies reflects a clear understanding of the overall data 3. Valid benchmarks and indicators are identified to monitor impact of the educational response on children, youth and the community 4. Information collected from the initial assessment is updated with new data
	<u>Monitoring</u> Relevant stakeholders regularly monitor the education activities and the evolving needs	1. Systems for continuous monitoring of emergency situations and interventions are in place and functioning 2. All affected groups are regularly consulted and involved in monitoring activities. 3. Education data are systematically and regularly collected starting with the baseline 4. Monitoring systems and data bases are regularly updated on the basis of feedback to reflect new trends and for use in informed decision-making
	<u>Evaluation</u> There is a systematic and impartial evaluation of the education response to improve on practice and ensure accountability.	1. Evaluation of policies, programs and outcomes of interventions is conducted in a timely manner against overall response strategy 2. Information is sought on the unintended effects of interventions 3. Information is collected in a transparent and impartial manner from all stakeholders 4. Lessons and good practices are widely shared with the broader national and local community.

⁴ Adapted from The Minimum Standards in for Education in Emergencies, Chronic Crises and Early Reconstruction Handbook (INEE, 2004).

B. Access and Learning Environment		
<i>Description</i>	<i>Minimum Standards</i>	<i>Key indicators</i>
Educational access is ensured for all	<u>Equal Access</u> All individuals have access to quality and relevant education opportunities.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. No individual is denied access to education and learning opportunities because of discrimination. 2. Documents and/or other requirements are not a barrier to enrolment. 3. A range of education opportunities (formal and non-formal) is progressively provided to the affected population to fulfill their education needs. 4. Sufficient resources are made available by authorities, donors, NGOs, other development partners and communities to ensure continuity and quality of education activities. 5. The education authorities of the host country and/or country of origin recognize the education provided.
	<u>Protection and well-being</u> Learning environments are secure, and promote the protection and mental and emotional well-being of learners.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Schools and other learning environments are located in close proximity to the populations they serve. 2. Access routes to the learning environment are safe and secure for all. 3. Training programs for teachers, learners and the community are in place to promote safety, security and protection. 4. Teachers and other education personnel are provided with the skills to give psychosocial support to promote learners' emotional well-being. 5. The community is involved in decisions concerning the location of the learning environment, and in establishing systems and policies to ensure that learners are safe and secure.
	<u>Facilities</u> Education facilities are conducive to the physical well-being of learners.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The learning structure and site are accessible to all regardless of physical ability and are marked by visible boundaries. 2. The physical structure used for the learning site is appropriate for the situation and includes adequate space for classes and administration, recreation and sanitation facilities. 3. Class space and seating arrangements are in line with an agreed ratio of space per learner and teacher, as well as grade level, in order to promote participatory methodologies and learner-centered approaches. 4. Communities participate in the construction and maintenance of the learning environment. 5. Adequate sanitation facilities are provided, taking account of age, gender and special education needs and considerations, including access for persons with disabilities. 6. Adequate quantities of safe drinking water and water for personal hygiene are available at the learning site.

C. Teaching and Learning

<i>Description</i>	<i>Minimum Standards</i>	<i>Key indicators</i>
<p>Nature and relevance of education services offered and instructional processes</p>	<p><u>.4 Curricula</u> Culturally, socially and linguistically relevant curricula are used to provide formal and non-formal education, appropriate to the particular emergency.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Existing curricula are reviewed for appropriateness to the age or developmental level, language, culture, capacities and needs of the learners affected by the emergency. 2. Where curriculum development/adaptation is required, it is conducted with the meaningful participation of stakeholders and considers the best interests and needs of the learners. 3. Curricula address life skills, literacy, numeracy and core competencies of basic education relevant to given stages of an emergency. 4. Curricula address the psycho-social well-being needs of teachers and learners in order for them to be better able to cope with life during and after an emergency. 5. Learning content, materials and instructions are provided in the language(s) of the learners and the teachers, especially in the early years of learning. 6. Curricula and methods of instruction respond to the current needs of learners and promote future learning opportunities. 7. Sufficient teaching and learning materials are provided, as needed in a timely manner to support relevant education activities, and are gender sensitive, recognize diversity and promote respect for learners.
	<p><u>Training</u> Teachers and other education personnel receive periodic, relevant and structured training according to the need and circumstances.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Training corresponds to prioritized needs, objectives of education and learning content. 2. Where appropriate, training is recognized and approved by relevant education authorities. 3. Qualified trainers conduct the training courses and provision is made for on-going support and guidance, follow-up, monitoring and supervision in the field and refresher training. 4. Training encourages teachers to be facilitators in the learning environment, promotes participatory methods of teaching, and provides teachers with skills to assume leadership roles. 5. Training content is regularly assessed to determine if it meets the needs of the teachers, students and the community, and is revised when necessary.
	<p><u>3 Instruction</u> Instruction is learner-centered, participatory and Inclusive.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Learners are provided with opportunities to be actively engaged in their own learning 2. Participatory methods are used to facilitate learner involvement in their own learning and to improve the learning environment. 3. Instruction addresses the needs of all learners including those with special needs. 4. Parents and the community understand and accept the learning content/teaching methods used.
	<p><u>Assessment</u> Appropriate methods are used to evaluate and validate learning achievements</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Differentiated continuous assessment and evaluation methods and mechanisms are in place to assess learning periodically and appropriately. 2. Learner achievement is recognized and credits or course completion documents are provided accordingly. 3. Assessment and evaluation methods are considered fair, reliable and merit-worthy, and non-threatening to the learner

D. Teachers and Other Education Personnel		
<i>Description</i>	<i>Minimum Standards</i>	<i>Key indicators</i>
Teacher recruitment processes, service and supervision	<p>➤ <u>Recruitment and Selection</u> A sufficient number of appropriately qualified teachers and other education personnel are recruited through participatory and transparent process.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Clear and appropriate job descriptions are developed prior to the recruitment process. 2. Clear guidelines exist for the recruitment process. 3. A selection committee, including community representatives, selects teachers based on a transparent assessment of candidates' competencies and considerations of gender, diversity and acceptance by the community. 4. The number of teachers recruited and deployed is sufficient to prevent over-sized classes.
	<p>➤ <u>Conditions of Work</u> Teachers and other education personnel have clearly defined conditions of work, follow a code of conduct and are appropriately compensated</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Compensation and conditions of work are specified in a job contract and compensation is provided basis, related to the level of professionalism and efficiency of work. 2. International actors coordinate with education authorities, community education committees and NGOs to develop appropriate strategies and agree to use fair, acceptable and sustainable remuneration scales for the various categories and levels of teachers and other education personnel. 3. The code of conduct and defined conditions of work are developed in a participatory manner, involving both education personnel and community members, and that there are clear implementation guidelines.
	<p>➤ <u>Support and Supervision</u> Supervision and support mechanisms are established for teachers and other education personnel and are used on a regular basis.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A supervisory mechanism provides for regular assessment, monitoring and support for teachers and other education personnel. 2. Staff performance appraisals are conducted, written up and discussed with the individual(s) concerned on a regular basis. 3. Appropriate and accessible psychosocial support and counseling are provided to teachers and other education personnel, as needed.

E. Education Policy and Coordination		
<i>Description</i>	<i>Minimum Standards</i>	<i>Key indicators</i>
Stakeholders develop policies to support education coordination	<p>➤ <u>Policy Formulation and Enactment</u> Education authorities prioritize free access to schooling for all and enact flexible policies to promote inclusion and educational quality</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Education laws and policies uphold the right to education articulated in international human rights instruments and declarations both during and after emergencies. 2. Laws, regulations and policies protect against discrimination in education with regard to vulnerable and marginalized groups. 3. Laws, regulations and policies are in place to ensure learners are not denied education because of limited resources of the learner or the learners' family. 4. Laws, regulations and policies permit the establishment of emergency education facilities by NGO actors when needed, subject to the education authority's guidance and inspection 5. Policy promotes the development and use of an EMIS database, to be used as a tool for analyzing and reacting to changes in educational access and completion. 6. National education policies are supported with legal and budgetary frameworks that permit a quick response to emergency situations.
	<p><u>Planning and Implementation</u> Emergency education activities take into account national and international education policies and standards and the learning needs of affected populations.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. International and national legal frameworks and policies are reflected in education programs of relief and development agencies. 2. Emergency education programs are planned and implemented in a manner that provides for their integration into longer-term development in the education sector 3. Education authorities and other key actors develop national and local education plans for current and future emergencies, and create a system for their regular revision. 4. Education responses specify the financial, technical and human resources needed for effective planning, implementation and monitoring. Stakeholders ensure that the resources needed are made available. 5. Planning and implementation of educational activities are integrated with other emergency response sectors.
	<p>3 <u>Coordination</u> There exists a transparent coordination mechanism for emergency education activities, including effective information sharing between stakeholders.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Education authorities establish an inter-agency coordination committee for current and future emergency response, which assumes the major role in planning and coordinating Emergency education. 2. Authorities, donors and other agencies establish financing structures that are coordinated with and support activities of stakeholders. 3. Clear coordination aims, indicators and monitoring procedures is in place and all actors commit to work within that framework and make available information and statistics in the public domain. 4. Affected communities are authorized and able to participate in decision-making that directly affects them, particularly in policy/program formulation, implementation and monitoring. 5. A transparent and active mechanism exists for sharing information across sectors and between key national and international stakeholders.

3.4. Content Analysis

The minimum standards in emergency education are presented in 5 broad descriptive categories, 19 prescriptive standards, and above all 109 indicators. It remains to be seen whether implementing agencies have the capacity, required resources and institutional structures to realistically attain these standards in specific contexts. A detailed analysis of some of the key indicators would reveal to what extent these standards are universally practicable and realistic considering the often fragile security environment and the exigency of the moment.

3.4.1 Initial Assessment and Community Participation

The first set of standards is described as crosscutting because they are common to the other four ensuing categories. It emphasizes the need for undertaking initial assessments of the situation and the need to enhance community participation while ensuring broad involvement of all stakeholders such that resources can be adequately mobilized including those in the local community. These standards also emphasize the importance of developing a framework for any education intervention strategy based on the initial assessments, and ensuring that mechanisms for monitoring and evaluation of programs are embedded in the overall humanitarian response strategy.

3.4.2 Access and Learning Environment

The MSEE prescribed 3 standards in this category, considered relevant and critical for ensuring educational access during emergencies. These are equal access to quality education, provision of learning environments that promote the protection and well-being of the learner,

and the provision of physical facilities and structures that are conducive to learning. There are basically 22 indicators to be attained, key among which is the right of education for all without discrimination. Another key indicator relates to the safety and security of both the learners and teachers, the provision of which may require much more from authorities and the community than they would usually provide.

3.4.3 Teaching and Learning Processes

The four minimum standards in the category of teaching and learning relate to the nature and relevance of education services offered and the instructional processes that would ultimately ensure quality. These standards fall in the realm of curriculum relevance; training of teachers and other education personnel in accordance with the needs of potential teachers and those of the learners; appropriateness of the instructional methods or pedagogy and the methods used to assess and evaluate children as well as validate learning outcomes. These standards are accompanied by 22 indicators, amongst which is the provision of sufficient supplies of learning materials in a “timely manner to support relevant education activities” (MSEE, 2004, p. 56). There can be considerable challenges to fulfill this goal at the early stages of an emergency. Other indicators include ensuring teachers use participatory child-centered methodologies and making learning inclusive. We shall examine some of these challenges in greater detail in the critique in Chapter 4.

3.4.4 Teachers and other Education Personnel

These set of minimum of standards pertain to teacher recruitment processes, conditions of service, and mechanisms for supervision and support to teachers and the teaching learning

process. The document stipulates 11 indicators for achievement of the 3 standards that broadly have to do with human resources issues. Of critical importance is the standard relating to conditions of work of teachers and other education personnel. The harmonization of the conditions of work and discrepancies in salaries paid by governments on one hand and INGOs on the other has caused serious tensions in the field in the past. Finally, the standards emphasize the need for effective supervisory mechanisms and systems to enhance quality teaching and favorable learning outcomes.

3.4.5 Education Policy and Coordination

The minimum standards in the category Education Policy and Coordination define the role of stakeholders in the development of policies and the establishment of mechanisms to support education activities and coordination. The standards relate to policy formulation and enactment, planning and implementation, and coordination for which 20 indicators were prescribed. The policies referred to in the document specifically seek to articulate compliance with international educational policies and instruments as well as national policies particularly those that ensure programs “uphold the rights to education, and are responsive to the learning needs of affected populations” (MSEE, 2004, p. 71). Whereas many national education policies in developing countries are supportive of laws and regulations for free access to education for all even in times of conflict, they may not have the requisite “legal and budgetary frameworks that permit a quick response to emergency situations” (p. 74); a key indicator for policy formulation.

Moreover, implementing agencies and NGOs insist on compliance with international and national legal frameworks and policies in the development and planning of relief programs

as long as such programs do not flout humanitarian codes of ethics and basic human rights. It must, however, be noted that it is far more difficult to plan during conflicts because of the unpredictable nature of events, insecurity, and the flow of funding. As stipulated in the document, planning of education activities should be integrated with other emergency response programs as part of a comprehensive humanitarian response strategy.

In the area of coordination, a key indicator specifies that clear “coordination aims, indicators and monitoring procedures is in place and all actors commit to work within that framework and make available information and statistics in the public domain”(MSEE, 2004. p. 77). However, Sommers (2004, p. 63) notes “governments in countries consumed by war tend to have minimal bargaining power in garnering the authority, funding, and training to bolster their ability to lead and coordinate the work in sectors such as education.” Some international humanitarian agencies do not feel accountable to local authority and are more likely to institute programs that run parallel to government initiatives. In Liberia, for example, international agencies are unresponsive to demands by the transitional government to build the capacity of the ministry of education⁵ in the implementation of the accelerated learning program (ALP) funded by UNICEF. In fact, a similar program funded by USAID and implemented by IRC runs parallel to that being implemented by the Ministry of Education.

We may also cite one of the “most vexing and widespread operational challenges in field coordination for education during emergencies; devising an affordable and appropriate payment structure for teachers” (Sommers, 2004, p. 74). The decision of international agencies and NGOs to pay higher salaries and provide more lucrative work conditions for teachers and education officials in their programs has always been true in many situations from Afghanistan

⁵ Personal Communication- Jonathan Bunting-Williams (January, 2005), UNICEF Consultant, ALP Project, Liberia.

to Sudan and from Liberia to Angola.

In the next section, it may be useful to match the above set of minimum standards to on-going emergency education projects to determine their relevance and practicability in field situations in Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone. This will form the trust of the analysis in the next chapter.

CHAPTER FOUR

EVIDENCE FROM THE FIELD

4.0 Overview

The Minimum Standards for Education in Emergencies was developed to address issues of quality and accountability in the implementation of emergency education projects in the field and to bridge coordination gaps of the major stakeholders involved. As part of the focus of this study, three case studies drawn from three different conflict-ridden environments in the last ten or more years-Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone- will be examined to determine the relevance of the standards and the applicability of the indicators.

The three cases were selected on the basis of information available on the different projects; the profile of the agencies as major stakeholders, and their role in the development of the standards as a universal policy document. These agencies incidentally are involved in the implementation of emergency education projects in all three countries: UNICEF, UNHCR, WFP, the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), and the International Rescue Committee (IRC). Save the Children in collaboration with UNICEF is also involved in child protection activities in Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone

4.1 Refugee Education Program in Guinea

The International Rescue Committee (IRC) is implementing the Refugee Education Program in Guinea. The IRC started assisting refugees and their host communities in Guinea in 1991 following the outbreak of civil war in Liberia, focusing on formal and informal education, gender-based violence prevention and assistance in tracing families of separated children. In cooperation with local partners, the IRC also supports the socio-

economic revitalization of communities affected by conflict in Guinea. Guinea, considered one of the world's poorest countries, has accommodated nearly one million refugees from the civil wars in neighboring Liberia, Sierra Leone and Ivory Coast. While most Sierra Leonean refugees and some Liberians have been repatriated, the majority of refugees from Liberia and Ivory Coast continue to live in Guinean camps due to continued instability in their home countries, particularly in the latter.

4.1.1 The Nature of the Program.

The IRC currently supports over 34,000 children and youth in six refugee camps with books and supplies, rehabilitation of school buildings, and peace and health education. Teachers participate in IRC-sponsored training sessions covering management, didactic techniques, girls' education and protection in the classroom. According to the IRC, their “education program strives to promote access to quality education by creating protective, nurturing and healing classroom environments for all students, by building community ownership of education resources and by empowering girls” (IRC, para. 5). In its continued drive to support and boost refugee education, the IRC provides refugee students with scholarships to attend secondary schools in the capital Conakry.

IRC's education program also encompasses a broad range of alternative education. The adult education program offers older refugees an accelerated, accredited high school equivalency certificate program. This initiative has been described by the agency as an “understandably popular program for the many refugees who missed years of school because of war and displacement” (IRC, para. 6). Further, IRC implements vocational education projects referred to as Vocational schools, which offer courses in business management,

computer literacy, English, French, tailoring and secretarial instruction. The schools offer refugees the opportunity to learn skills to help them become productive community members both in the host country and upon their return to the country of origin. IRC also reportedly launched a program to provide vocational and literacy training to vulnerable adolescent girls, most of whom have previously worked in the sex industry in Guinea's refugee camps and its host communities. In addition, the IRC's Health Education program trains students, youth leaders, peer educators and counselors in preventive health and public education. These programs are implemented in collaboration with and are funded by UNHCR, UNICEF, BPRM and the Ministry of Education in Guinea. The thrust of the analysis will focus on the education component as measured against INEEs five prescribed minimum standards.

4.1.2 Community Participation, Assessment, Monitoring and Evaluation.

The Refugee education program in Guinea was established in 1991 in response to the education needs of the refugee community at the time. It is not clear to what extent the beneficiary community was involved in any initial assessments before the commencement of the program or how thorough the assessment was. Reports however, indicate that IRC, with funding from UNHCR, came in to support the spontaneous efforts started by the arriving Liberian refugees when they realized the “incompatibility of the Liberian and Guinean education systems”⁶. The problem was mainly the differences in the language of instruction and curriculum as well as the systems of education, one being fashioned after the French and the other after the American system. As far as utilization of local resources is concerned, the bulk of teachers and supervisors are members of the refugee community. Although there are mechanisms for consultation with communities on issues such as security and protection of

⁶ Personal communication with David Walker, January 2005, IRC Education Coordinator in Guinea.

children, they were not involved in the development and implementation of activities.

Meetings are often held with the education committee but not with the prime objective of conducting social audits of education activities or the project budget.

In terms of planning and implementation of the program, the government of Guinea plays a nominal role, if any, and cannot be said to be a legitimate and active partner as described by INEE. Management, budget control, and implementation of project activities are entirely the prerogative of IRC based on their memorandum of understanding with UNHCR. In relation to involvement of the host government, there are no existing national policies or mechanisms for humanitarian action or emergency preparedness, nor strategies for intervention in the education sector. It is only recently that the framework for an education response has come to be seen as a possible entry point for an overall strategy through which other programs have developed with IRC programming in Guinea. Finally, monitoring of the refugee program is part of IRCs implementation strategy whilst the same cannot be said for evaluation of the program. An evaluation of program impact is certainly overdue but may not be a priority for the funding and implementing agency.

4.1.3 Access, Quality and the Learning Environments.

The Minimum standards strongly assert that education programs in emergencies can provide “ physical, social and cognitive protection to learners, especially children and youth, and to education personnel” (MSEE, 2004, p. 39). A key element of the education strategy is to ensure equal access and equity for all children while ensuring quality. Specific actions taken by IRC include the mobilization of refugee communities and identification of interested teachers and other education personnel from within the community. Additionally,

the agency strictly enforces a policy of no fee charges and no uniform requirement for schooling. Moreover, Community-Teacher Associations are formed to support the schools in more ways than encouraging eligible children to enroll.

According to IRC, the government of Guinea's involvement in the refugee issue has mainly been offering space, offering goodwill and the use of local natural resources that has never been quantified in terms of costs. The involvement of the government of Guinea in ensuring access and equity has been more of an advisory and mediation one. The education program targets children at four levels: early childhood, primary, secondary and higher education.

In terms of quality, the IRC reportedly trains teachers, provides teaching and learning materials and carries out assessments leading to the award of 'internationally acceptable certificates'⁷. The school environment is continuously made conducive through construction of new structures and rehabilitation of dilapidated ones. Also, the teacher-pupil ratio matches, to a reasonable degree, what obtains in the countries of origin-Liberia, Sierra Leone and Ivory Coast. The supply of teaching and learning was described as adequate although textbook availability is still a problem.

However, it is on record that the government of Sierra Leone consistently rejected the proposal by IRC to validate the education provided in the camps and rejected requests to grant accreditation to teachers trained by IRC. This therefore specifically runs contrary to one of the key standards stipulated by INEE, the Dakar Framework of Action and the Geneva Convention (IV) Relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War (Article 50). Further, the fulfillment of the nutritional needs of learners is beyond the mandate of IRC and

⁷ Personal communication with David Walker, January 2005, IRC Education Coordinator in Guinea.

as such the indicator may be considered irrelevant in this context. IRC only advocates for the implementation of a school feeding program in the refugee schools through World Food Programme (WFP).

4.1.4 Teacher Resources, Teaching and Learning Processes

IRC and the ministry of education of Liberia amalgamated the curriculum of two countries (Liberia and Sierra Leone) for use in the school system since the schools were serving refugees of the two nationalities simultaneously attending schools. To a certain extent, the curriculum was not modified to meet the changing needs of the refugees from one of the countries. When the education system in Sierra Leone changed in 1993, the education system in the camps in Guinea did not make the necessary adaptation to ensure equity in standards for the refugees when they repatriated. This indeed posed re-insertion problems for the Sierra Leonean refugees when they returned home or were repatriated in 2002. However, the Liberians are not facing the same problem as the curriculum used in refugee schools has similarities with the one used in their country of origin

In relation to recruitment, the process normally starts with the school identifying the need. A screening process ensues where the teachers to be selected are given a written examination, sit for an oral interview, go through a new teachers workshop to establish the rubrics of teaching, including the use of microteaching as part of their training. The teacher is “employed” only if he/she is able to pass successfully through the process outlined above. The department that screens the teachers is not the same one that employs them indicating a transparent process of recruitment. This system was established by IRC to allow for checks and balances and improve on transparency in the recruitment process.

The initial training of the teachers to learn the rubrics of teaching takes a week, followed by training during each vacation period to improve on identified weaknesses. Continuous on-the-job training, usually offered in the summer vacation period, follows the recruitment, and the on-going mechanisms of teacher supervision and mentoring contributed immensely to improving the teachers' performance on the job according to monitoring reports by IRC. Further, the school administration and supervising officers are trained and required to do lesson observations and hold post observation conferences. Schools have mentor teachers whose duties include supporting the school administration and supervising officers to organize lesson observations, demonstration lessons, and in-school workshops; and to work with teachers to help them improve on their pedagogical skills.

In terms of pedagogy, the teachers extensively use interactive/participatory and learner-centered methods. They are also encouraged to be responsive to the needs of learners. However, in a situation where there is usually overcrowding in classes; learning materials in short supplies; the basic needs of the refugees are rarely met, and teacher motivational issues are difficult to address, the achievement of these goals in practice is unrealistic and impracticable. Nonetheless, the agency has sought to augment the system by setting up a monitoring and supervisory mechanism that mimics that of the Ministry of Education in the countries of origin. As the school systems are different, the ministry of education in the host country only plays an advisory role which may not be adequate for ensuring quality teaching in the schools.

Additionally, IRC established a system to evaluate and validate learners' achievement, which consist of a continuous assessment and recording system that forms part of the achievement scores attained by each learner at the terminal class. Thus promotion to

the next class is based on these set of scores derived from a system of grading in the countries of origin. IRC also ensured that students from the refugee school system are registered for the internationally recognized certificate issued by the West African Examinations Council, as they would have done in their country of origin.

Meanwhile, returning teachers, who received part or all of their training from the IRC in Guinea, cannot instruct in Sierra Leone without accreditation. Thus, according to Watson (2002), this “well-trained cadre of teachers is not being put to use in a country desperate for qualified educators” (para. 3). Finally, the conditions of work for teachers in the regular schools in Guinea are far better than those for refugee teachers. The government of Guinea offers higher incentives; there is job stability, opportunities for advancement are better, and resources for teaching are plentiful compared to the conditions of work for teachers in refugee schools.

On the whole, the teaching and learning processes have serious gaps some of which can be attributed to the low levels of education of the pool of teachers available for recruitment in such crisis situations. It may therefore be farfetched to expect implementing agencies to adequately measure up to the minimum standards in this category.

4.1.5 The Policy Environment, Management and Coordination

Although the Guinean government has no specific policy for coordination of education activities in the refugee camps, coordination meetings are held on a weekly basis. These meetings bring into contact all the implementing agencies that are working in the education sector and the ministry of education in Guinea. The meetings are chaired by UNHCR and it is part of the humanitarian strategy for intervention by agencies. IRC is

currently leading initiatives to develop an overall emergency preparedness and intervention strategy in the education sector and within a broad humanitarian response framework.

On the whole, the refugee program in Guinea has made considerable effort to ensure equitable access to education for both children and adults within the limits of the resources made available by donors. It must however, be acknowledged that the program is a long way from attaining the required minimum standards because of factors beyond the control of IRC as the implementing agency. Specifically, much needs to be done to achieve the level of quality required by officials in Sierra Leone. The duration of the pre-service teaching may be one reason the ministry of education rejected certification of the teachers. It may also be partly due to the lack of content specific knowledge on the core subject areas- Mathematics, Science, and Language. Further, it was made explicit that basic pre-service training for teachers may not be adequate for the caliber of teachers recruited to improve on their pedagogical skills. Nevertheless, IRC recruited from the limited pool of potentially qualified teachers present in the camps; a factor that is beyond IRC or UNHCR control. In the next, issues pertaining to the relevance and practicability of the minimum standards in this context will be fully analyzed.

4.2. The Accelerate Learning Program (ALP) in Liberia

Following more than a decade of violence, the Accelerate Learning Program (ALP) in Liberia was initiated as part of a UNICEF/MOE unified response to get children back-to-school. The initiative was a crucial aspect of stabilization efforts in the education sector and within Liberia's overall recovery strategy and framework. The UNICEF-supported *Accelerated Learning Project (ALP)* is being implemented as a component of Liberia's

Back-to-School initiative and the broader context of school rebuilding, textbook distribution, teacher training, girls' education and life-skills programming which was started in 2000. To encourage war-excluded children to come to school, ALP gets them as quickly as possible to their appropriate education level through a compressed 6-year primary curriculum done in three years. It assumes children will move quickly, given their motivation and readiness, being older and more experienced, and teachers' ability to teach for skills competencies rather than a pre-set curriculum and small class size. The ALP also assumes the ability to attract good leadership and mobilize community interest and support. The question remains whether initiating the work through limited pilot projects will provide sufficient evidence for determining the feasibility of such programs.

Other agencies such as IRC and NRC are also implementing similar accelerated learning programs using different strategies. With a newly formed national task force chaired by the Ministry of Education, UNICEF and other agencies aim to help approximately 750,000 children return to school in Liberia following the cessation of hostilities in August 2003. This discussion will focus on the accelerated learning program implemented by the Ministry of Education and funded by UNICEF with some insights into other emergency education programs being implemented by other agencies such as IRC and the NRC.

The Liberian context is a perfect example of a chronic emergency situation that has lasted since September 1989 when the first shots were fired. The magnitude of the destruction both in terms of infrastructural damage and loss of human lives during this period is overwhelming and it may take a little while for Liberia to regain its lost soul. In the education sector, an estimated one million children were out-of school as a result of the war. There is widespread destruction of school infrastructure, displacement of thousands of

teachers and other education officials, and extensive recruitment of children into the fighting forces resulting in the deaths of thousands of children and school personnel. As noted by a senior official of the Ministry of Education: “In this country there are more guns than books; ... actually, we start seeing more cars than books!” (Draft Needs Assessment Note, 2003, p.1).

The crisis has completely eroded the capacity of the education system, already made worse by the lack of technical competence on the part of the MOE, and the nonexistence of the requisite institutional framework. Further, there are no coordination mechanisms to cater for the needs of the more than one million children out of school. Consequently, much of the rehabilitation work in the sector has been carried out by international humanitarian agencies with the necessary ‘expertise’ and enjoys the trust and confidence of donors not only to reliably handle donor funds but with capacity to deliver services in a timely manner. As a result, there are more challenges for education program coordination and implementation. These challenges will be examined based on the conceptual framework provided in the minimum standards.

4.2.1 Community Participation, Assessment, Monitoring and Evaluation

Before the establishment of the ALP in 1998, the Ministry of Education carried out initial assessment with support from UNICEF to identify eligible children in the age category 10- 16 years. Registration was made difficult by the return of more Liberian families from Guinea and Sierra Leone and of internally displaced people. UNICEF provided funding and technical support to conduct trainings for teachers in the philosophy and pedagogy of accelerated learning. Community participation at this initial stage was limited to

consultations with parents comprising mainly “a couple of meetings with very little follow-up or detailed clarification of roles and responsibilities of the various stakeholders involved” (Bunting-Williams, 2005, para. 3). One possible explanation for the limited participation of the communities was the fact that the program beneficiaries were mostly displaced either internally or as refugees in neighboring Sierra Leone, Guinea and Ivory Coast.

Further, the results from the assessment may not have been utilized in the planning of the intervention because of the lack of requisite technical competence of the ministry to carry out detailed assessment and analysis. There were also structural and institutional issues such as which division should take the lead to implement the program. Also, to date, the provision of education in Liberia can, for time being, best be described as a relief enterprise comprising school rehabilitation and the provision of tangible teaching and learning materials. Thus apart from occasional monitoring by UNICEF officials, the ministry simply lacks the necessary logistical capacity to carry out monitoring and evaluation activities.

4.2.2 Access, Quality and the Learning Environments

The education system in Liberia has always been one of the weakest in sub-Saharan Africa, due to lack of resources, weak government commitment, poor infrastructure, and very weak economic and institutional support mechanisms. After 14 years of civil war, the unpredictable security environment and the political situation have improved tremendously, and so has the demand for education services, schools, students, and teachers. To date, the educational system has shown high volatility (and unreliability), as it goes through phases of severe stress and revitalization. There is still considerable evidence of the effects of the past couple of years of continued violence, abandonment and looting of infrastructure, killing, displacement of large sections of the population, and of unstoppable degradation of virtually

all institutions. This has had a devastating impact on virtually all components of the education sector particularly in the area of access, the quality of teaching and learning outcomes and the learning environment.

In response to this situation, the ministry of education through UNICEF support launched the Back-to-School initiative with the objective of improving overall access. UNICEF and the government attempted to conduct an assessment of learning spaces (Rapid Assessment of Learning Spaces-RALS), which was used as the basis for initially providing educational materials to every functioning school in the country at the time. There are efforts to renovate/rehabilitate learning spaces by various agencies-UNHCR, UNICEF and a few INGOs with support from multilateral agencies. This aspect of school revitalization has been considered the easier option by INGOs hence ignoring the larger issues of teacher training and motivation, and institutional capacity building. However, this effort has not been carried out in a coordinated manner with each agency selecting counties considered as relatively safe or as comfort zones for their operations. As a result of the level of destruction of school infrastructure, much needs to be done in terms of rehabilitation so that access can be increased considerably.

In terms of equity, UNICEF has been working with the ministry in the area of girls' education with emphasis on support for the training of female teachers, an initiative that is in progress. Further, education quality is very low in Liberia, because of lack of relevant curriculum, lack of learning materials, lack of qualified teachers and the overall political instability. While there are only limited standard test results available, there is anecdotal evidence that teaching and learning conditions have declined since 1990, and more rapidly in recent years. Design of curricula is very centralized, and the curriculum has remained

unchanged throughout the 14 years of war and chaos. The unavailability of textbooks and other learning materials is very critical since classrooms have only few textbooks for the students. There are renewed efforts at redesigning education coverage and the quality of delivery of basic educational services since the transitional governments' recent declaration of free and compulsory primary education. However, enforcement of the policy is difficult because of the lack of resources to even pay teachers and education officials.

4.2.3 Teaching Resources and Learning Processes

As part of the ongoing emergency education response, UNICEF has largely supported the procurement and distribution of teaching and learning materials in safe zones. This activity will continue in other counties thereby expanding coverage to areas that will open up as a result of deployment of UN peacekeepers in most of the 15 counties. It is hoped all the schools and learning spaces, which includes all the modes of education delivery-non-formal, public sector and private schools- will be provided with the basic supplies for the immediate resumption of learning activities at the primary and secondary levels.

With respect to curriculum development, the government directed the process and is largely based on the prewar national curriculum with a few modifications. According to information from the field, the community did not have any say in the content and design of the curriculum. Further, 14 years of war has rendered the curriculum irrelevant to the realities of the present time such as the need for the adoption of child-centered pedagogy. Also, the MOE recognized the importance for inclusion of relevant emerging issues such as sexual violence human rights education, peace education, HIV and AIDS, and Life skills to reflect the recent history of Liberia and the dynamics of the conflict.

In terms of teacher training and ongoing teacher support, approximately 7,000 teachers have received orientation in the rapid educational response Teacher's Guide. The objective is to support children's learning in a crisis environment. As more counties become accessible and the security situation improves, the ALP will be expanded to provide the remaining teachers with the basic knowledge and skills to support children's learning. The initial pre-service training that lasted for 8 days was considered inadequate hence emphasis was placed on school based in-service training. This school-based professional development program consists of regular experience-sharing sessions among participating schools and teachers within a cluster of communities. It is hoped this would improve the pedagogical skills of the teachers. However, it was reported that the majority of the teachers did not employ interactive/participatory learner-centered methods in their teaching and was considered one of the areas for improvement. The master trainers themselves also need the orientation and training in participatory methodology to be able to improve the teachers' skills (Bunting-Williams, 2005). Moreover, teachers and education officials have come to accept that there is an absolute need to upgrade the knowledge of teachers in subject matter content particularly in Science and Mathematics.

With respect to monitoring and supervision, the institutional mechanism was recently developed and is being implemented by the MOE. However, the lack of funding and support for monitoring and supervision, coupled with the apparent lack of technical capability of the ministry has limited the MOE's role and participation. There are no systems in place to evaluate and validate learners' achievement and it was only recently that discussions commenced on the issue of assessing learning competencies of the learners. In this regard, Bunting-Williams observed that "apparently, there is a need to define 'learning outcomes' at

this stage which could form an integral part of the revitalization process” (Bunting-Williams, 2005, para. 24).

4.2.4 Teachers and Other Education personnel

The ALP program covers Early-childhood and Primary education, although teacher availability remains one of the main challenges facing implementation. In principle, the MOE claims there are a lot of teachers on the payroll. However, they are not available in the classrooms, forcing the program to recruit a number of volunteer teachers to basically fill the gap. Further, it was reported that the recruitment of teachers could be described as the only ‘near-perfect’ aspect of the ALP program. The stakeholders in the recruitment process included the community, PTAs, heads of schools, and officials of the ministry of education who acted upon the recommendations made by the selection committee at the school level. Most of the teachers recruited had teaching qualifications but required initial 8 days training followed up by a school-based professional development program.

Finally, the conditions of work of teachers and the supervisors working for the ALP in the regular schools compared to those working for INGOs is deplorable; they work under very difficult circumstances, with little or no incentives. There are huge disparities in the salaries or incentives offered by agencies. For example, it was reported that NRC pays its teachers \$40 while USAID funded ALP programs implemented through IRC, CCF and Save the Children (UK) offer \$15 to their teachers. The MOE implemented ALP program does not offer anything extra to the teachers beyond their regular monthly salaries of about \$20. Such parallel programming has potential for undermining the authority of the government and may not augur well for sustainability. This example is a classic case of the lack of coordination in

the field. Unfortunately, the INGOs involved in this situation (NRC, IRC, USAID, UNHCR and Save the Children UK) are at the fore of the initiative for development of the minimum standards in education for emergencies.

4.2.5 The Policy Environment, Management and Coordination

After the onset of the war in 1989, there have been no viable and comprehensive education response strategies that would guide any meaningful intervention following the cessation of hostilities in 2003. Apparently, education is supposed to be part of the overall recovery strategy known as the Transition Initiative Programme, but the government has neither indicated nor demonstrated the ability to effectively manage this process. For instance, “in the education sector, UNICEF is, by default, coordinating the transitional framework with the government serving as a mere client!” (Bunting-Williams, para. 6).

As mentioned already, there is a transitional framework, and UNICEF instead of the MOE has been playing the coordinating role. As a result of the ‘institutional weakness’ of the MOE, an assessment of the organizational structure and processes was considered important to identify areas for the strategic capacity building of the MOE (Draft Needs Assessment Note, 2003). In particular, the assessment will investigate the MOE capacity in the areas of procurement, financial management, human resources management, administration and reporting, data collection, policy formulation, and legal affairs” (p. 14). In response to the challenges of reconstruction, the assessment will also identify strategies for the alignment of the different organizational units in the MOE, within a broader vision to enhance organizational efficiency, transparency and accountability. This should be seen as a desirable goal and much needs to be done to carry the process through.

Considering this structural weakness in the MOE, it is therefore not surprising that coordination of education recovery activities being carried out by INGOs is mostly ad hoc and led by international agencies (UNICEF) rather than the government. There is more inter-agency consultation than collaboration or coordination at this point in time until the government makes concerted effort to effect policy review and development. This might entail a identifying opportunities for the strengthening of the policy and institutional frameworks to address the challenges of reconstruction of the education sector. There is also need to support the government's effort to provide the mechanisms for the implementation of the Free Access to Compulsory Primary Education in Liberia. Moreover, there would be opportunity to strengthen the policy focus on girls' education, over-age children, ex-child combatants as well as girls associated with the fighting forces. In addition, setting standards for certification and accreditation for learners and teachers as well as reconstruction and rehabilitation are among other areas needing attention.

Finally, there is need to support the government in revising Liberia's ten year Education Sector Master Plan (2000-2010). Additionally, the inclusion of policies on the expansion of accelerated learning programs for out-of-school, over-aged children, ex-child combatants, and girls associated with the fighting forces would be crucial in expanding access. The expansion of accelerated programs is critical to absorb the high demand for education. As the re-integration process continues, expanding the scope and coverage of these programs will be central to the strategies for re-integration of children, particularly children associated with the fighting forces.

Thus from the above analysis, one can safely say that although the minimum standards are increasingly relevant in the Liberian context, much needs to be done to make it

practicable. This may not happen in the short term partly because of the limited capacity of the government to take the lead role in education recovery and coordination. Until this is done, implementing agencies will continue to carve out their separate operational.

4.3 Emergency Education in Sierra Leone-The Context

Emergency education activities commenced initially in Sierra Leone in 1990 when Liberians seeking refuge from the violent conflict crossed over into Sierra Leone and were moved to the Waterloo Refugee Camp. With the war intensifying in that country, a group of fighters associated with the National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) invaded southeastern Sierra Leone in March 1991, running over many towns and villages. This group of marauding rebels later came to be known as the Revolutionary United Front (RUF), comprising mostly of disgruntled Sierra Leonean youths, seasoned Liberian fighters, and Burkinabe mercenaries lead by a former fugitive called Foday Sankoh.

By 1995, over 75% of the countryside had been occupied by rebels while the number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) and refugees grew astronomically. Between 1991 and 1999, the war claimed over 75,000 lives, caused half a million Sierra Leoneans to become refugees, and displaced half of the country's 4.5 million people (Smillie et al, 2000). According to the National Recovery Committee (an interagency forum set up by the government), by 2002, an estimated 75% of government structures were destroyed in the war; about 85% of school infrastructure was damaged or vandalized; over 20,000 children were abducted to serve either as child combatants for the fighting forces or as sex slaves, and a once growing and buoyant economy was in shambles. The war contributed immensely to a further drop in educational access, efficiency and quality as the entire education system crumbled in almost every part of the

country except the capital city, Freetown. A Peace agreement, the Lome Peace Accord, was eventually signed in July 1999 between the RUF and the Government following negotiations facilitated by the United Nations and the international community led by the United States and Britain.

While it is acknowledged that the cause of the conflict may have ostensibly been to fight corruption and political injustice, the war soon revealed glaring economic undertones. By and large, the insurgents became “indistinguishable from bandits or pirates” (Grossman, 1999); the “rebellion was a predation of productive economic activities” (Collier, 2000). In a study of the causes of the conflict in Sierra Leone, Smillie et al (2000, p. 1), argued that Sierra Leoneans, historians, analysts and writers have rejected the view that “Sierra Leone’s war is a crisis of modernity, caused by the failed patrimonial systems of successive post-colonial governments”. They conclude that “while there is little doubt about widespread public disenchantment with the failing state, with corruption and with a lack of opportunity, similar problems elsewhere have not led to years of brutality by forces devoid of ideology, political support and ethnic identity. Only the economic opportunity presented by a breakdown in law and order could sustain violence at the levels that have plagued Sierra Leone since 1991” (Smillie et al., 2000, p. 2).

Implicitly, Sierra Leone’s conflict can neither be entirely justified as a cause to fight for the eradication of poverty and the attendant consequences of the failure of traditional economics; or to political brinkmanship, or to its history of military coups and countercoups. The thrust of the war may not actually have been to win it and by extension to rule, but to engage in “profitable crime under the cover of warfare” according to Smillie et al.

4.3.1 Initial Interventions in the Education sector

With the crisis becoming increasingly chronic by 1992, populations living in the border areas and later in the interior migrated to camps set up and managed by the Red Cross and the Adventist Relief Agency (ADRA) in Bo, Gondama, Kenema, Makeni, Daru and Freetown, with support and funding from UNHCR, WFP and UNICEF. Initial interventions in the camps primarily had to do with the provision of humanitarian supplies: water and sanitation, food and nutrition, health and shelter. Interventions in the education sector only started after communities in the camps took spontaneous actions to set up provisional schools in makeshift shelters run by volunteer teachers. The NGOs managing the camps provided much needed supplies of basic learning materials through the support of lead humanitarian agencies.

During the course of the war, interventions in education took two forms. Firstly, programs exclusively directed at refugees and managed by INGOs with UNHCR and WFP support; and secondly programs which target internally displaced children, returnees, and over-aged children out-of-school in seven districts. NRC and IRC implemented the second category of programs in collaboration with the ministry of education and with funds from UNICEF. It must be added, though, that the government of Sierra Leone never provided much needed support for refugee programs in terms of monitoring, supervision, and the provision of teaching and learning materials.

As for the second category, actual support from government only started in early 2000 by which time an interagency coordination committee for education was set up, comprising major stakeholders like UNICEF, UNHCR, World Food Programme (WFP), Plan International, IRC, NRC, World Relief, Save the Children (UK), OXFAM and a host of local

NGOs. The goal of the interagency committee on education, according to the ministry was to coordinate interventions, enhance networking, resource mobilization and information sharing. It was also intended to help with the mapping of strategies for assessment, planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

One collaborative effort that emerged from this partnership between the ministry and agencies was the initiation of a Rapid Response Education Program (RREP) implemented by NRC with funding from UNICEF. The RREP became the forerunner to the Complementary Rapid Education for Primary Schools Program (CREPS) after integration of most of its core curricula focusing on psychosocial aspects and so-called emerging issues-trauma healing and counseling, peace and human rights education, literacy, numeracy, religious and moral education, gender education, physical and health education, sexual violence, and HIV/AIDS. The RREP was run in six-month cycles that targeted children aged 8-14 years. The RREP succeeded in placing over 8,500 children in formal primary schools or in CREPS centers during three years of its existence before it was integrated into the CREPS program following harmonization of the curriculum.

For purposes of the analysis, I will focus on the CREPS program, partly because of its well-defined institutional structure; its wide coverage and large number of beneficiaries targeted. Also, the CREP has distinctive features that are relevant to the ongoing discussion of the minimum standards vis-à-vis the dynamics of its implications. Further, my close association with the program while serving as the project officer in charge of emergency education at UNICEF (Sierra Leone) from 2000- compelled me to focus on the CREPS.

4.3.2 The Complementary Rapid Education for Primary Schools Program (CREPS)

The Complimentary Rapid Education for Primary Schools Program replaced the RREP after the project was terminated for technical reasons. CREPS was conceptualized in May 2000 to cater for the educational needs of over-aged children (10-14 years) whose schooling had been disrupted by the war ten-year war or for children who had never been to school. It also targeted ex-combatants or children associated with the fighting forces. The project was modeled after the ALP in Liberia after a working visit to that country by a team of MOE officials and UNICEF.

4.3.3 Community Participation, Assessment, Monitoring and Evaluation

Before its establishment, preliminary assessments were carried out by the MOE in the 3 newly accessible districts of Lungi, Kenema, and Kailahun to identify learners and potential teachers. At the time, the MOE estimated that there were over 300,000 out-of-school children in the country 50% of whom who fell within the defined over-aged category of 10-14 years. CREPS is a compressed three-year program that was designed to be the equivalent of the six-year conventional primary school. It enabled the target group (10-14 year old) to catch up with their counterparts in primary or post-primary schools at the end of the cycle. The communities participated by contributing labor for the construction of temporary shelters and provided land sites whenever there was need for one.

In terms of community involvement, officials of the ministry instructed heads of schools to make announcements to communities about the program and to commence registration of eligible children. With the involvement of the NRC in 2002, inspectorate staff in each of the 3 districts in which they operated carried out preliminary assessments. The

target group included mainly children who had just completed the RREP and ready to transit to either regular schools or the CREPS program.

However, it should be emphasized that the participation of beneficiary communities was restricted to information sharing and consultation. The implementing agency defined the parameters for such 'assessments' and 'extracted' the information through informal interviews and discussions. With the CREPS program, the district inspectorate staff provided data but these were essentially estimates based on pre-war enrollment in the districts. In reality, a comprehensive assessment was only carried out after the enlistment of the services of NRC to co-implement the program in 2002, which entailed identification of affected areas, collection of background information on target beneficiaries, and potential teachers.

With respect to evaluation of the program, communities were neither consulted for the development of the terms of reference for the midterm evaluation carried out in 2003 nor in its conduct. UNICEF exclusively provided the required technical support and funding after symbolic consultations with the ministry of education through a designated CREPS coordinator.

4.3.4 Access and the Learning Environments

In line with its commitment to the EFA and other international instruments such as the CRC, the government, through the support of international agencies ensured that efforts were made to ensure equitable access for all children particularly girls. The initiation of the CREPS program targeting over-aged children including ex-combatants was in fulfillment of this commitment. Beyond this effort, the government is implementing a tuition-free policy at the primary school level and paying public examinations fees to the examinations for all

eligible children. It must, however, be emphasized that the government relied greatly on donor funds during the emergency and early reconstruction phase while ensuring that education was at the top of its recovery agenda.

On the issue of adequacy and suitability of the learning environment, the physical condition of a number of the centers, especially in the more remote areas, was found to be particularly deplorable. CREPS shares infrastructure facilities with the regular schools, but evidence from a midterm evaluation indicates that not all basic amenities such as toilets and wells are made available to CREPS pupils. Some of the centers that used existing school structures had far more conducive learning environments than those provided in the temporary shelters that were constructed. CREPS classes were also held in temporary shelters that became very hot in the summer; timber planks rather than benches and desks were used for furniture. Pupil/teacher ratios were ideal (40:1) compared to regular schools.

In terms of safety and the protective capacity of the learning environment, there were reported cases of sexual abuse by teachers that prompted NRC in consultation with the government and UNICEF to institute codes of conduct for teachers and project personnel. Incidences of insecurity did not occur since implementation started after the peace Accord was signed.

4.3.4 Teaching and Learning Processes

The CREPS program was designed to provide access for traumatized over-aged children who were considered ill-prepared for immediate formal schooling using the accelerated learning program model. The curriculum was essentially based on the Harmonized National Primary School syllabus with emphasis on the four core subject areas-Language

Arts, Science, Mathematics, and Social Studies. In addition, the program also integrated critical 'emerging issues' consistent with the perceived excesses and abuses associated with the conflict. These emerging issues included psychosocial and health issues-Trauma Healing and counseling, Peace Education and Human rights, HIV and AIDS, Gender, Girls Education and Sexual violence.

Before its inception, a series of writing workshops involving the National Curriculum Development Center were held which resulted in the production of a Detailed Teaching Syllabus, Teachers' Guides and Manuals for the three Levels. UNICEF also funded the procurement of textbooks, which were supplied on a ratio of 1 textbook for every 2 children. Further, the agency purchased of essential teaching and learning materials adequate to supply 24,000 children in 600 classes. Funding was also provided for the training of master trainers and 625 teachers; the payment of incentives to an initial batch of 300 teachers, supply of logistics and equipment for monitoring and supervision; and the purchase of temporary shelter materials including the provision of timber supplies for fabrication of school furniture.

In terms of quality, the midterm evaluation carried out by Mansaray et al (2003) had serious reservations about the quality of the program particularly with regard to teacher competence and learning outcomes. Some of the key findings of the study that related to teacher quality are summarized below:

- (i) Teacher quality: In terms of teacher quality, the overwhelming majority of teachers in the program are unqualified and uncertificated, and have spent less than two years in the classroom. The teachers had received some 12-day pre-service training prior to their assignment to the centers, and they continue to

receive periodic training. Nevertheless, they generally demonstrated poor pedagogic skills. Over 85% could not prepare lesson notes, and demonstrated low levels of subject matter knowledge compared to their counterparts in the formal primary schools.

(ii) Availability and suitability of teaching/learning materials (TLMs):

With the exception of Teachers' Guides and Learning Manuals, most of the teachers indicated that the materials were either not available or inadequate. Pupils were not in possession of textbooks and, in some cases even exercise books. Very few teaching and learning materials were found displayed in the classrooms, and a heavy dependence on supplies from UNICEF and NGOs was found among the teachers. The Ministry did not consider the supply of teaching and learning materials to emergency education programs a priority. This situation is however not very different from that existing in regular primary schools where the ministry's goal is to reach a target of 1 textbook per 2 pupils.

(iii) Teacher Effectiveness and Learning outcomes.

In a comparative study of students' performance in the CREPS and regular schools, the researchers reported that pupils in the regular schools scored significantly higher means (PL.05) in all the subjects-Mathematics, Science, Language Arts and Social Studies than their CREPS counterparts.

(iv) Incorporation of 'emerging issues' into Teaching/Learning process:

While such emerging issues such as HIV and AIDS, peace and conflict, and gender issues are reflected in the curriculum and the Teachers' Guides, there was little evidence that these were treated in a systematic way in teachers'

everyday classroom activities. The pupils indicated that far more is learnt about the environment in class than about HIV and AIDS; and very few of them admitted to having received some form of trauma healing.

On the issue of teaching and learning materials, it must be pointed out though, that official rhetoric emphasized support for the program but this policy directive was neither documented nor officially communicated to the inspectorate staff at the district level. In the perception of education officials, CREPS was a UNICEF program and that substantial funds were available to implement it. The situation was not helped by UNICEF's over-zealousness, commitment and visibility to deliver education services to children as part of its mandate to ensure the rights and protection of children.

4.3.5 Teachers and other Education Personnel

The availability of qualified and competent teachers was a major problem as identified in the midterm evaluation even though these were considered the best available situation. In the midst of a conflict where established systems become dysfunctional, teacher availability can be a major problem and this greatly affected the quality and type of teachers recruited into the program. In the CREPS program, only 5 out of the 620 teachers were qualified or certified whilst the rest were high school graduates or dropouts. Most of the teachers could neither master the development of cohesive lesson plans nor carried out effective teaching. As noted earlier, the teachers to a certain extent the supervisors, lacked skills to use participatory, child-centered methodologies, particularly to meet the demands of a compressed, intensive and accelerated learning program.

The process for the recruitment of teachers was fairly transparent involving tests and interviews and the involvement of implementing agencies and UNICEF. The MOE was assigned the task of recruiting potential teachers, conducting the training and carrying out monitoring supervision. The communities were not involved in the recruitment process and no effort was made to ensure their participation either by the implementing agency or the ministry.

With respect to monitoring and supervision, the ministry implemented CREPS program was in complete shambles as supervisors of schools lacked the necessary motivation to carry out supervision and teacher support at the school level. NRC did supervision of the schools quite regularly and the head teachers as well as the teachers considered this effective according to a midterm evaluation report (Mansaray et al, 2003). In the ministry run centers, monitoring and supervision was hardly carried out even though motorcycles were provided for this purpose. Considering that the majority of the teachers are untrained and unqualified, there was need for much closer supervision of their actual classroom practices.

The NRC program, on the other hand, was well supervised with an in-built school based teacher support and mentoring program. NRC developed an elaborate and effective system of monitoring and supervision, with a regular, well organized monthly in-service training program for teachers in each of its 3 operational districts. Also, NRC recruited better qualified teachers to serve as mentor teachers and supervisors. The component of the program implemented by the ministry in four other districts did not have such monitoring mechanisms nor did they provide clinical supervision to the teachers in their areas of assignment. The reasons for the negligence had to do with demands for incentives to carry out this function, which they perceived as an additional burden 'imposed' by UNICEF. To

this effect, a number of workshops involving senior officials of the ministry, UNICEF and NRC were held to clarify the roles and responsibilities of the different stakeholders in the program. Again, this misunderstanding emanated from the ministry's inability to communicate policy decisions to officials in field offices, a phenomenon which was not uncommon with the ministry of education.

4.3.6 The Policy Environment, Management and Coordination

The establishment of the interagency coordination committee in 2000 formed the basis for a series of regulatory actions taken by the ministry of education to ensure effective coordination. The interagency committee was more a consultative mechanism rather than an oversight body. While the government supported the CREPS program in principle, it was however, difficult for it to translate such support into tangible actions. UNICEF, the funding agency, and NRC were leading the process and to a certain extent setting the agenda for any strategic direction. This was understandable, although not appropriate, given the numerous demands on the government's meager resources, its technical incompetence and logistical inadequacy. In fact, field monitoring of project activities by the major stakeholders hardly ever took place without initiation by the agencies themselves.

In 2002, agencies of the United Nations system (UNICEF, UNHCR and WFP) and two key implementing partners, specifically IRC and NRC, signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) focusing on collaborative actions in basic education provision. The main components of the MOU were school rehabilitation and reconstruction; provision of teaching and learning materials; support to teacher training and distance education; monitoring school enrolment, and support to district education offices. It is worth noting that

the ministry was not privy to this memorandum and it worked parallel to the interagency committee based at the MOE. This move virtually undermined the relevance of the broad based interagency committee chaired by the ministry and left it moribund.

Nonetheless, the networking at the interagency meetings developed into further partnerships that eventually gave birth to a collaborative project known as the Rehabilitation of the Basic Education Project (REBEP), to which the World Bank and the African Development Bank committed substantial funding in 2003. The project has a teacher development component, school infrastructure rehabilitation, provision of educational materials, and building the capacity of the ministry.

Following the cessation of hostilities in 2002, the government with support from UNDP developed a framework for an overall recovery strategy that included education. As a result, the coordination of education of activities was further strengthened through the REBEP bringing together international agencies, local NGOs and the government. The REBEP Advisory Committee recommended the establishment of a coordination body in each of the 12 districts and the Western Area, and at the headquarters level. These mechanisms include coordination meetings jointly chaired at the central level by the National Commission for Social Action (NaCSA), OCHA and the NGO Liaison Desk at the ministry of education. There are also interagency and education committees at district level and District Education Offices.

Finally, there were discrepancies between the NRC run programs and those of the ministry of education. For example, NRC teachers were paid attractive salaries in a timely manner and most were enrolled in the distance education program. They also benefited from one-on-one supervision by well paid, highly motivated and qualified supervisors. The

supervisors were each provided motorcycles to cover all teachers in their catchment areas. The teachers and supervisors in the ministry's program received salaries late with no other incentives hence teacher moral and motivation dissipated over time. This precipitated tensions between the two groups of staff working for the same program. The ministry felt completely dissatisfied with this status quo, which more or less translated into negligence on its part to carry out monitoring and supervision tasks in the CREPS schools. On the whole, the CREP was widely acclaimed as a model intervention and the impact it created in the overall education recovery efforts of Sierra Leone.

4.3.7 Impact of the CREPS Project by 2003

As a rapid response program, the main CREPS strategy was to ensure equitable access through an accelerated learning model to serve as a complement to the conventional formal primary school system. The primary objective of the CREPS program was to “enable 25,000 10-14 year old children to commence or recommence schooling, ensuring that at least 40% are girls” (UNICEF, Annual Report, 2002). When the program was launched in November 2000 in Lungi, 1,800 children were enrolled and serviced by 40 purposively trained teachers. By December 2003, the following significant outputs were achieved in spite of the many challenges:

- 25,731 children 42% girls, were enrolled in 179 centers in seven districts across the country;
- 620 teachers were orientated and trained in the CREPS philosophy and methodology;
- UNICEF provided support for the purchase and distribution of 800 specially packaged teachers' and pupils' kits for three consecutive years;

- Also provided 13 motorcycles, 5 vehicles, school equipment and office supplies to implementing partners both NRC and the ministry of education in support of monitoring and supervision activities;
- Achieved a pass rate of 71% from the first batch of 513 CREPS students in the National Primary school examinations taken in May 2003 compared to the pass rate of 75% achieved by children in the regular schools.

These outputs may be considered as being significant for a project that only started in 2000. Nonetheless, implementation of the program has been seriously hampered by systemic problems, most of which were external factors rather than technical ones. Most of these shortcomings were earlier referred to based on the findings of mid-Term evaluation of the CREPS program carried out by Mansaray et al in 2003 and submitted to UNICEF (Sierra Leone).

4.4 Comparative Analysis of the Case Studies from three contexts

The three were taken from programs currently being implemented in the West African sub-region by the IRC in Guinea, UNICEF in collaboration with the ministry in Liberia, and NRC in collaboration with the ministry of education with funding by UNICEF. Each of the cases provides a good basis for experimenting with the prescriptions of the minimum standards focusing on their relevance and practicability in each context. Also, as far as possible attempts will be made to provide reasonable explanations why the standards may not be applicable or practicable based partly on close affinity with the contexts. Finally, the author's experiences while working as the project officer in charge of emergency education with UNICEF in Sierra Leone will be extensively utilized in the analysis.

Table 3: A Comparative Summary of the Practicability of the MSEE in Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone

Description	Minimum Standards	Refugee Education -Guinea	Accelerated Learning Program- Liberia	Emergency Education-Sierra Leone
A.1 Community Participation	1. Participation -Communities take part in assessing, planning, /implementing, M & E.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communities initiated the idea of schooling Community participation in implementation and M & E not feasible 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communities participate through SMCs/PTAs at school level. Community participation in planning, implementation, and M & E not practicable. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communities participate through SMCs/PTAs at school level. Community participation in planning, implementation, M & E; not practicable.
	2. Resources : community resources are identified, mobilized and used in implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Refugees had limited resources; and served mostly as teachers In such circumstance, the standard may be too demanding of refugees 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communities were mostly returnees who depended on relief support. Community Support to education not a priority to many. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communities were mostly IDPs and returnees who relied on relief handouts Communities contributed land and labor
A.2. Analysis	1. Initial Assessment : Timely education assessment is conducted in holistic and participatory manner.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communities registered children as they arrived Difficult to carry out any holistic Assessment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communities registered children in schools as they arrived Unrealistic and difficult to carry out holistic assessment initially A Needs Assessment plan for reconstruction has been drafted by the MOE 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communities registered children as they arrived. Assessment only preliminary Difficult to carry out holistic assessment with communities Comprehensive assessment for all sectors done in 2001
	2. Response Strategy : Framework for education response is developed with a strategy for action.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A strategic framework for education intervention is only being developed since 1991 lead by IRC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A needs assessment plan drafted will form the basis of a comprehensive recovery strategy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compressive Response strategy was only developed in 2001 after isolated intervention by agencies
	3. Monitoring : Stakeholders regularly monitor the education activities and the evolving	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitoring activities carried out by IRC/UNHCR as a routine activity Communities were only consulted 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitoring carried out by UNICEF as a routine activity and sometimes by MOE No community involvement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitoring done by UNICEF /NRC and other agencies as a routine activity; by MOE Communities hardly involved
	4. Evaluation : Systematic /impartial evaluation_of the education response is carried out.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No evaluation of refugee program since 1991 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relatively new after project activities recommenced in 2003 after the war 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mid Term Evaluation conducted in 2003. Communities not involved in its planning and execution
B. Access and Learning Environment	1. Equal Access : All individuals have access to quality and relevant education opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Realistic standard that is achievable and has been maintained. No uniforms or fees 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Realistic standard, achievable and has been maintained with UNICEF insistence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Practicable and realistic. Policy in place to ensure equity with focus on the girl child.
	2. Protection : Learning environments are secure; promote the protection, & well- being of learners.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learning environment relatively safe but isolated abuses reported Children recruited by fighting forces with parental acquiescence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children still vulnerable to attacks by militia. Code of conduct being put in place 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learning environment were prone to attacks in the early years. Reported child abuses in some schools; action taken by NRC
	3. Facilities : Education facilities are conducive to the physical well-being of learners.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School environments are continuously made conducive as resources become available 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Infrastructural destruction was extremely high Some reconstruction is ongoing More rehabilitation needs to be done with donor support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some centers are housed in temporary shelters made of plastic sheeting; less ideal Considerable rehabilitation done on school structures

C. Teaching and Learning	1. Curricula: Culturally/linguistically relevant curricula used for formal & non-formal education.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Curriculum fashioned after countries of origin. Little modification to meet the changing needs of learners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Curriculum is based on the existing national curriculum There is however room for improvement considering the dynamics of the conflict 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Curriculum is based on the existing Harmonized National Syllabus Curriculum was infused with emerging issues; HIV, etc.
	2. Training: Teachers/education personnel receive periodic, relevant, structured training as needed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initial training carried out in the rubrics of teaching followed by vacation in-service trainings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initial training lasting 8 days followed by school-based professional development process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Two weeks training in subject-matter content, pedagogy and classroom management
	3. Instruction: Instruction is learner-centered, participatory and Inclusive.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Efforts made to help teachers use learner-centered instructions Some continued to use teacher centered methods 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers hardly use participatory, learner-centered methods Even master trainers need reorientation in these methods 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers in NRC schools often use learner-centered methods; most don't Even master trainers need reorientation in these methods
	4. Assessment: Appropriate methods are used to evaluate and validate learning achievements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School-based assessments carried out on monthly and quarterly basis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continuous assessments are in-built in the curriculum. Quarterly exams taken on regular basis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School-based assessments carried out on quarterly basis Level 3 sit to national exams for transition to secondary.
D. Teachers/ Education Personnel	1. Recruitment: Sufficient qualified teachers etc. recruited in participatory/transparent process.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recruitment was transparent starting with screening, exams, oral interviews and micro-teaching 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recruitment transparent and perfect with PTAs, community inputs and MOE approval. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Transparent involving NRC, UNICEF and lead by MOE. Recruitment based on exams
	2. Work Conditions: Teachers/education officials have clear work conditions/code of conduct	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Excellent work conditions offered by IRC/UNHCR compared to government teachers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agencies running parallel ALPs have better salaries and conditions MOE wages are low and not regular 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work conditions for MOE teachers poor with low wages NRC offers better conditions
	3. Support/Supervision: Supervision and support mechanisms established for teachers/others.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School administration and supervising offers trained to do lesson observations and carry out ongoing teacher support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitoring and supervision mechanism newly developed but MOE incapacitated. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitoring/ supervision based on ineffective formal system Parallel system set up by NRC that is effective.
Education Policy and Coordination	1. Policy Formulation/Enactment: Education authorities ensure free access to schooling for all.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Government very supportive of refugee education although this has not translated into material support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Favorable and supportive policy environment but lack of resources hampers enactment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Favorable and supportive policy environment exists but enactment slow
	2. Planning/Implementation: Programs consider national, international education policies /standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Program follows international and national policy standards for providing education for refugees 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Efforts made to standardize practices and implement policies, EFA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Program design in compliance with standard practice and international policies; Equity.
	3. Coordination: Transparent coordination mechanism for emergency education exists	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coordination mechanism and overall intervention strategy now being worked out lead by IRC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Transitional framework in place with UNICEF rather than MOE playing a coordinating role. Ministry logistically/technically incapacitated 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coordination mechanism set up by MOE but ineffective. UN agencies and INGOs had a parallel coordination outfit

4.4.1 Critique of the standards related to Participation and Analysis-(A1-A2)

The development of the minimum standards was with the best of intentions to improve field practice for interventions in the education sector. However, the model on which it is based, a rational positivist linear model, may be far too simplistic for achieving these objectives and impracticable in many contexts. Some of the qualitative indicators come in for particular attention either as a result of their being farfetched and unattainable or being predicated on assumptions that are fundamentally flawed.

The key indicators relating to community participation stipulate that the community or its representatives should be involved in prioritizing and planning education, and that community education committees conduct social audits of education activities and their budgets. In the field, participation of communities in education activities during emergencies can be described as largely symbolic and restricted to information sharing and/or consultation as defined by Pretty et al (1995). In such circumstances, communities participate by being told what is about to happen in the form of a “unilateral announcement” or they may be required to answer “questions posed by extractive researchers using questionnaires or surveys” (p. 61). Also, communities may be said to have participated by being consulted on issues, problems and solutions that were predefined and predetermined by project staff of agencies. Ultimately, it is almost impossible for participation by communities to reach “functional” or “interactive” or “self-mobilization” levels as defined by Pretty, given the urgency of the situation.

Further, in each of the three cases examined, the initial assessments were only preliminary and episodic entailing registration of children rather than their needs. In the refugee education program in Guinea, no evaluation has been carried out by IRC in the last 15 years of implementation. In Sierra Leone, a mid-term evaluation was conducted in 2003 without inputs from the community in the planning, design and implementation of the activity.

While at UNICEF, the author developed the terms of reference for the evaluation, and the evaluation was subcontracted following UNICEF contractual procedures. The concurrence of the MOE was only sought afterwards, because, in the judgment of UNICEF, it lacked the requisite capacity and competence to participate in the process.

Above all, implementation agencies hardly allow community education committees or governments to conduct social audits of education activities and the project budget, and may likely not do so in the foreseeable future. The information on project budget is considered confidential in most international agencies and NGOs. Therefore, opening up such information to public scrutiny is most often not in the best interest of agencies. In practical terms, agencies working in emergencies feel more obligated and accountable to donors than to beneficiary communities and governments, particularly in a conflict or post-conflict situation where the legitimacy of the government may be in question. This apparent lack of transparency on the part of implementing agencies has brought about suspicion and resentment by governments and beneficiary communities (Sommers, 2004).

4.4.2 Challenges for ensuring Equal Access and Safe Learning Environments- (B1-B3)

During the early emergency phase, providing access for all children to education depends on a number of factors, key amongst which is safety and security. In fact, agencies see this task as a first step towards revival of education activities. When the situation stabilizes such as in the reconstruction phase, providing access to education may be far easier given the improved security environment. The situation is also greatly helped by the availability and sufficiency of resources to reach all children. Also, educators and agencies actively seek to protect children against hazards related to schooling since schooling may sometimes endanger children, adolescents and teachers, particularly in situations that are deeply rooted in violent

ethnic or tribal conflicts. In the last ten years, there have been concerted efforts at ensuring the protection of children during crises, such as UNICEF's initiative to provide 'Safe Spaces for Children' (SSC) which is now being used as a model by implementing NGOs. These spaces are intended to provide educational, recreational and health activities located together in a safe and clean area.

Nonetheless, schools can be targets during armed conflicts and may be used as centers for recruitment or abduction of children into rebel ranks. In Northern Uganda, the LRA rebels continue to abduct and maim children; in Guinea the LURD rebels recruited young fighters from the refugee camps in Guinea with the apparent acquiescence of parents; and in Sierra Leone, about 65% of the RUF rebels were children aged from 8 to 14 years. Schools were deliberately attacked by the fighting forces during armed conflicts; for example, the RUF attacked schools in Northern Sierra. Educators and implementing agencies cannot do much about this, except for arranging closures and compensatory study and examination arrangements (INEE, Internet Forum, 2004). Thus security issues may be well beyond the mandate of educators and agencies, which makes the issue of protection contentious. It is in this vain that Triplehorn⁸ (2004) proposed that the responsibility for deciding whether to continue schooling during periods of insecurity should perhaps be that of the community and parents.

Moreover, there have been reported incidences of child molestation and sexual harassment particularly of girls by some teachers which has prompted the need for prescription of codes of conduct for teachers and students by agencies such as Save The Children in Uganda and Nepal (Triplehorn, 2004); IRC in Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone (Walker, 2004) and NRC in Sierra Leone.

⁸ Carl Triplehorn-Contribution to INEE Internet Forum discussion on October 4, 2004

Finally, in the design and construction of sanitation facilities, considerations such as gender and disability may be ignored due to tight timeframes for responding to the emergency, or strategic decisions based on the agency's priority use of available resources. In Sierra Leone, for example, considerations of gender issues in the design of toilets only came to the fore in 2002 after years of implementation of emergency education programs including the CREPS.

4.4.3 Challenges for Ensuring Quality Teaching and Learning Processes-(C1-C4)

The four minimum standards prescribed to ensure quality teaching may be of paramount relevance and significance for the achievement of the initial objectives for its development by the INEE Working Group. Apart from having direct or indirect bearing on ensuring quality, they are the most critical elements in the delivery of education in emergencies. Of the 22 indicators specified under this category, those relating to the curriculum and its development may be considered to be within the reach and capacity of implementing INGOs and government because concrete actions can be taken to directly influence the development process. However, the indicators on sufficiency of teaching and learning materials, particularly the provision of relevant textbooks and their timely delivery, may not be feasible given the limited resources available and shipping times, which are quite often beyond the control of stakeholders. In acute emergencies, some of these materials need considerable shipping and delivery time after agencies put in orders. In Sierra Leone, teaching/learning materials for CREPS centers were normally ordered in the first quarter of every year; but deliveries from Copenhagen took an average of six months to arrive, often after the start of the school year.

Further, the training of teachers in the use of learner-centered methods may not necessarily translate into actual use by teachers in the classroom as made explicit in the CREPS midterm evaluation report. In practice, ongoing teacher development, in-service training and 'in-situ' mentoring may prove far more effective than initial pre-service training as is the case with the NRC implemented CREPS project. The problem of ensuring quality teaching is compounded by the lack of experienced and/or adequately qualified teachers with potential and capacity to deliver in the classroom. With the exception of teachers in the Liberian context, most teachers lacked the requisite subject matter content and pedagogical skills to make any meaningful impact on learning outcomes in general. Further, in the case of refugee education in Guinea, the government of Sierra Leone did not recognize the training provided by IRC for reasons that had to do with the qualifications of the teachers (secondary school leavers), and the inadequacy of the content of the training program compared to that in pre-service teacher training colleges in Sierra Leone. These factors were considered critical for accreditation by the ministry of education hence, according to Watson (2002), the teachers were not qualified for a primary Teachers Certificate (TC) equivalency.

Moreover, implementing agencies erroneously anticipate that teachers would use participatory methodologies in classrooms if the pedagogy were taught in pre-service training. This is hardly the case because of the rigorous demands of participatory child-centered learning unless an effective supervisory mechanism is put in place at the school level. Also, the minimum standards require that learning content materials and instruction be provided in the language(s) of the learners and teachers, especially in the early years. This may not be feasible in situations where there are different ethnic groups with perhaps no common language for communication. In the camps in Guinea, the language of instruction was ultimately English for both Liberians and Sierra Leoneans, as teachers could not instruct in the twelve or more

languages represented in the camps. In addition, IRC or UNHCR could not bear the cost of implementing such a strategy.

A general view of this category of minimum standards is that they seek to recommend systems, practices and procedures that may not have existed in the settings during normal times, such as establishing EMIS or providing instruction in local languages as was the case in Sierra Leone. While the issues raised merit attention and perhaps addressing, the implications for resources during crises situations may far outweigh the advantages. In the same vein, the minimum standards requirement that the understanding and acceptance of the learning content and teaching methods be sought from parents and the community may be asking too much from communities. It is an established fact that the bulk of the parents and communities in these situations may not be literate or appropriately educated to have the necessary competence for curriculum development or to have leverage on decisions on choice of content and pedagogy or to determine what is truly desirable for their children's learning. Above all, curriculum matters in most developing countries are considered the exclusive preserve of curriculum specialists, educators, and teachers even in normal times. This status quo may likely not change during crises or conflict situations.

4.4.4 Challenges associated with Teacher and Education Personnel Recruitment (D).

The fourth category of standards is essentially focused on human resource issues; recruitment and selection of teachers; conditions of work, codes of conduct, and the establishment of monitoring and supervision systems to support the teaching and learning process. A key indicator is the requirement to include community representatives (PTAs/SMCs) in the selection committee that is recruiting teachers such that a transparent assessment of the candidates' competencies and considerations of gender and diversity would

be maintained. The idea of community participation is indeed laudable particularly to establish the true credentials of potential teachers and to crosscheck their credibility. Also, the broad participation of stakeholders helps to ensure accountability of the process and community ownership.

However, in order to facilitate the recruitment of competent personnel, issues of qualification and experience frequently override considerations of gender balance and diversity particularly, if the goal is to ensure that quality teachers and project personnel are recruited. Further, the conditions of work of teachers and supervisors as defined by the MSEE document (note the Working Group's preference for the term 'work' rather than 'service') are hardly ever in line with those of the government or the ministry of education. In reality, the conditions of work and levels of salaries offered by implementing agencies are almost always better than those offered by the ministry such that they effectively, and perhaps, inadvertently undermine the conditions of service of teachers on government payroll. This was clearly evident in Sierra Leone in 2001 when the RREP and the CREPS programs were running concurrently in the Northern District of Lungi, with both programs receiving funding from UNICEF. NRC which was implementing the RREP offered its teachers three times what CREPS paid as incentives thereby causing disillusionment among CREPS teachers and abandonment of the program by many.

In Liberia, agencies are paying far higher incentives to teachers and volunteers compared to what the MOE is offering (Bunting-Williams, 2005). As recent as April 2005, NRC (Liberia) was paying \$40 to teachers in the ALP program that it is implementing compared to \$15 dollars offered to USAID funded ALP projects implemented through IRC, CCF and Save the Children (UK). The ALP, which is being implemented by the ministry of education with funding from UNICEF, works with volunteer teachers who are only dependent

on regular monthly salaries that are less than \$20. As noted by Sinclair (2004, p. 17) “most emergency education programs face the perennial problem of teachers and education personnel being attracted away from the profession by well paid employment opportunities with international assistance agencies.” The decision of international agencies and NGOs to pay higher salaries and provide more lucrative work conditions for teachers and education officials in their programs has, almost always, held sway in many situations from Liberia to Angola and from Sudan to Afghanistan. These inconsistencies are by no means isolated or surprising as agencies with differing work philosophies and visions are more often obsessed with carving out operational niches and outdoing each other in the field while paying lip service to the rhetoric of coordination and true collaboration.

Finally, the standards relating to the establishment of supervisory mechanisms for regular assessment, monitoring and support may be a desirable goal for agencies but often difficult to sustain. One main reason for this is the fact that the education system in a particular context may have broken down completely including institutional structures for supervision, for example, in Liberia. This is one major reason why agencies needed to devote resources to capacity building of the relevant arm of the ministry of education so as to enable them to carry out essential functions of supervision and monitoring of teaching and learning processes and data collection. Until this is done, supervisory activities at the school or classroom level may not be effectively carried out by the ministry of education thereby reversing efforts to improve quality.

4.4.5 Analysis of Education Policy and Coordination Processes (E)

The minimum standards document distinctively acknowledges the lack of coordination of education programs during emergencies and how this often leads to duplication of efforts

and wastage of vital resources. Coordination ensures that national and international instruments and declarations proclaiming the rights of all individuals to education are adhered to in an efficient and cost effective manner. The policies referred to in the document specifically seek to articulate compliance with international educational policies and instruments, and national policies particularly those that ensure programs “uphold the rights to education, and are responsive to the learning needs of affected populations” (MSEE, 2004. p. 71). What the MSEE does not highlight are some of the factors that constrain the process of effective coordination in the field.

Whereas national education policies in developing countries are supportive of laws and regulations for free access to education for all even in times of conflict, they may not have the requisite “legal and budgetary frameworks that permit a quick response to emergency situations” (MSEE, 2004, p. 74), one the key indicators for policy formulation. This is by all indications a tacit admission of the problem of implementing or operationalizing such policies because of budgetary constraints. Thus the policies now being advocated may not, after all, see the light of day particularly when national governments are more likely to give prominence to security considerations in budgetary allocations over and above expenditures for services such as education or health. The prescription, therefore, to develop ‘financing structures’ may be particularly difficult to institute considering that governments have neither the means nor the will to establish such structures. In truth, INGOs have serious distrust and misgivings for governments in crisis situations because of lack of accountability and reported cases of corruption, which are often part of the reasons for the conflict.

Further, a key indicator of the standards for coordination specifies that clear “coordination aims, indicators and monitoring procedures is in place and all actors commit to work within that framework and make available information and statistics in the public

domain”(MSEE, 2004. p. 77). However, Sommers (2004. p. 63) notes “governments in countries consumed by war tend to have minimal bargaining power in garnering the authority, funding, and training to bolster their ability to lead and coordinate the work in sectors such as education.” Some international humanitarian agencies may not subject their activities to the vetting powers of fragile local governments or authority and are more likely to institute programs that run parallel to government initiatives.

In Liberia, for example, international agencies are unresponsive to demands by the transitional government to build the capacity of the Ministry of Education (Bunting-Williams, 2005) in the implementation of the Accelerated Learning Program (ALP) funded by UNICEF. In fact, programs targeting the same over-aged beneficiaries, and funded by NRC and USAID that are implemented by IRC, CCF and Save the Children (UK), run parallel to that being implemented by the ministry of education. There are yet no mechanisms for harmonization of the various accelerated learning programs.

Similarly, in Sierra Leone, the government-lead interagency committee on education was upstaged by the establishment of the UN interagency sub-committee on education, which comprised UNICEF, UNHCR and WFP and the leading international NGOs in the sector, NRC and IRC after signing a memorandum of understanding. This effectively undermined the government’s initiative to coordinate NGO activity, which to a large extent relied on the expertise, direction and logistic support of these key actors.

Further, it is far more difficult to plan intervention activities in general in the chaotic environment of conflict and war because of the unpredictable nature of events, insecurity, and the flow of funding. Above all, there are more complex issues, which hinder coordination and the formulation of policies.

Sommers (2004) summarized it thus:

Overlapping United Nations agency mandates, international NGOs insisting on independence, restrictions that earmark donor funding in a particular direction and to particular recipients, confusion over which arm of the national government should be involved in education, competition for media attention to buttress agency profiles- are only a handful of potential problems that can limit, obstruct, or even obliterate chances for coordinating education sector work effectively.
(Sommers, 2004, p. 39).

Similarly, the 2004 Annual Report of UNICEF (Sierra Leone) cited problems of coordination of activities in the field as follows:

Co-ordination between MEST and NGOs working in the focal districts was not very effective with so much time spent trying to *align the partners*. MEST officials at the national level also dissipated energy trying to implement programmes at district level.
(UNICEF, 2004, p. 3)

Whilst national governments may strive to “screen agencies for integrity and competence” ((Sommers, 2004, p. 39) and to ensure that aid flows through the government structures, international agencies may not submit to such demands which breeds considerable resentment between the two set of actors. These problems pose serious limitations for effective coordination hence wholesome application of the minimum standards related to coordination might not be realistic in certain contexts.

4.4.6 Challenges for operationalizing the Minimum Standards

The primary motivation for developing the minimum standards in education for emergencies was the desire and commitment on the part of INEE, practitioners and academics to ensure a minimum level of quality, access and accountability for education in situations of crisis. Without reservation, this can be described as a remarkable step at regularization and reform of an emerging sector in education. The MSEE can best be perceived as a framework

for designing programs to meet the needs of individuals in crisis situations around the world. While it is clear that the standards are more prescriptive than normative, the document unfortunately lacks the necessary legal potency for it to be accepted as a legitimate policy instrument. However, accepting that the MSEE standards are a universally relevant quasi-policy, what mechanisms/systems exist for operationalizing the instrument? What specific mandate would such a system have to police the standards beyond mere rhetoric? In short, what happens when the policy hits the ground?

It is the contention of this author that implementation matters might lead to a lack of success of an apparently well-conceived and worthy enterprise. As noted by Bah-Lalya and Sack (2003), implementation is about a process and concerns myriad details, which can be difficult to apprehend at the conceptual stage. It is also about actions, procedures, rules and regulations that govern the intended field practice.

Further, implementation of the standards is contingent on the capacities, abilities, contexts, nature and degree of willingness of the various stakeholders to individually and/or collectively respond to the multitude of challenges and expectations that will confront their work. The MSEE document stops short of addressing these fundamental implementation issues. It was against this background that USAID commissioned a study in 2004 through Creative Associates International lead by Marc Sommers (2004b, p. 2)) that came up with ten critical questions and challenges on Education in Emergencies. Some of the key challenges relevant to the current discussion are summarized below:

- The predominance of international agencies in the field may inadvertently contribute to a process of disempowerment as new systems are put in place by the agencies that assume the functions of an already fragile state or shattered institutional structure of the ministry.

- The role of communities is crucial for sustainability but differences in the power dynamics often leads to their marginalization. While their participation may be desirable, it may not be feasible in relation to certain aspects such as curriculum development.
- The role of national governments: War affected governments are largely ignored by international agencies who by their actions indirectly or overtly challenge government legitimacy, sovereignty and real control of education programs.
- Capacity Gap: Education authorities are known to have low technical and operational capacities; but international agencies give capacity building low priority in their strategies hence low budgetary allocations.
- Coordinating Education in Emergencies: In the heat of crisis situations, national education authorities are frequently not situated at the center of the coordination structure, which tend not only to be dominated by international agencies but directed by them. Thus donor coordination is one of the most difficult in these circumstances.
- Inadequate Donor funding: While donors are committed to the achievement of EFA across the world, some major donors are restricted by internal regulations from supporting education where conflicts occur. This may pose a serious resource constraint for interventions in emergency education

Thus given the resource demands of the minimum standards in education for emergencies and chronic crisis, it might be presumptuous to assume that the goals and objectives of the standards would be achieved in the short or medium term. There is the view that the expectations need to match practical actions in the field to make the standards attainable and practicable. How this could be achieved will be the subject of the discussion on context specific strategies in the concluding chapter of this study.

Finally, the INEE working group may have inadvertently ignored the importance of specific institutional mechanisms that would be utilized at the field level to either guide

implementation of the minimum standards or to ensure compliance by agencies and other stakeholders. As a quasi-policy instrument, these mechanisms must be clearly defined such that the MSEE becomes binding on all stakeholders. This brings into focus the need for clarification of the role of national governments in the pursuit of minimum standards in education during emergencies. Obviously, the minimum standards must fit as well as complement the overall strategic direction of the ministry of education for it to be sustainable.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Synthesis of the Study Findings

The Minimum Standards in Education for Emergencies, Chronic Crises, and Early Reconstruction (MSEE) provides a common ground for initiating interventions that would ensure a minimum level of educational quality and access, improved coordination, and enhanced accountability. The MSEE has also been touted as a capacity-building and training tool, and that it has potential to contribute to strengthening the capacity of ministries of education. In this regard, the achievement of the prescribed standards may help in augmenting a country's efforts at achieving the overall goal of Education for All (EFA) by the year 2015 within the framework of the Millennium Development Goals (MDG).

The discussions in this study have focused mainly on the challenges associated with the feasibility and practicability of the minimum standards in a number of contexts. These challenges might equally apply to several more contexts around the world considering that the bulk of conflicts occur in developing countries with similar circumstances. The study emphasizes recognition of contextual differences in the dynamics of conflicts or disasters, the organizational culture and capacity of implementing agencies, and the quantum of resources that may be available for carrying out education activities.

Moreover, the study documents evidence from current emergency education programs in the West African sub-region- Refugee education in Guinea, the ALP in Liberia and the CREPS program in Sierra Leone-to determine the relevance and practicability of the MSEE in each context and why the standards may not be attainable.

On the basis of these findings and analyses, it would seem reasonable to conclude that although the MSEE is indeed a desirable goal, it raises a number of fundamental questions which should be addressed to make it realistic and doable.

5.1 Conclusions

Firstly, emergency education programs are already working towards providing equitable access to children in difficult circumstances. However, it would be farfetched to assume that every child would be enrolled since children may be hard to find and hard to reach because of insecurity.

Secondly, in terms of quality, the MSEE has potential to promote quality education even though such a rational model might be too simplistic. Nonetheless, the MSEE best serves as a framework for intervention in the education sector during and after emergencies rather than being used as a prescriptive instrument. It should be noted that the process of applying standards to educational practice can be far more complex than developing the relevant policy. For example, it is not clear how the MSEE would contribute to an improvement in quality and practice at the classroom level given the fact that there are no mechanisms (at least not yet) for operationalizing the standards at the field level.

Moreover, the assumption that increased resource inputs (teaching and learning materials, teacher availability, better infrastructure, etc); improved delivery processes and systems at the project and management levels (supervision, teacher training and mentoring, use of learner-centered methods, etc), would greatly improve learning outcomes needs re-examination. The assumption may be far too simplistic and linear than real because it woefully neglects other intervening factors which are equally important for ensuring quality even in pre-war times. These include the school culture, teacher qualification and effectiveness,

commitment and motivation; and the emotional and psychosocial readiness of learners. One would expect that the standards would address learning competencies of children as a key dimension of the notion of quality, one of the main objectives of the educational enterprise.

Further, the prescription of standards to guide field practice is in itself a challenge for implementing agencies and has potential to negatively impact the work processes of agencies that do not have the resources to meet the standards. In reality, with standards hanging over our shoulders, we are faced with the daunting challenge of making choices that must be made from “a bewildering array of tests, standards-setting models and professional judgments” (Cross, 1998 as cited by Brown, 2001, p. 375). In effect, the use of standards can be perceived as a mechanism for control and coercion, and can be resisted and opposed by those affected. For example, implementing agencies that may not have the resources to attain the minimum standards may feel marginalized. It is also likely that support for the MSEE from stakeholders might dissipate with time when it appears to affect the work processes and implementation capacities of NGOs or government institutions.

Additionally, emergency education as a field is still struggling to establish its mandate and carve out a niche for itself, such that donors recognize it as a legitimate and justifiable humanitarian response, of equal importance as food, shelter, health, water and sanitation. This challenge has enormous implications for funding and resource mobilization. Consequently, funding availability is of critical importance for achieving the high expectations and standards prescribed in the MSEE document since it is fundamentally rooted in the assumption that resources, particularly financial resources, are unlimited.

Furthermore, operational contexts are almost always going to be different such that the mandating of 19 universal minimum standards with over 109 indicators may not be practicable and pragmatic given an already depleted resource base of countries in conflict; competing

demands on the limited donor resources, shifting regional and political interests and weak institutional and human resource capacities. In practice, only a few donors commit resources to support activities in conflict situations particularly wars. Therefore, a one-size-fits-all strategy may not be the answer for ensuring quality, access and accountability in widely varying contexts.

Moreover, the MSEE in its present form relies on the capacities of international agencies to take the lead and ultimately carry through the process, while inadvertently downplaying the role of national governments, local NGOs and communities. We can refer to the composition of the latest Task Force set up to move the process forward which has 14 INGOs, 3 UN agencies 3 government officials. Yet the MSEE will be implemented at country level where it is most needed. In effect, program sustainability can be seriously compromised because of lack of ownership by national governments. A case in point is the decision of the government of Sierra Leone to phase out the CREPS program in 2007 because of the lack of government ownership and capacity to sustain the program outside support of NRC and UNICEF. (UNICEF- Freetown, 2004).

Also, even though the MSEE acknowledges the significance of community participation, such participation is quite often superficial and restricted to consultation and information sharing (pseudo-participation) hence interventions may not be sustainable. In practice, participation of communities in technical matters such as curriculum design and development, evaluation and social audits although a desirable goal, may not be realistic in crises situations. There is also the possibility that such initiatives may be conflict with mainstream practice and policy and may give rise to tensions between international agencies and the government. Communities can however, contribute land, labor and participate in initial assessments for identification of potential learners and teachers.

In addition, agencies working in emergencies must seek to develop strategies that would promote social capital thereby ensuring local ownership and sustainability. This naturally calls for capacity building not only through incremental training programs, or the secondment of MOE staff to ongoing projects, but by developing institutional mechanisms, structures and policies that will ultimately lead to the transfer of much needed technical knowledge and expertise to government officials, NGOs, local authorities and communities. The goal here is to enhance project ownership, sustainability, and continuity even after the termination of project activities by international agencies.

Furthermore, the situation in emergencies particularly in conflict environments is far more complex than has been portrayed by the minimum standards document. In practice, institutional factors, the political dynamics of development, and human factors come to the fore during implementation. These factors need to be carefully understood to achieve the desired results in situations of crisis. For example, some agencies may covertly seek competitive edge over others in accessing funding and other privileges hence may not be too keen to enter into partnerships with agencies they perceive as rivals. This obviously has potential for agencies to nurture a spirit of coordination, networking and partnership. These considerations are indeed vital for setting up the necessary institutional structures and mechanisms for implementing the standards and institutionalizing the process at the field level.

Above all, the study highlights fundamental challenges for operationalizing the minimum standards in the field drawing from recent studies on emergency education by researchers, opinions of project staff and consultants in the field, and my personal experience as a practitioner in post-conflict programming. In reality, there are indeed critical issues and concerns to be addressed if the minimum standards should make any meaningful contribution to an improvement in the implementation of education in emergencies

Finally, the MSEE, as acknowledged by participants at the conference in December 2004, should be seen as work in progress and that there still remain immense opportunities for learning, strategizing and conceptualization of the standards. Below are some ideas to move the process forward.

5.2 Recommendations

Thus far, I have sought to highlight the potential challenges that may emerge from an adoption of the minimum standards in program implementation. In this regard, implementing agencies can overcome these challenges by taking actions at two levels or domains: firstly, management processes at the project or institutional level; secondly, school-based processes to ensure quality and improved learning outcomes. It must however, be borne in mind that successful accomplishment of the minimum standards is deeply premised on resource availability. Therefore, there is need for increased advocacy at the donor level; firstly, to engender recognition for and acceptance of education as the fourth pillar of humanitarian response during emergencies; and secondly, to help mobilize much needed resources for service delivery. Until we can muster enough support to raise the requisite funds needed to match the high expectations of the minimum standards, our efforts might be doomed to failure.

5.2.1 Improving Management Processes at the Project and Institutional Levels

The MSEE is essentially a policy document without the required operational framework and agency, which is critical for its application. Interestingly, a new Working Group on the MSEE (2005-2007) was only established in March 2005 after what INEE described as a ‘transparent’ process. It is charged with the task to “develop a strategy for and facilitate the promotion, training, piloting, monitoring and evaluation of the minimum

standards” (INEE, 2005). The new Working Group is made up of 14 INGOs, 3 UN agencies and 3 government representatives. INEE should set in motion the process of monitoring, documenting and reporting of best practices including implementation challenges assuming the minimum standards is being utilized in the field. Therefore, it is essential to set up a monitoring and evaluation mechanism both at the global and country levels to validate the standards and indicators and where necessary recommended modification or refinement. Such a unit may be used to pilot the MSEE and report the outcomes of such application to practitioners

While development of the MSEE is a commendable step towards mapping strategies for education in emergencies, successful implementation of the minimum standards is contingent on a refinement of management processes at the country or project levels. These actions include the establishment of country-level working groups driven largely by the relevant arms of government and facilitated by implementing INGOs and donor agencies. The terms of reference for such a group should include refinement and adaptation of the MSEE such that it is contextually relevant, realistic and practicable. Most emergencies occur in impoverished and fragile states with failing and shattered economies and low human resource capacity. In its present form, the resource demands would be well beyond the capacity of most governments. Considering that resources would be inadequate to respond appropriately to the demands of the minimum standards, the impact of interventions on quality and learning outcomes in such a scenario would likely be minimal.

Thus the involvement of governments at the national level is crucial for institutionalization of the MSEE into existing national policies and guidelines in the education sector. Such policies would eventually form the basis for agencies and NGOs developing refined operational guidelines at the project level and for field practice. The advantage of this

strategy is that the MSEE would have sound legal pedigree and agency and that sanctions can be applied for non-compliance. Thus the operations of international agencies, donors, local NGOs, and government institutions will be largely guided by such an instrument and is likely to be more effective. In this regard, the policy should reflect specific actions that will improve access, project implementation, and accountability to donors and beneficiaries. (See Annex 1).

Further, the task to mobilize resources should be considered as a management function of organizations either individually or collectively. This must however, be within the framework of the MSEE at the national level to minimize duplication of efforts and overburdening one or a particular group of donors. In the same vein, strategies for increased advocacy and dissemination of both the MSEE and the refined country-level policy instrument should run concurrently with the institutionalization process. Communities and beneficiaries must be made aware of the provisions of the policies and its implementation and what is expected of them.

The third management process has to do with the development of mechanisms for capacity building of key stakeholders and partners to ensure sustainability. In the quest to reach project goals, agencies discover that the inputs of local partners and government officials are critical. In effect, developing training programs that will contribute to skills and knowledge acquisition to improve their overall technical competence is indeed vital to enhance sustainability. Capacity building must therefore be considered as a key component of the reconstruction and recovery process.

5.2.2 Improving processes at the School and Classroom levels.

The minimum standards should be seen as a tool to design and reconstruct education programs in crisis situations. It would only serve this useful purpose when practitioners, by

their actions and practices, endeavor to attain the prescriptions and indicators in order to uphold the standards. There are currently ongoing emergencies for which resources are being mobilized by international agencies to contribute to the ongoing recovery process in those countries (Liberia, Angola, Ivory Coasts, Afghanistan, Southern Sudan, Iraq, and South- East Asia following the Tsunami disaster). In this regard, these countries offer unique opportunities for experimentation, monitoring of the process, providing critical feedback and evaluation; thus clearly fulfilling an action research agenda through a cycle of theory, action and praxis.

If the minimum standards should be seen to be meaningful to all stakeholders, it must have potential to improve on the quality of education, and more specifically learning outcomes at the classroom level. In other words, our primary focus should be how the MSEE translates into an improvement in the learning competencies of children at the classroom level such that we can easily determine the effectiveness and efficiency of education interventions in crisis situations. In this regard, the timely provision of teaching/learning materials, and provision of protective and conducive environments is essential to achieve this goal.

Further, it is important to institute transparent recruitment processes for teachers and other project staff, and working conditions that are fully harmonized with those of the ministry of education of the host country. Criteria such as teacher qualification and competence should override issues of diversity and gender to enhance teacher effectiveness. Also, consideration should be given to curriculum design and development with a view to making the process participatory and the contents relevant to the needs of learners and the aspirations of the government or country of origin. Curriculum developers should be mindful of what is feasible rather than what is desirable given available resources and the time frame. Feasibility is crucial for determining the specific model or design of the intervention, for example whether an accelerated learning program is more appropriate compared to a regular school model or a

skills training program.

Moreover, it is relevant to develop appropriate teacher development strategies and supervision mechanisms at the school level to ensure utilization of child-centered methodologies and participatory learning. This brings into perspective the design of the teacher training program in terms of what takes precedence in the content of the training- subject matter content or pedagogy? More importantly, emphasis should be on comprehensive and systematic in-service teacher training and mentoring along the lines of 'in-situ' supervision that is being carried out by NRC in the CREPS program in Sierra Leone and ALP in Liberia. These practices are critical for an improvement of classroom practice by teachers and ultimately an improvement in learning outcomes.

Also, it is necessary to consider addressing other intervening factors not directly related to the education sector or the specific project. Factors such as the lack of capacity and technical competence of the ministry of education to carry out supervisory functions; low salary structure of government officials and the ensuing lack of motivation and morale; and the culture of corruption and mismanagement, must be factored into the equation to have any meaningful impact. Thus evidence of actual field practice and actions taken in this regard at both the global and national levels can be supportive of praxis and might be linked to the need for research and development.

5.2.3 Beyond the call for Minimum Standards.

Emergency Education is without doubt an evolving field that is going through a process of conceptualization and theory building. In this regard, research should be a critical part of its agenda and must be a key component of projects that will be designed for intervention in crises situations. It will ensure that new knowledge and practices are discovered, tested and

disseminated for worldwide consumption. Christopher Talbot (2005), one of the pioneers of the MSEE initiative, acknowledged the role of research in defining and redefining some of the issues and themes documented in the MSEE handbook. Talbot in fact proposed a number of thematic areas and research gaps which needed to be addressed in the short and medium term such as using the development strategy in education for emergencies proposed in Pigozzi's (1999) hypothesis and endorsed by UNICEF. The role of academics and researchers in this enterprise cannot be overemphasized. Further, the research agenda must fit the overall development strategy of agencies and governments and as part of its humanitarian response preparedness strategy. The role of INEE to accomplish this vision is primordial; and it certainly does have the necessary leadership clout and technical capacity to carry through the dream of achieving equitable access to quality education in a cost effective manner.

Finally, for effective implementation of key components of the standards, it may be worth considering emergencies in terms of severity or magnitude of the damage and adapting specific responses that are not only relevant to the situations but also indeed practicable (USAID Fragile States Strategy, 2005). Situations that are severe may require more resources hence rigid application of all the indicators might not be realistic. Also, with country-level implementation mechanisms in place, it would be much easier to refine the MSEE to country-level practices and hence be adjudged by those set of standards.

Indeed, the minimum standards are a desirable goal but much needs to be done to achieve the objectives for which it was developed. These challenges are indeed within our competence but require more commitment from all stakeholders.

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Annex-Operationalizing the MSEE

