



## A Practical Guide to Education

### Introduction

Education is universally recognized as a fundamental human right for all children. It contributes not only to social and economic development, but has an inherent value in itself. Education is a preparation for life, which builds a necessary foundation for the overall development and well-being of children. Emergency situations - poverty, war, conflict, forced migration, ethnic strife, or natural disasters - create conditions of discontinuity, uncertainty, and instability that affect educational opportunities for children. The profound negative impacts of emergencies on education are attributable to such factors as the displacement of communities, disintegration of families and social structures, the destruction of educational facilities, scarce physical and financial resources, and a lack of qualified teachers. In some countries, even when there are no emergencies, a lack of ideal conditions and resources to support basic education may exist. As a result of these conditions, children are often denied access to quality basic education.

### EDUCATION: A BASIC HUMAN RIGHT

Every person - child, youth and adult - shall be able to benefit from education opportunities designed to meet his or her basic learning needs. These needs comprise both essential learning tools such as literacy, numeracy, and problem solving, and the basic learning content such as knowledge, values, and attitudes required by human beings to be able to survive, to develop their intellectual capacities, to live and work in dignity, to improve the quality of their lives, to make informed decisions, and to continue learning. *From: Article 1.1, Convention on the Rights of the Child.*

Providing access to education can play an important role in creating continuity, teaching survival skills, bringing hope and empowerment, and stabilizing displaced populations in emergency situations. In the short term, access to basic education provides the possibility for children to acquire knowledge, competencies, and skills that enable them to cope with prevailing difficult circumstances in more effective ways. Particularly, important messages relating to health, hygiene, environmental protection, reconciliation, and other aspects of life in emergencies can be effectively conveyed through educational programs. In the longer term, education builds a necessary foundation for personal development and the well-being of children by enabling them to understand their living situation, communicate effectively, make informed decisions, solve problems, and take action.

The development of educational kits (edukits) was first initiated by UNESCO and UNICEF in Rwanda and Somalia as a means to help children of these countries to

pursue basic education (Pigozzi, 1997). "School in a box" was viewed as rapid response to emergency situations which allowed the delivery of essential learning and teaching materials in places where educational services were disrupted by wars, civil strife, or natural disasters. Later, Edukits were also used in countries with limited resources for education in order to ensure that all children have access to quality basic education.

This Edukit consists of suggestions and reference materials for teachers who work in emergency situations. It includes guidelines for curriculum development, teaching methodology, as well as learning materials and supplies necessary for teaching in emergency situations. The Edukit is not a practice manual, which would give instructions for solving existing problems. By contrast, it helps you to address these problems by pointing out issues that are important to keep in mind when planning educational activities in emergency situations.

Although the nature of the Edukit is generic, each educational program will be modified by local education specialists when implemented in the field. In addition to translating educational materials and guidelines in the local languages, these specialists will work with teachers to adapt the instructional materials to meet local needs and conditions. A fundamental principle is that planning education in emergency situations must be based on the needs of the community and involvement of the local population in the decision making process. Therefore, it is important that you rely on your own knowledge of the local situation, your skills and experiences, and your common sense when using these guidelines. The Edukit includes five chapters, which are organized around the following issues:

1. Assessment of needs, resources, and available facilities: This chapter provides guidelines for gathering the information necessary for starting educational programs in emergency situations. Organized in the form of questionnaires, it will help you: (1) to identify the main effects of emergencies on education; (2) to assess available human resources; and (3) to assess existing educational facilities and services.
2. How to work in conditions of change and instability: Times of emergencies tend to undermine teachers' motivation, support, and participation. Teachers may be forced to work without pay, some are persecuted, and many are victims of violence. This chapter discusses possible ways of creating substantial teacher support systems based on community and parental involvement in educational planning, implementation, and administration.
3. How to deal with a lack of resources: Physical access to school is a major constraint to educational participation in emergency situations, often because of the destruction of school facilities. This chapter suggests possible ways of utilizing other locally available facilities, space, and the environment for educational purposes, and provides methods of income generation through accessing non-governmental organizations.

4. How children learn and behave: In emergency situations, classes may be very large and may include children of different ages who are at different stages of physical, emotional, and cognitive development. It is important to be aware of the differences between children in the class in order to help them all learn well. This chapter summarizes the major developmental characteristics of children in different age groups and identifies some teaching approaches and class management techniques that can be effectively utilized by teachers.

5. How to teach in a variety of situations: Every child is an individual, developing at his/her own pace and differing in needs, abilities, interests, learning patterns, cultures, and behaviors. This chapter provides an overview of different teaching and learning methods and provides practical suggestions for their implementation in classroom teaching.

6. What are the students supposed to learn: This chapter identifies educational goals and objectives for primary education which can be used as a starting point for the planning and implementation of educational programs in emergency situations. The goals and objectives are divided into five subject areas:

l Language, including mother tongue and second language

l Math, including numbers, patterns, relations, shapes, measurements and estimates, fractions, and decimals

l Science, including scientific inquiry, matter and energy, force and motion, the universe, earth processes, ecology  
and living systems

l Social Studies, including history, geography, economics, civic and government, and conflict management; and

l Health, Nutrition, and Physical Development, including personal hygiene, nutrition, safety and first aid, human growth and  
development, and physical training.

7. How to develop lesson plans: This chapter provides information on how develop daily lesson plans, including writing goals and objectives for the lesson, choosing teaching methodology and learning activities, and developing evaluation and assessment techniques.

In addition, examples of successful lessons plans in five disciplines are provided.

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