Eliminate Gaps in Education for Children, Adolescents and Young People

Analytical Paper on WHS Self-Reporting on Agenda for Humanity Transformation 3E

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Executive Summary:

The Agenda for Humanity called for a commitment to eliminate gaps in education for children, adolescents and young people through, among other measures, providing safe, quality and inclusive access to education and vocational opportunities during and after crisis. At the World Humanitarian Summit, stakeholders made more than 65 commitments to implement this transformation, with a number of new financing initiatives launched.

Through the self-reporting in the Platform for Action Commitments and Transformation (PACT), it is clear that the convergence of the Syria Pledging Conference (January 2016), World Humanitarian Summit (May 2016) and the High-Level Meeting of the General Assembly on Large Movements of Migrants and Refugees and Migrants (September 2016), has given new impetus toward providing educational opportunities for those displaced and in crisis.

However, it is also telling from the challenges noted by stakeholders and in reviewing the types of programmes funded that there remain considerable gaps that must be addressed if we are to see transformation in this area. It will be essential to continue to push for a mind shift toward understanding that education is a continuum that must continue from primary to secondary, through to technical, vocational and higher education opportunities. National governments, local institutions and humanitarian and development actors will need to work together toward programmes and financing that support this continuum of education through different phases of a crisis and recovery. It will also be critical for humanitarian programming and financing to better link up and support programmes aimed at achieving Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4 - Quality Education) and Sustainable Development Goal 5 (SDG 5 - Gender Equality).

Looking ahead, significant progress toward the achievement of this transformation may also come from two new announced mechanisms: the Education Cannot Wait Fund and the Rapid Response Mechanism for Higher Education in Emergencies. To do so it will be essential for these initiatives to become fully operational with strong political support and adequate and sustained funding. If this can be achieved, these complementary initiatives seem to have the potential to trigger a quantum leap in delivering education at all levels in emergencies.

Most significant progress made across reporting on transformation 3E – Eliminate gaps in education for children, adolescents and young people

32 stakeholders reported progress against transformation 3E "Eliminate gaps in education for children, adolescents and young people" in the Agenda for Humanity. This included 17 Member States, 4 United Nations agencies, 1 regional organization, 9 non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and 2 universities.

From a long-term perspective, the most significant achievements relate to the early implementation efforts of two new mechanisms that were launched at the Summit – the Education Cannot Wait Fund and the Rapid Response Mechanism for Higher Education in Emergencies.

> *"Education should be central to any response and funding available to support all children to access quality education and training to prepare to rebuild their nations."*
>
> **World Vision International**

The **Education Cannot Wait Fund** is the first global fund to prioritise education in humanitarian action aimed at fulfilling the educational needs of 75 million children and young people (aged 3-18) in 35 crisis-affected countries. The Fund has made impressive progress in a short period of time, largely due to strong leadership of the UN Special Envoy for Global Education in close cooperation with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the support of the European Union, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and a number of countries such as the UK, Canada and Norway. The Fund has already generated solid support from a wide range of key stakeholders. In its self-report, UNICEF stated that the Fund had raised 113.4 USD million and received USD 100 million in commitments from the private sector as financial and in-kind pledges.

The **Rapid Response Mechanism for Higher Education in Emergencies (RRM)** aims to support a coordinated, coherent and quick academic response to humanitarian crisis, targeting the age bracket 18-32**.** The RRM was designed on the basis of the experience gathered with an Emergency Scholarship Programme for Syrian Students launched in 2013. The RRM is underpinned by the principle that universities know how to integrate refugees and students in forced mobility provided that they form (1) an **academic consortium** to be properly backed through (2) a **coordination mechanism (**to ensure that universities reach out refugees and students on forced mobility and that admission procedures both from an academic point of view but also from a national, legal and administrative perspective can run smoothly) and a (3) **financial facility** that ensure funds are available to cover the costs that funding is sustainable.[2]

Although still in progress and not yet fully operational, these two mechanisms seem quite complementary and together have the potential to trigger a structural transformation aimed at delivering better education at all levels in emergencies.

The importance of higher-education in emergencies was also emphasized in the New York Declaration - the outcome document from the High-Level Meeting of the General Assembly on Large Movements of Refugees and Migrants, held in September 2016. Paragraph 82 recognized for the first time the key role of higher education in emergencies. In its self-report, Portugal reported on its efforts to support this process and its intention to create a coalition of partners to support the practical implementation of commitments made within paragraph 82 of the New York declaration.

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[2]For more information see: https://www.youtube.com/embed/VZ84tyeb6Fg

Other observations of areas of progress reported by stakeholders include the following:

- Overall, stakeholders most commonly reported on education programmes benefitting refugee children and young people, with the majority of the programmes reported benefiting those in or coming from Syria and neighbouring countries (Jordan, Lebanon and Iraq). Other countries reported being the focus of increased educational programmes, including Chad, Ethiopia, Uganda, Ukraine and Yemen. It is also worth mentioning that some stakeholders have also prioritized gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls within this transformation.

- Most of the reported initiatives focus on primary education and providing increased funding to education for children and young people in crisis. They are either connected with existing ongoing actions – notably "No Lost Generation", "Global Partnership for Education", "Global Business Coalition for Education", "Global Education Cluster" - or aimed at supporting the new "Education Cannot Wait Fund".

- A limited number of reports focused on higher education either through scholarship programmes or those aimed at setting up a "Rapid Response Mechanism for Higher Education in Emergencies". For example, Slovakia provided 30 government scholarships for the school year 2016-2017, with an additional 520 scholarships to be provided, predominately for Syrian refugees, in the course of 2017-2021.

- A few other reports focused on vocational training, non-formal education targeting both youth and out of school children, and on human rights literacy for adults. For example, YUVA (an NGO based in Turkey) reported on Turkish language, vocational training services and cash for work programmes for refugees. The Buddhist Tzu Chi Foundation also reported on its work to provide refugees and displaced persons with primary, secondary, formal and informal as well as vocational education opportunities in Turkey and Thailand.

- A number of countries also reported on their own national policies to integrate refugees into their education system. For example, Ukraine has put in place legislation to ensure government support for children registered as internally displaced persons get access to vocational and higher education. Malta is committed to providing migrants and refugees the same rights as Maltese and EU citizens in the provision of primary, secondary and vocation educations. Migrants are also eligible to attend Public Employment Service training courses and have access to active labor market policies.

The main barriers/ challenges to progress

Across the stakeholder reports, five main challenges were identified that need to be addressed in order to help eliminate gaps in education for children, adolescents and young people:

1) Ensuring close coordination among new and existing initiatives within the current education and humanitarian aid architectures. This will be essential to: show the added value of new initiatives; generate synergies and multiplier effects between initiatives; ensure optimum allocation of resources (both during the onset of acute emergencies and over the longer-term, particularly during protracted crisis or in the transition to recovery and rebuilding phases); and avoid competition among donors and initiatives.

2) Aligning the humanitarian agenda on education with the SDGs, in particular with SDG 4 (Quality Education) and SDG 5 (Gender Equality). This alignment will be important to ensure that humanitarian education programmes are delivered in a way that support longer-term education programmes and adequately target women and girls.

3) Setting up more objective and standardized needs assessments, better data, improved monitoring, an ability to learn from evaluation, and capacity to seed and scale innovation.

4) Ensuring multi-year, sustainable funding for education at all levels in order to minimize risks of fundraising shortfalls that can result in limited or interruptions to children's and adolescent's education, and also contribute to ineffective cost management.

5) Ensuring that during armed conflicts, students, teachers, schools and universities are protected from attack and that education can continue in conflict settings.

Measuring progress

In general, stakeholders reported little information on how they were monitoring and measuring impact. However, there were a number of good practices mentioned by stakeholders that can be highlighted. Bringing together these best practices and developing them further might open up new avenues for close collaboration with a view to adopting common or at least similar work-plans, benchmarks and indictors to measure progress in the future.

• The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA) is assessing progress through its agency-wide Common Monitoring Matrix which establishes a methodology and baseline as well as target guidance for indicators of efficiency and of cost effectiveness of its education programmes.

• UNHCR is partnering with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Institute for Statistics to ensure refugees are accounted for in SDG 4 (Quality Education) monitoring efforts.

• UNICEF (host of the Education Cannot Wait Fund) is assessing progress through benchmarks which were established during the initial start-up phase of the Fund. The Fund's secretariat follows up on progress and the adoption of open financing facilities and grant making will ensure public participation in the monitoring of progress. The fundraising and advocacy plans are also being used to monitor progress through documentation of funds raised, new partners and non-traditional partners who are prioritizing education in emergencies.

Gaps between the actions of stakeholders and advancing the transformation

Achieving the goal of eliminating gaps in education for children, adolescent and young people requires a long-term, systemic and differential approach. At this stage, the following six gaps have been identified that need to be addressed moving forward:

1) Closing the "mindset gap". This will require a more comprehensive understanding of education as a continuum, from primary through to higher education, including secondary and technical and vocational education and training (TVET). In particular, such understanding may help highlight the need to focus beyond basic education since, for

instance, countries coming out of conflict are likely to have a serious need for the advanced skills acquired through tertiary education.

> *"System strengthening towards quality, inclusive and equitable education (…) combined with the deployment of innovative, integrated approaches to ensure the continuation of education in emergencies, anchored by tireless dedication and commitment of students, teachers and parents, are key success elements."*
>
> **UNRWA**

2) Closing the "leadership gap". This will need stakeholders to embrace a global level framework and system of monitoring of results that can promote coordination and collaborative actions among all stakeholders at all levels of education across humanitarian and development sectors.

3) Closing the "co-ownership, collaborative gap". All stakeholders (humanitarian and development actors) will need to mobilize and work together on shared objectives, notably at country level in order to reinforce local delivery, ownership and accountability.

4) Bridging the "financing gap" will require investing further in innovative financing and effective cost management, as well as in research that can provide a stronger evidence-base for the 'return on investment' in providing different levels of education in emergency situations.

5) Bridging the "data gap" will allow for more evidence-based programmes and policy-recommendations.

6) Addressing the "gender gap" in education at all levels in and outside of emergencies can underpin the achievement of SDG 5 (Gender Equality) for all women and girls, particularly for those currently in crisis situations.

Highlights of good practice

A number of good practices were identified in the self-reports. The following provide a few examples:

- In 2017, the European Union will launch a global call (worth EUR 21 million) for proposals that focus on evidence based models for education in crisis affected environments.

- Germany is providing vocational and advanced training in the areas of trade and infrastructures to young refugees and adults to provide them with employment prospects in the medium term and essential skills to rebuild their home country in the longer-term.

- Greece is taking part in a pilot project for the recognition of qualifications held by refugee students, together with Italy, Norway and the UK. It is focused on refugees who claim to have made or completed studies at the level of upper secondary and above, for which they have insufficient or no documents. The idea is to establish a system which can be used by other countries in the future.

- In Portugal, the launch of a voluntary "academic solidarity levy" is being prepared as a basis of a Financing Facility for the Rapid Response Mechanism for Higher Education in Emergencies.

AGENDA FOR HUMANITY
5 CORE RESPONSIBILITIES
24 TRANSFORMATIONS

Recommendations

It might be useful to explore further the three following recommendations in order to strengthen progress on the transformations at stake:

1. Support the development of the two new proposed mechanisms (Education Cannot Wait Fund and Rapid Response Mechanism for Higher Education in Emergencies) in order to make them truly global, comprehensive and fully operational to ensure quality education at all levels for children, adolescents and young men and women most affected by crisis and conflict.

2. Encourage and support greater investment in data collection, analysis and research that can build the evidence base in order to gain an in-depth understanding of the whole range of inter-connecting issues when considering education at all levels in emergencies. This will be particularly important to better understand the differing impacts of emergencies on different age groups.

3. Discuss further different models and sources for financing education in order to design the best strategy that attracts the widest range of financing sources (beyond just humanitarian funding). This will be important to also help eliminate competition between funding for delivering education in emergencies and funding for delivering life-saving aid or meeting other basic needs in times of conflict or crisis, which remains one of the biggest challenges of the humanitarian agenda.

Photo credit: OCHA/ Gemma Cortes