

Education of youth in post-conflict areas



Description

According to UNESCO the number of South-South migrants, i.e. migrants from a Southern country to another Southern country (in this case migrations within Africa), exceeds the number of South-North migrants, i.e. those leaving a Southern country to seek a better life in Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) member countries. In the case of South-South migration, the externally displaced youths (EDY) (from one country to another) and internally displaced youth (IDY), when acting on a voluntary basis, being on the basis (an intentional decision by the migrants or by their parents), achieve a better fate than those who do not migrate at all. But, on the opposite, EDY and IDY suffering from a fate that is not of their own doing (like conflicts or natural disasters) meets results that are less favorable.

Even if the number of conflicts is diminishing on the African continent, the number of youths in a situation of prolonged displacement caused by conflicts keeps increasing in view of the absence of programs for their reintegration. They find themselves outside the zone where they come from for prolonged periods of time. Consequently, the youths are subjected to a first trauma caused by the change in their living environment, and must then overcome the obstacles inherent in their insertion into a new schooling system in which the number of pupils is already excessive to start with. For those displaced abroad, a linguistic barrier often further aggravates the adjustment problem, in addition to the even more estranged social and schooling environment.



Context

The consequence of these displacements is in the first instance a psychosocial gap that the youth needs to overcome, often requiring an adaptation of several years. There is further an age gap, as most of the displaced have dropped behind in their schooling – even when their schooling has been organized from the outset, which is rarely the case. This increases the adaptation hurdles in view of the differences in age and ill-adapted schooling systems.

Education is still not systematically considered to be a priority action that saves lives in emergency situations; this is particularly the case when it comes to mobilizing funding. But education should be a crosscutting theme in all programs addressing emergency situations, as highlighted by the Interagency Network for Education in Emergencies².

More often than not, displacements are prolonged, leading to the need to adapt the programs to the specific conditions of the environment where the displaced end up. This is how in Burundi, the internally displaced still reside in refugee camps for the more than 20 years since the end of the conflict situation. In Tanzania, refugees from Kivu and Burundi do receive education in French following curricula from their home countries, but they cannot return home while remaining rather unwelcome in Tanzania.

The internally displaced youth (IDY) constitute a specific problem because they are only rarely attended to by international authorities. In 2014, internally displaced persons reached 28 million. In Nigeria, the torments inflicted by Boko Haram have since 2009 caused more than 1 million internal displacements in 43 camps of which 19 were not offering formal or informal education facilities. Among IDAY members, the following countries are more severely affected: Burundi, Cameroon, DRC, Guinea, Ivory Coast, Kenya, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Tanzania and Uganda.

It is a known fact that children at an age above the normal primary level age have a degree of maturity allowing them to learn faster, especially when programs are adapted for their age. Displaced children could thus acquire the necessary skills within a reduced time span if the children had access to such program.

All such circumstances require specific educational programs. Members of the IDAY network from affected countries have requested support from IDAY's Secretariat for the design and implementation of such programs in their countries.

The indispensable link must be emphasized between the issues of education in prolonged displacement situations and the issues of peace making/consolidation, stability and conflict prevention. In particular, the role of the States and of civil society in peace keeping must be highlighted (including their required neutrality). And the importance of peace oriented education in curricula directed at IDY can only be stressed.



Description of the program

Pillar 1

Dialogue among stakeholders

Develop strategic partnerships / synergies for acting and catalyze the impact of interventions by stakeholders; bring resources together for more effectiveness.

Objective: Strengthened dialogue between actors from the base up for more effectiveness.

Pillar 2

Legislative, institutional and political frameworks

Authorities should be made responsible.

Objective: Improve the national and regional legislative, institutional and political frameworks to foster educational solutions adapted to children and youth under prolonged displacement.

Pillar 3

Socio-economic capacity of the communities

Mobilize the relevant communities.

Objective: Improve care of children and youth under prolonged displacement.

The program will be developed in close coordination with the concerned United Nations entities (UNHCR, UNICEF, IIEP). It would be implemented first where there is an initial survey like the one completed in Burundi. It will comprise on a systematic basis an inventory of the concerned children's' and youths' needs, the identification of their age and socio-economic characteristics (including their capacity to become autonomous), the duration of their stay in the camps, their mother language and education language in their zone of origin, the capacity of available school infrastructure, the avenues for sustainable solutions (returning, integration, resettlement/relocation) and legal measures required to integrate displaced people and ensuring the respects of their fundamental rights.

During this first phase, members of civil society will conduct their advocacy campaigns towards the authorities so that they would become aware of the extent of the needs and start needed procedures to address them, towards the parents in order that they ensure education for all their children including girls, and towards both groups for them to facilitate the integration of displaced populations. This will involve identification of the lack of means of the parents (school materials, uniform) and also psycho-social needs of children having endured traumas. An evaluation of the results will determine the need and orientation of a second phase.



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If warranted, a second phase will deploy schooling program as a function of available facilities and the needs, either by deploying existing inclusive educational facilities or by the development of suitable curricula for formal schooling, informal schooling, and the transition between the two with particular attention to youths above the schooling age.

Budget

A detailed budget has been prepared for a first series of 5 countries (Burundi, Kenya, DRC, Rwanda and Uganda). Total cost is estimated as €1.21 million over 3 years. The amount will be adjusted according to the number of countries actually participating in the programme over and above those mentioned above.

The program, as conceived by IDAY, awaits financing for its implementation