

UNESCO Pakistan BEST PRACTICE - CLUSTER CASE STUDY

Country/emergency where the best practice was used: Pakistan, earthquake of 8 October 2005; North West Frontier Province (NWFP) and Azad Jammu & Kashmir (AJK)

Cluster: Education cluster; “Education working group” within Early Recovery and Reconstruction (ER&R) cluster

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Issue: Successful cluster leadership; successful cross-cluster coordination mechanisms

Executive summary

The study illustrates a) the importance of considering ER&R efforts from the very beginning of an emergency education response; and b) the need for establishing forums where links between relief and early recovery can be forged and planned. The collaboration between the Education cluster (led by UNICEF) and the Education working group (led by UNESCO in the ER&R Cluster) is a showcase of joint collaboration and a holistic education response that will benefit the sector in the years to come.

Background

In the aftermath of the earthquake of 8 October 2005, an Education cluster, chaired by UNICEF, was established. An ER&R cluster was also set up, structured in sectoral groups, one of them in Education. The Education working group, led by UNESCO, set about to formulate strategies for effective transition from relief to recovery, and longer-term reconstruction. UNESCO staff also participated in the Education cluster, assisting in coordination, meetings, preparation of Flash Appeals, etc.

Challenges in the education sector

The Government and partner agencies vowed to “build back better than before”, thus placing considerable pressure on management and delivery systems which had anyway suffered huge losses. Staff and students were also traumatized and very much preoccupied with their own survival.

Challenges in the cluster and cross-cluster coordination

“Building back better” implied a commitment to a system-wide approach and better quality service delivery. Yet, early discussions focused on hardware and reconstruction: there was a perception that “education cannot be done without a

school". Considering the expected 5-10 year reconstruction period, coordination and planning by both groups (emergency and recovery) required a careful balancing of "hard" and "soft" components. Overlapping between the emergency and early recovery phases was another issue: it was not clear when the first subsides and the second commences; which activities pertain to which phase and under which coordination forum.

The mandate of the agency leading the Education cluster and the TOR of the cluster chair were blurred at best. The chair often had to represent the cluster and UNICEF interchangeably vis-à-vis donors, government and partners.

How challenges were overcome

The Education cluster chair led the drafting of Flash Appeals with inputs from cluster members. UNESCO led the drafting of the education chapter of the ER&R Framework and the ERR-UN Early Recovery Plan with inputs from both the Education Working Group and the Education cluster. Thus, strategic and practical linkages were forged between relief and early recovery activities. The Education cluster chair effectively clarified his role to cluster members. Collaboration was also facilitated through daily communication between UNESCO, UNICEF, ERR and Government bodies. Advocacy by UNESCO and UNICEF contributed to shifting the perception of early recovery activities. Although there is still a hardware bias, ERR officials and line ministries today term early recovery activities "as important as the hardware".

Clear TOR for the chair would enhance the cluster approach in future operations. Cluster coordination is a full-time job requiring decisions on interventions that do not necessarily coincide with those of the cluster lead agency.

Results

The education sector response has been well coordinated and funded: Flash Appeals were mostly funded and the ERR-UN Early Recovery Plan has been well endowed, albeit with serious gaps in secondary, non-formal, technical and vocational education. In spite of this, over the first 18 months, education needs from pre-primary to tertiary level, management systems, non-formal, and technical/vocational education have been partially addressed.

The strategy and activities in the relief, recovery and reconstruction phases configure a logical sequential whole which ultimately contributes to improving the education system in the affected areas and the country at large. Each agency is in a better position to respond, in line with its mandate and constituencies. This is crucial when considering the UN Reform in Pakistan and globally.

As of February 2007, ERR and the Government authorities have taken over the coordination of the education response. Jointly, UNESCO and UNICEF provide technical and secretarial support, and represent the education sector in the IASC Operations Group.