



Executive summary

# Strengthening coordinated education planning and response in crises

## Analysis framework

Susan Nicolai, Allison Anderson, Marian Hodgkin and Arran Magee

October 2019



---

# Executive summary

Education is a central need for millions of children and young people affected by emergencies and protracted crises. Supporting education in crisis contexts involves multiple actors with mandate, mission, organisational structure, technical and geographic expertise. Systematic organisation of groups and individuals contributing to education activities can, in principle, allow for more efficient, cost-effective and successful operations.

This report presents a framework for analysis of formal coordination approaches for education planning and response in emergencies and protracted crises. It reviews concepts and definitions of coordination, approaches and structures for coordinated planning and response, and expected outcomes of these processes, with a focus on humanitarian structures across the humanitarian–development nexus. The main types of formal education coordination groups include Education Clusters, Refugee Education Working Groups and Local Education Groups (LEGs). These often have different purposes and organisations associated with them, sometimes resulting in overlaps and gaps in coordination efforts.

## Conceptualising coordination

Our research aims to explore how joint planning and response contribute to strengthening collective education outcomes – identified in the Education Cannot Wait (ECW) Strategic Plan as access, equity and gender equality, continuity, protection and quality.

A conceptual framework includes five elements, with each playing a role in the effectiveness of coordinated education planning and response. We first set the scene by examining:

1. **Country contexts:** the country and crisis-specific features that shape what is needed in terms of education coordination. These include aspects of country profile, the type and complexity of disasters, the phase of crisis and capacities of national authorities.
2. **Global frameworks:** the commitments and agendas that shape humanitarian and development action across contexts. These include both long-standing and more recent legal obligations alongside guidance frameworks like the Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE) Minimum Standards for Education.

Three features that directly shape education coordination in-country are then detailed:

1. **Coordination approaches:** the main actors provide leadership for education planning and response, according to their mandates, with the group(s) present as a key feature shaping what is possible in terms of coordination.
2. **Ways of working:** critical processes and tools that shape education planning and response throughout the humanitarian programme cycle, alongside four factors that appear in organisational research relating to the success or failure of inter-organisational coordinated efforts: predisposition, incentives, leadership and equity.
3. **Evidence of impact:** the influence of coordination on collective education outcomes is explored through the OECD DAC Criteria and ECW Collective Education Outcomes. Taking measurement challenges into account, as well as broader theory and evidence of the impact of coordination, we look at the links between coordination and education outcomes.

---

## Research questions

This conceptual framework is then used to set out a series of research questions, focused on the following central inquiry:

**How can humanitarian and development actors more effectively coordinate planning and response to strengthen education outcomes for children and young people affected by crises?**

While the first two elements of the conceptual framework – country contexts and global frameworks – set the scene, the next three elements lead to specific research sub-questions examined in this report and subsequently.

**Q1: Who are the main stakeholders contributing to country-level education coordination in emergencies and protracted crises, and how can their roles be optimised?**

The first sub-question explores issues such as: who are the main stakeholders involved in education coordination in crisis contexts; why and how are they involved; to what extent and in what ways does this vary across context; and what are the overlaps and gaps in coordination systems and responsibilities. This will lead us towards recommendations regarding the shifts that may be needed in roles to create more effective and efficient coordination systems.

**Q2: How can coordination of education planning and response be made more effective?**

The second sub-question looks more closely at enabling factors that support effective education coordination, and the obstacles and constraints which undermine this. It considers different approaches used in country-level education coordination, how coordination processes

change across the programme cycle, and what coordination support and tools have been most useful across contexts. This leads us to identify ‘markers’ that could be used to determine the effectiveness of education coordination.

**Q3: So what does coordinated education planning and response contribute to better education and other collective outcomes for children and young people affected by crises?**

The third sub-question investigates the strength and nature of evidence on whether coordinated education planning and response leads to improved education outcomes. With limited existing evidence, it sets up a framework to explore what additional indicative or anecdotal evidence on the link between coordination and improved outcomes can be gathered from case study countries.

## Further case studies and synthesis

The conceptual framework and set of research questions that emerges from this report is then applied to planned case studies in the Middle East, Central Africa, Eastern Africa, and South Asia. The findings of this report, alongside the separately published case studies, result in a final synthesis report that includes recommendations for action by key stakeholders: governments, country-based education providers and global humanitarian and development actors.

This report has been researched and authored by the Overseas Development Institute (ODI). Funded through Education Cannot Wait, the project is a partnership between the Global Education Cluster (GEC), the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) and the Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies. These partners actively support both the research process and its uptake.

## Conceptual framework

Key features that shape education coordination outcomes

### Country contexts



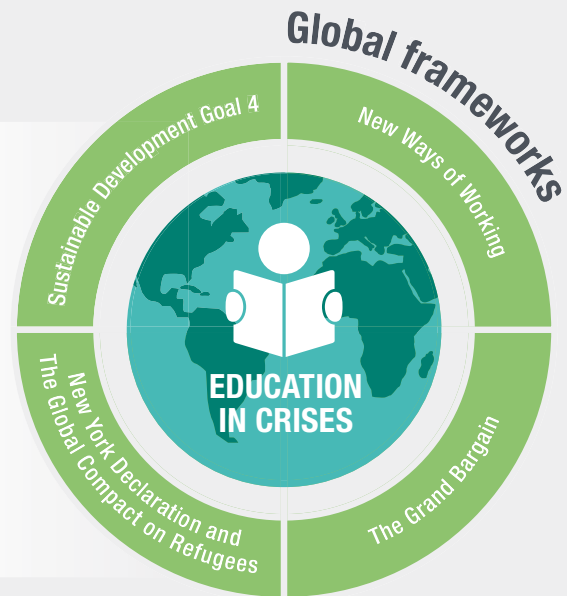
**Country situation:** the geographic, political, legal, social and economic context of the country, as well as existing capacity of national and/or regional authorities to respond to the crisis



**Type of crisis:** violence and conflict, environmental, health, complex emergencies, and whether displacement produces either internal displacement or refugee situations, and the scale of displacement, disasters or mixed situations



**Phase of crisis:** Sudden onset emergency and/or protracted situation



### Who: Coordination approaches

The main actors providing leadership for education planning and response, their responsibilities, as well as the type of group(s) present.

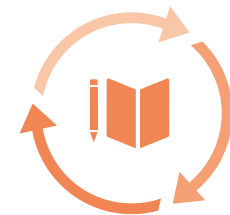
- **Ministry of Education**, and/or other national ministries
- Regional or local **government bodies** overseeing education and/or emergency response
- IASC **Humanitarian cluster coordination approach**, with the Global Education Cluster co-led by UNICEF and Save the Children, and country level cluster leadership varied
- **Refugee Coordination Model** led by UNHCR
- **Development coordination**, led by Local Education Groups, guided by UNESCO and supported by the Global Partnership for Education
- **Donor-facilitated coordination**, including Education Cannot Wait, which works through the existing coordination architecture to encourage a more collaborative approach among actors on the ground and mobilise additional funding
- Mixed, regional and other **hybrid approaches**



### How: Ways of working

The critical processes and tools that shape the experience of education planning and response throughout programme/project cycles.

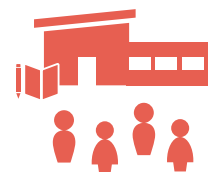
- **Coordination across the humanitarian programme cycle (HCP) and refugee response planning cycle:** needs assessment and analysis, strategic response planning, resource mobilisation, implementation and monitoring, operational review and evaluation
- **INEE Minimum Standards:** a global tool that articulates the minimum level of educational quality and access in emergencies through to recovery
- **The Faerman Factors:** predisposition, incentives, leadership and equity highlighting the softer side of coordination



### So what: Evidence of impact

The collective education outcomes of coordinated education planning and response as linked to coordination quality measures.

- **Collective education outcomes set out in Education Cannot Wait strategy:** access, equity and gender equality, protection, quality and continuity
- **Coordination quality measured by OECD DAC criteria:** coverage, relevance/appropriateness, coherence, accountability and participation, effectiveness, complementarity, sufficiency, efficiency, connectedness and impact





**Evidence.  
Ideas.  
Change.**

---

ODI is an independent, global think tank, working for a sustainable and peaceful world in which every person thrives. We harness the power of evidence and ideas through research and partnership to confront challenges, develop solutions, and create change.

---

**ODI**  
203 Blackfriars Road  
London SE1 8NJ

+44 (0)20 7922 0300  
info@odi.org

odi.org  
odi.org/facebook  
odi.org/twitter