

**United Nations Children's Fund  
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## **Education in Emergencies and Post-Crisis Transition: global evaluation\* and management response**

### **Introduction**

1. The Education in Emergencies and Post-Crisis Transition (EEPCT) programme began in 2007 as a four-year partnership (later extended to a fifth year) between UNICEF and the Government of the Netherlands. The overall goal of the programme was to support countries facing emergencies and post-crisis transitions as they endeavoured to establish a viable path of sustainable progress towards quality basic education for all. The Government of the Netherlands contributed \$201 million, while an additional support of \$5.76 million was provided by the European Commission.
2. The programme directly provided access to or improved education for up to 6 million children per year, with indirect benefits reaching an additional 14 million per year through national adoption of best practices and innovative financing mechanisms. Many of these children received successive years of support. Over half a million teachers received training and more than 60,000 schools and classrooms were constructed or rehabilitated. Over seven million learning materials were distributed. The programme also contributed to national policy development and support to ministries of education in most of the 42 participating countries.
3. EEPCT has served as a catalyst for Education in Emergencies (EiE), supporting development, standardization and professionalization of the field and contributing to the role of UNICEF as a leading partner in education in emergencies and post-crisis transition contexts. UNICEF education work more broadly has benefited from lessons learned through EEPCT, contributing improvements in strategy, programme design and management and results-based monitoring.

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\* Progress Evaluation of the UNICEF Education in Emergencies and Post-Crisis Transition Programme (EEPCT): [http://www.unicef.org/evaluation/files/EEPCT\\_Global\\_041311\\_USA-2010-008\\_FULL\\_Eval.pdf](http://www.unicef.org/evaluation/files/EEPCT_Global_041311_USA-2010-008_FULL_Eval.pdf)

## **The evaluation process**

4. Two major evaluative activities relating to the EEPTC programme were conducted by independent consultants commissioned by the UNICEF Evaluation Office. The first was the Progress Review and Evaluability Study (PRES) undertaken in 2009-2010, which provided information on design, implementation and preliminary recommendations for programme improvement. The second was the Progress Evaluation (PREV) to assess progress on the four goals of the EEPTC programme at global, regional and country levels. Conducted by the Columbia Group for Children in Adversity between June and August 2010, the evaluation used a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods.

5. In line with UNICEF evaluation policy, a formal management response to the findings and recommendations of the PREV evaluation was prepared by management and relevant staff. Following careful consideration, a set of commitments intended to strengthen achievement of EEPTC programme goals was agreed, based on the recommendations of the evaluation. These have been implemented, and lessons from the evaluation have more broadly informed education programming (see sections on “utilization” and “longer-term learning” below).

6. Overall, the Education Section agreed with the findings of the evaluation. However, limitations were also noted: for example, the relatively small sample of countries studied (6 of 42). Furthermore, by the time the evaluation had concluded and its report had been formally presented, some recommendations were outdated, given ongoing programme learning and attention to issues identified by the earlier PRES.

## **Key findings of the progress evaluation**

7. Two overall findings concern scope and approach. The evaluation noted the ambitious scope of the original programme proposal and the imprecision in laying out expected results. While this allowed for rapid start-up, it undermined overall programme coherence and effectiveness. EEPTC programme coherence was also undermined by a tendency to use the resources more as a fund to support existing country programmes rather than in support of the programme’s global objectives.

8. At the same time, the evaluation recognised an inherent tension between advantages gained through flexibility of funding versus fidelity to a rigid design and results framework. The evaluation noted that EEPTC funds enabled UNICEF to work in a flexible, timely and responsive manner with partners and governments to support improved quality of response in education in emergencies and post-crisis transitions (Goal 1). The flexibility of EEPTC programme funding was well suited to support elements of education in situations where predictable funding for education is lacking, and coordination amongst actors – including donors – is weak.

9. The evaluation noted some specific findings on achievements and challenges:

(a) Support for the education cluster system at all levels enhanced coordination and coherence – key elements in increased resilience of education service delivery (Goal 2) in emergency and post-crisis-transition contexts.

(b) Progress towards increasing education-sector contribution to better prediction, prevention and preparedness for emergencies caused by natural disaster and conflict (Goal 3) was being achieved in the majority of countries reviewed. These included steps to improve school and

child safety, and other promising policy initiatives and good practices, although these endeavours were not sufficiently monitored.

(c) In relation to evidence-based policies, efficient strategies and fit-for-purpose financing (Goal 4), the evaluation found limited progress. However, the Liberia Pooled Fund and the Education Trust Fund (ETF) in Zimbabwe emerged as strong examples of “fit-for-purpose financing mechanisms”. While there are reservations about the efficiency of the management of the Pooled Fund and limited scope of the ETF, they are valuable, innovative experiments to address financing challenges in transition and conflict-affected contexts.

(d) The evaluation provided examples of good practice related to cross-cutting themes, such as adherence to a rights-based approach, highlighting UNICEF success in restoring children’s rights and integrating participation into its response. However, in the six case-study countries, programmes did not feature children’s participation strongly enough, and integration of gender dimensions was uneven.

10. The evaluation also highlighted the efficacy of the EEPCT funding in advancing ongoing global partnerships, such as the Inter-Agency Standing Committee Education Cluster, the Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies and the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, that are greatly enhancing sector performance at global, regional and country levels.

## Utilization of evaluation results

11. While the PREV documented progress towards each of the four programme goals, it also identified specific areas that required action to ensure programme coherence and a results orientation. Actions taken to address key recommendations include the following:

(a) *Efficient and optimum utilization of funds.* A multi-stage fund allocation process was implemented in 2010 and 2011 so that programme activities were better aligned with the four EEPCT goals.

(b) *Quality of monitoring and reporting.* The original results framework was revised to focus on a set of key process, output and results indicators to guide annual reporting in the last two years of the programme.

(c) *Capacity development for EiE.* Significant investments were made in EiE training across all regions. The capacity building strategy was deliberately inter-agency rather than agency specific (thus benefiting all emergency-prone countries) and reaching nearly 5,000 UNICEF, partner and government staff.

(d) *More critical and accurate reporting on results and analyses of implementation challenges and programme performance.* The EEPCT communication staff strengthened outreach activities and produced four media packages focused on efforts such as post-conflict transition in Sierra Leone and flood response in Pakistan. Annual reports included more analysis of challenges to implementation.

## Longer-term learning and action

12. The PREV and PRES have provided specific direction for the design of a new education and peacebuilding programme, focusing on resilience, security and the role of education within broader

peacebuilding processes, with continuing support from the Government of the Netherlands as follow-on to the EEPCT Programme. As a result, the new programme focuses on five key outcomes, with specific results indicators, against which country-specific interventions will be developed and reported on. It targets a more limited set of countries and has a separate outcome area on evidence building, knowledge generation and advocacy.

13. Learning from the programme and the evaluations is contributing to UNICEF work in education beyond emergencies and crises. It has strengthened both process and programming approaches for ongoing initiatives and continues to inform future work in basic education with an emphasis on equity and sustainability. Concrete examples include continuing to work across UNICEF sectors in all stages of programming, an early start to evaluability processes to inform planning, and the need for sufficient staff for programme management, including monitoring and evaluation. Strategic initiatives that have taken on EEPCT lessons include the UNICEF equity strategy, the Global Initiative on Out-of-School Children, adaptation of the child-friendly school approach and consolidation and incorporation of lessons related to education and disaster risk reduction. The programme has had a more catalytic effect on the role of UNICEF in the Global Partnership for Education and upstream policy work in general – utilizing strategies, within EEPCT in sector plans and implementation, encouraging emergency and contingency planning, and providing real-time feedback for discussions at the global level on implementation in countries with difficult conditions.

## **Conclusion**

14. While the PREV pointed out shortcomings in operational aspects and some inconsistent progress towards goals, it also recognized that the EEPCT programme strengthened UNICEF work on education in emergencies, with notable achievements at global, regional and country levels, bringing significant benefits to millions of children, often the most marginalized. Nevertheless, the EEPCT experience underscored the enormous scale and complexity of the challenges; it has highlighted the need for continuing commitment and increased resources for education in emergencies and conflict-affected contexts, so that education can play a fundamental role in recovery and reconstruction.

15. The EEPCT programme has demonstrated the need to engage further in understanding the issues and refining concepts and approaches. The recently completed literature survey and case studies on education and peacebuilding are a good example of how such reviews can support improved understanding and conceptualization, so that future programmes can be planned and developed within a robust and evidence-based framework.

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