WHAT'S POSSIBLE? LEARNING IN EDUCATION IN EMERGENCIES

SOCIAL AND BEHAVIOUR CHANGE IN EDUCATION KNOWLEDGE BRIEF SERIES

4 QUALITY EDUCATION

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SOCIAL + BEHAVIOUR CHANGE

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SNAPSHOT

Education Goals

Enabling access to school for children in conflict and crisis affected contexts, including displaced and hosting communities, enhancing learning and protection.

SBC Interventions

Community engagement; locally led solutions; co-creation and participatory process, attitude shifts towards discrimination and stigma; mental health and psychosocial support; life skills; parenting programmes.

This brief is part of a series about social and behaviour change in education. It is meant to make you think out of the box, reflect, ponder, and get inspired about the potential that social and behaviour change in education presents to ensure every child can learn in a safe and enabling environment. Rather than being a guidance per se it provides a snapshot of programmatic thinking and case examples, as well as a collection of resources, which you can use to continue exploring and unleashing the potential of Social and Behaviour Change in Education!

WHAT'S AT STAKE?

War, conflict, and crisis can upend a child's access to learning. Schools are often repurposed as shelter for displaced communities, which may disrupt learning for children in both displaced and host communities. Furthermore, discrimination against some groups of children may exacerbate disparity in access to formal learning settings. This can result in lower rates of attendance, enrolment, and completion and in turn heightened risk of protection concerns. Moreover, too often learning is reduced to literacy and numeracy in crisis settings, limiting a child's opportunity to grow holistically to deal with the mental and psychological consequences of trauma.

Acquiring basic skills such as reading and writing in the context of conflict, a climate disaster, or any other crisis can be a monumental challenge for a young child. Acquiring deep subject knowledge or practical life skills in a similar context may be entirely out of reach for an adolescent. Barriers to learning can include safety concerns and fear of violence, language barriers, and economic hardship. Add to that the traumatic stress that children, their parents, and their teachers are experiencing. While education is supposed to protect children from the dangers around them, including recruitment into

armed groups, violence, abuse, and exploitation, the exacerbated dangers in emergency contexts could ultimately lead to disengagement and dropout from the education system altogether, further jeopardizing the future of children and youth and society as a whole.

Children in conflict-affected countries are:

30% less likely

to complete primary school and

50% less likely

to complete lower-secondary school

An estimated

35 million children

around the world have been forcibly displaced.

Nearly 1/2

of school-age refugee children are out of school

As of 2023:

127 million crisis-affected children

were in school but not reaching proficiency levels in math and reading and girls are

2.5 more likely

to be out of school in conflict-affected countries compared to girls in other places

Girls are also at a heightened risk of gender-based violence in and going to and from schools. Furthermore, children and adolescents with disabilities are less likely than their peers to attend school, learn as much, and move successfully from primary to secondary education in emergency contexts.

In communities with large numbers of displaced people, adults and children alike often exhibit symptoms of traumatic stress. Violence against children - and between children - may be more prevalent due to fear, ongoing traumatisation, and insufficient access to mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS).

This knowledge brief seeks to showcase how we can better address this through a coherent social and behavior change approach building

on cross-sectoral interventions among organisational partners in support of affected children, families, and educators in emergencies. It provides two case examples of emerging work in Egypt and the Central African Republic (CAR) on applying social and behaviour change strategies to advance education in emergencies and protracted crises.

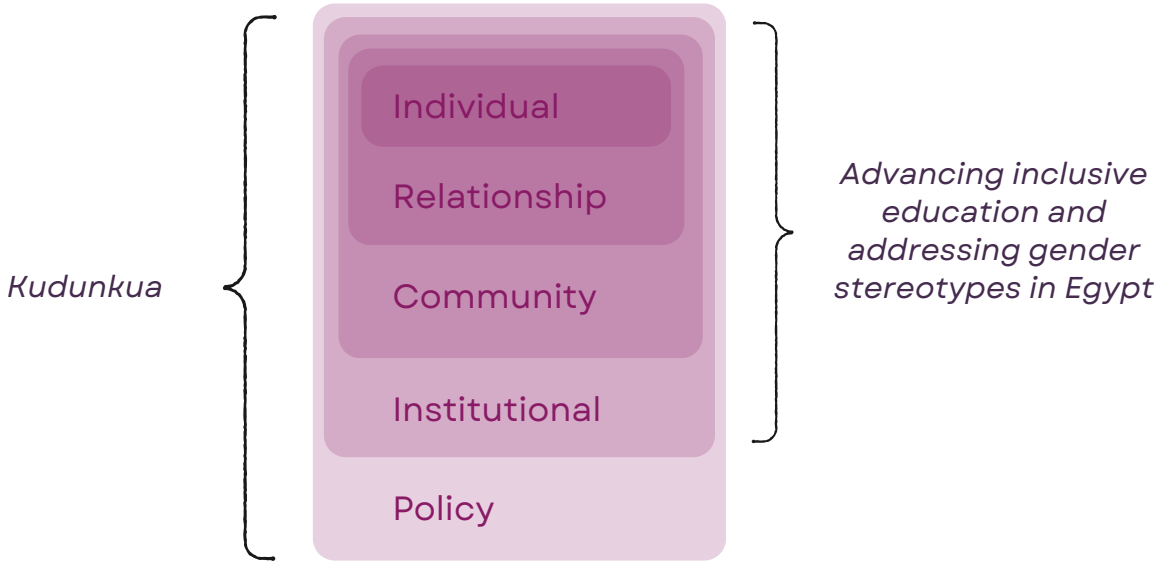
WHAT'S POSSIBLE?

A Social and Behaviour Change (SBC) approach to education can facilitate a better understanding of why children are left behind, out of school, not learning, experiencing violence, racism, stigma, or exclusion in and around schools. SBC is a means by which to identify and address the social and behavioural determinants that influence children's learning, access to, and experience of education. By effectively identifying and targeting social and behavioural challenges at all levels of the education system, SBC can provide strategies for addressing the identified challenges through a whole-of-school approach, and measure the effectiveness of education systems in creating an enabling, safe, and equitable learning environment for every child.

Adopting a social and behaviour change approach to education means tapping into a thus far under-used potential for enabling the education sector to contribute to overcome both educational and social challenges and barriers that cause distortion of educational outcomes with big societal consequences too. Moving into this space also means contributing to results in other areas such as advancing gender equality, disability inclusion, peacebuilding, fostering social cohesion, and preventing harmful social and gender norms and stereotypes that may be reproduced in and through education systems.

CREATING A BUBBLE OF LEARNING AND SAFETY - EMERGING PRACTICES

"We wanted a systematic approach to empowerment because educating in an emergency is not just about acquiring literacy and numeracy skills. Social emotional learning and life skills are just as essential. [1]"



Advancing inclusive education and addressing gender stereotypes in Egypt

Kundukua in Central African Republic

[1] Quote from a key informant interviewee in the UNICEF Egypt Country Office.

ADVANCING INCLUSIVE EDUCATION AND ADDRESSING GENDER STEREOTYPES IN EIE IN EGYPT

Promising practices

Recognise the problem

In Egypt, children, parents, and teachers experiencing traumatic stress in crisis contexts have been found to hold more tightly to their beliefs and attitudes as a means of guarding their ethnic or shared identity. This has created situations where ensuring equal access to school for girls and boys, or integrating children with disabilities in education is challenged when and if it differs from children's and parents' experiences from their home community.

Understand the drivers

Social and behaviour change approaches place the importance of context central in shaping decisions and behaviors. By taking the time to approach this challenge through building on insight rather than assumptions, the UNICEF team in Egypt came to understand how each unique refugee community context informs the community's mindsets, behaviours, and norms.

Coordinate the shift among people ready to change

With the aim of advancing inclusive education, UNICEF Egypt developed an internal working group, engaging colleagues from Social and Behaviour Change, Education, Child Protection, Health, and Field Office staff. The working group established clear goals; getting children into school while also challenging stereotypes regarding gender in education and advancing disability inclusion. To enable this, the intervention engaged stakeholders across

Promising practices

systems, community, and individual level, and ensured coordination with the Ministry of Education, stakeholders in the school governance association, and other aligned non-governmental partners on the ground.

Enable reflection, deliberation, and debate

Importantly, the intervention ensured space for dialogue with local partners and stakeholders during the design phase. Paying due attention to trauma in the community, adolescent girls and parents of children with disabilities were invited to inform the interventions and the ongoing change process. This enabled an evidence-based process with ownership from the community of displaced children and families, and engagement with strategic community influencers like teachers and school leaders, over the long term. Through the process of building relational trust and social cohesion with the community over time, a gender-transformative approach was introduced to increase equitable access to schools for girls and advance an inclusion programme for children with disabilities.

Results

The collaborative effort resulted in the expansion of the community-based school model, which primarily supports refugee or migrant children who are out of school, and the enrolment of 6,000 children with disabilities in 290 schools across seven regions.

The case illustrates how Egypt made promising efforts to ensure displaced children and adolescents from other parts of Africa and the Middle East can have access to schools, while at the same time seeking to change stereotypes about gender and disability among children, parents, and teachers.

KUNDUKUA IN CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

Promising practices

Recognize the challenge

Insecurity and conflict-related violence, population movements and natural disasters weigh heavily on children in the Central African Republic. 2.8 million people (nearly half of the country's population) including 1.2 million children will require humanitarian education assistance in 2024.

Key challenges for education include the security conditions to access schools, lack of trained teachers (66% of teachers in the country are parents who have taken up a teaching role), lack of infrastructure and overpopulated classrooms. Moreover, population movements have a direct impact on the ability of affected households to guarantee quality education for their children. Combined with other socio-structural factors, insecurity constitutes a barrier to access to education and reinforces school dropout in difficult to access areas.

The safety concerns on the way to school, lack of mental health and psycho-social support, and security attacks/incidents at school are some of the factors that are found to reinforce the perception of insecurity. The Ministry of Education's capacity to address the needs throughout the country are a challenge and financing of the education system is low leaving communities to carry a large part of efforts to ensure their children go to school. This has created a system, which is heavily reliant on donor funding. In pursuit of a more sustainable and people-driven solution, UNICEF CAR collaborated across education and social and behaviour change to work and dialogue with communities to address education needs and lack of learning.

Promising practices

Understand community engagement in context

In CAR, the approach of community engagement and dialogue to facilitate education is grounded in the understanding that the culture a community promotes and the patterns of thought and behaviour it cultivates, are largely defined by its members' collective sense of purpose. The example of the Kundukua initiative illustrates how a collective sense of purpose and awareness of the need for concerted action towards a common good increased school access and retention for children in CAR. A way to achieve this is by enabling a growing number of people to take charge of their social and intellectual development. Making them active agents of their own and their community's progress, rather than passive spectators of events beyond their control.

Enable reflection, deliberation, and debate

To enable community engagement in context and ensure co-creation and ownership in the development of the Kundukua initiative, the Education and SBC team in CAR undertook the following 10 key actions working across the socio-ecological framework to enhance children's access to education in 5 communities:

1. Institutional anchoring at policy level: At the Transforming Education Summit CAR's Head of State committed to elaborate a plan and tools to strengthen community dialogue to support retention and participation in education, with a particular emphasis on girls. On this basis UNICEF continued dialogue with the Ministry of Education (MoE) at national level to follow up on the commitment.

2. Community dialogue: Consultation with the MoE at sub-national level in 5 provinces and design of a community engagement for

education approach through a bottom-up driven process.

3. *Establishment of Kundukua in the villages and engagement in dialogue*: Secret ballot nomination of community representatives.
4. *Pilot modeling and implementation* of community dialogues and platforms in 20 villages with the involvement of the 5 decentralized authorities, co-creating the model and producing community action plans to support education.
5. *Validation workshop* of the developed tools held by the MoE to ensure adaption based on implementation.
6. *Village assemblies:* Presentation of the model and its objectives to communities. Request for feedback to improve the model.
7. *Endorsement of the tools by the MoE* in line with the commitments made by the Head of State at the Transforming Education Summit.
8. *Training of field actors* and MoE executives on the approach to enable the Kundukua to facilitate the initiative. Training included: how to hold village assemblies; how do to a community diagnosis on needs and opportunities in the locality; how to carry out home visits to families to discuss education topics; how to develop an action plan.
9. *Sharing the approach* during government seminars (high-level adoption).
10. *After one year of implementation*, *evaluation of the approach* and consideration of lessons learned before scaling up.

Example of concerted community effort:
A first element identified by one of the communities was the absence of girls in their level 2 class. The community then planned to follow the progress of the 4 girls who were in level 1 now to ensure they would progress to level 2 and onwards to middle school in future.

Promising practices

Results

The community dialogue strategy to stimulate demand for education and find strategies for school retention through community engagement in CAR was tested during the 2022-2023 school year. The modules and tools for community dialogue around schools were validated and adopted by the Ministry of Education. This enabled the pilot communities to design their own activities to benefit education in their villages and produce their own results.

These include:

- Community-developed action plans available without financial aid
- Improved school infrastructure
- Enhanced identification of out-of-school children
- Enhanced awareness of the value of education among parents
- Establishment of school gardens to support parent-teacher relations

In 2024 scale up has been launched with all the country's education inspectorates (IA), and implementation of the approach has started in 250 additional localities. The communities have made education their own goal and act as protagonists of initiatives around education.

Insights

The case examples provide insights on how SBC approaches are being used to diagnose both the problem and the solution by engaging multiple stakeholders - including children, parents, and teachers in refugee and host communities. This way the interventions developed advance inclusive education and community engagement for education in emergencies in a comprehensive and evidence-based manner. Key elements include collaboration and participatory approaches to diagnose social and

behavioural drivers that impact education outcomes and access to education, designing and implementing together with the affected communities, and applying fully locally owned and contextualised implementation strategies.

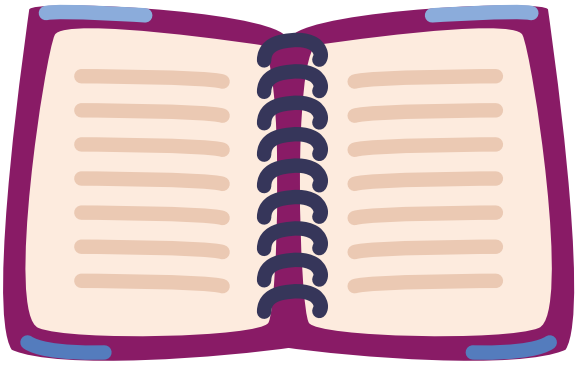
Every community context is unique. It is important to thoughtfully diagnose challenges when seeking to meaningfully leverage social and behaviour change approaches.

A key element in the two case examples involve applying approaches that leverage agency of change across the socio-ecological model. The socio-ecological model displays the complex interplay between the individual, parents/caregivers and family, community, institutional/societal, and policy and systems level. Education systems encompass all levels of the socio-ecological model, which helps understand the risks children face at each level as well as what can protect them and their education.

RUN WITH THE INSIGHTS AND CHANGE THE WORLD!

A larger body of literature and research amplify key elements of social and behaviour change approaches that are useful to advance education in emergencies, including:

- Engaging community members in initiatives as agents of change, rather than disempowered recipients, during times of crisis.
- Coordinating with government and non-governmental partners and stakeholders to leverage policy change aligned with programme change.
- Extending beyond shifting individual attitudes and behaviours, to shift community-wide social expectations during times of crisis.
- Increasing relational trust between children, parents, teachers, and other stakeholders in crisis settings.
- Using analysis to delineate the cognitive, social, and structural determinants for advancing education in both development and humanitarian contexts.
- Creating safe spaces for critical reflection on how to work collaboratively.



RELATED TOOLS AND RESOURCES

- National Girls Empowerment Program
- Positive Parenting Toolkit
- Gender Transformative Education
- Education, Children on the Move, and Inclusion in Education
- Life Skills
- INEE Guiding Principles on Integrating Conflict Sensitivity in Education Policy and Programming in Conflict-Affected and Fragile Contexts
- INEE Guidance Note on Conflict Sensitive Education
- Improving Well-being through Education Integrating Community Based Psychosocial Support into Education in Emergencies
- Everybody Wants to Belong
- Education in Emergencies-GenKit
- Education 2.0
- Learning Passport
- Parenting on the Move
- Moving Minds Alliance
- Positive Parenting
- Supporting Host Communities for Refugees Across Egypt
- Measuring Change in Times of Crisis
- Toward a Theory of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy
- Annual Review of Psychology Life Change, Social Identity, and Health
- Closing the Gap: Advancing Girls' Education in Contexts of Crisis and Conflict
- Bridging the Gap: Strengthening the Evidence Base for Gender-Responsive Education in Emergencies
- Education in emergencies: challenges of providing education for Rohingya children living in refugee camps in Bangladesh
- Effects of trauma-informed approaches in schools: A systematic review
- Ensuring Access to Education | UNHCR
- UNHCR The Right to Education and Opportunity
- USAID and Breakthrough ACTION R-CEFM Remedial Education Program
- INEE Framing Paper 3: Whole People, Holistic Approaches: Cross-Sectoral Action and Learning

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Guidelines for Community Engagement and Social Accountability in Education