

# **Guidelines**

## **for Humanitarian Assistance in the Education Sector**

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**Sida**

SWEDISH INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT  
COOPERATION AGENCY

Department for Cooperation with  
Non-Governmental Organisations and Humanitarian  
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## FOREWORD

These guidelines lay down the conditions, which shall be followed by Swedish and international organisations when applying for Sida grants from the humanitarian budget line within the education sector, according to SEKA decision 519/02, 18 June 2002. These guidelines form an integrated part of the overall *Directions for grants to non-governmental organisations for humanitarian assistance and conflict prevention, July 2000*.

The ambition with these guidelines has been to clearly set the priorities within the humanitarian sector when it comes to educational related projects, both in complex political emergencies and natural disasters.

I would like to thank those NGOs who have participated in the process of developing these guidelines.

Stockholm, November 5, 2002



Johan Schaar  
Head of Division

## **Guidelines for humanitarian assistance in the education sector**

### **Background**

The Division for Humanitarian Assistance and Conflict Management at Sida is responsible for channelling grants to organisations that implement contributions in humanitarian crises which are the result of natural disasters and/or conflicts.

The goal of humanitarian assistance is to relieve the acute needs that arise as a consequence of armed conflicts and natural disasters while promoting, as far as possible, long term sustainable solutions. Therefore, grants can be approved for primary and secondary education as well as vocational training and adult education.

Direct training programmes constitute approximately 6-8% of all Swedish humanitarian assistance. Indirect education programmes, for example providing food for school children and their families, are difficult to measure. Humanitarian crises often have far-reaching consequences for education structures in the countries concerned and for the access of people living in these countries to education programmes. Educational structures are often destroyed in connection with emergencies that involve refugees and displaced persons. In order to create stability and normality in a devastated society, educational programmes are of great importance and may not be regarded as merely having the aim of transferring knowledge .

The right to education for all is the basis of grants for education programmes. Concepts such as security, protection, reconciliation, and integration of individuals/groups also justify educational programmes in humanitarian situations. Educational programmes can offer a way of reaching vulnerable groups, reducing criminality and promoting peace. Including, for example, street children, former child soldiers and demobilised soldiers in education programmes, gives these groups an opportunity to enjoy a better life. Educational programmes can also involve practising reconciliation, finding peaceful solutions to conflicts, and raising awareness of the risks of mines.

As an appendix to Sida's education policy of 2001, there is a reference paper on education in emergencies, conflicts and post-conflict situations. This education policy shall be seen as a background to these guidelines.

Long-term educational programmes most often require a stable environment in order to have the best possible effect. A stable environment is rarely or never found in complex emergencies. At the same time it can be said that sections of the population (including refugees and displaced persons) often remain surprisingly stationary in complex disasters. Consequently, this constitutes a basis for planning programmes with a long-term perspective.

It is possible to find common patterns in emergencies/natural disasters, but nonetheless each disaster should be treated as a unique event. Providing educational programmes in their political, social-economic and cultural context, and understanding the importance of flexibility, are of central importance in the design of the programmes. One characteristic of a successful humanitarian education

programme is that it mobilises national resources and strengthens local structures. It is important to coordinate education programmes with the authorities in the country concerned and with national and international donors. It is also important that the programmes follow the guidelines laid down by the authorities or internationally recognised guidelines.

### **Guidelines:**

The following should be taken into consideration when drawing up an application:

#### **Access to education**

- The target group of educational programmes in natural disasters and emergencies is those parts of the local population that have been affected by the disaster, internally displaced persons and refugees. In order to promote peace, access to education is important in order to reintegrate soldiers into the community, and it is an important part of the process of reducing the recruitment of child soldiers. Access to education can also offer a way of promoting the return of internally displaced persons and of reducing the movement of these people, as well as of avoiding tensions between refugees/internally displaced persons and the local population.
- Education programmes shall give special priority to primary education. However, grants may be approved for secondary education and vocational training as well as adult education.
- In education programmes consideration should be given to children with special needs (children with functional disabilities, orphans, children affected by HIV/Aids or children that have undergone traumatic experiences).
- In the light of the broad definition of education programmes, girls and boys as well as women and men shall have equal rights to education. In particular, it is especially important to emphasise the right of girls to education. Underlying causes of cultural, social and economic obstacles to the education of girls should be included in the application.
- One prerequisite for the creation of access to and quality in education programmes is that an effective education environment is in place. School buildings shall be adapted to the prevailing situation and can include provisional solutions such as tents or other types of buildings. When the conditions are more stable, existing school buildings may be repaired.
- Providing food for children that go to school can offer a way of making it possible for them to remain in school and obtain an education. Experience shows, for example, that the provision of food in school can reduce the recruitment of child soldiers and can function as an incentive for children to complete their education and for their parents to keep them in school. At the same time, Sida sees complications with the provision of food on a temporary basis in schools, firstly since the children may leave school when the school

meals are no longer provided, and secondly since the provision of food has the effect that schools are not encouraged to cultivate their own crops.

### **The quality of education**

The quality of education is also of great importance in a humanitarian situation.

- To ensure the quality of education programmes, focus should be placed on the following five quality aspects: *the students* (healthy and well-fed children learn more easily); *the curriculum* (which should be relevant); *the pedagogical process* (participation); *the learning environment* (safety); and *the final measurable results*.
- Teacher training, teaching methods, curricula and training materials should be adapted to the prevailing situation.

### **The sustainability of the educational programme**

- A humanitarian education programme should have a long term development perspective. Even in an emergency, education programmes should be drawn up in cooperation with the local authorities, if possible.
- In order to strengthen the sustainability of the programme, it should be implemented as far as possible through local structures and make use of local resources in all respects, providing that this does not impoverish other national structures.
- The local community should be an active partner in the education programmes, for example parents' associations and education committees can participate in the design of the programmes and in their implementation.
- When drawing up educational programmes for refugees, the programmes should be based, whenever possible, on the education system in the country of origin of the refugees. This can be achieved by establishing contacts with the educational authorities in the country concerned.
- The programme should be coordinated with all different organisations in the education sector. The programme should have a harmonised approach.

### **References**

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