

Negotiating Change: Participatory Curriculum Design in Emergencies

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Abstract

This paper examines an important component of the developing field of education in emergencies: curriculum decision-making processes. The paper argues that in order to fully meet the commitment articulated by the INEE Minimum Standards to provide quality education for all, curricula decisions cannot be ignored or postponed until after a crisis has occurred. Practitioners, advocates, and policy makers in the field of education in emergencies must recognize that in order for quality education to be provided equitably, curricular decisions must not only be fully part of the remit for those organisations, agencies, or governments providing education in emergencies, but the decision-making processes must be transparent, inclusive, and participatory. The INEE Minimum Standards as they continue to be promoted, contextualised, and institutionalised, could play a crucial role in this process.

An increasing amount of attention has been paid to education in emergencies during the last decade. The principal mandates of humanitarian relief organisations typically involve provisions of food, shelter, water, sanitation, and healthcare. Education is often seen as part of longer-term development work rather than a necessary intervention in emergency responses. Today, attitudes and assumptions are changing as education is increasingly included in the planning and provision of humanitarian relief.[2]

However, when education is included as part of a humanitarian response, there is a tendency to focus on the provision of school supplies. One example of this is the UNICEF 'School in a Box' kits, which comprise basic materials such as pencils and chalk, but on their own do not provide quality intervention (Anderson, Martone, Perlman Robinson, Rognerud & Sullivan-Owomoyel, 2006). The Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE) is a body working to ensure that education in emergencies is not only part of a humanitarian response, but also that the education meets minimum standards of quality, access, and accountability. INEE has conducted broad-based advocacy efforts to ensure that the importance of education in emergencies is globally recognized. It has also facilitated a global consultation to develop a set of minimum standards for education in emergencies, chronic crises, and early reconstruction.

The resulting document contains six categories of standards, including: Community Participation, Analysis, Access and Learning Environment, Teaching and Learning, Teachers and Other Education Personnel, and Education Policy and Coordination (Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies [INEE], 2004a). The Minimum Standards also include Key Indicators and Guidance Notes to help in their implementation. The Minimum Standards Handbook has been adopted and used in over 80 countries and 25,000 copies have been distributed to humanitarian agency staff, educators, government ministries, donors, and multilateral agencies (INEE, 2006). Workers across six continents have been trained in their use, and increasing efforts are being made by the network to further contextualise the global standards so they may be a useful tool in any situation, from post-crisis to reconstruction and development.

This paper examines an important component of education in emergencies: curriculum decision-making processes. It argues that in order to fully meet the commitment articulated by the INEE Minimum Standards to provide quality education for all, curricula decisions cannot be ignored or postponed until an indeterminate 'post crisis' phase of development. Practitioners, advocates and policy makers in the field of education in emergencies must recognize that in order for high quality education to be provided with accountability and equity, curricular decisions must not only be fully part of the remit for those organisations, agencies or governments providing education in emergencies, but the decision-making processes must be transparent, inclusive, and participatory.

This is not an easy task. Curriculum development or revision in times of stability and peace can be fraught with sensitivities: issues of power, knowledge, and collective identity emerge in debates over what should be taught and how. In emergencies, particularly in those involving violent conflict where education itself can exacerbate or cause tensions, these issues become even more difficult to surmount. However, this paper will argue that participation is itself one way of responding to exactly these challenges. It can occur at different stages of the decision-making process, and could begin in small ways in individual classrooms and schools, without necessarily entailing wholesale national educational reform. This paper draws upon the experience, literature, and practice of educationalists working on negotiated curriculum theory. Negotiated curricula are learning plans that are collaboratively developed by teachers, students, and occasionally parents. Proponents of negotiated curriculum techniques highlight the advantages of encouraging students to be active agents in their own learning as they contribute to the choices and directions of their learning. Teachers are not presented as experts of knowledge, rather teachers and students engage in joint problem solving, the sharing of responsibility and mutual learning. These theories of negotiation in education provide a starting point in exploring how participatory curriculum design might be attempted in emergency situations.

Through examining literature from a number of sub-fields from the education and development disciplines, this paper aims to provide insights into how the ultimate goal of quality education for all expressed in the INEE Minimum Standards might be realised. The argument is grounded in an in-depth study of the INEE Minimum Standards and their development as well as other tools that have been developed to aid practitioners in the field. It also draws upon the author's observations and analysis after participating in several professional trainings on the INEE Minimum Standards and having informal conversations with members of the Network who use the Minimum Standards in their work. The pedagogical approach and practical techniques from contemporary progressive curriculum scholarship provide a theoretical framework and a useful model for adoption and adaptation. This problematisation of the current discourse is designed to incite discussion of the critical issue of curricula design in emergencies and to prompt much needed empirical research into current practices in order that we might more fully understand the opportunities for change that emergency contexts present.

The term "emergency" encompasses a wide range of situations. These include natural disasters such as earthquakes, hurricanes, droughts and floods as well as complex emergencies that are 'man-made,' often caused by conflict or civil unrest (INEE, 2004a). Education is increasingly recognized for providing life-saving and life-sustaining relief in acute emergency phases and is a necessary component of early recovery and ongoing development (INEE, 2006). In this way education can provide continuity across all stages of the relief development continuum. There is growing recognition that "all individuals - children, youth and adults - have a right to education during emergencies" (INEE, 2004a, p. 5), in part because of education's normative status as a

fundamental human right enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Covenant on the Rights of the Child, the Geneva and Refugee Conventions, and other international protocols and principles (Women's Commission, 2004). Furthermore, there is increasing evidence that education can enhance psychosocial wellbeing, ensure protection, facilitate the provision of other key services (such as health or nutrition) and disseminate life-saving knowledge (such as landmine awareness or HIV/AIDS education) (INEE, 2004a).

Not only is education in emergencies increasingly recognised as a central part of the humanitarian remit, but studies are now being carried out to investigate the potential for educational innovation in crisis and early recovery contexts. The crisis situation is, by definition, one of dramatic and often swift social change, usually having substantial impact upon education systems. A situation of wide and substantial social and educational change reveals structural power relationships in the curriculum design processes, prompting further questions with implications for the INEE Minimum Standards as they develop and humanitarian policy more widely.

The work of the International Rescue Committee (IRC), an international NGO that does substantial emergency education programming, provides one example of educational innovation in crisis.[3] During the years of Taliban rule in Afghanistan, when schooling for girls and women was not permitted, local communities had to improvise. Many established clandestine home-based schools run from the homes of community members and supported with training and materials by the IRC (Winthrop, 2006). These schools have continued to operate since the fall of the Taliban in 2001, educating both boys and girls with no access to government schools. Not only do these home-based schools improve access to education, particularly for rural children, they have fostered success in completion rates and exam results compared to government schools (Kirk and Winthrop, 2006). The current Afghani government is exploring the potential of mainstreaming these home and community-based schools into the government education system. The chronic crisis experienced in girls' education during the Taliban years led to innovations and understandings about the value of small class sizes and close teacher/student/parent relationships which may well not have developed in other circumstances. The fall of the Taliban regime and the establishment of a more moderate government has incited widespread national change within the education system. Crisis situations can provide an opportunity for educational transformation as existing power structures breakdown or change.

Yet in some such situations educational changes do not necessarily result in productive innovations. Therefore it is important to understand the process of educational development in order to positively influence this potential for change. Changes may ensure increased empowerment for those with less power, but not necessarily. They may conversely create new hierarchies or rebuild former power structures within educational decision-making. The question then for curriculum design is who directs this change, and how substantial is it? The following sections of this paper discuss current approaches to curricula development during and after emergencies and make the case for participatory practice in curricula design processes. Arguing that negotiated curriculum techniques can provide a useful model for genuine participation by all stakeholders, including students, the paper concludes by calling for practical steps to be taken to incorporate elements of genuine participation into institutional structures and practices of individual educators. As they continue to be promoted, contextualised, and institutionalised, the INEE minimum standards could play a crucial role in this process.

Curricula Development During and After Emergencies

This paper takes a broad view of the concept of curriculum design, seeing curricula as living documents that involve a design process that goes beyond narrow content and skill-based decisions, engaging a number of actors at different levels in the process and within complex socioeconomic, political, and cultural frameworks. Unpacking curricula decision-making processes provides insight into the relationship between people within those structures and sheds light on the relationship between knowledge and power. The knowledge-power relationship operates in two directions: on the one hand educational professionals at every level (with specialist knowledge) who contribute to the development of a curriculum have clear power over priorities and outcomes. On the other hand, those in positions of power may influence and define “knowledge” and give it value. “Knowledge...far from being constructed in isolation from power relations, is embedded in them (or against them)” (Kothari, 2001, p. 141). This paper will explore the ways in which participation and negotiated curriculum processes can help to address the iniquities within these knowledge-power structures.

The INEE Minimum Standards (2004a) give guidelines on the possible need to revise curricula, stating that existing curricula should be:

reviewed for appropriateness to the age or developmental level, language, culture, capacities and needs of the learners affected by the emergency. Curricula are used, adapted or enriched as necessary.... Where curriculum development or adaptation is required, it is conducted with the meaningful participation of stakeholders and considers the best interests and needs of the learners. (p. 56)

However, the Guidance Note relating to this standard states that “curriculum development can be a long and difficult process...[as] in emergencies curricula are often adapted from either the host country, the country of origin or other emergency settings” (INEE, 2004a, p. 57). The substantial UNESCO International Institute for Educational Planning’s [IIEP] (2006) Guidebook for Planning Education in Emergencies and Reconstruction similarly establishes the potential for curricula development: “an emergency or post-conflict situation...often provides a critical opportunity for educational authorities to examine the curriculum and revise it” (p. 6). However, the strategies and Guidance Notes actually recommend that during an emergency, little more than the removal of “elements that may fuel conflict” from the curriculum are necessary (INEE, 2004a, p. 2-6). This therefore makes it easier “to insert important non-traditional topics into the learning process, such as health and hygiene education...environmental and landmine awareness,” with the suggestion that more substantial “curriculum review and renewal” typically take place “in the post-conflict situation” (IIEP, 2006, p. 2-6).

Given the extreme emergency circumstances, it is clear why local educational professionals and humanitarian providers often use curricula from other contexts or slightly modify existing documents rather than attempt wholesale redesign of curricula in a crisis. However, a danger of this approach is that a supposedly temporary expedient may in fact last for years. A prime example of this is the case of the Rwandan history curriculum. After the genocide in 1994, all national history curricula from primary to tertiary levels were suspended due to the highly contested nature of the historiography and the fear that ethnic tensions might be exacerbated. Twelve years later, although absence of the curriculum is a matter for debate, there is still no national history being taught in Rwandan schools, a failure that is itself detrimental to the reconciliation process (Hodgkin, 2006).

The deferral of meaningful curriculum review and reform is also disadvantageous in that it fails to engage affected populations in the decision-making process. In fact, although it might appear to be neutral, such a decision never is. The rationale seems to be that because major curricula change is not considered in the height of emergencies, participation is not viewed as essential. This rationale stems from the premise that decisions about the nature and extent of change come before decisions about process, in particular who is involved in these decisions. The primary focus should instead be on the process rather than on the content or outcome of curricula changes. In other words, our starting point should be the process, and the extent to which these processes involve inclusive and participatory decision-making.

Participating in Change

The development paradigm has swung from being often dictatorial, patriarchal, and patronising to one that is more concerned with participatory programming (Henkel and Stirrat, 2001). There is much written about the need for 'ownership,' community 'buy-in,' and 'bottom up planning' that is not reliant on one-size-fits-all approaches, all-knowing foreign experts or regular monetary hand-outs. Humanitarian actors within the last decade have also recognised the rights of affected populations to participate in making decisions that affect them and the duty of the humanitarian community to be accountable not only to their donors, but also to the populations they serve.

The Sphere (2004) Humanitarian Charter and accompanying Minimum Standards in Disaster Response were developed in the years after the Rwandan genocide, a time of serious reflection that represented a sea change in humanitarian strategy and practice. The cornerstone of this project is the recognition and expression of commitment to the rights of people affected by disasters, in particular the obligation to provide "quality and accountability" in the process of service delivery (p. 5). The first standard in the Sphere Handbook refers to participation: "The disaster-affected population actively participates in the assessment, design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation" (p. 28). However, the key indicators which purport to measure the achievement of this standard display a limited conception of participation, requiring that local populations "receive information...and are given the opportunity to comment" (p. 28). The INEE Minimum Standards also include a Minimum Standard on participation - a category which is a cross-cutting standard that focuses on community participation in educational planning and response. However, the indicators in the INEE Minimum Standards are far stronger than those in the Sphere Handbook, with specific suggestions such as "the community education committee holds public meetings to conduct social audits of education activities and their budgets" (INEE, 2004, p. 14). The accompanying Guidance Notes are also highly detailed.

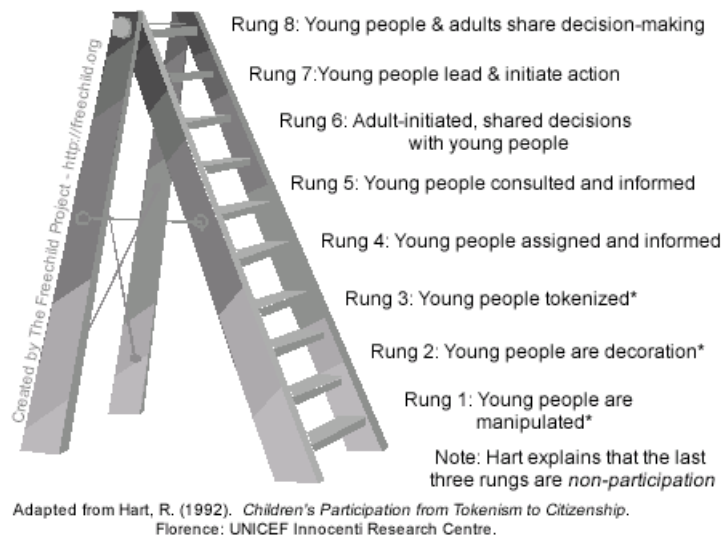
Here it is interesting to refer to the documentation of the development process of the Minimum Standards. In 2004, four field-based regional consultations (involving 137 delegates from over 51 countries) each produced their own set of regional standards. The regional documents, in particular the Asia Collective Consultation Report (2004), contain substantial recognition of opportunities for participation:

All agencies (government, international, NGOs) must coordinate to provide the necessary technical support and material resources to enable the stakeholders to engage in the local curriculum development process.... Educational reform...can be activated by participatory local curriculum development processes. (INEE, 2004b, p. 8)

The final comprehensive version of the Minimum Standards, while emphasizing participation in curriculum design more than the version created by Sphere, is more cautious than some of these regional documents. Perhaps this reflects a perception among expert technical advisors who drafted the final INEE Minimum Standards Handbook that anything more extensive would be unrealistic. Indeed, although a criticism often levelled at the INEE Minimum Standards is to claim that the standards are too high, [4] in the case of curriculum reform and design, the INEE Standards are perhaps more “realistic” and “minimal” rather than “Minimum.”

While both the Sphere Handbook (2004) and INEE Minimum Standards advocate community participation, what that ought to entail in a particular context will vary enormously. We should therefore regard participation not as an absolute standard but rather as a continuum ranging from tokenistic presence through genuine consultation to full joint decision-making. A useful metaphorical expression of the varying degrees of participation is Roger Hart’s (1992) Ladder of Young People’s Participation:

Roger Hart's Ladder of Young People's Participation



When considering participation in the context of an emergency, there are factors that both facilitate and constrain participation, especially at the top end of the continuum. Crisis situations often involve the disruption of the status quo-- traditional power relationships are altered and there may be an opportunity for more people to participate in decisions that affect their own lives. As we have already seen, this can trigger innovation in education and other societal constructs. Therefore, crisis situations can be fertile ground for educational development. In emergency contexts, those working to facilitate or provide education programmes will be humanitarian or development agencies that often consider their missions, and mandates, to be apolitical and neutral. However, their position of power and influence as a result of their financial and human resources inevitably causes new power structures to evolve around their operations.

Often, while development and humanitarian relief agencies pay lip-service to the ideal of participatory programming, the reality is that participation is limited to a very particular normative framework, based on international and humanitarian law or human rights principles, for example. Agencies are also limited in what they can offer by their own mandates and donor-driven criteria.

Participation may occur, but only on the terms of the development agencies themselves, an approach which fails to give adequate weight to the more evidence-based approaches comprised of ground-up needs, expectations, capacities, and the aspirations of the affected populations themselves. Although the aspirations and expectations of a population may correspond with an agency's policies, many do not. For example, a needs assessment might reveal a strong local demand for education that cannot be fulfilled by an agency where education is outside its mandate. Or a local population's views on education for girls may not be compatible with an agency's gender equality-based policies. Such competing expectations present real challenges regarding the achievement of genuine participation. Further, curriculum development initiatives will often rely on the involvement of external actors – including humanitarian aid and educational development professionals – managed and funded by westerners. Therefore, participation itself may be imposed from the outside, a Western concept that is alien within the given context.

While certain aspects of education in emergency programming may be open to participatory processes, the construction of school buildings or the recruitment and retention of teachers, for example, the realm of curriculum reform may be seen as something that should be reserved for “the experts,” without considering the decision-making stages that are part of any curricula design process. Allison Anderson (personal communication, February 26, 2007), an INEE Focal Point on Minimum Standards, commented, “the regional consultation process in 2004 was filled with debates over who had the right to develop curricula, with government officials voicing their feeling that this is the domain of governments.” Whereas decisions about school buildings and teacher compensation may be seen as having marginal importance, decisions about what is learnt and how (i.e., knowledge) are connected to power not only in the educational process but within social structures more generally. Thus, often the processes that may have wide social impact are not open to participatory decision-making.

The issues raised above concern some of the potential problems with participatory decision-making. In considering how true participation can be extended to include children and youth, there are further barriers to surmount. Youth participation should be a crucial dimension of any humanitarian or development programming; however given the particular educational context, curriculum design in crisis is even more in need of youth input. Of those civilians affected by armed conflict, a disproportionate number are youth, who are most likely to be recruited as soldiers, are primary targets of sexual violence, and are most likely to miss out on education (United Nations Department for Social and Economic Affairs [UN-DSEA], 2005). Youth are subject to several cumulative barriers when it comes to true participation during emergencies. Not only are they part of a disadvantaged community in crisis, often with a limited voice within local or external power structures, in emergency situations they are labelled as ‘victims’ and/or ‘survivors’ who often do not possess recognized expertise. Often in emergency situations children and youth are characterised as being vulnerable victims in need of protection rather than active participants.

Attention to the experiences, roles, needs and aspirations of young people in specific conflict zones is rendered impossible by an approach that assumes ‘trauma,’ ‘vulnerability,’ and ‘victimhood’ as defining and universal characteristics of children who have lived through war. (Hart, 2006, p. 9)

Most fundamentally, they are not adults and therefore not viewed as capable of being able to make decisions that affect them and their communities. Participation guidelines frequently focus on formal community organisations such as Parent Teacher Associations, which will often exclude youth input.

The Negotiated Curriculum

Contemporary progressive education debates have prompted the development of new theories of curriculum design. The suggestion that curricula should be developed using negotiation techniques is one such school of thought; this paper considers the potential value of applying these theories within emergency education contexts. The concept of negotiated curricula entails inviting students to contribute to and modify the curriculum. All parties – students, teachers, even parents – are given an opportunity to express their points of view, needs and wants and to work together to reach an outcome that is satisfactory for all concerned (Boomer, 1992). A central part of negotiation is the ownership principle: people tend to work hard for things they wish to own or to keep and enhance that which they already own. Theorists argue that negotiation brings with it a sense of ownership, and it is this active, intentional and participatory involvement in the decision making processes that “results in more effective learning than does the passivity that attends the performance of a teacher’s imposed pedagogical pattern” (Boomer, 1992, p. 16). A key component of negotiated curriculum theory is the recognition that curricula and their enactment are always “embedded in a rich socio-political context which must be acknowledged, interpreted and dealt with since it strongly influences and constrains classroom and institutional possibilities” (Boomer, 1992, p. vii). Negotiated curriculum techniques aim to recognise and make explicit existing power relationships inside classrooms, schools, education systems, and within society itself. In doing so, they work to offset the harmful effects of the ever-present inequalities of power present in schools and society more generally (Boomer, 1992).

An approach based on negotiated curriculum techniques may be a good point to start to address some of these genuinely difficult problems associated with ensuring true participation. A central part of any negotiated process is communication and openness. Certain constraints and imperatives need not damage the participatory relationship if they are made explicit. There will always be power relationships in schools and society generally.

...[the] harmful effects of power will be offset only if those in power make quite explicit the values, assumptions and criteria on which they base their actions. In this way others will have a better chance to defend themselves, more opportunity to question and more chance of negotiation. (Boomer, 1992, p. 8)

As I have identified the ways in which youth are disempowered in emergency contexts, this principle of recognizing the barriers to their participation and the potential of youth to contribute is all the more important.

As we have explored, one difficulty with true participation is the non-negotiable nature of certain norms and values, such as basic human rights for the development and humanitarian aid communities. What negotiated curriculum methodologies teach us is that those in power (relief workers, development practitioners, classroom teachers) must make these values and assumptions fully explicit; only then will the disempowered be able to question, negotiate and participate on a truly level playing field. A negotiated curriculum does not imply that every facet of the curriculum is necessarily open to negotiation. It does, however, require a full explanation about what is and is not negotiable and, additionally, a commitment to negotiate those aspects that are open to negotiation. Explanatory openness should also apply to externally imposed constraints such as an agency’s mandate, financial, and material resources.

In recognizing the real difficulties with participation that have been identified above, this paper suggests that a constructive approach emphasizing the process is at least as important as any outcome. Adopting a negotiated design approach allows expertise to be valued in a creative way and does not disempower others in the process. Those leading curriculum development processes should adopt the role of facilitator rather than directing choice:

The new role is one of process helper, facilitator, resource linker, and public documenter. These concepts of role provide the context within which the teacher is still a source of ideas, an expert, a provider of information, a guide and leader. (Boomer, 1992, p. 28)

This involves taking risks. If power is shared with others, the result will be a compromise and may not align with the facilitator's objectives. If the facilitator has been open about any non-negotiable elements, this degree of power sharing and unpredictability of outcome is acceptable. This compromise should not be seen as a giving up of ideals by the facilitator, but rather as an opportunity for mutual learning. The implication of this is that learners (i.e., youth) are essential to the participatory process even in emergencies. Borrowing from the work of Paolo Freire (1970), curriculum developers should be learners and learners should be curriculum developers, and as Boomer (1992) argues: "all negotiators...are learners" (p. 48).

In the context of education in emergencies, how extensive should participation be? Is it realistic in a crisis to expect full participation at every point of the decision-making process? Participation is only genuine if it gives those involved real input into the decision making process, but the level of this input can range from the broadest national strategies to smaller-scale immediate decisions in classrooms. As Kothari (2001) argues, power must be analysed as something which circulates, and we should not rely on "the dichotomies of macro/micro, central/local, powerful/powerless, where the former are sites and holders of power and the latter the subjects of power. Instead, all individuals are vehicles of power" (p. 142). If we recognize that "power relations run through a particular social body and are not confined to particular central sites or located solely among the elite" then we can also identify ways in which participation can be used in decision-making at different levels (p. 150). At some of these levels negotiation can encompass all relevant decisions, whereas at others there will be many more constraints, but they should be explicit, justified and subject to constant review.

Conclusion: Participatory Curriculum Design in Emergencies

In this paper I have examined curriculum decision-making processes in the context of education in emergencies. I have explored the ways in which negotiated curriculum techniques can contribute to genuine participation by all stakeholders, including youth, in these processes. Quite rightly, education is now seen as an important part of humanitarian response to emergencies. The INEE Minimum Standards for Education in Emergencies promote the assurance of educational access and quality for those affected by crisis. They recognise that education is not something that should wait until an emergency situation has stabilised, but needs to be part of the first phase of humanitarian action.

This paper contends that curriculum development should be a part of the educational planning process from the beginning and should not be, as is sometimes the case, treated as something that cannot properly be considered in a crisis and therefore should wait until after a return to stability. The transitional period during which curriculum development is not implemented can sometimes last for years. The postponement of curricula decisions is never neutral and the maintenance of

an existing curriculum will always have implications for both students and society. This paper argues that the societal change and disruptions to the balance of power structures that are a feature of crisis situations provide an opportunity for curriculum development that should be capitalised upon.

Any curriculum development process should involve a careful analysis of power relationships at both macro and micro levels. This is particularly pertinent in emergency contexts, where power dynamics shift and groups of particularly disempowered and vulnerable people are often those most affected. Participation is increasingly recognised as important in humanitarian contexts, and within the field of education in emergencies. This paper argues that not only should curriculum design be integrated into the first phase of education programmes in emergencies, but also that the curriculum design process should encompass effective and genuine models of participatory decision making. It is recognised that true participation is difficult to facilitate, and is a risky process in that outcomes are not always predictable. Negotiated curriculum theories provide useful conceptual frameworks for thinking about participation, as well as practical techniques for planning, design, and implementing new or revised curricula. At the heart of this approach is an insistence on open communication, concerning not just the goals or objectives of the curriculum but also the decision-making process itself and the inevitable internal and external constraints.

If a negotiated and fully participatory approach were to be wholly integrated into humanitarian programmes it would necessitate significant reassessment of the structures and mode of work of the humanitarian community. Because of the need for openness and explicit communication that participatory aid programmes require, humanitarian relief organisations would have to develop substantial and at least medium-term relationships with the host community. Yet we can learn from negotiated curricula techniques that negotiation and participation may operate on many levels. Efforts should be made to incorporate elements of genuine participation even within existing organisational structures and operational practices. Organisations involved in planning education in emergencies should actively consider and incorporate participatory and negotiated curricula reform as part of their remit. Although the INEE Minimum Standards make a significant contribution to the inclusion of participation in education in emergencies, they downplay the possibilities for participation in curriculum design. However, like the best curricula, the INEE Minimum Standards are not static. Rather, they are a dynamic entity - developing and continually being monitored and evaluated. Considering how the INEE Minimum Standards should evolve as they are revised in the coming years, attention must be paid to the lessons that can be learned from negotiated curriculum theories and practice.

Notes

- [1]. The author would like to thank Marise Cremona, Allison Anderson and Celia Oyler for their helpful feedback on drafts of this paper.
- [2]. It was recently decided that education will be included within the UN Inter-Agency Standing Committee's (IASC) cluster initiative. The IASC endorsement of education as part of the cluster process is a significant achievement as it indicates not only the recognition by the international community of the critical role that education plays in humanitarian response but also their willingness to support its provision. (Communication from the INEE Secretariat, February 2007).
- [3]. The International Rescue Committee is working with the UNESCO International Institute for Educational Planning and the University of Amsterdam to develop a number of casestudies investigating opportunities for positive change within or in the aftermath of conflict-related emergencies.

- [4]. One Save the Children Manager and member of INEE has commented: "it is a problem that the Minimum Standards ended up more like maximum standards. This means that the standards will usually not be fulfilled in most of the emergencies in which we work" (Save the Children, confidential informant). A UNESCO employee in Nepal, also part of the INEE network, similarly stated: "The standards are too high. In Nepal, even in normal times, such standards are not met and therefore, in times of emergency, it is not relevant for the country to have such high standards" (UNESCO, confidential informant).

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