Education in Emergencies Toolkit

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Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation SDC



Tool 3

From education to durable solutions - and back: closing the Nexus loop for displaced learners

1. Purpose

This tool provides a concise overview of how education contributes to sustainable outcomes for displaced populations. It is particularly relevant for supporting advocacy in favour of education but is also helpful for programming.

The tool demonstrates how progress towards 'durable solutions' enables equitable, quality and system-integrated education, in line with a Humanitarian–Development–Peace (HDP) Nexus approach. Based on the Inter-agency Standing Committee (IASC) Framework on Durable Solutions for Internally Displaced Persons, it is relevant to working with displaced people including:

- Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs): displaced within their country, under national jurisdiction
- Refugees: displaced across borders, often facing legal and system-integration barriers
- Returnees: individuals or families returning to areas of origin after displacement
- Mixed migration settings: migrants driven by multiple factors who travel along similar routes—often illegally—with diverse legal statuses, vulnerabilities and protection risks, and exposed to rights violations along their journey

Education responses with displacement-affected communities must be designed on the basis that displaced people do not live in isolation and often share services and risks with host communities. A community and area-based approach is essential to avoid parallel systems, reduce tensions, and support collective outcomes.

2. Key roles of education across the three pillars of durable solutions

The IASC Framework defines durable solutions as a **process** through which displaced persons can enjoy their rights without discrimination. Education plays a structuring role across the three interlinked pillars:

Protection

Education contributes to protection by:

- Providing safe and structured spaces that support physical safety, psychosocial wellbeing and dignity.
- Supporting informed and autonomous decision making by strengthening access to information and life skills including social and emotional competencies.
- Reducing protection risks linked to displacement, such as exclusion, child and early labour, and or negative coping mechanisms such as child and early forced marriage.

Socio-economic recovery

Education supports recovery when it:

- Builds foundational (social, emotional and academic), transferable and vocational skills needed for livelihoods and employment.
- Strengthens economic self-reliance, reducing long-term dependency on humanitarian assistance.
- Enables reintegration into local economies in contexts of return, local integration or relocation.

Social cohesion and peace (see also Tool 2)

Education contributes to social cohesion by:

- Promoting non-discrimination and inclusion within shared education systems.
- Enabling participation in public and community life, especially for young people.
- Supporting conflict-sensitive, peace-supporting pedagogies and teaching approaches that reduce tensions in displacement-affected communities.

3. How education contributes to durable solutions (IASC criteria)

Education directly supports progress against several IASC criteria for durable solutions, notably:

- Safety and security: regular access to education depends on freedom of movement and physical safety.
- Adequate standard of living: education is a core basic service, alongside health, water, sanitation and shelter.
- Access to livelihoods and employment: learning pathways enable income generation and economic recovery.
- Participation in public affairs: education strengthens civic participation, voice and accountability.
- Non-discrimination: inclusion of displaced learners in national systems signals equal rights and status.

As a result, education is both a means to achieve durable solutions and a key indicator of progress towards them.

4. How durable solutions enable access to quality education

Progress towards durable solutions creates the conditions for sustainable education outcomes by:

- Improving security and freedom of movement, enabling consistent school attendance.
- Restoring access to personal documentation, which is essential for enrolment, certification and progression.
- Strengthening livelihoods, reducing financial and social barriers to schooling.
- Integrating displaced learners into national systems, avoiding parallel or temporary structures.
- Enhancing participation and governance, ensuring displaced communities can influence education planning.

When durable solutions advance, education shifts from an emergency response to a system-embedded public service, accessible to all.