

Framing Note

Education in Emergencies Toolkit

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Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confédération suisse
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Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation SDC

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As the number, scale and duration of crises increase around the globe, children and young people see their right to education increasingly jeopardised. Education in Emergencies and Protracted Crises (EiEPC) programming is a way to ensure the right to education even during crises.

Education in Emergencies emphasises the importance of access to and quality of education, addresses the diverse needs of learners across all age groups and offers crucial protection elements, both physical and psychosocial, that can be lifesaving in crisis situations. EiEPC equips children and young people with the tools for survival and lays the foundation for future prospects, resilience, and sustainable development. It plays a crucial role in reducing vulnerabilities, fostering self-reliance, and achieving durable solutions for children and young people affected by emergencies, and can contribute to peace and security.

This Education in Emergencies toolkit aims to support the SDC and partners in expanding and strengthening the SDC's contributions for children and young people affected by emergencies and protracted crises. It can be applied at strategic and programmatic levels, to inform country programmes and projects, support implementing partners, guide policy dialogue and help with quality assurance.

Aligned with the humanitarian-development-peace Nexus, recommendations throughout the toolkit apply in fragile contexts and protracted crises and all types of humanitarian crisis contexts such as forced displacement, conflict, disasters associated with natural hazards and health crises.

The toolkit consists of different modules that describe sector standards and best practice approaches for various sub-themes in EiEPC. All modules include examples and concrete tools illustrating how EiEPC can be integrated into humanitarian responses and protracted crisis programmes. It is important to underline that all tools and approaches presented in this toolkit need to be contextualised to be relevant for the specific needs, risks and vulnerabilities of the children and young people they aim to support.

Additional tailored support from the SDC head office or Regional Education/Protection/EiEPC specialists and the SDC education backstopping team is available if required. You can contact us at eenetwork@eda.admin.ch

Education in Emergencies definition

The Inter-agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE), defines EiE as "quality learning opportunities for all ages in situations of crisis, including early childhood development, primary, secondary, non-formal, technical, vocational, higher and adult education. EiE provides physical, psychosocial, and cognitive protection that can sustain and save lives. Common situations of crisis in which EiE is essential include conflicts, situations of violence, forced displacement, disasters, and public health emergencies."

Switzerland's engagement in Education in Emergencies

Education in Emergencies is a strategic focus area for Switzerland. This commitment is highlighted in Switzerland's International Cooperation Strategy 2025-2028, in which EiE as part of Protection, is recognized as a priority area of humanitarian aid. SDC's Operational Concept on Protection 2021-24 recognises EiEPC as an integral part of protection.

The integrated EiE/Child Protection approach aims to respond to the specific needs, vulnerabilities and protection risks girls and boys face in crisis contexts. This means ensuring that the protection and education needs of children from both displaced and crisis-affected host communities are addressed.

Nexus approach: Many countries and regions where SDC works, or has previously worked, on basic education (including Africa, the Middle East, South Asia and Ukraine) are increasingly affected by conflict, climate-related hazards, health emergencies or a combination of these factors. These crises often disrupt education over extended periods, blurring the lines between immediate humanitarian needs and longer-term development challenges. Addressing these challenges requires a Humanitarian-Development-Peace (HDP) Nexus approach that links immediate responses with longer-term efforts to strengthen education systems and build resilience. For SDC, this means supporting access to safe and protective education during crises while strengthening national systems and creating pathways that enable children and young people to continue their education and build longer-term prospects.

Locally adapted responses: SDC's long-standing country presence and close collaboration with national and decentralised authorities enable it to develop flexible responses adapted to local needs and contexts. This provides a strong basis for putting the Nexus approach into practice. Examples include alternative education opportunities for children and young people whose learning has been disrupted, with the aim of facilitating their transition or reintegration into national education systems. These programmes can also incorporate vocational skills development, building on SDC's recognised expertise in linking foundational skills such as literacy, numeracy, and social and emotional competencies with vocational education and training. This helps learners develop pathways towards livelihoods and employment. SDC also supports education systems in becoming more resilient and inclusive, including by strengthening their capacity to integrate refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs). Across these efforts, the integration of education and protection remains a core principle.

Multilateral engagement: SDC plays an active role in international policy dialogue and advocacy to keep Education in Emergencies high on the global agenda, mobilise political and financial support, and highlight the critical role of education in protecting children affected by crises. Switzerland also promotes Geneva as a global hub for EiE, building on its strong humanitarian, development and human rights ecosystem. Since 2019, Switzerland has strengthened its engagement through partnerships with Education Cannot Wait (ECW) and the Inter-agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE), as well as its 2019 Global Refugee Forum pledge. In 2021, Switzerland co-founded the Geneva Global Hub for Education in Emergencies, chaired its High-Level Steering Group from 2021 to 2026, and continues to serve as a member. Switzerland is also a member of ECW's High-Level Steering Group and Executive Committee and co-chairs the Executive Committee from June 2025 to June 2027.

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Eichenweg 5, CH-3003 Bern
education@eda.admin.ch
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Authors
SDC Economy and Education section
SDC Humanitarian Competence Center
SDC Education Backstopping team

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Anouk Pasquier Di Dio

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