

- BEPS - Basic Education and Policy Support Activity

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The Basic Education and Policy Support Activity is implemented by
CREATIVE ASSOCIATES INTERNATIONAL, INC. (CAII) in partnership with
CARE, the George Washington University, and GroundWork



CREATIVE ASSOCIATES INTERNATIONAL



Introduction

The Basic Education and Policy Support (BEPS) Activity is a multi-year, worldwide, indefinite quantity contract by which the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) can work to achieve four objectives:

- improve the quality, efficiency, access, and equity of education, particularly basic education;
- support educational policy dialogue and reform;
- carry out restorative and beneficially additive basic education, educational policy, and planning activities in crisis and non-presence countries; and
- carry out pilot projects, and provide technical assistance and information on child labor.

The BEPS Activity is designed to be responsive to USAID’s overall goal of “Human capacity built through education and training” by supporting improved and expanded basic education, especially for girls, women, and other under-served populations, and by encouraging an increased contribution of host-country institutions of higher education to sustainable development.

CREATIVE ASSOCIATES INTERNATIONAL, INC. (CAII), an international firm that works to improve the lives of children and families throughout the world, is responsible for implementing this important effort. CAII and its team members—the Cooperative for Assistance and Relief Everywhere (CARE), the George Washington University, and GroundWork—bring management and technical expertise, understanding of the relevant issues, and lessons learned from years of field-based experience to achieve these objectives.

“Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.”

-Nelson Mandela, former President of South Africa



The BEPS team members—CARE, GWU, and GroundWork—are recognized experts in the field of basic education who apply that expertise in addressing the needs of children hardest to reach—girls, rural populations, children in crisis, and children in abusive work situations. In addition, team members have extensive experience in policy analysis and reform, participatory training, program design and implementation, information dissemination, and large-scale, field-based management. This complement of skills and experience generates a synergism not only within the BEPS team but also between and among USAID missions, developing country governments and civil society, and USAID.

A Team That Works

THE BEPS TEAM

Creative Associates International, Inc. (CAII) is a women-owned, international, professional and technical services firm with more than 20 years of experience in assisting governments, communities, non-governmental organizations, and private companies in leading and managing change. CAII has successfully managed long- and short-term projects in 68 countries in the Middle East, Africa, Central and South America, Asia, and Eastern Europe. Much of that work has been for USAID, particularly for the former Global Bureau, the Africa Bureau, the Office of Women in Development, and numerous USAID Missions. CAII focuses on community development, civic participation, and quality education, particularly for underserved populations. CAII's approach to improving education reflects four important principles: *equity*, with a focus on opportunity for all; *participation*, which empowers people and institutions to do for themselves; *sustainability*, with a goal for identifying solutions that withstand the test of time; and *results* that enrich people's lives.



The George Washington University (GWU), the largest institution of higher education in the nation's capital, is widely recognized for its work in policy analysis and reform. GWU's Graduate School of Education and Human Development (GSEHD) is committed to providing the highest quality of educational services in order to develop innovative

research programs, contribute to local communities and the nation, and actively participate in the international community of scholarship. The school's Institute for Education Policy Studies (IEPS), which is closely aligned with GWU's

Education Policy Program, conducts research and policy analysis, sponsors symposia and seminars, and publishes policy papers and monographs. The Institute also serves as the organizational umbrella for five research centers, two national education clearinghouses, one bilingual clearinghouse, and a comprehensive technical assistance center.

CARE has over 50 years of experience in international relief and participatory community development. Having completed over 500 projects worldwide, CARE has the technical, financial, managerial, and logistical expertise to provide crisis assistance with flexibility and creativity to address local needs. CARE has extensive and long-term experience in food programming, agricultural and natural resources, water, and health.

CARE's education programs address basic education for all, with a special focus on the inclusion of girls and women. Through 30 projects in 24 countries, CARE provides a broad range of services, including participatory community education, literacy, school construction and renovation, the development and provision of teaching and learning materials, teacher education, advocacy, and coordination with governments at the national and local levels. CARE works in both developing countries and in countries in crisis and transition on a long-term basis to provide education and other basic needs.

GroundWork is a collaboration of senior experts who provide research and implementation services to governments, donors, and local people to help communities develop their own resources within the context of national policies. GroundWork principals are pioneers in practical, participatory research approaches and are experienced in building human and institutional capacity in industrialized and developing world contexts.

GroundWork principals have experience in social assessment, needs assessment, evaluation, and monitoring. Research support includes research plans, step-by-step research protocols, workshops, and training, to include intensive support programs for beginning researchers and country nationals. GroundWork also builds institutional capability through staff training in research design, data collection and analysis, and participatory research for analyzing organizational issues. The company's mission is to do valid, practical, participatory research that can be used by national/international agencies and local people alike. GroundWork's research approaches are designed to bridge national and local perspectives, give communities a voice, and create common understandings and solutions.



The four organizations—CAII, GWU, CARE, and Groundwork—bring a complimentary set of experience and demonstrated abilities to the BEPS Activity. Their combined capabilities allow for a logical division of labor and collectively provide managerial expertise and technical support across the BEPS program areas: basic education, policy support, crisis country intervention, and child labor.

Areas of Expertise

“I suppose leadership at one time meant muscles; but today it means getting along with people.”

-Indira Gandhi, former Prime Minister of India



PROJECT MANAGEMENT

CAII, the activity leader and the organization responsible for managing BEPS, has 19 years of experience in recruiting and fielding effective teams. Since 1981, CAII has successfully provided short-term technical assistance in education, training, and human resource development through various USAID-sponsored education initiatives, including three successive Education Indefinite Quantity Contracts (IQCs), the Advancing Basic Education and Literacy Projects, and the Global Training for Development initiative. In addition, CAII has managed long-term contracts in Africa, Latin America, and Asia.

Through these and other international projects, CAII has demonstrated the ability to manage field-based projects efficiently and effectively. CAII first considers cultural context and stakeholder needs in planning an approach and the performance schedule. CAII then selects technical advisors based on regional experience, language capability, interpersonal skills, and technical expertise. CAII's tested fielding procedures facilitate efficient service delivery. Experienced home office staff provide technical support, backstopping, quality control, and fiscal management. All of these systems help to ensure that projects meet or exceed client expectations, and that assignments are completed on time and within budget.

BASIC EDUCATION

The BEPS Team believes that access to a basic education is a human right and that education is fundamental to overcoming poverty and social injustice. Team members are therefore firmly grounded in basic education, having conducted research on the pressing issues and applied that research in field-based interventions.

CAII is recognized for its work in improving the supply of and demand for basic education for underserved populations. Many of CAII's completed

projects have contributed directly to improving the efficiency and effectiveness of educational systems. CAII has assisted USAID Missions, ministries, and communities in assessing needs, researching issues, designing and implementing trainings and pilot projects, and evaluating basic education activities. In addition, CAII is recognized worldwide for its work in the fields of girls' education, access and equity, and educational quality. CAII's publications are used by educators worldwide who are striving to improve policy and instructional programs.

CARE has two goals for its education programs: to improve access to, and achievement in, primary education systems; and to improve access to, and achievement in, literacy and life skills for adults and adolescents. To achieve its goals, CARE's programmatic approach includes training and capacity building of educators and local organizations, community schools, early childhood development, literacy and nonformal education, infrastructure improvements, and the provision of educational equipment and supplies. CARE has special expertise in implementing education activities as part of emergency relief/reconstruction activities, with education projects currently operating in 24 countries throughout the world.

GroundWork's members have a wide array of expertise in basic education. Principals have produced assessments, computer tools, publications, and research in the areas of basic education, girls' and women's education, education in Africa, system reform, learning and assessment, and community involvement in education. In one example, GroundWork assisted a Gambian community to conduct a participatory assessment on girls' education and develop viable strategies for increasing girls' enrollment. This experience was documented in a video for information dissemination.

POLICY SUPPORT

CAII strives to build institutional and community involvement in the development of education policy, with experience spanning various regions of the world. In Malawi, for example, CAII worked hand-in-hand with Ministry staff to help strengthen their capacity to analyze existing policies and develop plans for sustainable improvements in primary education. In the Middle East, CAII led a group of regional education planners and policy makers in identifying options for increasing girls' access and retention. In Latin America, CAII currently is working to strengthen mechanisms and channels of citizen participation and increase opportunities for civil society organizations. In sub-Saharan Africa, CAII is raising awareness about policies and procedures to help mitigate the spread of HIV/AIDS.



“Teamwork is essential for any organization seeking to lead and master change.”

-Steve Horblitt, Creative Associates International, Inc. 2000



“A small change in a massive system, when reflected on, can transform the system in an unpredictable way.”

-anonymous



As a research institution, one of GWU’s greatest strengths is its capacity in formal policy analysis. The University’s Institute for Education Policy Studies houses the Center for Curriculum, Standards, and Technology, the Center for Equity and Excellence in Education, the National Clearinghouse on Bilingual Education, the Hamilton Fish National Institute on School and Community Violence, the ERIC Clearinghouse for Higher Education, and the National Clearinghouse for Comprehensive School Reform. GWU’s direct work in policy analysis, planning, and evaluation has been conducted for Malawi, Ghana, Ethiopia, and Botswana. In addition, “The FORUM for Advancing Basic Education and Literacy,” a publication designed and edited by GWU and Groundwork, has provided high-level decision makers with access to research and innovations in basic education. GWU also builds capacity in policy analysis and reform through university-based instruction, study tours, and field-based training.

GroundWork has provided support for policy planning and implementation by providing assistance in the development of a basic and girls’ education strategy for CARE’s East Africa regional office. In addition, the company has researched World Bank support of girls’ education and the strategies and programs adopted by the government of Malawi to improve girls’ lives through education.

CRISIS COUNTRY INTERVENTION

Since 1989, CAII has been addressing the needs of communities in transition and is particularly experienced in designing and implementing returning-to-peace projects amid instability in various Latin American and African countries. In El Salvador, for example, CAII worked with approximately 1,500 families, supporting shelter, community infrastructure, and agricultural development. Health, environmental sanitation, small business assistance, basic education, and vocational skills also have been included as part of CAII’s overall effort. In Lebanon, where CAII’s PEACE Project currently is revitalizing the Lebanese economy, CAII is working collaboratively with local organizations to increase income-generating activities and improve infrastructure. CAII also has growing experience in addressing the HIV/AIDS crisis in sub-Saharan Africa. CAII’s publication, “Early Intervention: HIV-AIDS Programs for School-aged Youth,” includes summaries of a peer outreach program in Zambia and a school-based prevention program in Cameroon. In Malawi, CAII applied social mobilization strategies to change community behaviors related to the spread of HIV/AIDS.

Founded as a relief agency after World War II, CARE remains a world leader in providing timely, lifesaving emergency assistance. In 1998, CARE’s emergency projects directly assisted 8.7 million

people in 29 countries affected by natural and man-made disasters with food, temporary shelter, clean water, sanitation services, medical care, family planning and reproductive health services, and seeds and tools. Because of its many education projects, CARE has specific experience and ability in restoring education in crisis situations.

CARE's educational interventions in crisis countries utilize a four-pronged approach: community-based initiatives; alternatives to formal education; popular education specific to target audiences; and second generation initiatives built upon previously formed CARE partnerships. For example, in Afghanistan, the Community Organized Primary Education project, which provides basic primary education for 5,000 boys and girls, builds on the indigenous education system of rural communities to promote local ownership of schooling. CARE is familiar with the varied steps that are needed for assisting education in crisis situations, from obtaining curriculum approvals and providing support for teachers and students, to identifying and securing locally-made teaching materials.



CHILD LABOR

CAII strives to provide educational opportunities for children whose life situations require them to work. In Uganda, for example, CAII developed alternative teaching and learning materials for a UNICEF-sponsored basic education initiative for out-of-school youth. Materials were designed to provide basic literacy and numeracy, with an emphasis on life-coping and income-generating skills. Under ABEL2, CAII researched incentives to improve enrollment and participation by girls, who often drop out because of domestic responsibilities. CAII also has provided special learning opportunities for soldiers in Angola, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mozambique, Nicaragua, and Somalia, many of whom were youth who were unable to complete school because of their participation in the militia.

CARE brings a solid foundation for addressing abusive child labor at the grassroots level, with experience in strengthening families and communities and coordinating with various stakeholders to support and promote positive changes in children's lives. CARE's community-based programs are founded on participatory processes, whereby communities are empowered to identify and rank their own needs and priorities. CARE also works successfully with governments at local, regional, district, and national levels to develop and implement policy changes and coordinate activities that address the varied socio-economic issues that affect the quality of life. As a result, in projects involving health, small economic activity development, and agricultural activities, vocational and other education programs have been successfully implemented.



Through extensive research and field-based experience, CAII, CARE, George Washington University, and Groundwork have a thorough understanding of the issues related to the BEPS program areas: basic education; education and policy reform; work in crisis countries; and child labor. Some of those issues are highlighted below.

Exploring the Issues

“Education is the great engine of personal development. It is through education that the daughter of a peasant can become a doctor, that the son of a mineworker can become the head of the mine, that a child of farmworkers can become the president of a great nation.”

-Nelson Mandela, former President of South Africa

BASIC EDUCATION

Achieving basic education for all involves expanding access to underserved populations and helping to ensure that children who start school are ready to learn. It also means addressing various issues that can affect educational quality, e.g., parent and community participation, teacher training, the integration of technology, management information systems, and performance standards, and the interrelationship of basic education to health and nutrition.

ACCESS AND EQUITY

Despite the increased focus on girls’ education, many girls, especially those in poor, rural communities, still lack access to formal education.

In addition, inequities persist along other lines, including but not limited to race, ethnicity, language, class, literacy, location, and physical disability. Education costs, distance to school, inadequate roads, unenforced educational policies, norms and behaviors that place a low value on certain groups, and insufficient numbers of school buildings and teachers all contribute to limited opportunities. Providing education for all requires a comprehensive approach that supports improved access through more spaces, greater demand for education by parents and community, and improved learning as a result of better instruction and an enhanced learning environment.



EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

The high dropout rate in the early primary years often is attributed to insufficient stimulation, nutrition, and health support before children enter school. Scientific evidence demonstrates the importance of the child's early experience in the formulation of brain cells, personality, motor skills, speech, and communication. In addition, educated mothers are more likely to provide better nutrition and health care for their children and to send those children, particularly the girls, to school. Comprehensive programs for mothers and children focusing on health, nutrition, communication skills, and general development are needed.



PARTICIPATION

Community participation historically focused on fundraising and school construction, which can provide valuable support for a school. Yet more recently substantive community involvement strategies have been shown to produce results that are equivalent to or greater than those produced by conventional systems, particularly in increasing the participation of disadvantaged groups. For example, government decentralization and funding from donors, governments, and NGOs have facilitated communities becoming involved in educational decision making, action planning, and implementation. Community schools established with full community participation have been found to increase ownership and accountability, and to expand access and equity. It has been demonstrated that to be effective, participation must be active, appropriate for the intended outcome, meaningful (i.e., involving the stakeholders in planning, implementation, and decision making), and structured, to ensure that the kinds of desired input and resultant outcomes are obtained.

“Strengthening people’s capacity to determine their own values and priorities, and to organise themselves to act on these, is the basis of development.”

-Deborah Eade and Suzanne Williams, Oxfam 1995





TEACHER TRAINING

Parents in poor, rural communities consistently complain about the inferior quality of teachers and their indifference to the needs of children and the community. Teacher shortages often mean that untrained teachers assume responsibilities beyond their abilities. Teachers who have been trained are more likely trained based on “ideal” circumstances, e.g., class sizes of 30 to 40 pupils, adequate supply of teaching/learning materials, a chalkboard on the wall, and places for pupils to sit. Teachers, therefore, often are unprepared for or disillusioned by actual classroom situations.

Teacher dissatisfaction is further exacerbated by

limited or nonexistent in-service training and support, particularly in remote, rural areas. Effective, context-specific, pre-service and in-service teacher training strategies are needed.

“Broad and equitable access to information and to appropriate information technologies is essential to achieving success in all areas of human capacity development.”

-USAID, “Strategic Plan,” 1998-2003

TECHNOLOGY

Information and communication technologies help to create a competitive advantage, regardless of a country’s place on the development spectrum. Too often, however, funders assume that countries must follow a linear

technological evolution before accessing current innovations, that costs would be prohibitive, and/or that the needed infrastructural components do not exist. Admittedly, the use of technology involves a host of other issues in areas where access to power and electricity is limited or where children do not study in the traditional school classroom. Careful consideration of various options and innovative strategies to integrate technology should be developed.



MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SYSTEMS AND DECENTRALIZATION

The quality and efficiency of a management information system (MIS) often influence whether responsibilities can be decentralized to local communities, as reliable data allow for a more appropriate distribution of resources and funds. Unfortunately, MISs are often plagued by poor quality data due to

inadequate data collection, analysis, and dissemination strategies. These challenges can be exacerbated by primary education systems that are often poorly managed due to the remoteness of the schools and to education administrators who have minimal management training. To decentralize decision making, innovative strategies are needed to help ensure data collection, even from the most remote areas, data analysis, and the allocation of resources based on the findings.

QUALITY AND STANDARDS

Typically, developing countries address educational quality by implementing activities that ensure a healthy and safe learning environment, decrease the teacher/student ratio, increase the size and quality of the trained teaching force, enhance existing infrastructure, revise curricula and materials, make education more accessible and equitable, and/or incorporate community participation. Improvements in quality are measured by improvements in these areas. Better ways need to be found, however, to measure the quality and relevance of education once these changes are made. A growing movement is underway to replace numerical assessment mechanisms with more descriptive ways to document quality learning, focusing on what children actually learn and using assessment to facilitate learning-centered teaching.

Integration of Education with Health and Nutrition

Good health and nutrition have long been recognized as important contributors to children's learning. CAII therefore is exploring new ways to apply school-based health and nutrition (SHN) interventions to support pupils' learning. Strategies include multi-sectoral partnerships and increased community involvement to advocate for school-based health care, nutrition, and quality basic education.

One area that is requiring a closer link between education and health is the prevention and treatment of HIV/AIDS. CAII works with ministries, schools, and communities to develop education policies and procedures, disseminate information, and raise awareness about the disease and how it can be mitigated.



“If people are not gaining the knowledge, skills, and values they need, resources invested in teaching and learning are wasted.”

-World Bank, “Education Sector Strategy,” 1999



“If an institution has interest in its work, that means it will also be interested to hear our problems and find ways of solving them.”

-Discussion group participant, Nampeya, Malawi, *Voices of the Poor: Crying Out for Change*, World Bank, 2000

EDUCATION AND POLICY REFORM

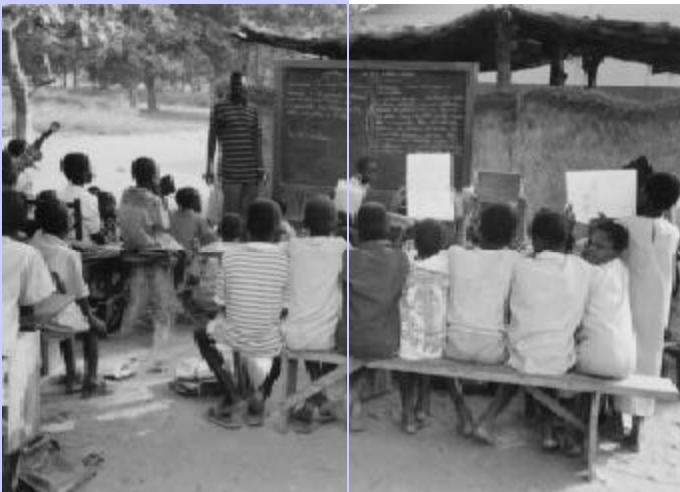
Until recently and in many contexts still, the overriding goal of basic education policy has been to enroll as many children as possible in formal schools. Implementation involved providing the physical infrastructures and allocating the available resources for teachers and materials. The role of development agencies vis-a-vis policy analysis and reform seemed clear—provide technical advice on good policies, develop workable plans, and provide resources to help support implementation. In recent years, however, four broad trends have complicated this strategy: the entailments of quality; the need to supplement the formal school; the volume and complexity of participation; and the ongoing need for technical expertise and mechanisms.

IMPROVING QUALITY

Awareness of the limitations of access-dominated policy has highlighted the need for improved quality in basic education. More important than provision of high-quality inputs is what teachers do with the inputs provided. Yet changes in teacher behavior cannot be dictated from a central authority; traditional policy often fails to penetrate the classroom door. The challenges for policy analysis and reform are to develop new relationships between central authorities and schools that can enhance learning and the flow of information across different parts of the system, to create conditions that foster innovation at school and community levels, and to support a culture of learning for ministries and educational leaders.

SUPPLEMENTING THE FORMAL SCHOOL

As enrollments have moved toward universality, it has become clear that many populations—girls, over-age youth, urban and working youth, the disabled, rural children, and children in contexts of social, health, and/or political crisis—are difficult or impossible to reach with conventional formal schools. Although alternative approaches have been modeled, their articulation within the formal system remains problematic. The challenge for policy is to promote innovative solutions to problems ill-suited to formal schooling, while creating linkages, maintaining coherence, and working toward greater quality, equity, and sustainability.



EMBRACING PARTICIPATION

As enrollment has grown faster than the economies, budgets, and management capacities of many national ministries, governments have turned to communities and nongovernmental organizations for financial and management support. Increasing democratization also has served to involve many larger numbers and types of stakeholders in education influence and decision making. While expanded participation enriches the policy and reform processes, additional complexity requires new ways of organizing those processes on the part of educational leaders as well as new roles, opportunities, and challenges for development agencies.



BUILDING TECHNICAL EXPERTISE AND MECHANISMS

Development of indigenous capacity to conduct research, evaluation, and policy analysis, and to disseminate findings to broader audiences continues to be a critical need. Decentralization and democratization will create



opportunities for previously marginalized groups to become more involved. The challenge for development agencies is to find better ways to develop host country capacity. Greater capacity on the part of developing country indigenous institutions will open opportunities for them to collaborate more with US-based organizations, to carry out more USAID-supported technical work, assume new or additional responsibilities when situations dictate, and extend the impact of activities when donor funding ends.

“Responsibility walks hand in hand with capacity and power.”

-J.G. Holland, The Forbes Scrapbook of Thoughts on the Business of Life



EDUCATION IN CRISIS SITUATIONS

Education activities often are omitted from emergency relief or reconstruction activities following massive natural, social, or political upheaval. Experience is showing, however, that once basic needs are met, education activities can be a key factor in reestablishing structure and stability and can serve as a venue by which communities begin to reestablish their role in civil society. In addition, HIV/AIDS is creating crisis situations with wide implications for basic education. With children, families, and teachers affected, student repetition and dropout rates are increasing, and teacher absenteeism is on the rise.

Maintaining student participation and providing quality instruction present new challenges as this pandemic worsens. For these types of crises, four areas are particularly important: infrastructure; curriculum and materials; teacher training; and psycho-social well-being.

“...Development has no worse enemy than war.”

-Kofi Annan, United Nations Secretary-General, 1999

INFRASTRUCTURE

After devastation or ongoing insecurity, schools and other educational facilities frequently have been ruined. Communities, including refugees and internally-displaced persons (IDPs), are often eager for assistance in rebuilding schools, and the process can be an effective way of mobilizing communities around education. Tensions can exist, however, due to the communities' immediate infrastructure needs and the communities' or governments' desire to establish more permanent—and costly—structures. Because traditional structures and classroom arrangements can be an impediment to learner-centered methodologies, temporary structures should be considered as an opportunity to provide new models, when possible.



CURRICULUM AND MATERIALS

Curriculum is always a political issue, and which curriculum to use must be decided in context. In the majority of political or social upheavals, a governmental or quasi-governmental authority must approve curriculum content. For refugees, problems may arise with home-country recognition of

the education received outside their national borders. Cultural and language differences may present barriers for IDPs. The effects of scarce teaching and learning materials can be minimized by using locally-produced materials and by preparing teachers to be creative with what is available.



HIV/AIDS has become a particularly important curriculum and materials dissemination issue for education in crisis situations. Messages that raise awareness, provide information, and encourage prevention can be integrated into basic education in a variety of ways, ranging from formal classroom instruction to peer outreach workers. Activities reflect the severity of the problem, age of the students, existing cultural practices, and parent and community input. Other special curriculum issues that arise in crisis situations include personal security, sanitation, life skills, gender, and environmental issues.

TEACHER TRAINING

The quality and relevancy of the educational program hinges on well-trained staff, who are usually in short supply after crisis. Available teachers often lack solid qualifications and generally do not have the skills to help students who have witnessed or participated in violence, experienced trauma, or cared for dying family members. Training is necessary, but is not enough. Follow-up and support systems need to be established.

PSYCHO-SOCIAL WELL-BEING

Psychological and social well-being are important for healthy development and successful learning. People who have lived through or continue to live in a crisis situation, whether natural or man-made, often suffer from symptoms of trauma. This can be especially hard for children without the maturity and resources to cope with difficult situations, for IDPs who experience local community resentment, and for girls whose parents keep them out of school out of concerns over security. The general breakdown in community social structure and government institutions can erode people's sense of order and security, and result in a dearth of support for educational programs.

“Education is essential to preventing and mitigating crises, achieving post-crisis transition to sustainable development, ...”

-USAID, “Strategic Plan,” 1998-2003

CHILD LABOR

Every day, girls and boys around the world are laboring in conditions that are harmful to their health, safety and morals, with no access to education, or social or health services. Compromising children’s cognitive, social, emotional, and moral development through child labor has far-reaching effects on local and national development. Interventions should help to ensure that no child is working in abusive or worse forms of labor situations and that every child has access to some type of basic education. Also, interventions should bring together the vastly different interests of parents, families, communities, schools, teachers, and local authorities, community-based

organizations and NGOs, employers, government and government officials, local, national, and international organizations, labor unions, and religious and civic leaders. Four areas—education, health and nutrition, economic support, and advocacy—are particularly important.

EDUCATION

If schooling is to be a viable alternative to abusive forms of child labor, high-quality and relevant education must be made available. It should utilize flexible, relevant school curricula; focus on teaching life skills, literacy, and numeracy; encourage flexible instructional calendars; and provide schools situated in the workplace or around migration patterns. Moreover, teachers can be trained in a wider set of skills, to become leaders for change, facilitators of learning, and stewards for the well-being of children, youth, and families. Children should be linked with the existing vocational training. If not available, these programs can be developed and tailored to fit safe employment options.



“Education is not a way of escaping the country’s poverty. It is a way of fighting it.”

-Julius Nyerere, former President of Tanzania

HEALTH AND NUTRITION

Laboring children may suffer from a wide range of health problems, including respiratory diseases, malnourishment, physical and mental underdevelopment, and/or HIV/AIDS. Effective programs must address children's health needs, educate them about preventative and curative health care, and possibly provide access to nutritional supplements.

ECONOMIC SUPPORT

Families who are truly dependent on their children's income need access to viable economic alternatives for their children not to work. Children working in extremely unsafe conditions like hazardous industry, prostitution, child soldiering, drug trafficking, etc. need to be identified, removed, and reintegrated into their communities and schools, and assisted in finding safer employment options, if necessary. Scholarships, stipends, food, and other incentives can be offered to families to compensate for lost income when children go to school rather than work.



PUBLIC AWARENESS CAMPAIGNS/ADVOCACY

Social mobilization campaigns can foster values and behaviors that protect children, as well as present viable alternatives to participation in the workforce. A common platform, or agenda, that unites various stakeholders can be vital for developing effective activities and government policies that balance children's welfare with other needs, such as family income and economic development.



"...We dream the same dream, of a world where children are at school and not at work, doing home-work and not building homes, and on the playing fields and not in mines."

-Assefa Bequele, International Labour Office, 1997

