

# Education in Emergencies Data

## A Long-Term Vision and Action Agenda

## About INEE

The Inter-agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE) is an open, global network of more than 15,000 individual members and 130 partner organizations from over 190 countries, including UN agencies, NGOs, donors, governments, universities, schools, and affected populations, working together to ensure all persons the right to quality, relevant, and safe education in emergencies and post-crisis recovery. Established in 2000, as a global community of practice INEE exists for and because of its members. INEE serves its members through community-building, convening diverse stakeholders, knowledge management, amplifying and advocating, facilitating and learning, and providing members with the resources and support they need to carry out their work on education in emergencies.

More information about INEE including EiE tools, resources, and the ongoing work of INEE's network spaces is available at [inee.org](http://inee.org)

## About NORRAG

NORRAG is a global network of 5,000 members for international policies and cooperation in education established in 1986. NORRAG's core mandate and strength is to produce, disseminate and broker critical knowledge and to build capacity among the wide range of stakeholders who constitute its network. These stakeholders inform and shape education policies and practice, both at national and international levels, and are united by a shared commitment to principles of social justice, equity and quality in education. Through its work, NORRAG actively contributes to critical dialogue on global developments in education by mobilising and disseminating diverse voices, multiple perspectives, facts and evidence.

NORRAG is an associate programme of the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies, Geneva. More information about NORRAG, including its scope of work and thematic areas, is available at [www.norrag.org](http://www.norrag.org)

## About USAID

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) is an independent agency of the United States federal government that is primarily responsible for administering civilian foreign aid and development assistance. With a budget of over \$27 billion, USAID is the world's premier international development agency and a catalytic actor driving development results. USAID's work advances U.S. national security and global economic prosperity, demonstrates American generosity, and promotes a path to recipient self-reliance and resilience. Support for the EiE Data Summit was provided through USAID's Middle East Education Research, Training, and Support (MEERS) project.

More information about USAID is available at [www.usaid.gov](http://www.usaid.gov)

## About SDC

The Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) is the agency for international cooperation of the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA). The SDC is responsible for the overall coordination with other federal authorities of development and cooperation with Eastern Europe as well as for humanitarian aid delivered by the Swiss Confederation.

More information about SDC is available at [www.eda.admin.ch/sdc](http://www.eda.admin.ch/sdc)

### Acknowledgement

This Action Agenda was commissioned by USAID, NORRAG, and INEE to report on the EiE Data Summit which was held June, 2019 in Geneva. This report was generously funded by USAID and the event was made possible with the support from the Graduate Institute, Geneva, SDC and USAID.

Special thanks to Sébastien Hine for consulting in the design and facilitation of the summit as well as the synthesis and writing of the Proceedings and Action Agenda, and to Anouk Pasquier and Paul Gerhard, of NORRAG for formatting the Proceedings and Action Agenda.

**Published by:** the USAID MEERS program, NORRAG, and INEE September, 2019

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## Introduction

In June 2019, representatives from 48 organizations gathered at a Summit in Geneva to discuss ways to address one of the current challenges of the global education community, the collection and use of quality and actionable data on the educational situation of children and youth in emergencies. At the data summit, participants recognized both that efforts had been made towards improving systems to collect and analyze this data but also that the global education community remains far from adequately addressing the data needs required to respond to the education needs of children. This document details the key discussions, recommendations, and commitments from the Summit, co-hosted by NORRAG, USAID, and the Inter-agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE).

## Longer term vision and objectives

The longer term vision that was broadly shared at the Summit has several dimensions. First, EiE data collection, storage, and use must be underpinned by strong methodological and ethical foundations. The primary purpose of this data is to support the intervention of programmes and strengthening of education systems. Ideally this data would be comparable across contexts and over time while also able to be contextualised to meet the needs of emergency-affected populations. Second, where possible, data sharing should become the norm with increased use of global repositories and platforms. Again this must adhere to strict ethical and protection guidelines. Third, data should be made more accessible to non-data specialists for use in research, advocacy, and programme design and implementation, while organisations should simultaneously strengthen data literacy and capacity of their own staff. Fourth, groups currently absent or underrepresented by the statistical picture - such as Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), refugees, girls, speakers of minority languages and other marginalised groups - must be prioritised. Fifth, none of this is possible without adequate funding. As funding for Education in Emergencies (EiE) increases, so should funding for EiE data initiatives, initiatives which often help make the case for EiE itself and thereby increase funding for the sector.

## General recommendations

Based on where consensus was found during the Summit discussions, this Action Agenda makes the following overall recommendations:

- Data sharing between agencies should become the norm. Specific data sharing arrangements are encouraged between organisations to facilitate this. These must be in line with data sharing principles and ethics guidelines.
- The sector should work towards developing standardised methodologies to calculate indicators with agreed definitions. This could include a list of suggested core indicators that actors are encouraged to report on, when possible and context-relevant. Existing efforts to do this should be harmonised rather than duplicating efforts.
- These core indicators should be accompanied by ethics guidelines on the collection and use of EiE data.
- A data usage framework should guide discussions about data collection, analysis, aggregation, sharing, and use. This should also indicate what data should be prioritised at different stages of crises.
- Capacity building and preparedness should be encouraged so that Education Management Information System (EMIS) and local organisations are able to respond to crises and sudden movements of people either across or within borders.
- Further efforts should be made to include those that are absent from the global statistical picture, such as IDPs, refugees, girls, children with disabilities, ethnic, linguistic and religious minorities, and other population groups, who are often the most vulnerable during crises.
- Organisations should commit to sharing their EiE data initiatives early in their development so as to avoid duplication and encourage cooperation and/or collaboration.
- Collective action is needed to produce global public goods which address the needs of all stakeholders involved with EiE data, including facilitating the sharing of data.
- Funders should recognise the catalytic effect strong data can have on service provision and increase funding for EiE data.

## Agreed key actions

More specific than the above recommendations are the following Action Commitments. These were concrete actions organisations or groups of organisations made at the Summit to address specific issues in the EiE data ecosystem:

- The INEE Data and Evidence Collaborative will convene an Expert Group, the main purpose of which will be to oversee the implementation of this Action Agenda and to make reasonable steps towards the improvement of the EiE data ecosystem. The Expert Group will consist of key EiE data experts from a range of organisations that have EiE mandates.
- The Expert Group will lead the development of standardised methodologies for a minimum set of EiE indicators in line with the INEE Minimum Standards. The INEE Data and Evidence Collaborative will help facilitate the selection of indicators.



## The Education in Emergencies Data Summit

On June 20th and 21<sup>st</sup> 2019, NORRAG, USAID, and the Inter-agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE) co-hosted an Education in Emergencies (EiE) Data Summit in Geneva, Switzerland with participants from 48 organisations. An optional one-day training on navigating EiE data was also held on June 19th. The two-day Summit aimed to address EiE data issues, challenges and opportunities across humanitarian and development partners.

### Purpose

The purpose of the Data Summit was to share recent work on EiE data issues in order to better understand the challenges of EiE data; discuss good practices and success stories; and share recent initiatives, in an effort to strengthen humanitarian-development coherence and to improve programming through EiE data. The summit brought together EiE data specialists: policy makers, practitioners, donors, academics, and data aggregators working across humanitarian and development sectors. The event was specifically geared towards technical actors who routinely collect, analyze, aggregate, or share education data.

### Background

In emergency contexts, timely and accurate data can be difficult to access. A lack of data poses challenges for organizations working to provide education to children in need. Publicly available data are often fragmented or difficult to navigate online and misalignment of humanitarian and development response and programming is reflected and reproduced by data systems that differ in process and structure.

Recognizing these challenges, there are many initiatives occurring to improve data collection and dissemination for education in conflict-affected settings. These include initiatives to standardize humanitarian indicators (i.e., GEC Indicator Database and Education Under Attack), systematize collection of data on refugees in public schools (i.e., refugee data in EMIS), systematize tools for conducting needs assessments through Education Clusters, and to improve data sharing platforms (i.e., HDX).

However, there are two major limitations to current initiatives to improve data for education in conflict. First, there are many, disparate initiatives occurring in parallel. Those involved in some of these initiatives are not fully aware of the other initiatives, and therefore, do not benefit from collaborations or partnerships. Secondly, these initiatives and developments are occurring primarily in the humanitarian sector (under the umbrella of Education in Emergencies or Education in Crisis and Conflict). Development actors and organizations may not be aware of them or may not see

them as relevant or important to their work. However, the increasingly protracted nature of conflicts around the world and the shift towards longer-term collective outcomes, defined at the World Humanitarian Summit have blurred the line between development and humanitarian sectors in education. There is a need for deeper and more thoughtful conversations about how we can improve data for education in emergency settings that bring together both humanitarian and development actors and that share and build on current initiatives to chart “a new way of thinking” about data in education in emergencies.

### Objectives

The key objectives of the data summit were:

1. To bring together diverse stakeholders working on educational data in emergency affected contexts across humanitarian and development spaces;
2. To overview and map current initiatives to improve data and evidence for education in emergencies;
3. To create an opportunity for stakeholders to share their experiences, good practices, and lessons learned regarding data for education in emergency-contexts;

### Key issues identified

This section summarises the key issues discussed at the Summit, from which the recommendations and actions are drawn.

#### Standardisation of indicators

One problem that exists within organisations and across the sector is a lack of common indicators with agreed definitions and methodologies. Often, even within the same organisation, the same indicator will not be comparable from one month to the next depending on how the data collection is carried out. This makes changes over time and comparisons between groups and countries increasingly inaccurate as different data sources are aggregated. The Summit suggested that there should be standardised methodologies for calculating indicators, connected to the INEE Minimum Standards, that all organisations can use as a reference, a subset of which would be a core list of priority indicators. These standardised indicators would be accompanied by methodological instructions as well as guidelines on contextualisation in recognition that different crises have individual response needs.

#### Fit for purpose data

There was a recurrent debate about the need for accurate and comprehensive data systems versus the need for quickly actionable assessment of education in crisis situations. In that regard, there is a constant balancing act between the need

for data immediacy and data rigorousness. Improvements in the data ecosystem need to take into account both these perspectives and encourage phasing of data collection and processing so that relevant data is available at each stage of response.

## Ethics and security

There was broad consensus that the ethical considerations of data collection and use in EiE are even stronger than in other contexts. Poor management of data collection, storage, and use can put lives at risk, especially in situations of conflict where schools or particular marginalised groups of people may be targeted. Data, and its collection, is inherently political, requiring that adequate protection measures and ethical consideration be carried out in all situations in line with the humanitarian principle of Do No Harm. It was agreed that there is a need for guidelines on education data ethics specifically in crisis settings. These could draw on existing national and global statistical principles and guidelines that exist either in development or humanitarian settings, such as [ICRC's Handbook on Data Protection in Humanitarian Action](#). Putting any new guidelines into practice will require relevant staff have appropriate training and support at a minimum.

## Forgotten populations

A recurring focus of discussions was the need to adequately capture populations that are currently excluded from the statistical picture. Progress is being made on refugees and needs to be accelerated but very little is known about the education needs of IDPs and other marginalised groups, such as girls, disabled children, speakers of minority languages, or those with intersecting inequalities.

## Data sharing

One potential positive is that there is a huge amount of data already collected that is not being used to its full potential. Data often exists hidden within organisations, or with individuals within organisations. Often data is not made public or is made public in an abbreviated form, such as PDF dashboards. There are several reasons organisations do not share data or make it public. Firstly, it can be time-consuming as data needs to be de-identified and made available in a way that meets protection and ethical standards, while at the same time not accruing immediate benefit to the organisation that shares it. Organisations may derive competitive advantage from having certain data that others do not. This presents a collective action problem where all would benefit from increased availability of existing data but there is a lack of incentives to do so. One method for overcoming this is specific data sharing agreements between organisations. The Humanitarian Data Exchange exists to make available data in humanitarian situations and have significant capacity to do this for education specifically. Ultimately it is hoped that

increased use of data sharing agreements can contribute to a cultural shift within the sector where data sharing becomes the norm.

## Data usage

The MEERS programme suggested a framework that highlights the different ways in which EiE data is used. This framework included six categories. First is program planning and design which uses data to understand the context and education needs. Second is coordination, to understand who is doing what and where. Third is for education sector planning and policy reform by using data to make informed policy and planning decisions. Fourth is to monitor programme implementation. Fifth is evaluation and learning by using data to determine to what extent programmes are successful or not and why. And sixth is advocacy, which uses data to make the case for education in emergencies globally and for specific crises. Improvements in the data ecosystem should take into account the different needs of each of these six categories.

## Funding

Discussion of financing showed that although in overall terms financing for education in emergencies is growing, in proportional terms compared to other sectors it is not. This lack of financing undermines the entire sector, including the ability to collect, share, and analyse data sufficiently. There is the opportunity for a positive feedback loop in that with better data we can make a stronger case for EiE, which in turn will strengthen outcomes and improved data collection.

## Capacity building

Capacity building became a theme throughout the two days of discussions. It was agreed that the sector would benefit from data literacy and capacity strengthening at all levels within organisations. In particular, crisis response would benefit from all education clusters having dedicated information managers. Currently only a quarter do, with non-data expert staff often taking on this role in addition to their primary duties. Similarly it was highlighted that data itself is a fantastic advocacy tool for making the case for more funding as a sector. All agreed that participants should lobby their organisations internally for increased focus on data literacy and capacity. This includes ensuring data collectors have adequate support to collect high-quality data in a language people speak and understand. For this to be sustainable it must also strengthen national systems' data literacy and capacity.

## Beyond access

In line with the education sector generally it was agreed that in emergency situations there is a need for data that goes beyond typical indicators of access and inputs. These should

cover domains such as learning outcomes, protection, and socio-emotional well-being of both students and teachers. It was recognised that for many of these dimensions there are either strong methodologies and projects that are either being used or developed. However these often exist within organisations and there is frequent duplication of efforts. If organisations had a more comprehensive understanding of existing tools and those being developed there could be a greater level of uptake of existing ones and cooperation over the development of new ones. INEE was identified as having a role in facilitating knowledge sharing for these tools, for example, the forthcoming outputs from the INEE Education Policy Working Group's workstream on Quality and Equitable Learning Outcomes.

### Global public goods

It was recognised that actors across the EiE sector would benefit from greater production and dissemination of global public goods that facilitate the collection, sharing, and use of EiE data. These include methodological guides, ethics guides, and data sharing platforms. These should be made as accessible as possible so that they can be used not just by data experts but the full range of professionals working in the sector.

### Nexus versus divide

There was significant discussion of the humanitarian-development divide and the importance of bridging this. Multiple pieces of research demonstrated that often development and humanitarian actors are interested in very similar types of data in the same contexts but operate with different mechanisms. There was consensus that any actions taken forward from the Summit should not reinforce the divide but be part of the solution to bridging it. The best case scenario is for EMIS systems to be structured so they are prepared and have the capacity to respond to crises and influxes of people from abroad or large movements of people within a country. There was a brief mention of the third dimension of stabilisation but no in-depth analysis of how this interacts with humanitarian and development actors. To advance this it was recognised that we can draw on lessons from other sectors, interoperability literature, and examples of best practice from more wealthy countries.

### Leadership and building the ecosystem

The Summit by design was ambitious in that it is trying not just to share resources and encourage learning but to also drive change through commitments organisations would make at the Summit. There is a need for leadership on these initiatives and more broadly in building the EiE data ecosystem globally. Organisations that could be taking the lead on this by nature of their mandates include ECW,

Education Cluster, INEE, UNESCO, UNICEF, and UIS. To this end the INEE and their Data and Evidence Collaborative agreed to convene an expert group, ideally with a selection of experts from a few key organisations responsible for education data and statistics to oversee, and lead key initiatives such as the development of standardised and core indicators and guidelines. Members should be selected on the basis of expertise and knowledge in education statistics and EiE data. The expert group should maintain independence and autonomy when developing standardized methodologies for indicators.

### Other sectors

There was increasing recognition that quality learning outcomes can not be achieved by one implementer or even one sector. Education needs to work more closely with other sectors, such as protection, shelter, food, and WASH, depending on the type of crisis. The same is true for EiE data and there are many missed opportunities. Many non-education based surveys collect data about education access and literacy during and after crises and these are generally not known about or used by education specialists. This also presents the opportunity to proactively incorporate education relevant questions in other sectors' data collection efforts, and importantly avoid duplication, allow pooling of resources, and encourage data sharing.

### Further resources

The session recordings can be found [here](#).

The presentations can be found [here](#).

The EiE Data Summit proceedings can be found [here](#).





