

# Fiji Education Cluster – Terms of Reference

## Overview

The international community has recognized the right to education in emergencies as an integral part of the humanitarian response. Education is frequently interrupted during the reconstruction process and the early recovery response to emergencies. It is recognized that education mitigates the psychosocial impact of disasters by giving sense of normality, stability, re-settling and hope during the time of crisis and contributes to social reconstruction.

Fiji is vulnerable to many forms of emergency from natural disasters due to a harsh and unpredictable climate. Children in emergency contexts are often denied their right to basic education. The establishment of the Education Cluster in Fiji recognises that all children have the right to education, even during emergencies. The aim of the Fiji Education Cluster is to improve coordination between the Ministry of Education, UNICEF, Save the Children and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in order to support the Government of Fiji to ensure that children affected by manmade and natural disasters are protected and able to access quality basic education.

In Fiji the Ministry of Education (MOE) takes the lead for the Education Cluster. In line with the global Cluster agreement, UNICEF and Save the Children act as supporting co-leads for the Ministry. Membership will be open to all education-focused agencies in Fiji. The purpose of the Cluster is to support the Ministry of Education to better prepare for and respond to emergencies. As such, the Ministry of Education is a key member of the Cluster and has participated in its establishment and the drafting of this Terms of Reference (ToR).

## Objectives of the Education Cluster

1. To advocate for the right to education for all in emergencies in Fiji.
2. To coordinate the education response to emergencies between Government, UN and NGO partners, based on capacity mapping, preparedness and response planning
3. To develop an information management system for the Education Cluster to enable information on emergencies, partner capacity and responses to be shared.
4. To advocate for resources for emergency education using an Emergency Preparedness and Response Plan based on needs and contingency planning.
5. To strengthen the capacity of partners to respond to education in emergencies, including the promotion of the INEE Minimum Standards.
6. To design monitoring and evaluation mechanisms for education in emergency responses which will measure both the impact of interventions and the effectiveness of the cluster response.

## Scope of Work

1. **Coordination of Education in Emergency Implementation**
  - Support government leadership in monitoring of implementation of education programmes;
  - Ensure support to government in the maintenance of appropriate education coordination mechanisms, including working groups at the national level;
  - Give the necessary attention to cross-cutting priorities, namely, HIV/AIDS, disability, gender, Sexual and Gender Based Violence (SGBV) and environment, utilising participatory and community based approaches. In line with this, promote gender equality by ensuring that the needs, contributions and capacities of children are addressed;
  - Secure commitments from cluster members in responding to needs and filling gaps, ensuring an appropriate distribution of responsibilities within the cluster;
  - Ensure that participants within the cluster work collectively, ensuring the complementarities of

the various stakeholders' actions;

- Promote emergency response actions while at the same time considering the need for early recovery planning as well as prevention and disaster risk reduction concerns, particularly at school level;
  - Ensure effective links with other clusters and coordination with international partners;
  - Represent the interests of the cluster in discussions with the Pacific Humanitarian Team Resident Coordinator on prioritisation, resource mobilisation and advocacy;
  - Share roles and responsibilities and immediately respond to emergencies so as to ensure minimal disruption to schooling for learners and teachers.
- 2. Planning and Strategy Development for Cluster**
- Conduct multi-sectoral, rapid and on-going assessment and analyses, taking into account the approach and tools agreed by the government and cluster members
  - Develop rolling six month cluster action plans;
  - Identify gaps in consultation with Ministry of Education and partners working on the ground;
  - Update agreed response strategies and action plans ensuring they are adequately reflected in overall country strategies, such as government-led appeals/Flash appeals;
  - Conduct as required sector wide joint assessments, response and recovery for Education related emergencies and provide focal point to participate in sub-working groups to ensure cross-sectoral issues are addressed in joint monitoring and assessments in emergency situations with multi-sectoral dimensions;
  - Ensure close collaboration with the Protection, WASH and Health Clusters particularly for school-level interventions including psychosocial screening and prevention of SGBV, school water, sanitation and hygiene promotion, and health screening.
  - Draw lessons learned from past activities and revise strategies and action plans accordingly;
  - Develop a multi year funding strategy as required for the predictable emergency requirements for identified Education priorities;
  - Develop an exit, or transition, strategy for the cluster, as required.
- 3. Application of Standards**
- Ensure that cluster participants are aware of relevant policy guidelines, technical standards and relevant commitments that the government has undertaken under relevant international conventions, particularly the INEE Minimum Standards for Education in Emergencies (INEE MS) and support their dissemination at all levels;
  - Ensure that responses are in line with the INEE MS and existing policy guidance, technical standards, and relevant government international obligations;
  - Respect humanitarian principles of implementation, and advocacy for respect of the principles of good donor-ship by partners;
  - When possible, initiate the drafting and adoption of national standards for Education in Emergency response that incorporate the INEE MS adapted to the country context.
- 4. Advocacy and Resource Mobilisation**
- Identify core advocacy concerns, including resource requirements, and contribute key messages to broader advocacy initiatives of the Pacific Humanitarian Team Resident Coordinator and humanitarian partners;
  - Advocate for donors to fund Cluster participants to carry out priority activities in the sector concerned, while at the same time encouraging Cluster participants to mobilise resources for their activities through their agreed channels;
- 5. Training and Capacity Building of National Authorities and Civil Society**
- Promote and support training of humanitarian partners, and in particular the relevant education

- ministries and at sub-national levels;
  - Support efforts to strengthen the capacity of the national authorities and civil society undertaking approved humanitarian activities.
- 6. Identification and Inclusion of Key Partners**
- Identify key humanitarian partners for the Education Cluster, respecting mandates and minimum standards of education programme priorities;
  - Identify other key partners, including national authorities, and conduct outreach efforts.
- 7. Facilitate and ensure Cross-cluster Strategic Planning and Assessment Processes**
- Continue to support the Education Cluster to manage inter-agency planning processes, such as the development of the government-led Appeal documents/Flash Appeals, the preparation of contingency planning, multi-sectoral needs assessments, analysis and monitoring;
  - Bring new global knowledge as necessary through better collaboration and close work relation with the global and regional Education Cluster colleagues;
  - Work with similar clusters to ensure linkages between preparedness and early warning, emergency response and longer-term recovery and development strategies and DRR;
  - Develop and share appropriate tools, guidelines and lessons learned with other clusters to ensure consistency in areas of overlap and to produce outputs that feed into overall planning processes.
- 8. Monitoring and Reporting**
- Ensure adequate monitoring mechanisms are in place to review effectiveness of the cluster and progress against implementation plans;
  - Ensure adequate reporting and effective information sharing, with due regard for children affected and gender dis-aggregation.

### **Membership and Coordination of the Education Cluster**

Cluster membership is open to all agencies active in education in emergency response and coordination at national or/and global level and willing to be part of the cluster.

Globally, UNICEF and Save the Children are co-leaders of the Education Cluster. In Fiji the Ministry of Education, with support from UNICEF and Save the Children Fiji will adopt co-coordination of the cluster and will take responsibility for coordinating meetings and keeping records of all activities. Roles and responsibilities will be shared between the co-lead agencies.

Decision-making will be on the basis of consensus and in times of difference, the ideas supported by the majority will be practiced.

Organisations are encouraged to send technical experts to the meeting in order to facilitate joint coordination and planning. Regular reports can be provided to Heads of Agencies, who may be invited to attend ad hoc meetings for the purpose of decision-making.

### **Frequency of Meetings**

Meetings will be held quarterly, which was agreed upon by Cluster members. Whenever urgent matters need to be discussed, extraordinary meetings will be arranged.

### **Roles and Responsibilities**

#### **Ministry of Education**

The MOE Education Cluster focal point, currently the Director of the Assets Management Unit (AMU), and members of their support staff, bear responsibility for overall coordination of the Fiji Education Cluster during a period of emergency response. In collaboration with the Cluster supporting co-lead agencies, the focal point will carry out a rapid education assessment and develop

a work plan for the Cluster based on the findings. Education Cluster meetings are chaired by the focal point and action points and follow up carried out by members of the Cluster where designated. The focal point is required to liaise with relevant government departments toward fulfilment of the objectives as established in the work plan. They will also be responsible for reporting duties to the various departments and Ministries in the government of Fiji.

#### **Cluster supporting co-lead agencies**

As Cluster supporting co-lead agencies, UNICEF and Save the Children will provide leadership support to the Ministry of Education. This will be achieved through facilitating a coordination process that fosters inclusion of education partners, and establishes and maintains the agreed upon coordination mechanism. The Cluster supporting co-leads will assist the MOE in their role as chair of national Cluster meetings.

As supporting co-lead agencies, UNICEF and Save the Children will work together according to the Principles of Partnership as endorsed by the Global Humanitarian Platform (July 2007) (See Annex 1). Both supporting co-lead agencies are accountable to the Pacific Humanitarian Team Resident Coordinator for the effective functioning of the Education Cluster in Fiji, and are responsible for preparing and submitting reports to the relevant Pacific Humanitarian Team meetings.

Under the Cluster approach, supporting co-leads are to both act as, and be perceived as, neutral, impartial and fair representatives of the Education Cluster as a whole, rather than as representatives of their particular agency.

#### **Provider of Last Resort**

UNICEF and Save the Children share the responsibility of 'Provider of Last Resort' (See Annex 2). With this responsibility, both agencies commit themselves to ensure the provision of education-in-emergency services throughout Fiji to address critical unmet gaps, provided there is access, security measures and adequate funding available. However in the case of lack of access, security or funding the two agencies, through the Cluster approach, will advocate for the provision of education-in-emergency services in the affected areas.

#### **Cluster Member Agencies**

1. Regularly attend and contribute to the active operation of the Education Cluster including participation in assessments and contribution to response plans;
2. Contribute to resource mobilisation initiatives for the Cluster and advocacy as required;
3. Be a resource institution in planning, organising and conducting capacity building activities/trainings;
4. Share roles and responsibilities during intervention in emergencies based on geographic coverage or areas of expertise/comparative advantage and contribute to overall monitoring.

#### **Education Cluster Members**

- Ministry of Education – lead agency
- UNICEF – supporting co-lead
- Save the Children – supporting co-lead
- National Disaster Management Office (NDMO)
- Red Cross Society Fiji
- AusAID
- Access to Quality Education Program (AQEP)
- UNOCHA

**Signed & Approved:**



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**Annexes:**

***Annex 1:*** Principles of Partnership

***Annex 2:*** Provider of Last Resort

# Principles of Partnership

## A Statement of Commitment

*Endorsed by the Global Humanitarian Platform, 12 July 2007*

The *Global Humanitarian Platform*, created in July 2006, brings together UN and non-UN humanitarian organizations on an equal footing.

- Striving to enhance the effectiveness of humanitarian action, based on an ethical obligation and accountability to the populations we serve,
- Acknowledging diversity as an asset of the humanitarian community and recognizing the interdependence among humanitarian organizations,
- Committed to building and nurturing an effective partnership,

... the organizations participating in the **Global Humanitarian Platform** agree to base their partnership on the following principles:

- **Equality**

Equality requires mutual respect between members of the partnership irrespective of size and power. The participants must respect each other's mandates, obligations and independence and recognize each other's constraints and commitments. Mutual respect must not preclude organizations from engaging in constructive dissent.

- **Transparency**

Transparency is achieved through dialogue (on equal footing), with an emphasis on early consultations and early sharing of information. Communications and transparency, including financial transparency, increase the level of trust among organizations.

- **Result-oriented approach**

Effective humanitarian action must be reality-based and action-oriented. This requires result-oriented coordination based on effective capabilities and concrete operational capacities.

- **Responsibility**

Humanitarian organizations have an ethical obligation to each other to accomplish their tasks responsibly, with integrity and in a relevant and appropriate way. They must make sure they commit to activities only when they have the means, competencies, skills, and capacity to deliver on their commitments. Decisive and robust prevention of abuses committed by humanitarians must also be a constant effort.

- **Complementarity**

The diversity of the humanitarian community is an asset if we build on our comparative advantages and complement each other's contributions. Local capacity is one of the main assets to enhance and on which to build. Whenever possible, humanitarian organizations should strive to make it an integral part in emergency response. Language and cultural barriers must be overcome.

## ***Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC)***

### **OPERATIONAL GUIDANCE ON THE CONCEPT OF 'PROVIDER OF LAST RESORT'**

The *IASC Guidance Note on Using the Cluster Approach to Strengthen Humanitarian Response* (November 2006) describes the 'provider of last resort' concept in the following terms:

- The 'provider of last resort' concept is critical to the cluster approach, and without it the element of predictability is lost. It represents a commitment of cluster leads to do their utmost to ensure an adequate and appropriate response. It is necessarily circumscribed by some basic preconditions that affect any framework for humanitarian action, namely unimpeded access, security, and availability of funding.
- Where there are critical gaps in humanitarian response, it is the responsibility of cluster leads to call on all relevant humanitarian partners to address these. If this fails, then depending on the urgency, the cluster lead as 'provider of last resort' may need to commit itself to filling the gap. If, however, funds are not forthcoming for these activities, the cluster lead cannot be expected to implement these activities, but should continue to work with the Humanitarian Coordinator and donors to mobilize the necessary resources. Likewise, where the efforts of the cluster lead, the Humanitarian Country Team as a whole, and the Humanitarian Coordinator as the leader of that team are unsuccessful in gaining access to a particular location, or where security constraints limit the activities of humanitarian actors, the provider of last resort will still be expected to continue advocacy efforts and to explain the constraints to stakeholders.
- For cross-cutting areas such as Protection, Early Recovery and Camp Coordination, the concept of 'provider of last resort' will need to be applied in a differentiated manner. In all cases, however, cluster leads are responsible for ensuring that wherever there are significant gaps in the humanitarian response they continue advocacy efforts and explain the constraints to stakeholders.
- In the case of emergency shelter, IFRC's commitments are described in an MOU between IFRC and OCHA. IFRC has not committed to being 'provider of last resort' nor is it accountable to any part of the UN system... It will, however, do its utmost to ensure an adequate and appropriate response as far as the network's capacities, resources, as well as the access and security situation allow.

In May 2008 the IASC Task Team on the Cluster Approach reaffirmed the guidance above. The Task Team also noted that the *IASC Generic Terms of Reference for Sector/Cluster Leads at the Country Level* provides a detailed outline of the wide range responsibilities of sector/cluster leads. It emphasized that the responsibility of cluster leads to act as 'provider of last resort' should be seen in the context of this broader set of responsibilities, which are all aimed at ensuring that all appropriate steps are taken to avoid critical gaps in response in the sector or area of activity concerned.

The IASC Task Team further noted that, as stated in General Assembly Resolution 46/182, '*each State has the responsibility first and foremost to take care of the victims of natural disasters and other emergencies occurring on its territory*' and as such '*the affected State has the primary role in the initiation, organization, coordination and implementation of humanitarian assistance within its territory*'. In line with this, agencies designated as sector/cluster leads by the Humanitarian Country Team are responsible for working in close consultation and coordination with national & local authorities and partners to ensure a strategic, balanced, and well-prioritized response in the sector or area of activity concerned.

Concerning the specific responsibilities of cluster leads to act as providers of last resort within their sectors or areas of responsibility at the country level, the IASC Task Team further clarified that:

1. Where necessary, and depending on access, security and availability of funding, the cluster lead, as provider of last resort, must be ready to ensure the provision of services required to fill critical gaps identified by the cluster.
2. The responsibility for acting as provider of last resort falls to the cluster lead for the particular sector concerned. In the case of clusters that have a multi-sectoral focus (e.g. Protection, Early Recovery and Camp Coordination/Camp Management), cluster leads for each of the relevant sectors (e.g. Health, Water/Sanitation/Hygiene etc) remain responsible for acting as providers of last resort within their own sectors.
3. In the case of the protection cluster, Focal Point Agencies<sup>1</sup> are responsible for acting as provider of last resort within their particular areas of responsibility, under the overall leadership of the designated cluster lead for protection and as agreed by the protection cluster at the country level.
4. Where an early recovery cluster is established (in addition to an early recovery network), it is the responsibility of the designated cluster lead for this cluster to either act as provider of last resort for the cluster as a whole, or to specify which agency is responsible for acting as provider of last resort within particular areas of responsibility.
5. In the case of clusters where co-leads are designated at the country level, their respective responsibilities for acting as provider of last resort should be clearly defined.
6. Where critical gaps persist in spite of concerted efforts to address them, cluster leads are responsible for working with the national authorities, the Humanitarian Coordinator and donors to advocate for appropriate action to be taken by the relevant parties and to mobilize the necessary resources for an adequate and appropriate response.

*Endorsed by the IASC Working Group on 20 June 2008*

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<sup>1</sup> At the global level, the Protection Cluster Working Group has five Focal Point Agencies that are responsible for specific technical areas (OHCHR/UNDP for Rule of Law and Justice; UNFPA/UNICEF for Prevention and Response to Gender-Based Violence; UN-HABITAT for Housing, Land and Property Issues; UNICEF for Child Protection; and UNMAS for Mine Action). At the country level, the Protection Cluster may put in place similar arrangements where appropriate.