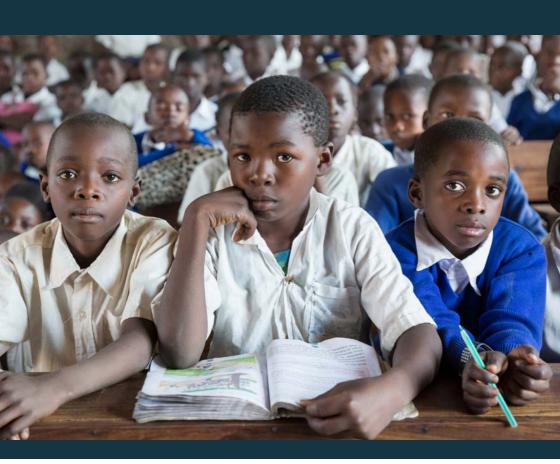# Creating an Enabling Non-formal Education Environment for Adolescents and Youth: Issues and Considerations for Crisis and Conflict Setting

Inter-agency Network for Education in Emergencies

The Inter-agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE) is a global open network of members who are working together within a humanitarian and development framework to ensure that all individuals have the right to a quality, safe, relevant, and equitable education. INEE's work is founded on the fundamental right to education. For more information and to join INEE, visit www.inee.org.

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INTRODUCTION

In 2015, the global community reasserted its commitment to provide inclusive and equitable quality education for all by 2030 (United Nations Division for Sustainable Development Goals, 2015). Despite this pledge, a significant number of adolescents and youth living in crisis- and conflict-affected contexts around the world remain out of school. It is estimated that 127 million primary and secondary school-age children and young people living in crisis-affected countries were out of school in 2019 (INEE, 2020). At the upper secondary level, 52 percent of girls and 46 percent of boys in conflict-affected areas were out of school. UNHCR (2020) reports that only 31 percent of refugee youth are enrolled in secondary education, and that girls are less likely to be enrolled than boys.

The coronavirus pandemic led to the unprecedented closure of schools world-wide, which at one point affected more than 1.5 billion children. Despite the introduction of remote programs to support learning from home, many children and youth were unable to benefit from these solutions, due to a lack of access to the hardware or connectivity required, to living in areas not reached by radio or television signals, and to familial and economic pressures that made studying at home difficult. As schools have started to reopen, it is clear that many children—often those from already marginalized groups—have fallen behind academically. Some may never return to school, due to economic and other pressures. The pandemic has accelerated the need to find alternatives to instruction and learning that are delivered through traditional schooling models.

Non-formal education (NFE) programs offer a variety of learning pathways for adolescents and youth who did not complete their formal education. However, the nature of NFE programming in crisis and conflict contexts varies widely, and there is only limited common language or shared understanding of NFE.

Defining NFE

In this paper, "non-formal education" is proposed as an overarching term to refer to planned, structured, and organized education programming that takes place (or is delivered) outside the formal education system. Some types of NFE lead to equivalent, certified competencies, while others do not. NFE programs can be characterized by their variety, flexibility, and ability to respond quickly to learners' new educational needs in a given context, and by their holistic, learner-centered pedagogy. Informal learning (knowledge and skills obtained through day-to-day interactions and activities) is not considered NFE.

In practice, NFE takes a wide variety of forms, including ad hoc, temporary education activities; technical skills-based programs; and full primary or secondary education programs that can lead to certification. Typical NFE programming includes accelerated education programs that lead to a certificate of completion of primary or secondary education, or that allow children and youth to re-enroll in formal education at the appropriate age-for-grade level; catch-up classes to address gaps in learning; transitional programs, such as language classes to support children who are not sufficiently proficient in the language of instruction; and vocational and skills-training programs that prepare student to access income-generating activities.

Non-formal Education

Typical Programs and Goals

Alternative Education

- Accelerated Education Programs
- Alternative Basic Education
- Second Chance Programs
- Youth Livelihoods Training Programs
- Speed Schools

Certificate of Completion

Return to School (formal / alternative)

Income Generating Activities

Skill Building Support

Support Services

- Tutoring/after-school support
- Remedial Education
- Dropout Prevention Learning Readiness
- Elements Integrated into curriculum: Life Skills. Health, DRR, Safety, PSS/SEL, Peace Education

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Skill Building Support

Learning Gaps Bridged

Transitional Education

- Learning Readiness
- Catch-up Programs
- Bridging Programs (i.e. language)

Return to School (formal / alternative)

Income Generating Activities

Skill Building Support

Learning Gaps Bridged

Language Proficiency

Other NFE

- Short-term or Infrequent Classroom-based Programs
- Short-term Content based Programs
- Less structured classroom- based programs
- Experimental or Project-based learning activities for children and youth

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Skill Building Support

Language Proficiency

Purpose

This Policy Note offers recommendations for how to strengthen the policy environment in which NFE is delivered. It highlights key considerations for those planning, designing, and implementing non-formal programs that seek to meet the core education and skill-development challenges faced by out-of-school adolescents and youth, particularly those affected by conflict, crisis, or forced displacement.

This note emphasizes the centering of learners' needs in humanitarian and development contexts, and examines how these needs interact with larger political and institutional frameworks and capacity across various types of crisis and conflict settings. All considerations are drawn from and can be linked with the INEE Minimum Standards for Education: Preparedness, Response, Recovery—the only global tool that articulates the minimum level of educational quality and access required in emergencies and through to recovery (see Annex). The intended audience is the extended INEE community, including practitioners, donors, and policy-makers in various NFE spaces.

Complementary resources for NFE

While this Policy Note offers recommendations on the provision of NFE, the background paper titled *Non-formal Education for Adolescents and Youth in Crisis and Conflict Contexts: A Proposed Taxonomy* proposes a taxonomy and definitions of NFE programming for adolescents and youth in conflict- and crisis-affected environments. It summarizes the historical and current use of terms related to NFE and reflects current policy and programmatic use of these terms.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS ON NFE FOR POLICYMAKERS, DONORS, AND PRACTITIONERS

This note presents decision-makers, donors, practitioners, and other stakeholders with ten key considerations for how to facilitate the expansion and delivery of NFE for adolescents and youth in crisis- and conflict-affected settings. These considerations are informed by the literature review, background paper, and taxonomy that accompany this document. They offer ten ways in which the planning, design, and delivery of NFE could be strengthened in order to be more relevant to the needs of young people in humanitarian settings.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS FOR AN NFE-ENABLING POLICY ENVIRONMENT IN CRISIS AND CONFLICT SETTINGS

Policy-makers play a key role in ensuring that the availability and delivery of NFE is relevant (fit for purpose), recognized (certified, accepted, and recognized within the education system and by employers), and meets the needs of displaced and conflict- and crisis-affected youth and adolescents.

They also should work to create a policy environment in which NFE is viewed and treated as a valid and useful complement to education provided through the formal education system. NFE offers out-of-school youth and adolescents opportunities to acquire relevant knowledge and skills in more flexible ways.

The policy environment can support the effective delivery of NFE programs by:

1. Embedding NFE programming within the national education architecture

2. Removing administrative and financial barriers to accessing NFE opportunities

3. Including post-primary skills and facilitating the transition from NFE to formal education, post-primary education, or livelihood opportunities

4. Certifying NFE programs

5. Ensuring sustainable financing for NFE programming

1. Embed NFE programming within the national education architecture

If NFE is embedded within the national education architecture, it will facilitate sustainability and the allocation of funding to support delivery or programs, and promote recognition of those programs. NFE provides valuable opportunities for states to diversify the range of educational opportunities available, and to ensure that these opportunities meet the needs and wishes of youth affected by conflict and crisis.

Increasing the number of education options, including NFE, often requires strengthening or rebuilding institutional capacity, particularly in crisis- or conflict-affected states. It is therefore important that international donors commit to supporting the strengthening of systems in order to facilitate the delivery of quality non-formal programs, and to having policy frameworks in place that allow for the implementation of a range of programs that meet the diverse needs of different youth, including those who are forcibly displaced and those living with disabilities. This includes offering pathways to move from NFE into formal education at the secondary or post-secondary levels, and education programs that are recognized by employers and will facilitate learners' entry into the workplace.

Including the provision of NFE in the national education architecture will demonstrate that it is a viable, valid form of education. It also will address concerns that flexible modalities and forms of delivery may be equated with lower quality educational outcomes. This means that social and material support programs delivered through the formal system should be extended to NFE programs. Such support could include school-based nutrition programs, cash-based assistance for students, transportation services or allowances, eligibility for student accommodation subsidies, and the availability of counselling and advisory services provided by staff members.

2. Remove administrative and financial barriers to accessing NFE opportunities

As policy frameworks are put in place to govern NFE delivery, it is important to ensure that administrative and financial barriers to accessing, attending, or completing education programs are removed. Conflict- and crisis-affected youth may be unable to access the formal system for a number of reasons, including being older than the expected age for grade; having no documentation of their prior educational experience, which is needed to register in schools; needing a more flexible and skills-based education; insufficient spaces available in secondary schools; and financial barriers to participating in education.

Where barriers to formal education access exist, the policy framework governing NFE should work to remove them. For example, refugee youth may be excluded from education due to a lack of documentation (identity card, proof of previous education, or vaccination certificate), misalignment between home language and language of instruction, and policies that restrict non-residents' entry into the national education system (Bengtsson & Naylor, 2016; UNHCR, 2015; Zakharia & Menashy, 2018). Even where these barriers are removed and refugee learners are able to enroll in NFE, they may be barred from sitting for national exams, returning to or entering a formal school, or pursuing livelihood opportunities.

3. Include post-primary skills and facilitate the transition from NFE to formal education, post-primary education, or livelihood opportunities

An essential need for learners in crisis and conflict contexts is to transition from NFE programs to post-primary education or livelihood opportunities. Policy frameworks also should ensure that links exist between NFE and formal schooling so that those who complete NFE programs can enroll in the appropriate grade for their age or skill level, sit for national exams, transition to secondary school, or have access to skills-training programs.

Accelerated education programs are NFE programs that support transition by enabling learners to develop knowledge and skills that are equivalent to what the standard curriculum delivers through formal schools. Once learners in accelerated education programs complete the primary-equivalent content, they are allowed to take the national exam and obtain primary education certification, which enables them to transition into formal secondary school (AEWG, 2017). Flexible entry and exit points and the transition to formal education are core features of these programs (EDC, 2018; Kebede, 2018; Save the Children, 2019).

Also needed are NFE programs designed for youth who have completed primary school but were unable to complete either lower or upper secondary school. Such programs could offer alternative pathways to basic and advanced technical and vocational training, access to secondary school exit exams and certification, and higher education.

The links between education and employment are represented in Sustainable Development Goals 4.3 and 4.4, which aim to increase technical, vocational, and tertiary education opportunities for youth, and to ensure that they have the necessary, relevant skills for employment and entrepreneurship. Inclusive NFE programs should enable adolescents and youth who are displaced or living in conflict zones to build the essential skills they need to engage in decent work and give them an opportunity to contribute to the economic growth of the country they are living in or their country of origin.

Many skills-based programs for out-of-school adolescents and youth achieve this through counseling, mentoring, networking, and internships, or by helping learners develop business plans or obtain cash for a business start-up.

4. Certify NFE programs

If crisis- and conflict-affected adolescents and youth are provided certified NFE, they will be more likely to be retained in programs and then to transition into additional education or to livelihood opportunities.

In crisis and conflict settings, NFE programs that aim to offer primary or secondary school equivalent competencies should either be aligned with the nationally approved curriculum or use an approved NFE curriculum. Equivalency and certification are of particular concern for displaced students (both refugees and IDPs) who require documented proof of the learning that has taken place during displacement. If NFE programs do not offer their own certification, students who complete these programs should at least have the opportunity to sit for national certification examinations.

Skills-based NFE for out-of-school adolescents and youth also should consider the need for the recognition, validation, and accreditation of knowledge and skills gained in the program. NFE programs should offer certification that is relevant to the dynamics of a particular context and that aligns with existing technical and vocational education and training structures, assessments, and certifications.

5. Ensure sustainable financing for NFE programming

The expansion and delivery of effective NFE programs that address the learning and skills needed by the millions of out-of-school youth and adolescents in crisis- and conflict-affected settings requires substantial investment by governments and donors. This necessary investment will support greater economic engagement and empowerment among youth; have social benefits, including reduced levels of infant mortality and improved health outcomes; and harness youths' potential to bring about positive social change.

In many emergency contexts, education makes up a small proportion of the national budget, the bulk of which is allocated to formal education (e.g., King et al., 2019; Ngware et al., 2018). The amount of aid that goes to education is lower than the amount to other humanitarian and development sectors, and it continues to fall short of what is needed (Bengtsson & Naylor, 2016; King et al., 2019). Although establishing the Education Cannot Wait Fund has led to an increase in education funding in humanitarian crises, the increase has not met the growing need.

To increase the availability of NFE, national stakeholders in crisis- and conflict-affected contexts should increase funding allocations specifically for inclusive, NFE programming that targets out-of-school adolescents and youth affected by conflict or crisis. Both primary- and secondary-level programs should be accounted for in NFE program funding.

Greater sustainability and diversification of funding streams is needed in the provision of NFE in emergency and crisis contexts. In countries where NFE provision is integrated into the national education system and architecture, financial support for its provision should be incorporated into the education-sector plans to ensure that the delivery of programs initiated during emergency situations is sustained using humanitarian funding, which must continue to be provided in order to meet ongoing needs.

While there has been significant movement toward greater cohesion in humanitarian and development funding and strategy in recent years, it is still important to note the generally shorter-term nature of funds earmarked for humanitarian response (Dryden-Peterson, 2017; UNHCR, 2019). Education in particular requires investment beyond the acute phase of a humanitarian emergency. This is particularly relevant for NFE programming in crisis- and conflict-affected environments, where challenges to quality, access, community support, and context-related logistics already exist.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS FOR NFE PROGRAM DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION FOR CRISIS- AND CONFLICT-AFFECTED YOUTH

Once the policy framework is set, the implementers must design and deliver NFE programs that meet the needs of youth and adolescents in crisis and conflict settings. Given the particular challenges they face in accessing and completing education programs, the following aspects should be considered when designing successful NFE programs:

1. Ensuring that the design and delivery of NFE programming are inclusive and protective

2. Building flexibility into NFE programs in terms of time, location, and delivery modality

3. Ensuring that NFE programs are relevant to the needs of out-of-school youth and adolescents

4. Designing holistic NFE programming that addresses health, peacebuilding, mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS), and livelihood opportunities for youth and adolescents affected by crisis and conflict

5. Promoting the participation of youth and adolescents in the design and implementation of NFE programming

1. Ensure that the design and delivery of NFE programs are inclusive and protective

Adolescents and youth affected by crisis and conflict may find themselves living in situations of ongoing poverty, insecurity, and exclusion; at risk of experiencing sexual or physical violence; or coping with physical and mental health conditions. Given the vulnerabilities faced by those who are excluded from the formal education system, it is important that the design and delivery of NFE programs take into account learners' needs, which extend beyond their academic or learning-focused needs. The accompanying background paper documents the holistic design of many successful NFE programs, and how they integrate the delivery of health information, life skills, and psychosocial support into their curricula.

Frameworks that govern the delivery of NFE programs should explicitly consider and address the factors that have contributed to educational exclusion. For example, NFE programs that aim to prepare refugees and asylum seekers to both learn the language of instruction and master the academic content that will enable them to enroll in the formal system may require specific accommodations in the design and delivery of the program. This is particularly true for NFE programs that enable refugees who lack documented proof of their prior educational attainment to obtain certification or academic equivalence that meets enrollment and admission requirements.

A range of intersecting challenges may need to be given more attention in the implementation of NFE programs in crisis- and conflict-affected areas, such as safety concerns, gender roles, disability, legal status, and the needs of working adolescents and youth.

The inclusion and protection considerations to take into account include:

- Ensuring flexible program entry and exit points
- Accessibility of programs for individuals with disabilities
- Providing flexible delivery schedules to accommodate the needs of different groups, such as working adolescents and young mothers (e.g., safety concerns, reaching classes held at night, etc.)

Additional practical considerations related to inclusion, protection, and holistic programming are discussed in consideration 9, below.

NFE and disability inclusion

Inaccessible school infrastructure, a lack of assistive technologies, or an exclusive school culture may result in early dropout or limited learning and development opportunities for children and adolescents with disabilities.

The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD, 2006) requires states to ensure that people with disabilities can access general tertiary education, vocational training, adult education, and lifelong learning without discrimination and on an equal basis with others (Art. 24). It also states that they should have effective access to technical and vocational guidance programs, placement services, and vocational and continuing training (Art. 27).

The recommendation that national education systems should include the principles of Universal Design for Learning (USAID, 2018) also applies to the facilities where and modalities through which NFE is delivered. Materials and curricular outcomes may need to be adapted to ensure that no skill or ability included in the core curriculum excludes learners with disabilities. Teachers engaged in the delivery of NFE should also receive training on disability inclusion and inclusive pedagogy.

2. Build flexibility into NFE programs in terms of time, location, and delivery modality

Flexibility in education is one of the most consistent needs of adolescents and youth who are living in crisis- and conflict-affected contexts across the globe, as many interrelated factors impact their ability to access education. Flexible delivery modalities are particularly important if programs are to meet the needs of learners who are older than the expected "age for grade" in the formal education system. Education programming that offers flexible scheduling, location, and entry/exit points may increase overall access and attendance (AEWG, 2017; Ngware et al., 2018). Implementers must consider factors such as learners' changing household responsibilities (e.g., the need to support their families by engaging in income-generating activities or caregiving) and balance these with the requirements for program delivery, such as number of instructional hours per week and certification procedures.

Flexibility can refer to **time** (times when learners attend, class hours per week, and the duration of programs); **location** (instructional settings that make use of schools or other locations accessible to learners); **delivery modality** (face-to-face, blended, distance, and self-study); **curriculum structure** (modular curriculum design, skills-based assessments, etc.); and **certification processes** (examination dates, certification points).

Time

Distance learning, self-study, or evening classes, if safe and appropriate for young people, including female students, enable students to schedule their learning around their availability. Flexibility may also include forgiving lateness or absences by providing the opportunity to make up missed work.

Location

The location where education programs takes place also requires flexibility, as the availability of physical space restricts where, when, and how classes can be held. NFE programming may occur in formal schools (e.g., through double shifting), in schools built specifically for the target population (e.g., facilities in refugee camps for refugee learners), in community centers or community spaces, or in mobile or makeshift settings.

Delivery modality

When appropriate, technology should be leveraged to expand educational "spaces," for example, using computers, mobile phones, or radio for distance learning. However, this should be done in ways that ensure inclusion, that using the technologies is safe, and that do not expose learners to safety risks.

Technology may be particularly useful for adolescents and youth who are more familiar with technology and more able to direct, motivate, and discipline themselves than younger learners. The important role of expanded learning spaces was demonstrated by the COVID-19 pandemic, which impacted more than 1.5 billion learners globally, or almost 91 percent of the world's student population (UNESCO, 2020). Innovative distance education measures provided solutions to school closures in both high-tech contexts (i.e., video conferencing, virtual classrooms) and low-tech contexts (i.e., radio and audio series, mobile-based learning platforms, SMS), which has increased access to educational spaces during the crisis (INEE, 2020).

Learners in crisis and conflict contexts, as well as children and youth from vulnerable groups, may lack the hardware, connectivity, and support services that enable them to benefit fully from the available distance or home-based learning programs. Access to technology and devices in the home is often gendered. Women and girls tend to have less access to the internet and devices than men and boys; the global average for access to mobile internet is 26 percent lower for women and girls than for men and boys (OECD, 2018; UN News, 2019). Girls and boys with disabilities may be at particular risk for exclusion from education if remote/distance-learning programs are not accessible or do not have assistive devices that enable them to participate and accommodate learning needs (UNICEF, 2020). All interventions should ensure that teachers are trained to provide remote support; that caregivers receive support, including for their own mental health and psychosocial wellbeing; and that measures to ensure continuity of education are included in all special education programs (UNICEF, 2020).

3. Ensure that NFE programs are relevant to the needs of out-of-school youth and adolescents

Crisis- and conflict-affected adolescent and youth learners need education options that are relevant to their prior education and work/life experiences, their identified needs and goals, and their current and future contexts, especially as they relate to the details of the crisis or conflict (e.g., Ngware et al., 2018; Bengtsson & Naylor, 2016; King et al., 2019; Christophersen, 2015; Olenik & Takyi-Laryea, 2013).

Youth, especially those who have been out of school and engaged in income-generating activities or household responsibilities, benefit from education programming that gives them self-direction in their education, recognizes and validates learning that has been obtained outside the classroom, and builds on their motivation to learn in order to meet a specific need, address a current problem, or achieve a certain goal.

Engaging adolescents and youth in discussions about their needs and aspirations helps to ensure the programming's relevance to local realities (see consideration 10 below) (e.g., Zeus & Chaffin, 2011; USAID-Equip 3, 2012).

Technical and vocational education and training and skills-based NFE programs should assess the local labor market to understand what skills are required and what jobs are available to young people, particularly refugees. A review of UNHCR youth programming showed that there was often an "interests vs. opportunities" mismatch, and that participants wanted programming tailored to the needs of the local labor market so they would have real opportunities to earn a livelihood after completing the program (UNHCR, 2013). As many refugee youth spend considerable time in a host country, NFE programs should be tailored toward the local labor market, which requires understanding that market and building links with local employers (King et al., 2019).

Skills-based NFE programs also should avoid reinforcing gender norms, and career guidance should challenge gender bias by focusing on each trainee's ability and suggesting a range of options for their employment or self-employment.

4. Design holistic NFE programing that addresses health, peacebuilding, MHPSS, and livelihood opportunities for youth and adolescents affected by crisis and conflict

In addition to their educational value, NFE programs offer an entry point for addressing the broader needs of adolescents and youth, including MHPSS, protection, health, peacebuilding, and personal development. This can be achieved by designing curricula and teaching/learning materials that help them build holistic competencies. These materials should be language, gender, and disability inclusive and address the full range of learners' needs, such as health (e.g., menstrual hygiene management, sexual and reproductive rights, disease prevention), safety (e.g., mine safety awareness, disaster preparedness), psychosocial support, social-emotional learning, and inclusion (UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2018; Compact for Young People in Humanitarian Action, 2019).

NFE programs also can provide wrap-around support in the form of protection services, psychosocial support, and social-emotional learning for students in crisis- and conflict-affected contexts. There is a significant link between learners' psychosocial and emotional wellbeing and their learning readiness. It is essential that program designers understand the effects crisis and conflict have on young people's social, emotional, and psychological wellbeing, particularly as learners in these environments may be at risk of physical, emotional, and sexual abuse. This may include corporal punishment and bullying or sexual violence in the home, school, or community, high rates of early/forced marriage, teenage pregnancy, and child labor (UNICEF, 2019). Explicit psychosocial training or counseling and recreational activities that build social emotional skills can be integrated into NFE programs (USAID, 2013).

Teachers should be trained on how to incorporate psychosocial support and social and emotional learning into their teaching, especially when time is constrained and they feel compelled to focus on subjects included on national exams. There is extensive literature pointing to best practices and norms for such programming in crisis- and conflict-affected settings, including INEE's resource collection for psychosocial support and social and emotional learning (PSS and SEL). To support the wellbeing and protection of learners in crisis and conflict contexts most effectively, it is essential to also address the wellbeing of teachers and program staff (Falk et al., 2019).

5. Promote the participation of youth and adolescents in the design and implementation of NFE programming

Youth, adolescents, their families, and their communities should be engaged in the needs assessment, design, and implementation stages of NFE programming in order to ensure its relevance and their sense of ownership. Engaging adolescents and youth in this process helps ensure that the programming is relevant to the local realities, and that the NFE program participants' educational and skills development aspirations are met (e.g., Zeus & Chaffin, 2011; USAID-Equip 3, 2012).

Furthermore, youth engagement can be catalyzed to support their holistic development, build their leadership skills, and give them a sense of agency in achieving their goals—educational and otherwise (e.g., Evans, Lo Forte, & Fraser, 2013; Zeus, 2010). It is important that all voices are consulted and heard when creating opportunities for youth to contribute to the strategic direction of NFE programs, particularly those of youth with disabilities and young women.

Communities and families play an important role in ensuring the accessibility and quality of NFE programming. Community support may include awareness of the need for the program, buy-in with the program's legitimacy, shaping program goals and offerings, informing decisions on the location of services and scheduling of classes, the identification and rehabilitation of learning spaces, and highlighting the specific needs of particular groups, including youth with disabilities. They also can carry out advocacy within communities to support the identification and enrollment of learners, to help monitor learner and teacher attendance, and to liaise between schools and families (UNHCR, 2019).

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CONCLUSION

NFE offers a variety of programming options to meet the needs of the millions of out-of-school adolescents and youth whose education is being affected or disrupted by crisis and conflict, and those who have fallen behind due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Structured, high-quality, certified NFE programs that are responsive to the needs of conflict- and crisis-affected youth can ensure that their disrupted education does not result in their long-term exclusion from education. Young people's long-term exclusion from education can have devastating consequences for the fight to address poverty and ensure their access to meaningful work that often depends on having formal certification. Central to realizing these goals is an enabling policy environment that establishes the relevance, recognition, and status of NFE provision within the education sector, in particular for families and crisis-affected youth and adolescents.

The 10 considerations are intended to help decision-makers, donors, and practitioners design, implement, fund, and write policy for accessible and inclusive NFE programming that supports the delivery of programs that will deliver on the goals of SDG4: to provide youth with access to quality, relevant, lifelong learning.

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ANNEX:
INEE MINIMUM STANDARDS COMPANION

NFE Key Considerations and the INEE Minimum Standards:
A Companion for Further Learning

The *INEE Minimum Standards for Education: Preparedness, Response, Recovery* (INEE MS) is the only global tool that articulates the minimum level of education quality and access in emergencies and through to recovery. The *INEE Minimum Standards Handbook* contains 19 standards, each with accompanying key actions and guidance notes. The handbook aims to enhance the quality of educational preparedness, response, and recovery, increase access to safe and relevant learning opportunities, and ensure accountability and strong coordination in providing these services. The guidance in the *INEE Minimum Standards Handbook* is designed for use in crisis response in a range of situations, including disasters caused by natural hazards and conflict, slow- and rapid-onset situations, and emergencies in rural and urban environments.

The 10 key considerations presented in this paper for creating an enabling NFE environment for adolescents and youth in crisis and conflict settings are rooted in the INEE MS. While all guidance in the INEE MS is relevant for formal and non-formal programming across policy and practice, this annex provides specific INEE MS Domains, Standards, Key Actions, and Guidance Notes that are valuable to review for each of the 10 key considerations offered in this paper. Please see the full INEE MS and participate in an INEE MS capacity-building opportunity through inee.org.

Key Considerations and the INEE MS

1. **Embedding NFE programming within the national education architecture**

   INEE MS Domain 1: Foundational Standards - Analysis

   Standard 2: Response Strategies
   - Guidance Note 6 on harmonized response and strengthening national education programs
   - Guidance Note 8 on complementary education

2. **Removing administrative and financial barriers for accessing non-formal education opportunities**

   INEE MS Domain 2: Access and Learning Environment

   Standard 1: Equal Access
   - Guidance Note 1 on discriminatory policies and practices
   - Guidance Note 2 on flexibility with documentation requirements

3. **Including post-primary skills and facilitating transition from non-formal education to formal education, post-primary education, or livelihood opportunities**

   INEE MS Domain 2: Access and Learning Environment

   Standard 1: Equal Access
   - Key Action on provision of progressive opportunities
   - Key Action on sufficient resources for continuity

- Key Action on sufficient resource availability to ensure continuity

INEE MS Domain 5: Education Policy

Standard 1: Law and Policy
- Guidance Note 2 regarding national education laws and policies should ensure continuity of education

4. **Certifying NFE programs**

INEE MS Domain 2: Access and Learning Environment

Standard 1: Equal Access
- Key Action on recognition and relevancy to local education authorities and country of origin

INEE MS Domain 5: Education Policy

Standard 2: Planning and Implementation
- Guidance Note on Planning and implementation of education activities

5. **Ensuring sustainable financing of NFE programs**

INEE MS Domain 2: Access and Learning Environment

Standard 1: Equal Access
- Key Action on sufficient resource availability to ensure continuity
- Guidance Note 8 on resource availability and responsibility

6. **Ensuring inclusive and protective design and implementation of NFE**

INEE MS Domain 2: Access and Learning Environment

Standard 1: Equal Access
- Key Action and Guidance Note 1 on discrimination
- Key Action on learning structures and site accessibility

Standards 2: Protection and Well-being
- Key Action on freedom from harm for learners, teachers, and education personnel

Standard 3: Facilities and Services
- Guidance Note 3 on consideration of people with disabilities in the design of education facilities
- Guidance Note 8 regarding facilities and services that promote safety and well-being

INEE MS Domain 3: Teaching and Learning

Standard 1: Curricula
- Guidance Note 6 regarding psychosocial needs, rights and development

7. Building flexibility into NFE programs in terms of time, location, and delivery

INEE MS Domain 1: Foundational Standards - Analysis

Standard 2: Response Strategies
- Guidance Note 1 on flexible and responsive program strategies

INEE MS Domain 2: Access and Learning Environment

Standards 1: Equal Access
- Guidance Note 4 on the need for flexibility

8. Ensuring the relevance of NFE programs to the needs of youth and adolescents

INEE MS Domain 3: Teaching and Learning

Standard 1: Curricula
- Guidance Note 3 regarding curriculum review and development
- Guidance Note 7 regarding language of instruction

9. Designing holistic programs that address peacebuilding, MHPSS, and livelihoods

INEE MS Domain 2: Access and Learning Environment

Standard 1: Equal Access
Standard 2 Protection and Well-being
Standard 3: Facilities and Services

To learn more about WASH and education in emergencies, consult the "water, safe" index entry within the INEE Minimum Standards Handbook.

Learn more about PSS-SEL in the *INEE Guidance Note on Psychosocial Support.*

Learn more about child protection in the *Minimum Standards for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action* (Alliance for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action, 2019)

10. Promoting participation of youth and adolescents in NFE programming

INEE MS Domain 1: Foundational Standards - Community Participation

Standard 1: Participation
Standard 2: Resources

INEE MS Domain 1: Foundational Standards - Coordination

Standard 1: Coordination

INEE MS Domain 1: Foundational Standards - Analysis

Standard 1: Assessment
Standard 2: Response Strategies
Standard 3: Monitoring
Standard 4: Evaluation

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