

May 11, 2006

Voices of Courage Awards Luncheon 2006

Remarks by Allison Anderson, Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies

In 1999, the Women's Commission co-organized one of the first ever conferences on education in emergencies at the World Bank. We owe a great debt to the work of the extraordinary Mary Anne Schwalbe and Mary Diaz. Thank you Women's Commission!

Many people in the humanitarian community mistakenly believe that education is of secondary importance. Education for refugee children is **critical and it is urgent**. It is about recognizing basic human rights. Education gives refugee girls and boys the **skills** they need to access freedom, to raise healthy families, to contribute to the reconstruction of their communities and countries -- to pursue peace.

The Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies –or INEE- grew out of the World Education Forum in Dakar, Senegal, in 2000. Participants there realized they needed to create an inter-agency network, a communication tool, to link their paths and allow them to work together to improve

emergency education response. INEE is that tool.

For instance, immediately after the earthquake in Pakistan, we linked our members with each other in order to form an effective and coordinated education response for getting kids back into school. **To give you another example of our work: the African Union** does not yet have a policy on refugee education for adolescents. They've asked us for help and we have linked them to INEE members who are now working with them to develop that policy.

Since 2000, INEE has grown to a global network of over thirteen hundred members. It includes NGOs, UN agencies, donor governments, Ministry of Education officials in countries affected by crisis, academics and most importantly, refugee teachers and students, all working together to ensure the right to education in emergencies and post-crisis reconstruction. Through **INEE's website and listserv,** we **share lessons learned and new materials** with members so they can build upon the successes and incorporate learning from around the world to create better quality education for refugee girls and boys.

We also produce global standards to help everyone speak the same language. **INEE's development of the MS** for Education in Emergencies, Chronic Crises and Early Reconstruction **reflects our mission** to ensure that refugee children and youth have access to education – **education that keeps them safe and is relevant** to their lives.

The standards are based on hundreds of consultations that we facilitated around the world with refugee students, teachers and community members. **Christiana Thorpe and Fawe**, another honoree here today, organized three consultations in SL, ensuring that the experiences of students and teachers in SL informed the standards. **The INEE standards hold the humanitarian community accountable** for providing quality education without discrimination. Since the standards were launched in December of 2004, they have been used in over 60 countries.

We need to secure the recognition of education as a **necessary component of all relief efforts**. This award represents one step toward that goal. It provides increased awareness of and recognition for the accomplishments achieved through the inter-agency coordination and the collaboration of INEE's thousands of members.

However, we still have work to do. Right now, the UN Inter-Agency Standing Committee, the most powerful global actor in humanitarian response, is deciding how relief is provided and to whom. At this time, unbelievably, education is not on their list. **If you know anyone to talk to about this, please TALK.**

We at the Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies will continue to work with the Women's Commission and other partners to realize the education rights of refugee children. Thank you for your invaluable support.