



**REACHING THE GIRLS
IN SOUTH ASIA:**
Differentiated Needs and Responses
in Emergencies

Alexandra Mathieu



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Regional Office for South Asia; and
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SERIES FOREWORD

There is a growing sense of momentum around education in South Asia. Governments are engaged and a lot has been done. The Millennium Development Goals have added an additional spur to action as indeed have greater awareness on gender disparity and the need for educated workers. There is though a long way to go if the rights of all children are to be realised.

Providing access to education is only part of the story. Once children are enrolled and attending, the quality of their education must make it a worthwhile experience. The special needs of girls in the social and cultural context of South Asia call for special measures, as do the needs of all children in situations of conflict and emergency. South Asia has many rich, positive examples of success in advancing basic education. It is important that these are shared and built on if there is to be an overall improvement throughout the region.

This series of papers aimed at promoting better education in South Asia grew out of collaboration between the UNICEF Regional Office for South Asia and the newly formed UN Girls' Education Initiative, and had its genesis at a Regional Meeting on Accelerating Girls' Education in South Asia in February 2005.

Essentially the series is intended to be a forum that allows debate, exchange of ideas and to break new ground. It will aim to capture the momentum and extol good practice to all engaged in educational policy and implementation.

The series does not seek to represent a specific viewpoint, but rather is intended to enable specialist contributors to present issues in greater depth and breadth than is often the case in official documents.

Initially the series will focus on girls' education but it is hoped that eventually it will broaden into a platform for more general education issues related to South Asia, with a particular emphasis on social inclusion. Contributions and feedback are invited from academics and practitioners from throughout the South Asia region and beyond. The series editors are particularly interested in submissions which offer new ideas and strategies that can assist those needing answers, and which can add impetus to the ongoing efforts in the region to provide quality education for all.

Come, join the debate!

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GLOSSARY

AHRC	Asian Human Rights Commission
AIHRC	Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission
BPFA	Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action
BRCF	Bhutanese Refugee Children's Forums
CPN	Communist Party of Nepal
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
CWIN	Child Workers in Nepal Concerned Centre
DCWB	District Child Welfare Board
DFID	Department for International Development (UK)
DDR	Disarmament, Demobilization and Rehabilitation
DEC	Disasters Emergency Committee
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
ECD	Early Childhood Development
EFA	Education For All
ESCO	Eastern Self-reliant and Community awakening Organization
GBV	Gender-based violence
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GEM	Girls' Education Movement
GES	Gender Equity Section

HAS	Health Action Schools
HMG/Nepal	His Majesty's Government of Nepal
HRCP	Human Rights Commission of Pakistan
IASC	Inter-Agency Standing Committee
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
ILO	International Labour Organization
IOM	International Organization for Migration
IRC	International Rescue Committee
HRW	Human Rights Watch
LTTE	Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MoE	Ministry of Education
MWO	Makhi Welfare Organization
NAEP	Northern Areas Education Project
NEP	North and East Provinces (Sri Lanka)
NWFP	North West Frontier Province (Pakistan)
OSP	Out-of-School Programme
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers
RET	Refugee Education Trust
RHRC	Reproductive Health for Refugees Consortium
SCN	Save the Children Norway
SWAp	Sector Wide Approach
UNAMA	United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan
UNCWS	United Nation Commission on the Status of Women
UNGEI	United Nations Girls' Education Initiative
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNICEF ROSA	UNICEF Regional Office for South Asia

PREFACE

As pointed by Smith and Vaux¹, one of the most debilitating limitations in the field of educational provision in conflict and post-conflict situations is lack of research. The main aims of this paper are to identify and review existing research in South Asia on girls' education in emergencies and highlight the ways in which armed conflict and natural disasters impact on girls' education. More specifically, the paper attempts to accomplish the following objectives:

- Undertake a review of the academic and programme literature on children in conflict and emergencies in particular in, but not restricted to, South Asia;
- Develop in-depth understanding of the linkages between emergencies and girls' education and the reasons behind low priority and lack of education for girls in emergencies in South Asia;
- Identify gaps and potentially less widely known research in the literature;
- Summarize key research findings that emerge from the literature and direct the reader to relevant literature;
- Highlight a number of innovative programmes and best practices;

- Provoke thoughts about possible areas of research and encourage practitioners and donors to take concrete actions to promote gender equality in schools and the empowerment of women and girls in situations of emergencies;
- Suggest drivers of change, opportunities and possible future directions with a view to improving response to girls' education in emergencies so that agencies can take a more proactive role for the education of girls in these complex situations.

This paper is the result of qualitative research conducted from September to November 2005 and is based on secondary data collection. As Sommers noted, *"the literature is too thin and the range of experience is too wide to be covered in one paper"*². Literature has been identified through 'snowballing' techniques (following one link that leads to another) through use of the internet as much as through systematic searches of databases. In addition, four interviews with NGOs, INGOs and UNICEF's programme officers were conducted in order to gain insight into their educational programmes within the Nepali context, and data and opinions were gathered from a workshop organized by UNICEF ROSA on Education in Emergencies.

According to J. Ward, gender refers to *"the attributes and roles differentially ascribed to males and females. These attributes and roles are socially constructed, context based and learned through socialization"*³. This definition has been adopted across this study. Moreover, emergency was taken to refer to conflict, post-conflict and natural disaster settings. Sinclair includes within this term *"conflict or natural disaster, displacement of population (whether to another country or internally), return to the home areas, and/or populations that did not migrate, acute early phases, prolonged crisis and reconstruction"*⁴. Many of the issues that apply to the provisions of education in conflict situations also apply to post-natural disaster, but these have not been a special focus in this paper. Education covers in-school and out-of-school education, formal and non-formal education. Finally, humanitarian action is understood according to the broad formulation of ALNAP⁵, that is to say as *"assistance, protection and advocacy actions undertaken on an impartial basis in response to human needs resulting from complex political emergencies and natural hazards."*

INTRODUCTION

Children's entitlement to education is well established in international law, including through the Geneva Conventions, the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), and a number of UN Security Council Resolutions. The Office of the Secretary General's Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict also provides an important framework for mobilizing the international community towards fulfilment of children's rights and needs. Furthermore, in recent years, a growing number of advocacy documents have appeared, highlighting the impact of armed conflict on children. The most widely read and influential of these has been the *Impact of Armed Conflict on Children*⁶ study by G. Machel, adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1996.

This key framing document fosters strong momentum for attention to and action on behalf of war-affected children and states that girls are especially at risk for violence, including sexual violence and disruption from school. Although a strong legal framework exists, its application in practice is limited, particularly during emergencies.

*"The statistical imprecision of data on populations affected by wars presents a serious constraint on the ability to accurately estimate war's impact on education systems, administrators, teachers and students. All we know for certain is that the impact has been tremendous"*⁷. In 2000, at the World Education Forum in Dakar, international educators belatedly recognized the issue

of conflict as an obstacle to the achievement of the goal of primary Education For All (EFA) by 2015. As M. Sommers notes, *“in some cases, war’s impact on an education system has been so extensive that approaching the EFA targets seems nearly impossible”*⁸. Natural disasters, which have increased in intensity and magnitude, also prevent children from accessing and pursuing their education. From the World Disasters Report, of the 76.5 million children affected by conflict each year, 10 million were affected by armed conflict whereas around 66.5 million were affected by natural disasters. In the year 2000, for example, Asia was host to 40 per cent of the total global disaster events⁹.

According to UNESCO¹⁰, it is estimated that half of the 104 million children not attending primary school live in countries in, or recovering from, conflict. Two thirds of them are girls. The international community has placed a high priority on girls’ access to education through initiatives such as EFA, the MDGs and United Nations Girls’ Education Initiative (UNGEI). In April 2000, UNGEI was launched to meet the UN Millennium Development Goal 3: *“Promote gender equality and empower women”*. The aim of UNGEI is to narrow the gender gap in primary and secondary

education by 2005 and to ensure that, by 2015, all children complete primary schooling, with girls and boys having equal access to all levels of education. However, it is already admitted that 75 countries all over the world, representing 60 per cent of the countries who pledged to this goal, have missed the 2005 targets. According to Save the Children, out of the 60 million girls who are not going to school in 2005, one third lives in India and Pakistan¹¹. In South Asia, a wide network of partners is emerging. The goal of UNGEI in South Asia is *“to improve girls’ education by mobilizing a coalition of partners to promote gender equity and equality and advocate for the elimination of gender disparity in primary and secondary education”*¹². Girls’ education in emergencies will be given a high priority since amongst the five working groups created in this network, one will focus on challenging barriers to girls’ access to school in emergencies.

It cannot be denied that, in South Asia, a focus on girls’ education will be essential in order to meet the MDGs related to education. According to a report entitled *Must Do Better*¹³ and published recently, half of the countries in the Asia Pacific region fail the gender equality mark. In South Asia, six out of eight countries (Bhutan, Afghanistan,

Bangladesh, India, Nepal and Pakistan) are in the 25 countries suggested for the first phase of the UNICEF girls' education acceleration strategy, formulated to speed up the progress towards achievement of the goal of gender equality in primary and secondary education by 2005. However, this goal will not be achieved given the poor performances of the education sector, the lack of efforts committed by agencies to reach girls as well as the impact of numerous conflicts and natural disasters.

Children are not a homogeneous group and their vulnerabilities in emergencies will be a function of many factors: their age, whether they live in urban or rural settings, their ethnicity or tribe and whether they are boys or girls. Their vulnerability will also depend on the traditional role in society, and whether that role and position has become worse or better as a result of a natural or human disaster. Therefore, the international community has a special duty of care, protection and education with regard to children exposed to armed conflict and other emergencies. Most importantly, it is critical to highlight the gendered impact of conflict on education. If it has been recognized that conflicts hurt girls more, the impact of conflicts on them has not been deeply

analysed and their rights are not properly guaranteed. As Jackie Kirk states, "*war magnifies the already existing gender inequalities of peace time. A just peace involves the reworking of the gender status quo*"¹⁴.

South Asia faces different types of emergencies which can hamper the increasing provision of education to girls. Natural disasters such as floods, droughts or earthquakes are frequent in this region. Education has been deeply affected by the earthquake which affected Gujarat province in India in January 2001. The tsunami on the 26th of December 2004 has also deeply affected three countries in South Asia: India, Sri Lanka and the Maldives. After the phase of emergency, reconstruction has been set on the agenda. The education system was part of this process. In October 2005, Pakistan was also the theatre of an earthquake whose effects are considerable and not yet fully assessed. The impact on the education system will be huge.

In addition to natural disasters, many countries in South Asia are still embroiled in, or emerging from, extensive upheavals and destruction due to long-term armed conflicts. J. Boyden has characterized the nature of armed conflicts in South Asia and

demonstrated their complexity. According to her, in Pakistan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka, armed conflict is not continuous but sporadic, shifting from one area and one community to another. She also underlined the prevalence of intra-state conflicts, the continuity of political conflict with other forms of violence, and the destabilizing effects of displacement. It is also significant that these conflicts have affected a region which is “*still one of the most iniquitous regions in the world in terms of gender, with discrimination against girls and women widespread*”¹⁵. Therefore, the impact of conflict and post-conflict settings on girls’ education in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka requires an in-depth research in order to take concrete actions and meet the gaps identified. The duty requires agencies involved in preventive and emergency efforts to understand how girls’ education is affected by such adversities and develop alternative programmes that mitigate the impact of emergencies on girls’ right to education.

The tragedy which unfolded in a school in Beslan, southern Russia, in September 2004, is but one of multiple examples of how education may be deliberately (ab)used in conflict

situations. In *The two faces of education in ethnic conflict*¹⁶, Bush and Salterelli examine peace-destroying and peace-building impacts of particular approaches to education. As so well articulated by these authors, “*education is both part of the problem and part of the solution*”. The understanding of impact of conflicts on girls’ education and the way education can be a healing process are key issues for development in education across the world.

In countries affected by armed conflicts, going to and remaining at school can put children at risk. They risk getting caught in the crossfire such as in Nepal since the Maoists launched their “People’s war” in 1996. In this landlocked country, poor state education provision has fuelled the rapidly increasing private sector, a symbol of privilege which helped to stimulate the Maoist insurgency and made education a battleground as rebels have attacked both state and private schools, especially since 2000. Schooling has been severely disrupted by the use of frequent bandhs (strikes) and large numbers of teachers and students have been kidnapped by Maoists for ‘re-education’ being said by the Maoists to “*put the paper and pencil in the bag and target the palace with the gun*”. The frequent closure of schools, in addition

to fear of violence, has led to an increase in the migration of students from rural to urban areas. Thousands of children have been displaced and deprived of their basic rights to education and a safe environment. In Nepal, school is a site in which conflict is promoted and played out and, particularly for girls and women, a site in which the gender dimensions of conflict and the associated impositions and manipulations of identity are also reinforced.

On the other hand, education is increasingly seen to have a role to play in mitigating conflict. As G. Machel stated, *“education is particularly important at times of armed conflict. While all around may be in chaos, schooling can represent a state of normalcy”*¹⁷. After an emergency, schools, however temporary and improvised they may be, are often among the first community organizations to start functioning. Education plays an enormously constructive role in healing war-torn communities, offering uprooted children a sense of protection, stability, normality and routine. According to Nicolai and Triplehorn¹⁸, *“education can provide a protective function for children in situations of emergencies”*. Given the numerous emergencies South Asia countries have to face, it is essential to

consider emergencies as opportunities to improve access and quality of education for girls. At the same time, it is also possible that opportunities emerge for girls to renegotiate social relations and established practices in an advantageous manner. In the aftermath of an emergency, girls’ education needs to be established as an urgent priority. The opportunity that reconstruction presents for not only addressing girls’ inequitable access to education but also rehabilitating them through education must never be overlooked.

In recent years, some drives and shifts in perspective have demonstrated a new way of looking at the reality. Evidence suggests that the international community has progressively sought to improve girls’ and women’s protection, participation and equality in situations of emergencies. In October 2000, the UN Security Council adopted a landmark resolution on Women, Peace and Security (Resolution 1325), which affirmed, for the first time, the importance of a gender perspective in all issues of peace and security, and the necessity of women’s participation in peace-building processes. The agreed Conclusions of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (UNCSW) held in March 2004 reiterated the importance of addressing the impact

of conflict on women and girls in all areas of planning and intervention, and on promoting the participation of women in all stages and levels of peace-building. Finally, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BPFA) marked its 10-year anniversary in 2005 with the Beijing +10 review session held in New York between 28 February and 11 March under the slogan “Achieving Gender, Equality, Development and Peace”.

Although these initiatives are valuable, it is high time to move from discourse to concrete actions by giving a high priority to girls’ education and empowerment in the aftermath of emergencies. This paper aims to explore the potential for girls’ participation in humanitarian action and learn about initiatives and

strategies to promote gender equality and girls’ education in emergencies in South Asia. After presenting girls’ experiences of emergencies and the way their education is affected in the region, some gaps in research and in emergency programmes are identified. To meet these gaps, some good practices are reviewed in the third part of the paper. An inventory of these key achievements leads to recommendations which should be taken into consideration by practitioners and donors while responding to an emergency. Information on girls’ education in emergencies can be useful for programming, monitoring and continued advocacy. Emergencies could thus be an opportunity for addressing girls’ specific needs, capacities and desires to access education.

GIRLS' EXPERIENCES OF EMERGENCIES: HOW THEIR EDUCATION IS AFFECTED

In South Asia, poverty and the resulting inability to pay school fees together with cultural barriers comprise the main reasons for girls' non-enrolment in schools, and these factors are exacerbated in times of conflict and emergencies. The recognition of differences in the nature and extent of the effects of crisis on girls is a crucial first step in addressing their gender-specific needs, especially in education, which have traditionally gone unnoticed in the planning and delivery of humanitarian assistance. Conflicts and natural disasters destabilize social infrastructure, leaving all children, especially girls, vulnerable to threats. There is evidence that those most at risk on all counts in conflict and post-conflict settings are women and

children, especially girls. Their disproportionate vulnerability is informed by their subordinate status.

In South Asian countries affected by emergencies, especially in conflict settings, girls are less likely to attend school and are the first to drop out of primary schools due to the following reasons: government spending choices, conservatism prevailing in society and the lesser value being placed on girls' education, security concerns, recruitment in armed forces, gender-based violence, family responsibilities, early marriage and pregnancy, displacement, trafficking and HIV/AIDS. Girls' experience of emergencies is an issue that merits careful exploration to better understand the reasons for their lesser opportunities for learning.

A. Exacerbation of Discrimination Linked to Cultural Obstacles

In the context of South Asian countries and with their historical legacy of unequal gender relations, the route to women's empowerment is seen through the world of educational opportunity. However, in emergencies, *"equity issues in 'normal times' manifest in greater degree"*¹⁹. Therefore, more girls drop out due to practical difficulties but also due to existing socio-cultural biases such as social norms and pressure to discontinue from schooling as well as more immediate demands related to family responsibilities.

B. Military Spending vs Allocation of Resources to Education

A study on children affected by armed conflict in South Asia showed in 2002 that *"progress in access to education has been slow – 40 percent of the 150 million children currently enrolled in the region continue to drop out before completing primary school, and 220 million girls and women will be illiterate in 2015"*²⁰. In 2005, the countries of the Asia-Pacific region were graded and ranked on their commitment to basic education. This grading was based on their performance in five main areas: basic education, state action on free

AFGHANISTAN

In Afghanistan, gender discrimination is certainly evident in children's education where the proportion of girls studying has always been extremely low. This tendency has been compounded by the denial of women's rights and the institutionalization of gender discrimination in education by the Taliban. Indeed, girls were officially prohibited from attending schools beyond the primary level. International organizations were actively prevented from supporting education for girls. In 2002, girls made up 35 per cent of the total student population and an initial comparison with the situation before March 2002 indicated that there had been an increase in girls' enrolment of nearly 90 per cent. Although girls' education was one of UNICEF's top three priorities for 2004, more than one million girls aged between seven and thirteen years were still not in school at the end of that year. It seems that even in the post-Taliban era in Afghanistan girls attending school still face intimidation.

PAKISTAN AND SRI LANKA

According to the regional report *Must Do Better*²¹, published by Asian South Pacific Bureau of Adult Education (ASPBAE), “*Pakistan ranks last out of 14 countries in the Asia-Pacific region*”²² in terms of education. This poor record may be linked to the spending choices of the government. Indeed, Islamabad has recently been criticized for spending the lion’s share of its GDP on the military at the expense of the education and health systems. According to A. Sinha, Pakistan’s educational spending represented 1.8 per cent of its GDP in 2001, the lowest in the region (data from Afghanistan and Sri Lanka are not included). Other countries affected by armed conflicts have increased their defence budget to the detriment of social services. For instance, in Sri Lanka, the percentage of GDP allocated to defence has grown from 0.5 per cent in 1982 to 5.3 per cent in 2000²³.

education, inputs and resources, gender equality and overall equity.

There are no fixed rules regarding percentage of GNP allocation for education, though there is evidence to suggest that good quality education requires more financial resources. Distortion in government spending will automatically disadvantage girls’ education – whether for military reasons or not – unless specific policies are in place. If education is a right, the state has to honour it through significantly larger resources dedicated to this sector.

C. Recruitment by Warring Parties

In South Asian countries affected by armed conflict, some children are taken by force and recruited in armed groups,

thereby reducing their opportunity to attend school. Typical functions are those of cook, porter, messenger and those who accompany military personnel, especially girls who are sexually exploited and forced into marriage. There is a misconception that girls are not associated with armed groups and do not take part in combat. This observation should lead to further examination of their experiences while being enrolled in an armed group.

It has been reported that the majority of girls who end up as part of an armed group are abducted or coerced into it while a minority of girls choose to join armed groups often because their daily requirements of food and shelter are met. By being involved in an armed group, girls are caught in a cycle of

recrimination: from the armed group if they leave and from community members if they return home. In addition

to missing out on an education, it becomes hard to reintegrate them in the educational system.

SRI LANKA

According to Save the Children²⁴, children, and particularly girls, in DRC, West Africa, and Sri Lanka have been most heavily involved in and affected by conflict. In Sri Lanka, although the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) has pledged to end all under-age recruitment and to stop using children for military purposes, a high rate of children enlisted in armed groups has been observed. UNICEF reports that up to 42 per cent of all children involved in the conflict are girls²⁵. The LTTE claims that the recruitment of girls and women, known as 'Birds of Freedom', is a way of *"assisting women's liberation and counteracting the oppressive traditionalism of the present system"*²⁶.

The LTTE's practice of using children as combatants has led to the death of many in the course of military operations. In December 2000, 14 teenage girls were amongst those killed in a battle at Kaithady near Jaffna Town. According to Human Rights Watch, *"unlike many other conflict situations where girls are recruited, sexual abuse of girls in the LTTE is rare, and relationships between the sexes are generally prohibited"*²⁷. On the other hand, the LTTE was among the first armed opposition groups to use its cadres, including children, to carry out suicide bomb attacks – estimated to be 200 since the 1980s. Female soldiers, girls among them, were used for numerous such attacks, in part because they were less likely to undergo rigorous searches at government checkpoints. Recruitment activities around the time of the 2000 offensive in the Jaffna Peninsula also focused more on girls than boys.

According to Tamil families in the north and east of Sri Lanka, the February 2002 cease-fire that has brought an end to the fighting between the government and the LTTE has brought little relief from one of the worst aspects of the twenty-year conflict: recruitment and use of children as soldiers. In July 2003, the LTTE signed a Joint Action Plan with the Sri Lanka government for the demobilization of all the under-18s in its ranks. Nevertheless, the Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers²⁸ reported in June 2005 an increased recruitment of children at Hindu temple festivals by Tamil Tigers and, according to UNICEF, there is a decrease in the number of children released. These observations put progress in jeopardy, contravene the LTTE's pledges and constitute a hurdle to children's attendance in schools.

NEPAL

In the ongoing conflict between HMG/Nepal and the Maoists, education has become a political battleground and schools are recruitment arenas for the Maoists. Although the protection and security of the children have been guaranteed by various international laws and conventions, huge numbers of children have been traumatized, injured, and even physically disabled during this period. Despite strong criticism and protests from human rights and civil society organizations, the warring parties have been using children and schools in different ways for their vested interest.

Boys and girls are deployed in combat zones, often to assist with caring for the wounded or carrying ammunition. In 2003, the Asian Human Rights Commission (AHRC)²⁹ estimated that about 30 per cent of the Maoist forces were children between the ages of 14 and 18. In areas under Maoist control, the recruitment policy is reported to be 'one family, one member'. According to AHRC, girls are sometimes much more threatened than boys to be recruited. This observation has been confirmed by a recent report published by UNICEF: *"In remote mountain districts, when Maoists demanded one person from each household to participate as 'whole times' in the Maoist ranks, parents prefer to send girls – an unusual manifestation of the boy preference culture"*³⁰.

From early 2003, large-scale abductions began to be reported, mostly of school children and apparently for the purposes of political indoctrination. A review of the articles published in the newspapers from early 2003 to early 2004 highlights the increasing resort to abductions: 'Nepal insurgents abduct 80 students for indoctrination'³¹, 'Nepal Maoists accused of forcing students to join ranks'³², 'Maoists kidnap 192 students, teachers in Nepal'³³, 'Maoists abduct 300 school students in Nepal'³⁴, and 'Maoists forcibly recruit 13 girls of Dalit community in Nepal'³⁵. Although the Maoists announced a 3-month cease-fire in September 2005, and subsequently extended it for a further month, fear of abduction and forced recruitment continued to contribute to girls' non-attendance or irregular school attendance.

By being enlisted in armed forces, girls are denied the right of access to basic education. However, the testimony of a young girl abducted by Maoists illustrates her willingness to go back to school: *"There were altogether twelve persons in my group, which was called 'Area'. But all the time, I was thinking about continuing my studies.*

Sometimes, I had to go on dangerous assignments such as bringing bombs and explosives to various parts of Nepal and India. ... Apart from these hardships at the rebel camp, I missed going to school and felt really sad for abandoning my studies. I would grab every book that I could lay my hands on and would read it thoroughly¹³⁶.

D. Gender-Based Violence

Insecurity on the way to and in school – due to gender-based violence, the presence of armed groups, forced recruitment and mass kidnappings – has deeply negatively impacted the lives and the education of girls in conflict affected areas. According to Save the Children, *“due to worries of security, the proportion of girls not attending school during a period of conflict tends to be much higher than the proportion of boys out of school”¹³⁷*. Any attempt aiming at improving girls’ enrolment and retention at school should therefore be linked to measures aiming at protecting girls.

Gender-based violence (GBV) describes *“any harm perpetrated against a person’s will that is rooted in power inequities informed by gender roles and encompasses physical, sexual and psychological violence, threats of violence, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty”¹³⁸*. Violence may be physical, sexual, psychological,

economic or socio-cultural. In emergencies, especially in conflict settings, levels of rape, sexual exploitation and other forms of violence rise. Women and girls are the most frequent targets, although men and boys can also be vulnerable. Since the major issue for girls is undoubtedly gender-based violence, it should be addressed from the outset of a crisis.

Conditions of war often go hand in hand with increased incidence of sexual violence. However, due to the shame associated with sexual abuse and the consequent silence of many victims, the true scale of this phenomenon is impossible to gauge. Beginning in 2001, the Reproductive Health for Refugees Consortium (RHRC) has advocated for the inclusion of sexual violence under the umbrella term ‘GBV’ so as to recognize that issues of gender underlie virtually all forms of violence against women and girls that humanitarian programming seeks to address.

AFGHANISTAN

Under the rule of the Mujahideen, rape and sexual harassment of women in Afghanistan's capital city of Kabul were reportedly commonplace, and in the years following the Taliban takeover, ethnic minority women and girls in the frontlines of combat were at risk of rape and abduction by all parties to the conflict. It has also been reported that when the Taliban took over territory in the north and centre, many Hazara and Tajik women and girls were abducted and sexually violated. These women have been apparently trafficked to Jalalabad, Kandahar and Pakistan³⁹. Humanitarian organizations working with victims of sexual violence report that girls become social pariahs, and are rejected by their families and communities, thereby facing impoverishment and humiliation.

In post-Taliban Afghanistan, parents worried about the safety of sending their girls to school inasmuch as there were still local warlords and militia in many parts of the country. *"There is only a limited national security or police presence, and parents fear if they let their girls walk to school there is a chance that they could be nabbed"*⁴⁰ said H. Wajdi, education specialist with the World Bank in Kabul. Kidnapping is not the only safety issue. *"Incidents like burning of tents and school buildings, explosions near schools, and threats to female teachers still occur. These all have a negative impact on the confidence in communities to send their girls to school"*⁴¹.

NEPAL

In A. Rana Deuba's study on Changing roles of Nepali women due to ongoing conflict and its impact, she noted that 44 per cent of families interviewed reported that their children had had to drop out of school due to the conflict. Thirteen per cent of the respondents have decided to send children away because of fear of the insurgents and security forces. *"The entire future of the children of this generation is at stake, as among the drop-outs only 39 per cent were found re-joining school in a new area ... Also it was clear that boys were more negatively impacted by the conflict than the girls. However, the high drop-out rate of boys' could also be due to boys' initial high enrolment"*⁴².

In Nepal, Bhutanese refugee girls and women also encounter gender-based violence. This problem persists despite reforms UNHCR introduced after internal investigations uncovered 'sexual exploitation' of refugee women and girls by aid workers in Nepal in 2002. Although some attempts were made to tackle this issue, the Human Rights Watch report⁴³ shows how Nepal's laws constrain the prosecution of gender-based violence, one of the main obstacles to girls' enrolment in emergencies.

BANGLADESH

In Bangladesh, there is evidence that one in every ten of the total tribal female population in the Chittagong Hill tracts has been a victim of rape in 1990. Over 94 per cent of the assaults were by security forces and of these, over 40 per cent of the women raped were girls under the age of 18.

SRI LANKA

In addition to cases of violent rape, many young women are believed to endure minor sexual harassment from security personnel on a fairly regular basis. In many parts of north and east Sri Lanka, this is hard to avoid given that the army has set up checkpoints and camps close to educational facilities. According to J. Hart, 31 schools were located close to checkpoints and two schools were occupied by army forces as of March 2001. This leads to potential harassment and intimidation, particularly for females who fear sexual harassment. However, it is reportedly girls more than boys who still venture to school. *"Although there are often fears of sexual harassment, it would appear that girls are considered to be less at risk of being stopped and of being subject to physical harm"*⁴⁴.

PAKISTAN

In Pakistan, the deployment of 350,000–450,000 armed police and soldiers in Jammu Kashmir makes it one of the highest concentrations of security forces per capita in the world. This has particular implications for girls' safe access to education inasmuch as they are exposed to several risks. In March 2005, according to

UNICEF⁴⁵, on average 60 per cent of girls under 11 – more than one million – were still not attending lessons. It is estimated that out of some 5 million children enrolled in schools throughout the country, girls made up just 35 per cent.

In most of the countries affected by armed conflicts, the epidemic proportions of sexual violence have resulted in such extreme psychological and physical damage that many, if not most, will never fully recover. Whether indiscriminate or methodical, sexual violence is only one variation of GBV that periods of conflict and consequent social disruption exacerbate. Others forms of violence that may increase during war and its aftermath include: early or forced marriage, female infanticide, enforced sterilization, domestic violence, forced or coerced prostitution or other forms of sexual exploitation and trafficking in women and girls. Some of these critical issues deserve specific attention in emergencies.

E. Early Marriage

One issue that merits further careful consideration, supported by empirical research, is the potential link between conflict and girls' early marriage as well as forced and unwanted pregnancies. Often, after a child marriage, husbands and/or parents-in-law refuse to allow the child-wife to go to school under threat of violence. There is evidence that emergencies favour early marriage and often lead to girls' dropout of school, thereby depriving these girls of their right to education and making an impact on their health, as premature motherhood heightens the risk of maternal mortality. Although the legal framework exists for pregnant girls to continue their education, it is rarely enforced, especially in situations of emergencies.

BANGLADESH

The Rohingya refugee camps in Bangladesh provide a useful case study where parents arrange matches at increasingly early ages. According to recent research prepared for UNICEF ROSA, *"it is numerous particular pressures that are placed on the Rohingya community by virtue of their displacement that have encouraged such a high level of child-marriage"*⁴⁶. Additionally, marrying girls off early is a way to avert the social stigma attached to girls who have been raped.

AFGHANISTAN

Afghan Minister of Women's Affairs, M. Jala, has publicly acknowledged that *“child marriage and early childbearing mean an incomplete education, limited opportunities and serious health risks”*⁴⁷. Although Afghanistan's new constitution sets the minimum age of marriage for females at 16 and for males 18, in rural and even in some urban areas, the tradition of marrying off daughters in order to receive money remains common among the poor.

According to reports from the Ministry of Women's Affairs and NGOs, nearly 60 per cent of marriages involve girls below the legal age of 16. Some girls are married as young as nine. In addition, the practice of resolving conflicts between families by giving daughters or sisters to the aggrieved party remains common in Afghanistan. A recent study by Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission (AIHRC)⁴⁸ found 500 girls who had been given away or traded as part of local conflict resolution practices. Of these, 90 per cent were under 14 years old. Some parents have apparently chosen to send their daughters away with IDP groups in order to protect them from such practices⁴⁹.

SRI LANKA

Because there is a general perception that the LTTE does not recruit from among married persons, evidence suggests that some boys and girls have married believing that it will provide a measure of protection against recruitment.

NEPAL

In the western part of Nepal, it has been reported that the practice of child marriage is rapidly increasing to protect girls from being kidnapped. According to a report published by Amnesty and entitled Nepal: Children Caught in the Conflict, *“there have been reports of girls being married very young as parents fear that if their daughter is taken away by the Maoists for some time she will no longer be marriageable”*⁵⁰.

In all these situations, early marriage prevents girls from attending school because of lack of child care, community stigma and the belief that once a girl has children, she is an adult and therefore beyond the age of needing education. Although early child marriage is a practice enshrined in Asian culture, forced marriage is increasing in scale in countries affected by armed conflicts.

In most countries, this practice is not condemned. But there is one inspiring example from Sierra Leone, where the charge of ‘forced marriage’ was added for the first time as a new count in the category of sexual violence at a war crime tribunal in 2004. Recognition of ‘forced marriage’ as a war crime should be applied in all future courts of justice and be addressed at the outset of an emergency.

F. Displacement

Across the world, it is estimated that there were 25 million Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) at the end of 2004, amongst which half were children. Due to displacement, another effect of emergencies, children have no scope to pursue their education. Indeed, *“for the vast majority of refugees living outside of camps and for IDPs, their right to education is often denied”*⁵¹. Although the UN has established Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement⁵² which recognized in article 23-3 that *“special efforts should be made to ensure the full and equal participation of women and girls in educational programmes”*, the lack of an organization with a specific mandate to provide protection and education to IDP girls puts them at a distinct

AFGHANISTAN

Some 3.7 million Afghan refugees who have fled the conflict in Afghanistan over the past two decades are currently living in neighbouring countries – 1.5 million of them in Iran, and more than 2 million in Pakistan. Following the collapse of the Taliban regime in Afghanistan, the UN refugee agency launched its voluntary repatriation assistance programme in 2002 from Pakistan and Iran – the two primary host countries of the Afghan diaspora. “Under the programme, nearly 1.6 million Afghans returned from Pakistan in spring 2002, followed by some 340,000 in 2003 and more than 380,000 in 2004. In October 2005, more than 415,000 Afghans have returned to their homeland this year”⁵³. However, recently, a reverse flow of Afghans has been observed. The Women’s Commission has reported that *“returnees, both IDPs and*

*refugees, are re-displaced upon their return, either because of the lack of economic opportunities or because of unresolved land and property disputes*⁵⁴.

As of October 2005, Global IDP Project⁵⁵ estimates that the total number of IDPs in Afghanistan varies between 157,000 and 200,000, most of them (78%) located in camps in the south near Kandahar. In this context of continuous displacement, Afghan refugees and IDPs' right to education is often overlooked. About three quarters of the returnees, who were mainly urban refugees, had received no education at all, as shown in the UNHCR repatriation statistics. Currently, only about 50–60 per cent of the school-age children in the camps go to school. Less than one third of the pupils are girls, although the proportion is progressively increasing.

SRI LANKA

In Sri Lanka, displacement has also taken a huge toll on children's education. According to Save the Children, *"displacement causes many children to lose as much as two years of schooling. If they do return, they may be unable to follow classes and withdraw, embarrassed that younger children are ahead of them"*⁵⁶.

NEPAL

Children's education has been one of the worst hit sectors in Nepal. Already suffering from a low level of enrolment and *"one of the highest school dropout rates"*⁵⁷, Nepal's educational system has been further weakened by the increase in IDPs due to the conflict. However, most organizations fail in providing education to displaced children. According to T. Dhital, spokesman for Child Workers in Nepal Concerned Centre (CWIN), *"there is a dire need for contemporary research on the situation of displaced children in the context of the current conflict"*⁵⁸.

Although no accurate figures are available, most credible estimates place the number of IDPs in Nepal at 100,000–200,000. Displacement of the population is due to three main reasons: political affiliation, constant abuses and fear of recruitment. According to a study by ILO and CWIN released in June 2005, some 40,000 children

have been displaced by violence in the nine years of the armed insurgency and between 10,000 and 15,000 children would be displaced during 2005 alone. Unlike other countries with large IDP populations, Nepal had in July 2005 only one small IDP camp⁵⁹ (without taking into account the seven Bhutanese refugee camps in the south-eastern part of Nepal), and UN agency and NGO personnel believe that setting up IDP camps is not desirable. Since IDPs have no formal recognition, they do not have any legal or institutional mechanism for receiving international assistance, especially educational opportunities. With so few visible IDPs, however, the displacement problem is underestimated although its consequences on education are tremendous.

Large numbers of displaced children end up in India or in the local district headquarters near the villages, creating severe overcrowding in urban schools. Therefore, the lack of capacity of schools to absorb the additional numbers of children from IDP families is causing difficulties. There are also problems associated with admission of children in schools as this process requires identity papers which these people do not always have. According to the Norwegian Refugee Council⁶⁰, in both Kathmandu and Birendranagar, only one displaced child out of four attends school.

However, this study does not provide any disaggregated data by sex to examine whether girls are less likely to join school. While there is reference to the plight of girls in these situations, there is little information which differentiates between girls' and boys' situation in relation to their education. Without accurate data on children IDPs, it is impossible to respond to their needs. That is the reason why UNICEF has recently undertaken a survey of educational opportunities of displaced children. In this survey entitled Educational needs of IDPs living in western Kathmandu, the data reveal that the guardians, who constitute migrants/IDPs from remote districts, have been more concerned over schooling of the girls. *"There is only a marginal difference of 3 per cent between enrolment of boys and girls among the migrating population"*⁶¹.

The present conflict in Nepal causes dislocation and displacement of many girls from their families and home support systems. Without a 'safety net', there is evidence that many girls who have been displaced to urban areas are in a situation of personal vulnerability and are at risk of being trafficked or falling into situations of abuse, debt bondage or the worst forms of child labour. Still tens of thousands of IDP girls are not involved in educational activities and will either miss years of schooling or will never have the chance to attend school unless more support is provided immediately. *"The*

*country is losing a whole generation of youth when they flee to India, leave schools and live in hostile conditions without any certainty about their future,*⁶² said activist R. Fichtl from Terre de Hommes (TdH), one of the handful of NGOs that have launched projects for internally displaced Nepali children. Since May 2005, TdH has provided immediate assistance to IDP children and their families in the field of education, psycho-social support (mainly in the field of recreation and play) and nutrition for small children.

disadvantage. It seems that very little has been done to understand the conditions and circumstances of displaced children and the different risks that girls face on a day-to-day basis.

G. Trafficking

In conflict settings, girls are less likely

than boys to be enrolled in schools and, as a result, become vulnerable to sexual exploitation and abuse as they come under increased pressure to support themselves or their families when rations run low. Prostitution and domestic labour are important sources of remitted income during emergencies.

PAKISTAN

Recently, the Women Commission for Refugee Women and Children has investigated the increasing trafficking of girls from the camps of Afghan refugees in Pakistan. In one camp outside Peshawar in Pakistan, women freely admitted that *“selling their prepubescent daughters to Pakistani men provided a source of income and was preferable to the child’s return to Afghanistan”*⁶³. Evidence suggests that girls’ trafficking is protected by powerful criminal interests and operates relatively openly in camps for Afghan refugees in Pakistan. Besides, it has been reported that prostitution of women and girls is facilitated inside the camps by family members, camp leadership and camp security.

NEPAL

Ongoing conflict, limited government intervention, geographic proximity, relatively open borders, and a poor security infrastructure have made Nepal a convenient logistics and transit point, making the trafficking of girls from Nepal to India a notorious regional phenomenon. Although it is extremely difficult to obtain data on trafficking, it is estimated that over 200,000 Nepalese girls are working as prostitutes or in sex-related businesses in India. Similarly, varied sources indicate that *“between 7,000 and 10,000 Nepalese girls, between the ages of 9–16, are trafficked each year from Nepal to India”*⁶⁴. Some girls are rescued and found temporary shelter with NGOs who run rehabilitation and emergency centres and provide educational activities. But, according to D. R. Rai, *“this was only a small fraction we met of the many girls who are in the urban areas and live in high risk situations”*⁶⁵.

Although sexual exploitation of girls has for a long time been a serious problem in Nepal, one may imagine that the poverty, displacement and instability created by the conflict has both exacerbated this exploitation as well as produced new forms of sexual violence. Since 2001, there is evidence that girls’ exploitation has increased as a consequence of the exacerbation of the ‘People’s war’. As the insurgency forces more children to leave their villages, the problem of child labour worsens. The conflict leaves girls vulnerable to being trafficked, or entering the sex trade, particularly if they lack alternative means to support themselves. *“While in the past trafficking was mostly across the border into India, agencies report that rural girls are increasingly being trafficked to urban centres in Nepal, where many of them are forced into sex work in dance parlours and bars”*⁶⁶. According to J. Hart, *“this is an issue that sorely needs systematic research to assess the full impact”*⁶⁷.

In the seven Bhutanese camps in the south-east of Nepal, the alleged trafficking of girls out of the camps in order to work in the sex industry in Bombay, Poona and other Indian cities is one consequence of the refugees’ vulnerability and insecurity. Although the numbers involved are hard to assess, many local community workers believe that this practice is on the increase.

In Mumbai, the increased police raids have frightened clients and ‘gharwalis’, resulting in a reduction of ‘open’ child prostitution. However, this is an observation of the surface of the situation, and does not necessarily indicate that child prostitution

has declined. Brothel raids may have only pushed child prostitution further underground. Amongst the recommendations formulated in A study on the 'destination side' of the trafficking of Nepalese girls to India to protect girls, is that *"clients and local persons should be mobilized to reduce the use of children for sex, motivating them through the reduction of police raids if 'child-free' brothels are established"*⁶⁸. There is evidence through the case study of Nepal that tackling trafficking of girls requires a regional approach, particularly a close cooperation between India and Nepal.

BANGLADESH, INDIA AND SRI LANKA

Particularly amongst displaced families such as the Rohingya in Bangladesh, and the Assamese displaced by Bodo militia, the trafficking of children, especially girls, is a growing concern. In Sri Lanka, there are also concerns that children are being systematically trafficked away from areas of great deprivation, such as the Vavuniya welfare centres, for domestic and sex work. It has also been reported that amongst the out-migration of workers in the east and north, it is predominantly girls and women who leave their homes to live for a year or more in the Gulf States. According to J. Hart, *"the abuse which many endure from their employers is a well known matter, which, so far, has not merited the international attention it undoubtedly deserves"*⁶⁹.

H. HIV/AIDS

In South Asia, UNAIDS estimates that 8.2 million people were infected by the human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (HIV/AIDS) as of the end of 2004. The AIDS picture in South Asia remains dominated by the epidemic in India. It is difficult to obtain accurate figures, but latest estimates indicate that somewhere between 2.5

million and 8.5 million people were living with HIV in India in 2003. Latest data also reveal that an estimated ten million young people are living with HIV/AIDS across the world. In DRC, up to 200,000 children under 15 were infected with HIV/AIDS in 2001, with the rate for girls being much higher. In South Asia, girls are much more vulnerable since amongst the 1.1 million young people between 15–24 who live with

AIDS, 62 per cent are girls⁷⁰. However, data on HIV/AIDS, especially in conflict settings, are poor in South Asia in comparison with Africa.

The 'double emergency'⁷¹ of HIV and conflict is recognized as putting girls at risk from both HIV/AIDS infection and violence. Evidence also suggests that GBV, trafficking and recruitment provoke an increase in rates of STDs (including HIV/AIDS) amongst girls. In armed conflicts, HIV/AIDS spreads rapidly as a result of sexual bartering, sexual violence, low awareness and the breakdown of vital services in health and education. Young people, especially girls, are most at risk inasmuch as rape, domestic violence and sexual exploitation often go unchecked. Many young women and girls in refugee and post-conflict settings are forced to use their bodies to get food and clothing for themselves and their families.

According to the Girls' Education Progress Report⁷², in the 12 countries in the bottom of the 71 surveyed, girls were less likely to be educated in 2000 than in 1990. Mostly located in Africa, nine of these countries have experienced conflicts themselves and the remaining three received large numbers of refugees from bordering conflicts. In one of the programmes for ex-child soldiers implemented by Save the Children in

West Africa, "38 per cent of all girls were treated for sexually transmitted infections"⁷³. Furthermore, a recent report published by Save the Children has demonstrated that, "for every boy newly infected with HIV, there are between three and six girls newly infected in Africa"⁷⁴.

In September 2000, Machel's formal review charted the rise of HIV/AIDS as the single most powerful new factor compounding the dangers for children in armed conflict. The UN Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS in June 2001 also stated that "populations destabilized by armed conflict ... including refugees, IDPs and in particular, women and children, are at increased risk of exposure to HIV infection". However, according to P. B. Spiegel, "the common assumption that this vulnerability necessarily translates into more HIV infections and consequently fuels the HIV/AIDS epidemic is not supported by data"⁷⁵.

Evidence suggests that girls' rights are threatened in emergencies and that they are less likely to attend school. Although the international community has progressively sought to tackle the issues highlighted above, there are still some gaps which prevent agencies from reaching girls and providing them with educational opportunities.

SOME GAPS: HOW WE MISS GIRLS

Despite an extensive consultation process and thorough review of available information sources, a number of gaps in the literature are evident. Academic and programme literature in some key areas were found to be limited. Therefore, this paper seeks to identify some gaps in programming, ongoing needs and future challenges of girls' education in situations of emergencies and raise key issues for further consideration and action. The following priorities deserve a growing interest from donors and humanitarian organizations which implement education programmes in emergencies.

- **The main gap identified deals with the difference between discourses on girls' education and actions.**

Recent gender analysis of PRSPs has demonstrated their generally poor record in addressing gender disparities: even where gender analysis is included, the policies developed are poorly designed and are rarely accompanied by gendered budgets. Furthermore, in emergencies, although humanitarian agencies seek to address girls' needs, they fail to meet them given the disparity in funding and the lack of recognition of girls' special needs. This is relevant in the DDR process. It is high time to move from discourse to concrete actions and translate policy into actions.

- Emergency donors are reluctant to fund education if it is seen as a

‘development’ issue. **This is linked to the duality of rapid education programmes as emergency relief and as long-term social and psychological investments.** It is high time **to fill the gap between emergency relief and development programming.** Emergency educational programmes targeting girls should have a long-term development perspective and include strategies for subsequent longer term education.

- While the Geneva Conventions and the CRC make specific mention of children affected by armed conflict, and while the CRC makes specific mention of other children with special needs, **there is little explicit mention of children affected by natural disasters.** Moreover, research, studies and good practices on how to pay more attention to disaster preparedness and address girls’ particular vulnerabilities and capacities in times of disaster are very few in number when compared to the number of girls affected. Some research has been done by Save the Children and Plan International on children’s participation in the aftermath of a disaster but they do not specifically mention girls’

educational needs and the way agencies can respond to them.

- Research has been undertaken on the gender dimension of emergencies, especially focusing on women’s participation and role in disaster recovery. However, **existing knowledge related to girls’ education, especially in emergencies, is limited.** Studies are lacking on the impact of armed conflict on girls’ enrolment. In Nepal, for instance, *“no research has been conducted so far to assess the impact of conflict on education in general and on girls’ education in particular”*⁷⁶.
- **There have been only sporadic attempts to officially identify the displaced children, especially girls who face numerous vulnerabilities, and respond to their needs.**
- **Although there is increasing recognition of the crucial need to address issues beyond educational access, this literature continues to dominate.** A more recent shift to examining broader issues in relation to gender and education is becoming evident. However, holistic interventions that promote convergent actions providing

education, food security, livelihood guarantee, social security, health care and women's empowerment are not common practice.

- **Advocacy documents have tended to focus on specific issues, most notably child recruitment, instead of considering the situation of children affected by conflict in broader and socio-cultural terms.**

Very little is known about the long-term effects of girls' participation in conflict and their ability to cope with the future.

- **Resource material in relation to gender and curriculum reform is limited. Moreover, there is also relatively limited gender-specific material devoted to teacher training, school management and community participation.** However, more general texts often contain some information on the gender aspects of these issues.

- Existing literature reflects the assumption that education starts at primary level, despite the fact that by the time a child reaches primary school age, essential foundations are already established. Essential broadening of the definition of basic education to include early childhood

education in families, communities, crèches and kindergartens, was stated and committed to at both Jomtien in 1990 and Dakar in 2000. **Yet little is known about gender issues in early childhood education and socialization in situations of emergencies.**

- **There is also insufficient research in provision of education for adolescent girls in emergencies.**

This gap has already been identified by G. Machel who stated she was *"particularly concerned to discover the lack of meaningful educational activity for adolescents"*⁷⁷. Although some positive changes have been observed, adolescent girls' educational needs are still overlooked.

- Although the 1997 Cape Town Principles call for a broad definition of a 'child soldier'⁷⁸, many members of the international community still do not consistently use this broad definition of children associated with armed groups. **Because of their invisibility and the discrimination they suffer, the current process of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) fails and discriminates against girls.** Most programmes do not differentiate

between the educational needs of girls and boys. Moreover, if the international community has developed a formal process designed to help children leave armed conflict groups, go back to their families and get the opportunity to learn after a conflict ends, this process is drastically under-funded. The success of a DDR process is often measured by the number of weapons collected rather than the successful reintegration of former combatants.

- Globally, **a poor reporting of girls' own perceptions of education and experiences of conflict** constitutes a barrier to a better understanding of their educational, psychological and physical needs. Their opinions are seldom asked even when decisions are made affecting their lives. In most of the studies, it appears that the analysis of the situation of girls was conducted without input from them.
- Agencies tend to revert to a view of children solely as victims who must be protected rather than as actors whose social role may actually have expanded due to the conflict itself. This is even more true for girls. In the literature overall, **little**

attention is paid to the active roles that the young play in times of war and displacement. It has not normally been the case that humanitarian agencies have encouraged the young to become full participants in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of programme activities. There are few examples of disaster interventions that consider children holistically – and boys and girls differently as worthwhile actors, with special needs but also with special capacities to be independent strong survivors capable of producing useful knowledge and actively contributing to disaster relief and recovery efforts.

- Furthermore, **there are gaps in collecting data on GBV and in programming related to the prevention of and response to GBV among conflict-affected populations, especially girls.** Humanitarian agencies have become increasingly concerned about the extent and effects of GBV in refugee, internally displaced and post-conflict settings. However, *“very little psycho-social assistance is still available to girls and women victims of gender-based violence”*⁷⁹. Another gap in addressing GBV is

the **tendency of donors and humanitarian institutions to focus on sexual crimes committed during conflict. Other forms of GBV for example receive virtually no attention.** Lastly, men are often absent, both as targets for services and as agents for change from GBV programming.

- Globally, in countries affected by emergencies in South Asia, research on HIV/AIDS is poor. **If research addressing the wider impact of HIV/AIDS on the provision of education exists⁸⁰, none of it focuses specifically on the relation between HIV/AIDS and the retention of girls in school,** and the strain on already stretched educational systems that will result following the death of large numbers of trained staff.
- **More quantitative and qualitative data and their dissemination is needed to further identify good practices as well as respond to and evaluate the needs of girls affected by armed conflict,** in particular their educational needs. The lack of gender and age-

desegregated data to assess the impact of armed conflicts on girls prevents aid agencies from implementing, monitoring and evaluating programmes focusing on girls.

- **Agencies do not evaluate systematically their programmes.** As L. Bird noted, *“evaluation issues are frequently the last consideration during a conflict or post-conflict phase where priorities are typically focused on immediate outputs”⁸¹.*

As a result, much of what is still to learn about the process of integrating gender into educational programmes in emergencies is not yet available.

This is reflected in the fewer than desired examples of good practices, valuable experience and lessons learned on girls’ education in emergencies. Conditions must be created where the resources can be available to researchers, practitioners and policy makers seeking to improve the practice of provision of education in situations of emergencies. The next section of this paper is an attempt to review key achievements in this respect.

GOOD PRACTICES AND LESSONS LEARNED

There is evidence that girls' educational needs are still overlooked in development and emergency settings. However, there is an opportunity in emergencies to address this issue by ensuring that girls get into and stay in school as well as complete their education. This section aims at highlighting some strategies and lessons learned from academic and programme literature to tackle girls' dropout of school in situations of emergencies, and responding to the specific vulnerabilities they face.

There is a need for humanitarian organizations to adopt a holistic framework and an integrated approach in order to ensure equity and respond to practical and strategic gender needs.

Evidence suggests that a cross-sectoral perspective should be adopted. This means that many actors should be involved in this complex process: children affected by conflicts, especially girls, teachers, parents, communities, moral authorities, the government, media, and national and international humanitarian organizations. Although there is evidence that some of the issues raised and good practices highlighted to address them are generally applicable to development situations, they are even more relevant in emergencies.

A. Education: A Strategy for Empowering Girls

There is a need to adopt a rights-based approach in emergencies. The

enforcement of girls' rights must be accorded the highest priority since many violations of girls' rights are only possible because of the invisibility of girls and the vulnerabilities they face. Therefore, protection, which embraces both the material conditions of children's lives as well as their psychological and emotional well-being, may be seen as a cross-cutting objective of humanitarian action. Agencies' child protection efforts should focus on addressing and preventing violence, abuse and neglect, exploitation and discrimination as well as forced recruitment in armed groups. Education should be further recognized as a means for protecting and rehabilitating girls affected by armed conflicts.

1. Gender-based Violence (GBV)

GBV against girls may play a role in pushing them out of the formal

education system. Responding to GBV is an emerging field; therefore, documenting the programme experiences in emergencies and drawing lessons to guide future interventions is especially important. Addressing the gender inequities that contribute to GBV includes providing girls access to power and challenging the structures that reinforce their subordination. This goal can be achieved through accelerating girls' education. It has also been recognized that for a community to be empowered to take action on sexual abuses, all members of the community, including boys and men, must be educated about the various forms of abuse, its consequence and the steps to be taken. Three case studies in South Asia illustrate the way girls experience gender-based violence in emergencies and how humanitarian organizations can respond to their needs.

AFGHANISTAN

Supported by different agencies and the Ministry of Women's Affairs (MoWA), four shelters in Kabul are home to more than a hundred women and girls who suffer rights violations in conservative, patriarchal Afghanistan. The confidential centres are designed to give protection, accommodation, food, training and healthcare to women who are escaping violence in the home or are seeking legal support due to family feuds. But space at the specialized shelters is limited. Many of the women who cannot find a place in the four secure hostels in Kabul end up in prison. More than thirty women are currently in jail in the capital, many simply because they have

nowhere else to go, women's rights activists say. One of the imprisoned women, Zaynab, said that *"even being in prison is safer than bearing the misery and punishments of violent men at home, at least in prison ... one day you leave"*⁶². The adoption of strategies aiming at responding to girls' educational needs is a way to guarantee their protection and empower them.

NEPAL

In the context prevailing in Nepal, the number of displaced children is increasing. However, social organizations often fail to respond to their needs for education and protection. Maiti Nepal is one of the more active organizations focusing on intercepting many girls who were on their way to be trafficked. Eleven transit homes have been established for rescued girls and one rehabilitation home has been created where non-formal education classes are conducted regularly. Maiti Nepal is also working on this issue and has had some success in bringing back to the camps girls who had been trafficked⁸³. Since June 2001, Save the Children US and Maiti Nepal have been designing safe migration strategies in Nepal to enhance a proactive rights-based approach towards tackling trafficking and promoting the safe migration of women and girls in Nepal. To meet this goal, the two organizations formed 15 anti-trafficking networks in one Municipality and 14 Village Development Committees, by using a multi-pronged strategy of interception, reintegration and awareness-raising. In this process, girls are provided educational opportunities, such as training.

PAKISTAN

Pakistan also offers some interesting models. Although GBV-related services are not widely available to refugee communities living in Pakistan and few humanitarian organizations have taken up the issue, there are several initiatives that have successfully, directly and indirectly, addressed GBV.

During the past two years UNHCR's Women at Risk Project has facilitated resettlement for the most vulnerable Afghan women. In Islamabad, UNHCR collaborates with two safe houses to ensure women's security during the transition to resettlement. Amongst these women, 60 per cent are under 18. The establishment of

these shelters has been extremely successful in Islamabad and could be replicated in the North West Frontier Province (NWFP) and in Afghanistan, areas where girls are victims of GBV.

International Organization for Migration (IOM) is currently working with the Pakistani authorities to develop a strategy for information campaigns addressing trafficking. The Pakistani NGO Struggle for Change (SACH) provides rehabilitation and training for survivors of torture through psychotherapy, physiotherapy and socio-economic support. It also has an education programme for survivors' children.

Girl sexual abuse can be reduced with the proper education of the children regarding their bodily safety. Keeping this in view, the children's rights organization Sahil⁸⁴ has facilitated education to refugees on child sexual abuse and has been critical in monitoring and publishing abuse against children in Pakistan. Sahil designed a story-cum-colouring book named 'Meri Hifazat' for the children to make them aware of self-protection methods in various situations. With this training programme, Sahil has reached 883 schools and 2539 teachers across the country. The NGO has also conducted teachers' training in 2850 primary schools of Rawalpindi and Islamabad districts. Other NGOs such as Savera and Rozan also provide training and services to women and girl victims of violence.

Addressing GBV perpetrated by humanitarian workers

To address GBV in IDP and refugee camps, one of the most important recent developments has been the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse of women and children in armed conflict by humanitarian personnel. In 2002, incidents of sexual abuse by agency-employed workers in the Bhutanese camps in Nepal came to light, drawing comment from international human rights organizations and some sections of the world's media, previously not

attracted by the predicament of the Bhutanese refugees. The victims of these abuses were principally students attending schools run by an INGO with funding from UNHCR.

In late 2002, an assessment⁸⁵ by UNHCR and Save the Children UK in Liberia, Guinea and Sierra Leone also demonstrated widespread evidence of sexual exploitation of refugee children by humanitarian workers including UN personnel and peacekeepers. In all three countries, agency workers from

international and local NGOs as well as UN agencies were reportedly the most frequent sex exploiters of children, often using the very humanitarian aid and services intended to benefit the refugee population as a tool of exploitation. An adolescent in Liberia stated that *“it is difficult to escape of those (NGO) people; they use the food as bait to get you to have sex with them”*.

These two events prompted the establishment of the UN Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Task Force on Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse in Humanitarian Crises which created a list of core principles for humanitarian agencies to incorporate into staff codes of conduct⁸⁶. In addition, minimum standards of behaviour expected for all UN civilian staff members have been set out⁸⁷. However, humanitarian workers' behaviours towards children should be monitored in order to guarantee girls' protection from sexual violence.

Promoting multi-sectoral programming

In 2001, UNHCR hosted an international conference, in which the concept of multi-sectoral programming was further clarified as fundamental to combating GBV. This means that health and social services as well as legal and security sectors are charged with basic

responsibilities under the multi-sectoral model.

This approach has been adopted in Sierra Leone where GBV committees, which held monthly meetings, have been formed by IRC at all levels. Key community actors such as women's groups, the police, schools and vocational institutions have been trained. Advocacy was also undertaken with the ministries of Health and Justice for the provision of medical care to rape victims and for legal services to be either free or at nominal cost. To date, the UNHCR multi-sectoral model forms one of the best practices for prevention of and response to GBV in refugee, IDP and post-conflict settings. For example, in Kosovo and East Timor, *“successes such as the high percentage of women recruited into Kosovo police services and trainings conducted by international personnel for East Timor's national police cadets are models for implementing ongoing protection. So are the efforts of a senior Sierra Leone police officer and a Kosovo international police officer, who established domestic violence units in their respective police headquarters”*⁸⁸.

Guidelines and best practices

Published in 2003, the UNHCR guidelines⁸⁹ also recommend some

measures to prevent sexual violence against refugees. These include providing night lighting and locating latrines in areas that are well lit, guarded and close to sleeping areas, providing water and firewood within the camps to limit the necessity of women and children venturing outside patrolled areas, and appointing women guards. Despite the simplicity and effectiveness of the guidelines, they have often been inadequately enforced. Indeed, in the Djabal camp in Chad, there is evidence that Sudanese adolescent girls have been victims of GBV by the janjaweed in Darfur and the local Chadian population, including rape and beatings. However, according to the Women's Commission, *"a formal system for reporting incidents did not appear to be in place in the camps as of the end of January 2005"*⁹⁰.

Another initiative to address GBV deserves special attention. In 2000, the Reproductive Health Response in Conflict (RHRC) Consortium launched the GBV Initiative to disseminate best practices and improve international capacity for addressing GBV. In 2003, this consortium published a field manual, the GBV Tools Manual⁹¹, which deals with assessment, programme design, monitoring and evaluation. Other outcomes of the Initiative include extensive web-based bibliography of

GBV resources⁹². The lead RHRC agency in addressing GBV has been the International Rescue Committee (IRC), which initiated its Tanzania programme in 1996 and, from there, has established GBV programmes worldwide.

In Tanzania, IRC has been providing comprehensive health care and other services to the survivors of GBV and responding to the needs of refugees through counselling, medical examination and treatment, referrals to social services, legal action, strengthening of prevention mechanisms and community support. New to the programme is male involvement in prevention group discussions. Male group committees have been formed to encourage further male involvement, to foster GBV awareness and prevention and provide support for survivors. As J. Ward stated, *"any efforts to reduce GBV will require the significant participation of men and boys and must necessarily include activities and initiatives to examine their participation in, and perpetuation of, violence"*⁹³.

Other direct service members of RHRC include Action on Rights for Children, Marie Stopes International, International Medical Corps (IMC), Care, OXFAM, Save the Children and Médecins Sans Frontières. In working to establish its

psycho-social programmes targeting adolescent girls who are victims of GBV in Chad, IMC has adopted a holistic approach, considering the family unit – as opposed to the individual – as the best avenue for protection.

In 2000, the UN Security Council adopted Resolution 1325, which specifically *“calls on all parties to armed conflict to take special measures to protect women and girls from gender-based violence, particularly rape and other forms of sexual abuse, and all other forms of violence in situations of armed conflict”*⁹⁴. The Council reaffirmed its desire to see gender concerns mainstreamed in all peacekeeping operations and throughout UN operations and to see gender concerns taken into explicit account in transitional justice mechanisms. At the same time, the Council reaffirmed women’s important role in preventing conflict, and recognized women’s vital contribution in promoting peace and their role in the reconstruction process. This has been reinforced in March 2004 by the Agreed Conclusions of the recent United Nations Commission on the Status of Women⁹⁵.

Causes of violence to girls need to be addressed: men’s view of women as sexual objects, the purdah system, the

widespread feeling that if women or girls cross certain boundaries they must accept the consequences, and the reluctance of girls and their families to report incidents of violence. In emergencies, there is evidence that the opportunity to attend schools or some type of education programme minimizes the risk that girls will be victims of GBV. School provides a daily routine and a structure which is often the most protective aspect of education. Education is also a good way to involve girls in preparedness and recovery from emergencies. Therefore, the most successful and sustained programmes addressing GBV are those that build international and local capacity and receive long-term technical and financial assistance from international donors committed to issues of girls’ rights, including education. In his research, J. Hart has also suggested that *“children often play a vital role in the enhancement of their own protection and that good participatory projects can facilitate this further”*⁹⁶.

2. Demobilization, reintegration and rehabilitation programmes for girls associated with armed groups

In South Asia, academic and programme literature on DDR processes targeting girls is limited. According to the Coalition to Stop the Use of Child

Soldiers, of the approximately 300,000 children⁹⁷ involved in conflicts around the world, up to 40 per cent are girls. Some as young as eight have been forced to become front-line fighters, or are otherwise supporting armed groups.

The special requirements of female ex-combatants were recognized in 2000 by the UN Security Council which stressed the importance of giving consideration to *“the special needs and particular vulnerabilities of girls affected by armed conflict, including, inter alia, those heading households, orphaned, sexually exploited and used as combatants”*⁹⁸ and urges that *“their human rights, protection and welfare be incorporated*

*in the development of policies and programmes, including those for prevention, disarmament, demobilization and reintegration”*⁹⁹. This was reinforced by Security Council resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security, which encouraged *“all those involved in the planning for disarmament, demobilization and reintegration to consider the different needs of female and male ex-combatants”*¹⁰⁰. Among these needs, the provision of education is crucial inasmuch as it plays a key role in the process of healing and reintegration of girls. Several programmes in Asia and Africa offer interesting lessons for agencies eager to implement programmes for girls associated with armed groups.

SRI LANKA

As of mid-2004, the Action Plan was the only signed human rights agreement to result from the post-ceasefire peace talks in Sri Lanka. The LTTE and the government agreed on the plan in April 2003 and formally signed it in June 2003. One of the main implementing partners, UNICEF, has played a primary role in negotiating it. The Action Plan provided for the establishment of three transit centres ready to receive children released by the LTTE. From October 2003 to August 2004, some 173 children, out of which 55 per cent were girls, went through the transit centre in Kilinochchi.

However, currently, none of the transit centres are up and running because insufficient number of children are being released by the LTTE. Children affected by the conflict were supposed to be given the opportunity to access vocational training, education, health and nutritional services and psycho-social care. However, according to B. V. Nylund from the Child Protection Section of UNICEF in Sri Lanka, “no

education is provided while these children are in the transit centre, because that would give a permanent nature to the centre, where children should stay no more than three months”¹⁰¹.

NEPAL

During the period of January–September 2005, around 16 children (6 boys and 10 girls) involved in Maoist activities surrendered themselves to District Administrative Offices¹⁰². However, the government has no mechanisms for monitoring or reporting on child soldiers and no official DDR programme exists, although some small projects were established for former combatants. In February 2003, Child Workers in Nepal Concerned Centre (CWIN) started a relief and monitoring programme for war-affected children in 10 Village Development Committees of the districts of Salyan, Rukum and Rolpa¹⁰³. In September 2005, 226 schools were involved in this programme with benefit to 3070 children out of which half were girls.

Supported by Plan Nepal, CWIN opened in 2003 a rehabilitation centre for child survivors of armed conflict in Kathmandu. In this ‘Peace Home’, known as Shanti Griha, integrated programmes are being run for educational support, including recreation and peace education, psycho-social counselling and children’s empowerment. In November 2005, 12 boys and above 100 girls between the ages of 7 and 17 rescued by the International Committee for Red Cross (ICRC) from all parts of Nepal were living there and enrolled in three governmental schools¹⁰⁴. According to M. Pradhan, *“they found it difficult to integrate at the beginning but it is better now. We are learning from them”*¹⁰⁵. In addition, a ‘National Resource Centre on Children in Armed Conflict’ was established in 2003 to promote and protect the rights of children affected by armed conflict. This resource centre is the first such initiative in Nepal. Apart from information generation, research, advocacy and awareness, the centre works for capacity development of community workers, teachers, members of users’ groups, mothers’ groups, and children on the issues of Children as Zones of Peace.

AFRICA

In the Girls Left Behind project implemented by UNICEF in Sierra Leone, “access was provided to schooling through the Community Education Investment Programme, and to skills training, small business development, apprenticeships and non-formal literacy, numeracy and life skills”¹⁰⁶. Another way of reaching girls previously enrolled in an armed group is to establish girls’ clubs in communities. This allows all vulnerable girls in the community to be reached and provided with non-formal education or life skills sessions as well as artistic and intellectual activities that contribute to their psycho-social well-being.

The Forum for African Women Educationalists and the Progressive Women’s Association are important organizations active in reintegration programmes. The Forum for African Women Educationalists¹⁰⁷, established in 1998 in Liberia, has dedicated itself to addressing girls’ education in Sierra Leone. Since the war, it has provided girls with formal education, vocational training, counselling, medical and psycho-social care, recreation and a variety of other services. Best practices have shown that specific programmes for girls should also include reproductive health services, pre- and post-natal care, parenting support, life skills training and counselling services for sexual and gender-based violence.

Gender blindness in the DDR process

Although these initiatives constitute a first step in addressing specific needs of girls associated by armed conflicts, some organizations, notably Save the Children¹⁰⁸, are concerned that girls’ specific needs remain unaddressed. Since Save the Children began working with children associated with armed groups in the DRC, fewer than 2 per cent of children passing through its programmes and interim care centres have been girls.

In Sierra Leone, according to UNICEF,

*“estimates suggest that 60 per cent of the abducted children were girls. The vast majority of them were sexually abused, yet these girls were overlooked in the demobilization and reintegration process”*¹⁰⁹. The military emphasis of DDR has the effect of discriminating against girls, the *“invisible soldiers”*¹¹⁰. Most of the humanitarian organizations implementing a DDR programme notice that girl soldiers have been reluctant to join demobilization and reintegration programmes, fearing rejection and exclusion by their families and communities while returning home. As a

result, with no other means of supporting themselves, many are forced to turn to sex work, limiting any possibility of them entering or re-entering school.

Insufficient attention has been accorded to the needs of girls in the DDR process. In a Save the Children study¹¹, girls have identified a number of ways that the international community could better help, particularly in long-term reintegration: access to school and skills training, assistance in establishing and maintaining livelihoods, medical tests and assistance, networks that provide emotional support, denunciation and follow-up of perpetrators as well as mediation work with the community and family.

Community-based programmes

In the early stages of the Girls Left Behind project launched by UNICEF in Sierra Leone in 2004, designed for abducted girls and young women to ensure their protection and reintegration, those communities that were the focus of workshops, sensitization and mediation underwent radical changes in the way they perceived and treated formerly abducted girls. This should encourage the international community to find ways of removing the stigma for these girls by raising awareness and promoting behavioural change at the

family and community level to end the social stigma and discrimination that survivors face. Thus, the international community needs to ensure that assistance is provided to the communities where demobilized girls live, regardless of whether girls go through a formal process of DDR or not.

Over the last 20 years, Save the Children has promoted support for communities as the best basis for the reintegration of children associated in armed conflict. According to the INGO, *“research suggests that the only way to ensure that girls are reached is through the community ... Any money should be used for community-led development instead of payments to individual children”*¹². Indeed, individual payments can cause community tensions since children and others who had not participated in the conflict may have perceived such payments as discriminatory. This has been highlighted by J. Wolfenson in 2004 who stated, *“[We must] ensure that governments protect their most vulnerable children by channelling resources to families and communities”*¹³. Providing support directly to the community acts as a safety net for all children associated with armed groups, particularly girls. *“The earlier the community is*

*approached and the sooner it understands the plight of the girls, the more successful reintegration will be in the long term*¹¹⁴. However, Save the Children's experience demonstrates that communities are rarely supported. DDR packages generally do not assist girls' long-term reintegration into their communities. Evidence also suggests that girls who are reunified with their families should continue to be supported.

Vishnu Karki, working at the Education, Police and Research cluster in the Himalayan Office of SC US in Nepal stated during an interview that *"child protection is a cross-cutting programme which is going to grow"*¹¹⁵ to respond to girls' needs in emergencies. Protection issues have not been at the forefront of discussions of responses to emergencies and attention to gender is consistently one of the weakest areas of humanitarian response. However, there is increasing recognition that providing education to girls serves a vital protection role as it provides an alternative to becoming involved in fighting forces, being sexually exploited or engaging in other harmful labour.

Nicolai and Triplehorn, working for Save the Children, have expanded on the role of education in providing protection for

children in conflict. They see the relationship between protection and education as two-fold, *"involving both protecting a child's access to education amid conflict and displacement, and using education to protect a child from the risks that such situations present"*¹¹⁶. Smith and Vaux have also pointed out that *"a key implication for the education sector is that short-term humanitarian assistance should include an education response where it is suggested by strategic analysis, particularly where the response contributes to the security of girls, and ensure continued access to primary education"*¹¹⁷. However, the links between education, gender and protection still need to be further documented to take into account the specific needs of girls, whose vulnerability is higher in emergencies.

B. Support Access to Education

UNICEF's principles and core commitments for children in emergencies aim to promote access to quality early learning and education for all children in affected communities, with a specific focus on girls. To guarantee that girls access education, agencies must firstly ensure that this access is safe. Then, incentives could be given to girls to encourage them to join school. Another strategy deals with

the recruitment of female teachers. Finally, it is worth remembering that while the main goal may be to get children into mainstream education, evidence suggests that non-formal education is sometimes more appropriate to reach out-of-school girls, especially child and adolescent girls.

1. Safe access to schools

In most countries affected by armed conflicts, the families are afraid to allow their children to return to school, worried

that the armed groups will abduct them as they walk between school and their home. Security – or more to the point, insecurity – is an issue constraining children’s education in many countries, particularly girls’. This is particularly so for girls post-puberty, whose bodies, reputations and ‘marriageability’ are at a very real risk. In a context where schools are one of the targets of the armed groups, education becomes a critical stake and girls are vulnerable, even more than boys.

BANGLADESH

J. Raynor undertook a study of reports published in the Daily Star in Bangladesh relating to violence to schoolgirls and college women, most while on their way to or from their school. *“Six out twenty-one cases show the police, those in political positions, and staff within educational institutions exploiting their positions of power or abusing the law and, in a number, those with authority fail to support the victim”*¹⁸. Indeed, the girls going to school are blamed rather than the rapists, revealing a widespread abuse of power. A variety of projects in Bangladesh seek to address the root causes of sexual violence, mostly through NGOs. However, in Bangladesh, *“every day, girls have to run the gauntlet between home and school, running the risk of anything from the innocent-sounding ‘eve-teasing’ to murder”*.

AFGHANISTAN

In Afghanistan, parents worry about the safety of sending their girls to school inasmuch as there are still local warlords and militia in many parts of the country. *“There is only a limited national security or police presence, and parents fear if they let their girls walk to school there is a chance that they could be nabbed”*¹⁹ said H. Wajdi, education specialist with the World Bank in Kabul. Kidnapping is not the only safety issue. *“Incidents like burning of tents and school buildings, explosions near schools, and threats to female teachers still occur. These all have a negative impact on the confidence in communities to send their girls to school”*²⁰.

In South Asia, many development projects intending to make education more accessible to girls focus on the logistical aspects of making schools safer for girls to attend. One of the

strategies adopted has been to build schools within a 'safe' walking distance of girls' homes to mitigate girls' potential exposure to violence.

BHUTAN

According to P. Kucita, UNICEF Education Officer in Bhutan, *"if you look at facilities in remote communities where there is no school – these areas are impeding girls from attending school. That is why the government and development partners, like UNICEF, are trying to bring schools to remote communities, especially, so girls can go to school"*²¹. With funding, teacher training and technical assistance from the government and international community, the Ministry of Education hopes to achieve gender parity by 2007. That means enrolling an additional forty thousand girls and women in primary schools and literacy programmes. To meet this goal, provision of boarding facilities in school is definitely an important factor for promoting continued enrolment of children in general, and girls in particular, given the fact that parents are reluctant to expose girls to the dangers of walking to school. Bhutan has encouraged parents to look after girls boarding at primary schools. Thus additional boarding facilities in school with proper care and supervision are recommended. However, J. Raynor wonders whether *"rather than bringing schools closer to the girls to reduce the running of the gauntlet, shouldn't we throw down the gauntlet and challenge sexual violence directly?"*²²

NEPAL

Raynor's observation leads to further questioning of the way humanitarian and human rights organizations seek to address violence on the way and in schools, especially in conflict settings. One interesting initiative has been launched in Nepal and deserves special attention.

As G. Machel stated, *"let us claim children as 'zones of peace'"*²³. In Nepal, the concept of developing 'Schools as Zones of Peace' was developed by SC Norway as early as 2001. In 2003, a Children in Conflict Coordination Committee was

established under the convenorship of the Central Child Welfare Board to promote children as zones of peace. The 9 members (3 INGOs, 5 NGOs and UNICEF) meet once a month to coordinate their actions. In 2005, around 35 Kathmandu-based organizations regularly participated in advocacy campaigns on 'Children as Zones of Peace' (CAZOP) calling for no armed activities in schools and no disruption of school activities. Child clubs across the country have been considered as key actors to disseminate this concept. CWIN has organized consultation programmes on CAZOP in several districts to give the opportunity to children to discuss their role in the promotion of the CAZOP campaign.

To ensure that girls have the opportunity to be empowered through education requires the adoption of a rights-based approach in emergencies. Once more, protection and education issues need to be addressed together. Advocacy campaigns such as the one initiated in Nepal should be scaled up to ensure that children affected by conflict are not denied the right to learn.

2. Incentive programmes

There is evidence that there is much more research on positive discrimination financial measures for girls in the development context than in emergencies. However, initiatives from development programmes have lessons even for emergencies.

Generally, families with limited resources give priority to boys' education, which means girls will receive their right to education only when, and if, the families achieve a sound economic status. Indeed, user charges in education have been identified as a major deterrent to poor girls entering and completing their

schooling, thus not affording them a fair chance to change their future through learning. In situations of emergencies, parents may be unwilling and/or unable to pay school fees and other charges for their girl child, who may be required to work or stay at home. Gender data on South Asia demonstrate how food security in Sri Lanka, Kerala and Tamil Nadu has contributed to a greater likelihood for girls' schooling. Other subsidies that fund the education of the girl child and cover the minimal costs of education (uniforms, nutrition, scholarships, free textbooks, etc.) have been proven to be very effective in raising the enrolment rate of girls both in development and emergencies settings.

SRI LANKA

Of the 14 countries in the Asia-Pacific region that have achieved gender parity, Sri Lanka and Thailand set good examples in working towards sustaining these gains with state action curbing user fees. According to UNICEF ROSA, Sri Lanka is one of the three countries in South Asia (including the Maldives and Bangladesh) which have achieved gender parity in primary school enrolment¹²⁴. However, it must be kept in mind that there are many disparities in Sri Lanka and that provision of education to girls is low in North and East Provinces (NEP) affected by armed conflict.

INDIA

In India, the governments of Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu provide respectively free education and cost subsidies for girls. In line with these initiatives, schools in South Asian countries should lower or exempt fees for lowest income families and particularly in emergencies.

BANGLADESH

According to the results of the study Must Do Better aiming at investigating Asian Pacific countries' commitment to Basic Education, *"Bangladesh's commitment to eliminate user fees, along with cash stipends to support poor girls, has earned it a high mark in this report – a 'B' for 'state action' – in recognition of the state's hard work to end the historical disadvantage of girls and women in education, worth emulation"*¹²⁵.

Indeed, Bangladesh boosted its girls' gross primary enrolment ratio from 64 to 98 per cent between 1990 and 2000¹²⁶. Firstly, the rise in primary school enrolment over the 1990s and the reversal of the gender gap had much to do with the expansion of community schools programmes, notably organized by Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC), that place an emphasis on getting girls, and children from poor families, into school. Secondly, increasing government efforts have included the 1990 elimination of school fees for girls in grades six to eight, the Food for Education

Programme established in 1993, deliberate efforts to increase the number of female teachers, and a World Bank-funded secondary school stipend for girls.

J. Raynor's study on the Female Stipend Programme (FSP) provides a useful case study in this respect. This programme, launched in 1994, offers an allowance to encourage families to send girls to secondary school, and to help to meet the costs of education, including examination costs and a portion of school fees, textbooks, school supplies, uniforms, shoes, transport and kerosene. FSP has been praised internationally as a means of achieving MDGs given that Bangladesh has succeeded in providing equal access to girls and boys at primary and secondary levels. However, *"there are strong reservations about the quality and relevance of education"* since girls are receiving a lower-quality education than boys and schools are seriously overcrowded. According to J. Raynor, *"there is evidence of parents' reluctance to 'water a neighbour's tree'"*¹²⁷.

NEPAL

By contrast with Bangladesh, the Review of Research Literature on Girls' Education in Nepal¹²⁸ revealed that the impact of governmental scholarship programmes in Nepal is minimal for increasing enrolment and retaining girls in school due to the very limited amount of financial assistance, limited scholarship quotas, the failure to distribute scholarships in time, and the lack of transparent criteria. The misuse of scholarship money was reported to be common mainly because there is no monitoring and supervision at the local level. There was no evidence that needy children were benefiting from the scholarship and incentive programmes. This observation questions the effectiveness of such initiatives if they are not well monitored and accompanied by other measures, a potential drift underlined by SC Norway while conducting interviews.

Indeed, Bhola Prasad Dahal, associate programme director, has highlighted the negative effects of the WFP programme, which provides food for children attending school from grade 1 to 5 in areas affected by conflict. There is evidence that parents prefer their daughter to stay as long as possible in primary school to benefit from this programme, instead of being enrolled in lower secondary school.

Although such incentive programmes are criticized, their impact should not be underestimated in emergencies. A recent survey on Educational needs of IDPs in western Kathmandu has demonstrated that *“a programme that covers the educational costs as well as the miscellaneous costs would be an incredible relief to IDPs”*¹²⁹ since the loss of income has adversely affected the majority of the displaced families, unable to meet the educational needs of their children.

BHUTAN

In 2003, *“one school has already initiated a fund by collecting personal contributions from teachers to support genuinely poor students ... Two schools have supported poor students by involving a local club and the National Women’s Association of Bhutan to sponsor poor students”*¹³⁰. Therefore, mobilizing local women’s groups to organize income generating activities in some of the poorer and more remote communities could constitute another way to support girls’ education. Such initiatives at the school level to support families with financial problems will have an impact on increasing girls’ enrolment.

PAKISTAN

In Pakistan, low family income with high costs of school materials has also long been cited by the educational authorities as the main reason for low attendance rates. In 2004, as a first step to boost enrolment and bring children into schools, the government of Punjab has not only waived the fee at public-sector schools but has also been providing free textbooks to all the students up to grade eight. By the next academic year, the programme should be extended to all the students up to grade ten. Furthermore, to promote female participation, the government introduced monthly stipends to girls in about 15 low literacy districts across Punjab. *“Since the start of the programme, some 200,000 girl students of grade six to eight with 80 per cent and above school attendance have been awarded a monthly stipend of 200 rupees [about US\$3]”*¹³¹.

Although all these initiatives have impacted positively on girls' enrolment, evidence suggests that incentive programmes should be accompanied by other measures. As the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP) pointed out in its annual report, *"instead of offering financial incentives to join schools, policies aimed at improving the environment at schools, providing trained teachers, [and] making curricula more relevant to children's lives would play a big part both in increasing enrolment and keeping children at schools"*.

3. Women-teacher recruitment

The lack of women teachers is often an added disincentive for girls to attend school in development and emergency settings. We will examine how this issue can be addressed in emergencies.

In most of the South Asia countries, women are seriously under-represented in the teaching profession, but more particularly at the lower secondary and secondary levels, one of the consequences of the low enrolment of girls in higher primary and post-primary grades. *The UNESCO EFA Monitoring Report*¹³² indicates that across the world, girls' enrolment rises relative to boys' as the proportion of female teachers increases. The recruitment of

female teachers is therefore an important gender-equity strategy, considered critical for improving gender equality in education and empowering women through teaching.

There are several reasons for this. Firstly, families often do not allow their girls to attend school post-puberty as they fear for their daughters' safety. Recent evidence of sexual exploitation of students by teachers suggests that increasing the number of female teachers may be an added protection mechanism for girls. Male teachers also favour the boys in their classes, effectively excluding girls from participation. Research has demonstrated that the presence of female teachers makes schools safe spaces and gender sensitive, thereby boosting parents' confidence to send their daughters to school. Lastly, female teachers are perceived as role models by girls, thus encouraging them to achieve academically. The presence of female teachers becomes even more important in emergencies¹³³.

As schools are among the first community organizations to start functioning after emergencies, increasing the number of women teachers may also mean that girls in schools are safer, and less vulnerable to

sexual harassment and abuse from male students and teachers. Therefore, it is important to set a high standard for gender equality in staffing and encourage the active participation of women. One of the obvious strategies to tackle this issue is to reduce the entry requirements for female teacher

candidates for teacher training. Another strategy consists in identifying women who would like to become teachers and investing accordingly in their training and support. Some examples of initiatives that are being taken to recruit, retain and support women teachers are presented here.

BANGLADESH

Bangladesh is an example of a country where deliberate policy measures have been taken to increase the recruitment of women teachers, especially in remote and rural areas, and this has had a positive impact on girls' enrolment. For instance, a European Commission programme, Promote, has been designed to get more women into teaching posts in rural secondary schools. *"Because of Promote, the Teacher Training Colleges have more than doubled their enrolment of women in recent years"*¹³⁴.

AFGHANISTAN

In post-Taliban Afghanistan, according to UNAMA¹³⁵, there were over 70,000 teachers with women representing 28 per cent of the teaching body in 2003. While most of the teaching staff in Afghanistan's capital are female, the chronic lack of female teachers in other regions is seen as another factor behind the low attendance rate of girls in schools. Evidence suggests that in conflict contexts where there are often high proportions of female-headed households, teaching can contribute to adolescent girls' and women's personal and professional transformation. In Afghanistan, one woman teacher interviewed as part of the Healing Classroom Initiative implemented by the IRC stated: *"School helps me forget my problems and sorrows – before I was teaching, I was very sad all the time. I enjoy being with the children, and it helps me forget my pain. They learn from me and I learn from them too"*¹³⁶.

PAKISTAN

In Pakistan, gender has also been a focal area of the Northern Areas Education Project (NAEP), with special attention given to supporting new female staff. NAEP is the UK's Department for International Development's (DFID) contribution to the Northern Education Project. Thanks to a loan from the World Bank, this project ran from 1998 to 2003 in *"Pakistan's remote and undeveloped northern areas, hostage to Islamabad's dispute with India over Kashmir"*¹³⁷. It focused on educationally disadvantaged girls, teachers whose quality was below the national standard and parents, especially mothers. Gender-sensitive material has been used with a view to changing the attitudes of many in the next adult generation. The initiative to expand girls' education at secondary level in the remote districts of the Northern Areas has been, as a whole, well received by the communities. The project has provided jobs for women as teachers in local girls' schools and educated more girls, whose enrolment has risen by 73 per cent. *"NAEP is the foundation stone in encouraging female participation at each level. It is inevitable that such activities continue in future"*¹³⁸.

NEPAL

In Nepal, feeder hostels have played a crucial role in producing women teachers. Eighteen hostels located in different parts of the country prepare local girls in rural areas to become primary school teachers. Most studies reported that the Feeder Hostel Programme, initially supported by the Government of Norway, has made a positive contribution to promoting girls' education by providing educational opportunity and access to girls.

However, according to M. B. Bista¹³⁹, a number of problems remain: the absence of clear guidelines to select girls in an equitable manner, the lack of qualified tutors and the small amount of the stipends. If this programme is valuable, it should be properly monitored to be effective.

SUDAN

Another initiative is being tried in Southern Sudan. Linked to the direct financial support to girls in secondary education is a future programme component, being designed to encourage girls to visit local primary schools and engage in activities with young children. According to J. Kirk, *"such activities may encourage secondary-school leavers to think about becoming teachers"*¹⁴⁰.

4. Formal education, non-formal education and alternative schooling programmes

■ *Back-to-school campaigns*

In emergencies, the provision of minimum equipment guarantees the normalcy of courses. Back-to-school campaigns aim to revitalize the educational system by providing educational supplies, teaching and learning materials and equipment. Back-to-school campaigns should be an opportunity to encourage more girls to attend school.

■ *Non-formal education*

In emergencies, non-formal education becomes even more important, as it is easier to deploy than formal education. There are different types of educational activities that can be initiated during and after emergencies: vocational or skills training, youth centres, accelerated learning, bridging and distance education programmes. In his paper, A. Sinha has underlined “*the absence of diversity of approaches to meet learning needs of girls – hostels, bridge courses, alternate schools*”¹⁴³. After and during an emergency, there is a crucial need to provide diverse and innovative educational options for hard-to-reach girls from early childhood to adulthood.

AFGHANISTAN

The Back to School campaign launched by the Afghanistan Interim Authority resulted in some three million grades 1–12 children and 70,000 teachers returning to school. “*In Nimroz province, one of the most isolated areas of the country, Back to School celebrations were held at Naswani Zaranj Girls’ School in September 2004. The focus of the event was on the importance of education in society, the significance of girls’ participation in the education system and the role of education in ensuring a peaceful and prosperous future for Afghanistan*”¹⁴¹. By 2004, 54.4 per cent of primary age children were in school¹⁴². In 2004, UNICEF provided essential supplies and learning materials to 4.4 million students and 81,000 teachers. The agency intends to support the supply of education materials to more than 4.5 million children and 105,000 teachers after signing an agreement with the Ministry of Education in 2005.

NEPAL

The Out-of-School Programme (OSP), known as Bal Shikchha, is an important component of UNICEF's programme mix for education in Nepal. This programme, known as UOSP in urban areas, offers two nine-month courses with literacy, numeracy and life skills subjects to girls and disadvantaged children aged 10–14 years, who have not had the opportunity of entering the formal school system or have dropped out at early grades. Parents have clearly expressed their preference for OSP classes for their girls as the classes run only two hours a day and there is flexibility to adjust the time of the class.

The second largest city in Nepal, Biratnagar, is now experiencing greater inflows of people from areas severely affected by conflict. In this city, the OSP benefits 697 working children, of which in 2004/05 approximately 67 per cent were girls, all of whom were working children. Moreover, many children's clubs have developed activities that encourage the development of talents and skills and which, notably, involve both girls and boys. They are also active in raising community awareness about social issues such as girls' education through street theatre. Supporting these clubs in emergencies is necessary to provide a structure for girls eager to initiate educational activities.

PAKISTAN

In Pakistan, too, given the acute shortage of girls' secondary schools in the NWFP, Northern Areas Education Project (NAEP) has supported the distance education programme developed by Allama Iqbal Open University, with local centres. Two pilot study centres have been established to see if a more cost-effective strategy to provide secondary education to girls could be found. Developing that sort of structure could be a means of reaching out-of-school girls affected by the earthquake in October 2005.

■ **Early Childhood Development (ECD) programmes**

Structured recreational activities, as part of the educational process, are often an immediate first step in the early stages

of an emergency. Such programmes give children a chance to play, sing, draw or participate in recreational activities and are an important means by which the often immense stresses of life in a war zone may be mitigated. As J. Piaget

stated, “*play is the work of children*”. The right to play, enshrined in the CRC (article 31), should be a strong focus of protection and education efforts by humanitarian agencies since play is a key function in restoring some level of normality in emergencies. Should conflict or displacement make formal schooling impossible, such opportunities become especially valuable.

After the tsunami, Save the Children offered an early response supporting play activities at welfare centres, safe spaces in displaced camps and the re-establishment of integrated childhood development system centres, including material support and teacher training.

SRI LANKA

In Sri Lanka, the Butterfly Peace Garden¹⁴⁴ in Batticaloa places a particular importance upon children’s play and recreation. For seven years now, the Garden has provided a sanctuary where thousands of children from villages and towns throughout eastern Sri Lanka have come to play, cultivate the soil, care for animals, practise arts such as music, painting, sculpture, ceramics and theatre and learn basic elements of yoga, qigong and other body wisdom exercises.

Early childhood education has been proven to be an important component of educating adolescent girls. If young children are at home, it is often teenage girls who care for them. Therefore, early childcare centres should be established in areas affected by emergencies so that young children have a safe and nurturing place to go during the day, freeing older girls to attend school. Evidence also suggests that the participation of out-of-school girls in ECD activities has encouraged re-enrolment in formal schools and vocational courses. The Child Friendly Spaces (CFS) concept pioneered by UNICEF and generally designed for younger children is one example of how these activities can be organised. UNICEF has also recently developed the Early Childhood Development Kit, a tool to respond to children after emergencies.

In emergency situations, play is often not viewed as a priority, and play programmes remain scarce. However, “*emergencies often present an opportunity to introduce ECD provision and concepts where there has been none before. For this reason, adherence to best practice and rigorous standards should be a major priority for supporting ECD in emergencies*”¹⁴⁵. For practitioners concentrating on young children in emergencies, INEE¹⁴⁶

presents a checklist specifically concerning ECD in crisis situations. Save the Children Sweden has also established the following acronym to guide the implementation of their ECD programmes:

- S – for space and structure
- T – for time, trust and talking
- O – for opportunities to play
- P – for partnership with parents

Experience has demonstrated that a diversity of approaches in reaching girls requires community action in planning and implementation. However, this action must be accompanied by a new accountability framework that legally provides a place for stakeholders, especially women's groups, to participate in the improvement of the management of the school system. According to A. Sinha, *“even low cost and under-funded learning centres attract children and improve participation ... Norms should not take away flexibility. They are a tool for planning and not an end in themselves”*¹⁴⁷.

This section aimed at presenting initiatives which focus on increasing girls' access to school and guaranteeing their safety. However, *“if access becomes the all-encompassing goal*

*without looking at quality, then the education system will remain very poor and inefficient in the long-term”*¹⁴⁸. If equal access for girls is necessary, it is not a sufficient condition for gender equality in education.

C. Improve the Quality of Education

In the conclusion of her report on sustainable peace, J. Kirk stressed *“the importance of girls' education, not just access to ‘any old’ education, but access to a quality, empowering education that enables them to develop the skills, attitudes and knowledge necessary for active participation in peace-building and other activities in the public realm”*¹⁴⁹. Quality is a key feature in the drive for Education For All, but is far more difficult to measure than access. However, some strategies aiming at improving the quality of girls' education could be part of the response to emergencies.

1. Gender-sensitive training to teachers

In emergencies, teachers face especially difficult and stressful working conditions (including overcrowded, multi-grade and multi-age classrooms), continued threats to their own safety and little or no compensation for their efforts. Whilst donors are often reluctant to start paying salaries, as this is not

sustainable in the long term, assisting this area as a one-off in emergencies can help to kick-start the system. The centrality of the teacher and the development of local resources as essential elements of any efforts to improve girls' education and participate in the reconstruction of a country affected by a disaster and/or an armed conflict should not be minimized. Throughout emergencies, it is essential to improve pre-service teacher education and to develop relevant in-service education in order to improve teachers' teaching performances.

Developed by UNESCO, the Teacher Emergency Package (TEP), also known as School-in-a-Box, consists of a kit of materials and a methodology of teaching basic literacy and numeracy in the mother language of the pupils. The kit covers grades one to four and is designed for a six month span of learning that then phases into the formal textbook-based curriculum. UNICEF has recently used this kit by in countries affected by the tsunami and after the Asian earthquake. However, the provision of this kit is not sufficient. As demonstrated in the Rwandan experience with TEP, the provision of teacher training in the use of the kits is essential. The UNESCO team has developed a training programme for the

implementation of TEPs based on a 'train the trainer' approach. Once a core group of national trainers has been trained, these trainers in turn move out to train head teachers or representative teachers. In turn, these people train their colleagues at the school level. This approach has several advantages. First, it allows national staff to develop psychological ownership of the programme, which is not generally the case when they merely receive handouts. Secondly, it contributes to developing independence that augurs well for the next phase of the formal curriculum.

During and after emergencies, teachers may be unfamiliar with the learner-centred teaching approaches that agencies introduce. Sommers demonstrated that *"altering the fundamentally hierarchical structure of the relationship between teacher and student proved especially difficult and culturally sensitive"*¹⁵⁰ since teachers have been trained to teach using authoritarian and didactic methods. While supporting the development of teaching and learning material, agencies should include teachers in this process to ensure that material is not disconnected from teachers' abilities.

Furthermore, teacher training plays a critical role in conveying the messages

that education in emergencies is a crucial psycho-social intervention. However, teachers often lack the skills and experience to teach in conflict or post-conflict settings and actively support children, especially girls. It has also been recognized that when teachers begin to study their own experiences of trauma, they are in a much stronger position to become advocates for change. During and after an emergency, teachers should also benefit from a psychological programme to cope with children affected by armed conflict, as well as their own personal trauma. The impact of this kind of self-reflective approach for teacher capacity development should not be underrated.

As the classroom is such an important site of transformation, the work of women teachers is also an important component of the peace process. In her article, J. Kirk argued for *“recognition of women teachers’ potential to act as agents of change for a gender-just peace”*¹⁵¹. Numerous strategies and considerations for international agencies, organizations and governments emerge from research and programming experience: training for all teachers needs to address their own experiences as men and women; and teacher training on empowering teachers as agents of transformation within the

education sector and within society as a whole should be emphasized.

Emergencies should also be an opportunity for sensitizing teachers to a gender sensitive approach to teaching. Teachers are especially in a critical position to influence parents and girls by their examples. Consequently, it is essential to provide teachers with material on gender awareness and methods of exploring their own teaching practices in order to modify their approach. Firstly, gender sensitization may help teachers to avoid stereotyping girls’ role unintentionally. Secondly, teachers can be even more effective if they are trained to identify situations of abuse and to alert a child protection officer when they suspect trouble. Finally, orientation and training enable teachers to provide counselling to girls on preventing teenage pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections.

Some schools are already trying to provide this type of service. However, such initiatives need to be recognized, supported and scaled up. There is a need for agencies and organizations involved in teacher training to continue to develop new gender-sensitive teaching material and fully evaluate their practical measures.

AFGHANISTAN

Afghanistan offers an interesting case study of the lack of evaluation of teachers' training.

According to A. Khamis, the system of education in Afghanistan today suffers from two major weaknesses: the use of an outdated and largely inadequate curriculum; and the quality of teachers, many of whom are unqualified and uncertified. Indeed, it is estimated that 70 per cent of teachers are untrained with an even smaller percentage of trained female teachers (approximately 10%). In 2005, UNICEF, with other development partners, supported the MoE to improve the quality of education and increase the overall enrolment of children in schools, with special emphasis on girls. Specifically, UNICEF and its partners aim to enrol an additional 400,000 girls in schools, revise curriculum, continue development of textbooks, and provide in-service training on a new gender-balanced curriculum for 25,000 primary school teachers. Although the emphasis is on training teachers in a child-centred gender-sensitive new curriculum, A. Khamis has underlined the lack of *“systematic evaluations of the teacher training offered to Afghan teachers to gauge its effectiveness and impact on teachers’ pedagogical practices or on the children being served”*¹⁵². That is why enhanced gender-sensitive teacher training programmes should not only be prioritized but also evaluated by humanitarian organizations.

Although untrained teachers constitute one of the barriers to girls' enrolment, other constraints prevent children from accessing a quality education in conflict settings. In Nepal remote areas, *“the problem is not a lack of trained teachers but their frequent absence in the classroom, and this has been exacerbated in the past few years due to the Maoist insurgency. Only 32 days of classes were held in most of the schools in 2004 in Humla district”*¹⁵³. In 2004, the Department of Education estimated

that 3000 teachers had been displaced and more than 160 school teachers had been killed since 1996, adversely impacting the education of children. The way teachers may be threatened should be borne in mind by agencies working in conflict settings, aiming at maintaining educational opportunities for children affected by conflict.

2. Curriculum development and reform

Exploring the content of the curriculum and the way it is designed and taught is

also important with a view to improving the quality of girls' education and making it more gender sensitive.

*"In post-conflict contexts, windows of opportunity may open for quite radical changes to be made in the content and processes of education"*¹⁵⁴. Since the curriculum is often moribund, there is a need to train teachers on how to revitalize it and use it after an emergency. Seeking to introduce a new curriculum also requires teachers to re-think the very way they teach so that they can help children to develop new skills and knowledge necessary for survival and coping. In emergencies, there is an increasing recognition that the curriculum should be much more gender sensitive, favour health awareness and development of life skills, promote peace education and address grief and psycho-social stress.

■ **Gender-sensitive curriculum**

Another barrier to girls' enrolment, retention and achievement which has

tended to be ignored derives from gender stereotyping in the curriculum, especially in textbooks, where *"girls tend to be portrayed as passive, modest and shy, while boys are seen as assertive, brave and ambitious"*¹⁵⁵. The curriculum contains gender bias both hidden and overt. It does little to dispel stereotypes of gender and, often, exaggerates them. It has been recognized that textbooks are a prime means of reinforcing the status quo of gender relations and preserving the status, power and privilege of men. Textbooks do not include topics or lessons chosen with the explicit aim of bringing about gender balance in the family, sociality and nation. According to F. Leach, *"schooling does little to address the underlying causes of gender inequities in society. In their support for education, governments and donors need to move away from narrow and superficial interventions and seek to support the transformation of schooling within a context of broad programmes of social and economic reform, which directly tackle the problem of women's low status"*¹⁵⁶.

NEPAL

A project on Gender Experiences in Public School, undertaken in six districts with 11 public secondary schools in the Kathmandu valley area and Terai, was completed in April 2004. Supported by DFID and conducted jointly by the Research Centre for

Educational Innovation and Development of Tribhuvan University and Liverpool John Moores University, this study was an effort to understand the gender issues in the secondary level of schools in Nepal. The results found that despite government plans, little has changed from the findings of earlier studies (e.g. Sibbons¹⁵⁷, 1998): *“Gender discrimination remains rife in both the curriculum and organization of the school”*¹⁵⁸. Despite efforts by the government and NGOs to raise awareness of gender issues in education in Nepal, the education system throughout Nepal is skewed in favour of boys. Girls’ access to education, attendance, participation and achievements is significantly lower than that of boys. That is why the Maoists have taken a strong hold on this issue, insisting that girls of school age must attend the local facilities, even to the point of holding parents accountable and liable to punishment for the non-attendance of their daughters. In 2001, J. Hart¹⁵⁹ underlined that in areas controlled by the Maoists, girls’ enrolment was higher than in other parts of Nepal. However, there is a need to undertake further research in that direction.

In post-conflict contexts, schools are the places in which new curricula will be taught. A school which offers young people a curriculum and pedagogy that are gender-sensitive, that engage in gender analysis and action, will encourage both girls and boys to reach their full potential. Adding positive images of women and their role in every facet of society is a much needed change that needs to be consciously undertaken by the different boards of education while rebuilding the education system after an emergency.

■ **Health education and life skills**

In emergencies, it is critical to provide hygienic kits with sanitary towels for girls. To make school facilities and

school environments more ‘girl friendly’, health education, including hygiene and cleaning methods, should be part of the curriculum. In emergencies, the curriculum should seek to link practices to knowledge, encourage learning of life skills and raise awareness on landmines, health issues, hygiene and HIV/AIDS so that education can disseminate life-saving messages and lead to women’s empowerment. As stated by a child in Gaza, *“by increasing our skills, we can become more capable of fighting the occupation with our minds”*¹⁶⁰.

During and after an emergency, what elements does quality education need to consist of in order to contribute to human development defined in terms of

BANGLADESH

In Bangladesh, the classrooms are growing in gender equality due to the Child-to-Child approach to health education. Health Action Schools (HAS) project is an action research project located at the Aga Khan University and implemented in partnership with SC UK. The approach advocates the direct involvement of children in promoting health to their families and communities and has now spread to over 700 schools across Pakistan. Lessons are structured using a particular sequence promoting understanding of the topic, finding out more, discussing and pooling their findings as a class, deciding what action to take, going into school and community, taking action and, eventually, evaluating their action to improve practices. The choice of health priorities is given to individual schools.

During the assessment by the team, parents requested sex education to be included in the curriculum, as they found it very hard to discuss this subject at home. However, the organization met difficulties in persuading teachers to respond to this request. Thus advocacy campaigns targeting parents and teachers and addressing the importance of including sex education within the curriculum as a means of reducing disease transmission should be scaled up.

well-being and enhancement of choices? One practical approach is 'life skills' education, which has been used and misused in a number of cases to refer to a wide variety of skills believed to link to quality education, most often practical skills. The four pillars of education put forward in the 1996 Delors Commission Report¹⁶¹ to UNESCO present a framework which can be used to put life skills education into practice:

- **Learning to know** consists of the information regarding a specific issue, but also the cognitive skills such as problem solving, critical thinking and creative thinking.
- **Learning to be** refers to the personal skills which build a person's self-worth, valuing oneself, building a positive image.
- **Learning to live** together builds on empathy and respect for others, learning to accept diversity and value it, communicating, negotiating, refusing, etc.
- **Learning to do** consists of the

practical skills that are necessary to put all these acquired abilities into action whenever required in everyday life.

Life skills have mostly been effective in the field of health education and most specifically with regard to the issue of HIV/AIDS, particularly threatening girls in situations of emergencies. As reported by the UN Secretary-General in 2003, *“there is a correlation between the spread of HIV/AIDS and sexual violence and the exploitation of girls and women in corridors of wars”*¹⁶². UNAIDS estimates rates of HIV among combatants are three to four times higher than the infection rates of the local population. Armed conflicts also exacerbate other conditions in which HIV/AIDS thrives, such as extreme poverty, displacement and separation.

There is evidence that basic education remains the strongest weapon against AIDS. A 72-country analysis¹⁶³ found that where the literacy gap between boys and girls is greater than 25 per cent, new HIV infections are markedly higher. When the literacy gap between boys and girls is less than five per cent, the HIV infection outbreak level falls by 40 per cent. The Global Campaign for Education has also reported that *“HIV/AIDS infection rates are doubled among*

*young people who do not finish primary school. If every girl and boy received a complete primary education, at least 7 million new cases of HIV could be prevented in a decade”*¹⁶⁴.

Consequently, education programmes should address the escalating HIV/AIDS crisis, a silent emergency that has denied so many children, the majority of them girls, the rights to education. In a Save the Children report¹⁶⁵, the authors recommend the inclusion of HIV/AIDS in emergency assessments in order to put an emphasis on HIV/AIDS prevention and provide care and support to people living with the virus. The prevention of HIV/AIDS also continues to pose one of the principal challenges in post-conflict settings.

In Sierra Leone, although some 88 per cent of adolescents and youths had access to information on HIV/AIDS, only 7.7 per cent could name three methods of HIV/AIDS prevention or three modes of transmission¹⁶⁶. Therefore, during and after an emergency, it is crucial for international agencies to implement HIV/AIDS prevention programmes aimed at increasing adolescents’ knowledge. In Liberia, a National Children’s Consultative Forum has launched HIV/AIDS awareness and sensitization dialogues in schools and communities

SOUTH AFRICA AND MOZAMBIQUE

M. Thorpe's reflection on gender-based HIV education interventions in South Africa and Mozambique deserves special attention. According to him, the question of how to mobilize teachers in the fight against HIV/AIDS is one of the greatest challenges to HIV/AIDS education. As a result, it is essential to encourage more ownership of HIV education among teachers. *"Although a school may be a problematic domain for a form of education that engages with gender-equity issues, schools can be enormously important places for the development of young people's perspectives on HIV"*¹⁶⁷.

Inspired by the work of the Brazilian drama practitioner A. Boal¹⁶⁸, drama and role-playing have been methods used by facilitators and teachers to introduce a gender-equitable approach to HIV education in schools. The 'Forum Theatre' offers the chance to see scenarios unfold differently and to rehearse for life. *"As students saw alternatives in each scene, discussion grew. When gender stereotypes emerged, they could be challenged"*¹⁶⁹. This innovative approach has allowed moving from awareness of gender dynamics within the group to challenging them and changing behaviour. This innovative approach could be replicated after adaptation.

and serves as the mechanism for children's participation in National Immunization Days. Communication initiatives, based on some results to be achieved, should also be prioritized by distributing posters, leaflets, stickers and booklets to provide basic information on causes, transmission and prevention of HIV/AIDS as well as to reduce stigma surrounding the disease and its victims.

Recent humanitarian crises reveal a complex interaction between the HIV/AIDS epidemic and sexual violence faced by girls. The interplay of these forces must be borne in mind when

responding to emergencies by increasing awareness-raising activities for behavioural change, particularly among vulnerable and high-risk groups. IASC has published Guidelines for HIV/AIDS interventions in emergency settings and recognized that *"within HIV/AIDS affected areas and population groups, schooling is of particular importance"*¹⁷⁰. Educating girls in emergencies is not only a way to protect them from GBV but also a strategy to prevent them from being infected by HIV/AIDS. The future of this epidemic may be determined by how well the world equips its children, especially girls, with the skills, knowledge and attitudes to prevent infection.

■ **Psycho-social component**

The loss of educational and recreational opportunities, the experience of bereavement and displacement, increased social marginalization and isolation are some of the factors that may pose a risk to children's sense of well-being and their healthy psychological development. However, in most countries, the existing curriculum is based exclusively on the development of cognitive learning outcomes and does not consider the emotional, psychological and social dislocation experiences by teachers and children in conflict and post-conflict situations.

Apart from the girls being physically affected by emergencies, they are psychologically traumatized. This has long-lasting adverse impact on girls' proper socialization and social integration. It is essential that the curriculum is fully cognizant of girls' needs and responds to their developmental needs beyond the acquisition of cognitive skills. Social reintegration, education and proper counselling have been proven to be the ultimate rehabilitation since they have the potential to be a healing mechanism.

NEPAL

SC Norway's 'Child Rights Programme in Areas Affected by Maoist Insurgency and Armed Conflict in Nepal' includes as one of its six main strategies the following: *"Change the revenge and violence culture found in the children into more tolerant and constructive culture by reducing the mental trauma and disorder"*¹⁷¹. As part of the effort to achieve this aim, schools are to become centres for psychological counselling. Apart from addressing children's psychological needs, the trauma healing component of the curriculum has proved to be beneficial for teachers and parents and others close to the children who are themselves able to experience catharsis.

SRI LANKA

In spite of the growing endorsement of child-centred and child-participatory approaches in the assessment of the needs in emergencies, when it comes to children's psycho-social well-being, adults alone are generally believed to possess the

relevant insight. However, according to J. Hart, children should participate in design, implementation and monitoring of psycho-social programmes. An alternative response to their trauma would be to discuss with children the resources that they themselves have and the strategies that they might employ to reduce the level of fear. The experience of the Butterfly Peace Garden¹⁷² seems illustrative of a shift from an individual, medicalized and adult-led approach to one more participatory and socially-oriented.

A recent research project in eastern Sri Lanka¹⁷³ has also demonstrated the possibility and value of engaging with children through participatory methods focused on psycho-social well-being. Working in collaboration with Terre des Hommes and the local organization Koinonia, the research team conducted numerous sessions with children aimed at testing methods that may be used to understand the particular challenges they face, the resources they draw upon and the ways that programmatic interventions might be more closely attuned to their situation. The participation of children in discussing and reflecting on their circumstances and their aspirations for programmatic development is likely to encourage a sense of solidarity, self-efficacy and control over one's life and situation. Such feelings, in themselves, turn out to be important components of psycho-social well-being.

D. Children's Contribution to Peace and Humanitarian Actions

Positive impacts of participatory programming that have been mentioned in the implementation of psycho-social programmes have been proven to be very effective while responding to emergencies. This section therefore examines to what extent children's participation in humanitarian action is necessary and beneficial.

In emergencies, international humanitarian agencies have traditionally

promoted a notion of children as traumatized victims of conflict and focused on their protection. Despite the relevance of this opinion, children's resilience and their strategies for survival and coping should be strongly considered by researchers. Girls are not simply victims who must be protected or rehabilitated but are also actors who can play a crucial role in resisting political oppression, forging conflict resolution, promoting peace-building and rebuilding their societies. Strengthening girls' capacities would contribute to the community's ability to withstand the effect of disasters.

1. The benefits of children's participation in humanitarian action

This section considers the benefits, challenges and opportunities that emergencies may create for children, especially for girls, and suggest that participatory projects can and should be developed to empower them. To meet girls' needs more effectively and encourage them to claim their rights, it is extremely important to learn from them, how they understand, experience and respond to conflict. That is why leading participatory research and involving girls in this process can be meaningful and may prove a highly effective strategy. Girls may have very productive ideas about possible solutions to the problems that confront them in the context of emergencies.

The emphasis on children's participation draws inspiration from Article 12 of the CRC, which highlights children's right to be involved in decisions which affect their lives. In this study, participation is understood to refer to processes of information sharing, consultation, decision-making, implementation, and resource control with, of, and by, beneficiaries of humanitarian action. Globally, participation as an approach is not yet deeply embedded in agency thinking. It would appear to exist as an 'add-on' or as a sector within country

programmes as a whole rather than a principle which is upheld across programmes.

Moreover, participation may be seen as too risky or simply not essential during a time of emergency. Nevertheless, children's participation may be a crucial means by which protection is enhanced. For instance, SC has acknowledged the value and benefits of children's involvement in the *UN Global Study on Violence against Children*¹⁷⁴. The efforts to build peace can also be pursued more effectively in (post-)conflict settings by involving children. Although a strong basis exists for enabling girls' involvement in efforts to ameliorate the impacts of conflict, the studies reviewed focusing on children's participation in emergencies did not mention girls' potential role and their specific expectations.

Today, it would seem that children's participation, whether explicit or not, is intended for adolescents rather than young children. According to J. Hart, "*the development of conceptual clarity and appropriate technical skills to effectively promote participation for this age group is still in its early stages*"¹⁷⁵. Therefore, this section reviews programme literature focusing on adolescents.

PAKISTAN

Implemented in an Afghan refugee camp in Pakistan, Health Action Schools (HAS) project is one of the projects in South Asia where a Child-to-Child approach has been promoted. *"Child-to-Child is a rights-based approach to children's participation in promoting health and community development"*¹⁷⁶. Children, especially girls, were encouraged to understand an issue, find out more, discuss findings and plan action, and, eventually, take and evaluate action with a view to doing it better. According to T.K Khamis, principal investigator of the HAS project, *"the way teachers treated children has profoundly changed. Many said that before HAS, they used to look at children in terms of what they could not do - yet, now they viewed them in terms of what they could do"*¹⁷⁷. There are numerous examples of how to help children to participate in health and community development at the Child-to-Child Trust's online directory¹⁷⁸.

SRI LANKA

In 1999, SC Norway launched a project with a local partner organization, Eastern Self-reliant and Community awakening Organization (ESCO), to meet the lack of recreational and educational opportunities. This project aimed at providing an opportunity for the young people of Sivanthivu in Batticaloa District to engage in the development of their own lives and that of the community in a situation where conflict and displacement have fractured many social networks. Through a series of talkshops, ESCO staff encouraged the adolescents to identify and suggest how to meet their priority needs. For instance, ESCO facilitated a meeting between club members and the Zonal Director of Education who promised to supply additional teachers if the young people themselves provided a structure that could be used for further classes. According to SCN, *"the Vivehananda Children Development has contributed to the expansion of schooling in the village to include grades 6–9, the reinstatement of bus services through advocacy efforts, the construction of a building for club activities as well as the accumulation of funds for the longer-term support of the club and its activities"*¹⁷⁹.

In addition to the dynamism in activities, the benefits of this approach extend to personal development of participants. Girls, in particular, described how the activities had given them the opportunities to overcome shyness and restrictive social norms.

They were now confident about speaking in public and felt much more comfortable socializing with boys. Today, this club stands as a model of participatory programming with children in eastern Sri Lanka which can be replicated in other countries after adaptation.

NEPAL

In 1997, SC UK established a network children's organization in each of the seven Bhutanese camps in Nepal through discussion with their field staff and refugee children. These came to be known as the Bhutanese Refugee Children's Forums (BRCF) and were supported by SC UK until the end of 2000. Following the departure of SC UK, UNHCR gave the various elements of the children's programme to different agencies and decided to end support of the BRCFs in 2002. However, according to J. Hart, "*UNHCR has been compelled by its own failings to consider the importance of children's participation in relation to protection*"¹⁸⁰.

The Rose Class Project is also a good example of children involving themselves in activities in support of the concerns and aspirations of their community. A monthly newspaper in English – *The Shangrila Sandesh* – is produced by participants and distributed in the camps, in Kathmandu and abroad. Through this newspaper and other activities such as photographic and art exhibitions, children are able to discuss, learn about and advocate for their situations as young Bhutanese refugees.

The network of children's clubs that was established in the early 1990s by numerous local and international agencies constitutes an important example of children's participation in development for organizations around the world. According to CWIN, as of April 2003, there were nearly 2000 child clubs in Nepal, nearly 90 per cent of which were in rural areas. These clubs seem to encourage action that is self-motivated and sustained by a strong sense of responsibility and ownership. However, monitoring and evaluation of children's programmes is still at a very rudimentary stage and agencies should pay attention to this issue. In addition, facilitators could and should play a much fuller part in supporting the clubs than they do at present, if their roles were professionalized and their capacity built.

SC UK has been a pioneer in seeking to link the child clubs with local institutions. At the district level, the District Child Welfare Boards (DCWBs) have the responsibility to report and monitor on the situation of children within the district and coordinate activities that address systematic abuse of their rights. Four places on the DCWB have been secured for children elected through the networks of clubs. According to SC UK, *“the benefits of children’s regular involvement in the DCWB have included greater support for children’s activities in the Surkhet district, the facilitation of children’s access to senior officials and a general change in attitude amongst the adults who have begun to listen more earnestly to children”*¹⁸¹. Therefore, the benefits from scaling up children’s participation and establishing functional linkages between child-led initiatives and the wider society, in particular the local institutions and fora, need to be understood and explored further.

AFRICA

In Africa, other initiatives involving children, and especially girls, have been successful. The Girls’ Education Movement (GEM)¹⁸² is a pan-African education initiative which facilitates girls with boys as partners to interact with stakeholders and express their concern about issues affecting girls’ education. It is not a single organization but consists of children and young people in schools and communities throughout Africa who work in different ways with the aim of bringing positive changes in the lives of African girls and encouraging them in the movement through active participation. *“GEM empowers girls and boys by providing them spaces and places where they can develop their leadership, technical skills and life skills as well as participate in decision making about their education and lives”*¹⁸³.

In South Africa, girls’ parliaments, sponsored by GEM in conjunction with the national Department of Education, have offered girls the opportunity to contribute to policy making around issues of sexual violence in schools. Today, GEM is also flowering in northern Uganda with the willing participation of both girls and boys, who recognize that an educated girl will make educated choices about her future, and the future of her own family, confirming the need for girls to be educated in emergencies.

Lessons learned from Plan International's programmes

Through three case studies in El Salvador, Sierra Leone and Vietnam, Plan International has demonstrated the importance of child participation in disaster responses. Indeed, a disaster provides opportunities for girls to participate in identifying problems, prioritizing them, proposing solutions, implementing actions, monitoring and evaluating interventions, and providing a unique outlook that can increase the quality of these interventions. There is evidence that children have a vision of their own role in the reconstruction of their community. Therefore, their voices need to be heard in disaster preparedness, relief and recovery to increase their long-term resilience, a universal capacity which allows a person, group or community to prevent, minimize or overcome the damaging effects of adversity. After the earthquake in El Salvador, Plan International worked with affected municipalities to develop municipal development plans to address reconstruction. The local mayors eventually recognized that children's participation was a fundamental part of the municipal development plans and publicly agreed to incorporate the vision of children into the reconstruction process.

Responses to natural disasters in South Asia

According to the study entitled *Lessons from the Tsunami*, "a key lesson learned is that those most affected by disasters must be consulted about their priorities and preferences about the type of assistance that is most needed"¹⁸⁴. However, the author does not mention children's roles in this process, especially the role of girls. After the Gujarat earthquake, few examples exist of serious gender analysis or consultation with women by Disasters Emergency Committee (DEC) agencies. Since women usually have greater need of support in emergencies but less access to available assistance, ActionAid has established a group within the Sneh Samudaya network which specifically caters for the needs and rights of women. It has become an influential group which, in collaboration with other civil society groups and organizations, forced the government to reverse the implementation of new policies on land rights that were discriminatory against women. Although this initiative is valuable, DEC public opinion survey indicates that globally "women felt that they had often been excluded from discussions about the design of projects and that, where consulted, their views had been ignored.

*ActionAid was a notable exception in this respect*¹⁸⁵.

*“Research on aid planning in emergency situations has shown that a community’s ability to survive disasters depends on the extent to which it has minimized vulnerabilities and maximized capacities”*¹⁸⁶. This observation should give incentives to humanitarian organizations to *“respect and develop the capacities of women”*¹⁸⁷, as well as girls, one of the six principles for engendered relief and reconstruction enhanced by the Gender and Disaster Network. The gender-disaggregated Capacities and Vulnerabilities Analysis matrix presented in M. M. Ariyabandu’s book¹⁸⁸ can be a useful tool to capture gender considerations in emergencies.

2. Educational programmes targeting adolescents

The potential of participatory projects to equip and facilitate girls to undertake their new or expanded roles effectively and to reduce the attendant risks merits much greater consideration informed by experience in the field. By offering children the opportunity to participate more fully in disaster situations, adults cease to be interpreters of their needs and thoughts, and instead begin to accompany them in the design of actions and adequate strategies that

strengthen their capacity to reflect, contribute and lead their own development processes. This section now examines how adolescents, who are often overlooked in emergencies, can play a crucial role in recovery and reconstruction if their capacities are strengthened.

While undertaking a study¹⁸⁹ on adolescents affected by conflict, the Women’s Commission researchers found extremely limited data on adolescents, in terms of their numbers, profiles or needs, and very few formal assessments and evaluations addressing their concerns. Evidence also suggests that it is not a rule but an exception for girls to continue education beyond primary level. Responding to their educational needs requires special attention. It has been progressively recognized that girls, as adolescents, have distinct experiences in emergencies as well as specific needs and capacities for recovery and reconstruction. In armed conflicts, they face particular risks such as recruitment into military service, economic exploitation, sexual abuse, and contraction of HIV/AIDS and other STDs. Providing educational services to adolescents which are age-appropriate and take into account other responsibilities or interests adolescents may have could be a way to address these issues.

In 1995, UNHCR's Guidelines for Educational Assistance to Refugees noted the specific education needs of adolescent girls. UNHCR advocated for *"the initiation of appropriate non-formal education and training opportunities for older girls and women. Women's committees should be made aware of the range of possible educational activities that could be of benefit to refugee women and older girls. They could draw up plans for community-based literacy, vocational and life-skills programmes ... for which external assistance could be sought as necessary, from UNHCR and other agencies"*¹⁹⁰.

However, *"secondary and tertiary*

*education has been typically neglected despite its importance in rebuilding the capacity of a potential workforce"*¹⁹¹.

Girls, as adolescents, are still woefully overlooked and in desperate need of increased attention by the international community. Their strengths and potentials as constructive contributors to their societies go largely unrecognized and unsupported. While girls are almost as likely as boys to be enrolled in pre-primary and grade one, their enrolment decreases steadily after that. The Global Survey on Education in Emergencies¹⁹² highlights the lack of post-primary opportunities for refugee youth since only six per cent of them are enrolled in secondary education across the world.

PAKISTAN

There is evidence that humanitarian agencies should pay more attention to the expansion of girls' secondary school opportunities in Pakistan. According to UNHCR, only 18 per cent of Afghan refugee girls were enrolled in 2002 and 40 per cent of girls dropped out before reaching the second grade¹⁹³. Educational opportunities for refugee adolescents are limited since UNHCR stopped supporting middle and secondary education in 1995 as a result of budget constraints.

Created in 2000, the Refugee Education Trust (RET)¹⁹⁴ funds programmes that support access to quality post-primary education to the largest possible number of Afghan refugee students in developing countries, while promoting the full involvement of girls and young women, thus favourably impacting their roles in their family lives, their society and future generations. Since 2001, 27 schools have been rehabilitating and more than 5000 students have benefited from this programme. More than half of

them were girls. Amongst the organizations which support girl refugees' enrolment in Pakistan, IRC and the Afghan Institute of Learning have strongly favoured girls' enrolment since around 40 per cent of the students supported by these two organizations are girls. Supported in part by the RET, IRC started its Female Education Programme in 1998/99. Since then, the organization has created mobile libraries and provided secondary education to Afghan girls as well as primary education to boys and girls, in 30 schools in and around Peshawar, with classes in Dari and Pushtu languages of instruction. IRC has also offered non-formal education opportunities through home schools which enrolled around 2000 students in 2000. Amongst them 70 per cent were girls.

BANGLADESH

UNICEF supports the Adolescent Peer Organized Network (APON), designed and implemented by one of the country's leading non-governmental organizations, the Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC). This project addresses the particular problems and needs of adolescent girls, who are often unaware of matters related to sexuality and reproductive health. For this purpose, Reading Centres have been created where adolescent girls can acquire knowledge and life skills that enable them to make informed choices and to develop their leadership potential. Started in 1998/99 in 25 regions, there are now 6,500 such centres in the country, reaching 200,000 adolescents, mainly girls. The objectives of the Reading Centres are to empower girls through education and skills development, provide employment opportunities and increase awareness of sexual and reproductive health as well as gender issues. As they have been trained as peer educators, adolescents receive a salary for their work, thereby becoming valued income-earners in their families and decreasing the pressure on them to marry early.

Although this programme is within the context of a development programme, it has potential for responses to emergencies and post-conflict situations. For instance, supporting girls' enrolment in secondary schools in Afghanistan is essential given that girls made up only 10 per cent of the students in March 2005¹⁹⁵.

There is evidence that the greatest focus of humanitarian organizations during and after an emergency is on primary education, leaving secondary less well-resourced. However, *“it is equally important to impart skills to youth – especially to those who have not been able to pass School Leaving Certificate – as these are the ones that can be diverted to destructive causes rather than constructive ones in our rural setting”*¹⁹⁶. Focusing also on Nepal, K. Poudel stated that *“as the country’s whole focus at present is directed towards the insurgency, the important and longer term issues of providing better opportunities for youths are ignored by the policy makers. Experts argue that it is not insurgency but the overgrowing unskilled and illiterate youth who are going to be major problems for the country in the long run”*¹⁹⁷.

From this perspective, it seems clear that the provision of suitable opportunities for education, expression and engagement should be considered as an emergency intervention rather than a measure for when the conflict has subsided. Although there is little evaluative literature regarding education programming geared specifically toward war-affected adolescents, especially focusing on girls, available sources and

experience in the field suggest an eclectic group of characteristics that best suit effective education programming for adolescents affected by armed conflict. According to J. Lowicki¹⁹⁸, such education should be non-formal, flexible, participatory, situation-based, and equitably available for boys and girls, useful, age-specific, gender-specific, linked to realistic employment opportunities, rapid, related to peace-building initiatives and reconciliation efforts, geared towards psychological and social healing and more. There is evidence that *“opening national education systems to diversity and innovation is a positive trend for girls’ education”*¹⁹⁹, especially when it comes to adolescents.

It is essential that girls, as adolescents, are given special attention, and that there is a realization that they are not only victims but can also be proactive in rebuilding communities. Indeed, girls can become catalysts for positive social reconstruction and an invaluable resource, particularly as communicators and mentors for other war-affected youth. As a conclusion, donors and agencies should bear in mind B. Bainvel’s reflection on the way children’s potential could be fully realized: *“In this suffocating context, adolescents need more than ever to have a cause. ‘Give*

*them a role, give them a voice' – this is what, put simply, could summarize the aims of programmes that must be implemented*²⁰⁰. This is even more true for girls, who are particularly vulnerable and overlooked in emergencies.

3. Participation in peace building through education

There is evidence that education can be a powerful political tool, subject to manipulation²⁰¹. According to Kirk and Muly, *“textbooks constitute a powerful tool for a ruling force to impose its ideologies on its youth”*²⁰². In conflict settings, the curriculum is frequently contested, and therefore requires careful review and adaptation in order to avoid exacerbating tensions after an emergency. Therefore, a consultative approach is essential to ensure the effectiveness of the reform and its ownership by the different stakeholders.

Peace education has been proven to be a key component of life skills education, especially in conflict and post-conflict situations. In post-conflict settings, there is a clear need for education to play an important role in guiding children away from violence through the teaching and emphasis of tolerance, reconciliation and accountability. This requires children's participation.

NEPAL, SRI LANKA AND INDIA/ PAKISTAN

In South Asia, several examples illustrate the way curriculum is a very sensitive issue. In the areas controlled by the Maoists in Nepal, the national anthem has been replaced by the Maoist one. The content of the curriculum is also at stake: Maoists have banned the teaching of Sanskrit from grade 6 to 8 and criticized the way history is taught, especially in consideration with the status of ethnic minorities.

Tamil teachers in Sri Lanka are also concerned about the cultural bias in Sinhalese textbooks translated into Tamil. In both India and Pakistan, state school textbooks and learning materials promote xenophobia and distrust of the other social groups, too. However, there are some limited initiatives in which school children on both sides of the border have had the opportunity to have dialogue with each other. For example, the Sabrang project²⁰³ in Mumbai has had children from India and Pakistan talking about peace together.

Education for conflict-affected populations must include some discussions of peace, conflict resolution, human rights and citizenship.

At the World Education Forum in Dakar, international organizations demonstrated how education can play a key role in preventing conflict and building peace. Young people usually view education as vital to the establishment of peace, too. Indeed, schools are key elements in transforming society and building a culture of peace. What children

experience in the early years of their development, particularly in the family and in schools, is most influential in determining their attitudes towards violence and peaceful relationships. Therefore, the curriculum should also be oriented towards peace, living together, conflict-management skills and active citizenship in a democratic society.

NEPAL

According to G. Pradhan, president of CWIN in Nepal, *“saving children from violence is a step forward to restoring peace and to creating a favourable environment for development in the future”*²⁰⁴. S. Sharma, founder of the Bal Bikas Samaj and member-secretary of the Social Welfare Council in Nepal, also stated that *“the country needs to think about instilling peace in the minds of the children who have been witnesses to the ongoing violence”*²⁰⁵. Indeed, since the issues of concern to the young are amongst those that lie at the heart of the current conflict, facilitating children’s contribution to addressing issues of discrimination, poor governance and inequity would seem a valuable way to enhance peace-building efforts in the country.

SRI LANKA

There has been recently an increasing investment of resources in peace-building activities, prompted by the ceasefire in Sri Lanka. However, according to J. Hart, it seems that *“little had been done to evaluate their impact on the attitudes and behaviour of participants”*²⁰⁶. Firstly, the author has underlined potential difficulties of peace-building efforts that are initiated by adults for children. According to him, the creation of a sustained exchange amongst young people from different communities should be initiated by children. Secondly, he has argued that children must already be engaged in a genuine process of self-empowerment before they are likely to want or be able to participate meaningfully in dialogue with children from other communities. This case study highlights the need to take precautions while integrating peace-building into the curriculum.

Through all these case studies, there is evidence that reconstruction allows for the participation of children in building education. Print and Smith²⁰⁷ have also provided an overview of models for teaching ‘civic education’ in Asia, suggesting that peace and human rights education should involve child-centred participatory teaching methods and an active-participatory pedagogy. This promising strategy could encourage girls to participate in the debates and express their views. Unfortunately, *“there has been little analysis on if, and exactly how, education, peace-building and gender equality are linked”*²⁰⁸.

Although Nicolai and Triplehorn stated children should be put at the centre of decisions about emergency responses, they are still *“the most photographed and least listened to victims of disasters”*²⁰⁹. It is therefore essential to use disaster recovery situations to influence and change the perceptions of adults about the needs and views of children, especially girls whose capacities are often underestimated.

E. Reconstruction of Facilities and Provision of Supply Materials

UNICEF’s Core Commitments to children advocate that the building of safe environments for children is primarily

defined as a protection issue, but at the same time is linked with the education sector. Schools are not only a learning space but also a protective and a healing environment in emergencies. Therefore, this section will examine to what extent emergencies are opportunities to rehabilitate and/or reconstruct protective, child-friendly and sensitive spaces for girls. Improving the water and sanitation system should also be prioritized since the lack of that kind of facilities is often one of the main reasons for girls’ non-enrolment at school. There is also evidence that responses to emergencies should focus on reducing the regional disparities in the distribution of schools to ensure that girls have the opportunity to be educated in remote areas.

1. Child-friendly and girl-sensitive spaces

Schools and classrooms are frequent targets of destruction, militarization and looting during conflict. However, there is still a tension between the reluctance to build or rehabilitate structures and the need to respond to the shortage of existing facilities and provide safe spaces in which to learn. Because schools are often targets, donors may be reluctant to invest heavily in the physical infrastructure of schools in conflict areas. While this is

understandable, whenever conditions allow, semi-permanent or permanent schools should be constructed in order to ensure continuous and uninterrupted learning. The principal of a high school in Afghanistan stressed that *“even if we do not have the resources we need, we will find a way to teach the students. If we have no chairs, no desks, no classrooms, we will teach them under*

*the trees. The future of our country, it lies with these girls. Their education is the future of Afghanistan; and some education is better than none at all”*²¹⁰.

The reconstruction phase should also be an opportunity to tackle geographical disparities which often are one of the main reasons for girls’ non-attendance at school in remote areas.

AFGHANISTAN

Wide gender disparities persist in many provinces of Afghanistan, and most of the agencies are unable to commit resources to more rural areas. High enrolments in major cities such as Herat and Kabul, where girls make up 35 to 58 per cent of the total, contrasts with the situation in rural villages across large areas of the country. In about 11 provinces, especially in the south and east, girls make up 20 per cent or less of the total primary school enrolments. According to B. Aasen, UNICEF representative in the country, *“these are the provinces in the south and on the border with Pakistan, where it is still a tradition among families to keep their daughters from school”*²¹¹. In the former Taliban strongholds of South Afghanistan, girls’ enrolment is at its lowest with only 3 per cent in Zabul, 5 per cent in Helmand and 7 per cent in Khost. In these areas, according to A. Khamis, *“there are only two agencies involved with educational provision and who have been there for more than a decade”*²¹².

With a view to responding to girls’ educational needs, UNICEF’s partnership agreement with the MoE, signed in 2005 and worth some US\$19 million, is expected to support the establishment of 10,000 community-based schools for up to 500,000 girls in villages with no formal schools over a two-year period. Currently, six NGOs²¹³ are working in partnership with the US Fund for UNICEF to keep the issue of girls’ education in Afghanistan alive in the minds. These groups have come together in an informal alliance pledging to assist UNICEF in addressing the issue of girls’ education in the reconstruction of education in Afghanistan. But, still, a lot of efforts should be put into building schools for girls in remote areas.

SRI LANKA

Sri Lanka has long been held up as a good example of 'over-achievement' in girls' education. A gender parity index of 0.96 in 1999 supports the claim that boys and girls have equal access to school. However, the disaggregated picture is complex and not so clearly positive. In the NEP of the country, it is estimated that one third of school-aged children have dropped out or have never attended school²¹⁴. Currently, approximately 50,000 school-aged children in the north-east are estimated to be absent from school, and four times the national average of students (15%) drop out from school. Although the Sri Lankan government has very strong commitment to the MDGs, their attitude towards reaching the goal for the Tamil population of the NEP has been ambiguous.

According to M. Sibbons, *"it is possible to draw parallels between this marginalization of NEP needs and the argument that providing activities specifically to address 'women's issues' simply marginalizes these problems to special units with no real funding and poor resources. Here, the provision of a couple of specific activities for the NEP permits their problems to be relegated to a special unit or a special team poorly resourced and funded by government"*²¹⁵.

Commitment to the marginalised groups, such as Tamil girls in NEP, is marginal and should be addressed by humanitarian organizations. UNICEF is currently supporting the government to build schools that have been destroyed by the tsunami. Therefore, UNICEF's education response should influence government's choices so that more child-friendly and gender-sensitive schools are built in NEP with a view to reducing the geographical disparities prior to the tsunami.

PAKISTAN

Home to almost 84 million people, comprising 55 per cent of the total population of the country, *"Punjab has better education indicators than Pakistan's other three provinces, with an overall literacy rate of over 55 per cent"*²¹⁶. But there is still a long way to go in improving access to education in the province since *"out of a total school-age population of 11.23 million, over two million children do not attend school"*²¹⁷. The physical condition of many schools is one of the barriers to high

attendance. *“Out of more than 50,000 public-sector primary schools in the province of Punjab – with about 4.5 million students – some 8 per cent have no building, while thousands more are without drinking water, electricity and toilets”²¹⁸.*

Opening schools and mobilizing the community with Oxfam’s support, the Makhi Welfare Organisation (MWO) opened schools in seven villages and started classes in September 2000 in the remote desert area of Makhi and Achhro Thar in Sanghar District in Pakistan. At the end of 2003, the total enrolment was 274, of whom 168 were girls in an area where female literacy is a shocking 0.3 per cent.

In Pakistan’s NWFP, the students of Pitao Banda Primary Feeder School are among the trailblazers for girls’ primary education in the remote hamlets that are scattered throughout the foothills of the Hindu Kush. Many of the villages in the province are not easily accessible. However, *“UNICEF is assisting 21 existing community schools and has helped to establish another 28 primary schools for girls in these remote areas”²¹⁹.* On 8 October 2005, an earthquake struck northern Pakistan and affected large tracts of Pakistan administered Kashmir and the NWFP. The latest estimates indicate that 10,000 schools have been damaged or destroyed. Schools have resumed their activities in the open-air, but continuation of the activities would seem to be impossible in the harsh winter season. Therefore, there is an urgent need to support the efforts of the government of Pakistan and other actors in rehabilitating and/or constructing schools. The earthquake should be an opportunity to raise the profile of education and reconstruct more schools for girls in order to increase enrolment, particularly in NWFP, where the rates were very low.

2. Water and sanitation systems in schools

In addition to social, cultural and economic barriers, the poor water and sanitation systems are a strong disincentive to girls’ attendance at school in many countries in South Asia. While rebuilding and rehabilitating schools affected by emergencies, experts have stressed the need to improve the water and sanitation system.

Toilets come up repeatedly in the literature as a particularly dangerous area of schools because there is no privacy. The rudimentary – or even half-destroyed – school buildings, with inadequate toilets and washing facilities, are a contributing factor in the low levels of girls’ enrolment. Toilet areas are perceived to pose personal threats not only to girls but also to female teachers whose recruitment and

retention is sometimes hampered by the lack of toilets. Especially during menstruation, such environments are particularly hostile to girls and women teachers and can be a cause of absenteeism and eventual dropout. Where latrines are not available, teachers and girls seeking privacy must go far from the school to defecate. This results in girls being exposed to a greater risk of harassment and sexual assault. However, in a study of gender violence in South Africa²²⁰, Brookes found that when teachers supervise the toilets that were constructed a great distance from the school, the incidence of gender violence decreased.

Privacy holds an importance for children, even in a situation of emergency. It becomes evident that in the process of reconstruction after an emergency, improvement of sanitation in schools and provision of separate latrines for girls should be prioritized. The involvement of women and girls in water and sanitation projects is crucial in obtaining successful results. By involving gender specialists and engaging adolescent girls in water and sanitation initiatives, governments, UN agencies, NGOs and local communities are working toward creating policy-making systems that address the

priorities, needs and concerns of girls and encourage gender equality through sustainable development policy-making.

In emergencies, although reconstruction of schools is part of the solution to accelerate girls' enrolment, this is not sufficient. Other initiatives should be supported. Indeed, L. Bird has stressed that *"it is often school construction which becomes the tangible focus for reconstruction whereas, building up the relationships with authorities on what is needed and ensuring that some learning takes place regardless of structures can be more important"*²²¹. Therefore, the positive impact of dialogue with different stakeholders should not be minimized.

F. Communication, Coordination, Monitoring and Evaluation

Emergencies are opportunities to change the attitudes towards girls' education and bring positive changes in this respect. This can be achieved through dialogue with families and communities, wide awareness campaigns based on innovative media, partnership with government and other agencies, advocacy towards donors as well as monitoring and evaluation of education programmes targeting girls.

1. Dialogue with families and communities: key initiators and partners

During and after emergencies, if governments do not often see education as one of the first priorities, clearly communities do. Therefore, awareness campaigns and social mobilization targeting parents and moral authorities and aiming at changing their attitudes are a good way to achieve a higher girls' enrolment. Literacy programmes targeting women are also crucial to meet this goal.

■ **Awareness campaigns targeting parents**

In most countries of South Asia, conservatism is a strong barrier to girls' education. Therefore, it is essential to reassure and convince reluctant parents to send their daughters to school through social mobilization. Reasons for non-enrolment or dropout, regardless of the root cause – whether it is, 'needed at home to help' or 'not able to afford school cost' – are on the whole influenced by parental attitude towards girls. According to parents, girls will get married and be tied down to home and children. Since they will get pregnant or married before completion of school, education is considered as a wasted investment. Moreover, girls cannot face the same hardships as a boy of the same

age to manage school life. Finally, parents believe there are fewer job opportunities for girls as compared with boys.

In Bhutan, traditional attitudes prevail. According to parents interviewed, *"girls will be taken care by husbands or inheritance of family property, while boys have to be educated in order to be a future provider"*²²². In Sri Lanka, it has been reported that girls in Muslim dominated areas have less chance of an education than girls elsewhere on the island. In Afghanistan, family interdiction is also identified as the main factor for girls' non-attendance according to the researchers from Altai Consulting. In Pakistan, beyond opening schools, the MWO's social mobilization and awareness-raising activities convinced village elders of the importance of sending girls to school. One of them admitted: *"We want to educate our girls and are thankful to the MWO because they are making us aware of the importance of female education, and are involving us in the process of setting up schools"*²²³. Further, S. Nizamani, programme coordinator of this organization, described MWO's strategy to gain the villagers' confidence and convince them to send their girls to school: *"The most successful strategy adopted by MWO has been to use arguments from Islamic texts, which state*

*that men and women should be educated*²²⁴.

■ **Mobilization of moral authorities**

In development and emergencies settings, traditional customs and religious beliefs can be another factor preventing girls from attending schools. Some can be tackled in the aftermath of an emergency by promoting dialogue with moral authorities.

This kind of restriction to girls' access to school should be addressed through interactions between agencies and religious authorities. If the prescriptions expressed by religious authorities of the Hindu faith can be a barrier to girls' attendance, then conservative interpretations by those of Islamic faith has also impacted on girls' education.

NEPAL

Girls found it difficult to surmount the taboos which prevent them from going to schools for the days of their menstruation. An article published in the Himalayan Times stated that girls cannot attend classes in the Siddheswor secondary school (Doti district) as they are untouchable during menstruation and cannot enter the school premises, in which is located a temple. *"They are forced to remain absent from school because they could not ignore a long-standing social belief"*²²⁵.

AFGHANISTAN AND PAKISTAN

Afghanistan's policy towards girls under the Taliban illustrates the way religion can be a barrier to girls' empowerment through education. There is evidence that in the post-Taliban era, it is essential to sensitize moral authorities on the relevance of girls' education. Since girls' education is a duty in Islam, imams, mullahs and other religious figures have been identified as key opinion leaders and essential partners to promote school attendance for girls. For that reason, religious and community leaders in Afghanistan and along the border of Pakistan should be engaged in the design of widespread education campaigns that incorporate Islamic teachings to promote education and illustrate the extent to which violence against women is anathema to Islam. Recently, 50,000 religious leaders have taken part in the awareness workshops funded by UNICEF to develop messages and communication plans around issues including girls' education, women's health, HIV/AIDS, immunization, nutrition and the protection of children from abuse and exploitation²²⁶. These initiatives should be scaled up.

■ **Literacy programmes targeting women**

Another way of convincing parents to

send their daughters to school is to implement literacy programmes targeting women.

NEPAL

In Nepal, REgenerated Freirean Literacy through Empowering Community Techniques (REFLECT) has evolved from an innovative literacy programme that blends the theory of Freire with the practice of Participatory Rural Appraisal to a rights-based approach to development. According to one beneficiary of this programme, *“being literate, the women have realized the importance of educating their children, which I think is the major achievement of REFLECT centre and Community Based Centre as well”*²²⁷. Despite important achievements, challenges and barriers still exist. Indeed, the increasing political unrest in Nepal has had an impact on the running of the centres, the functioning of the CBO and the ability of the process to be supported both in terms of funding and logistical support. However, in situations of emergencies, literacy programmes and awareness targeting parents should continue to be supported.

INDIA

In India, residential learning and literacy centres for women and girls by Mahila Samakhya²²⁸ and the residential bridge courses for out-of-school girls by Lok Jumbish have also demonstrated the major gains that can be made in girls’ education by focusing on the larger context of women’s empowerment. Currently, Mahila Samakhya supports 175 Adolescent Girls’ Centres which provide basic literacy and health education to 3,000 adolescents. One positive outcome is that the girls have voluntarily taken up the task of educating small children and ensuring their enrolment in the schools. Even if these programmes have been initiated in development contexts, they can inspire agencies working in emergencies settings.

As women and mothers are seen to be the strongest advocates of girls’ education, a reorientation of project objectives towards strengthening

women’s influence on family decisions would enhance the achievement of any emergency project aiming at improving girls’ enrolment.

M. M Ariyabandu stressed that *“gender concerns experienced in the development context are applicable in the context of disasters – with an added weight”*²²⁹. Therefore, in emergencies, strategies aiming at accelerating girls’ enrolment and retention should include social mobilization and awareness campaigns targeting communities, including moral authorities, and parents, especially women. The involvement of the community will ensure that girls’ education is integrated into community understanding of girls’ rights, and that there are moves towards sustainable action to promote girls’ education.

2. Communication at the local, regional and national level

Strategies of reconstruction for girls’ education are needed. One apparently successful strategy is multi-media campaigns based on innovative methods of communication. Evidence suggests that awareness campaigns on girls’ education at different levels of decision making should be designed in the aftermath of emergencies since awareness is something that cannot be reversed. Widespread multi-media campaigns that utilize television, radio and print could be used to conduct promotion and sensitization campaigns on girls’ education in countries affected by emergencies.

AFGHANISTAN

Recently, a study has demonstrated that by exposing girls and parents to female role models through media and personal visits to schools from professional women, girls’ enrolment could be improved. In March 2005, a national awareness campaign to boost girls’ enrolment was led by the Ministry of Education (MoE) and supported by UNICEF. According to B. Aasen, UNICEF representative in the country, *“the most important thing with this campaign is that the MoE has made a decision to try and make girls’ right to education a priority”*²³⁰.

A communication strategy around girls’ education in Afghanistan has also been designed by Altai Consulting²³¹ for UNICEF. According to Altai Consulting, radio appears a useful media accessible to almost all to raise awareness on girls’ education. In this research, teachers interviewed recommended also radio dramas to promote girls’ education as these seem to be popular within most target groups. Interviews with professional women in various fields could be included in the radio programme. While acknowledging the potential role of radio for raising awareness on girls’ education, other means of communication should nevertheless not be neglected. Although television is not a mass medium in Afghanistan, nevertheless, educational programmes could be broadcast on different channels. In the provinces, BBC and Azadi play an important role whereas in Kabul, Arman and Killid dominate.

The programmes implemented by Aina²³², Afghanistan's largest media NGO, should be supported by donors given their relevance and impact on society. In April 2002, Aina started an important visual education project. Eight mobile units travelled across Afghanistan, screening educational movies – produced in Afghanistan by Afghans – mainly to girls in schools and women's centres. A second phase of the project ran from August 2003 to May 2004 with another eight mobile cinema units. The success of these campaigns has established mobile cinema as a new medium – informal visual education – within post-conflict Afghanistan as it is able to reach populations outside traditional broadcast media.

NEPAL

Since 2002, UNICEF Nepal has been working closely with media. A Welcome to School Campaign was piloted in 2004 in 14 districts benefiting from the Decentralized Action for Children And Women (DACA) programme, especially targeting social inclusion of girls and disadvantaged groups in schools. Media have been strongly mobilized at the national and district level including Education Journalists, Education Pages, Equal Access, Radio Nepal and 14 FM stations in the districts. This partnership with media, which has covered many educational issues, was a key factor in the success of this advocacy campaign. According to S. Tuladhar, programme officer in UNICEF Nepal, *“working closely with media should be part of UNICEF's strategy to increase girls' enrolment”*²³³.

Through all these initiatives, there is evidence that in development settings as well as in emergencies, the potential of the media to address violence in schools and promote girls' enrolment should not be ignored.

3. Partnership with government

A major criticism of donors and NGOs in post-conflict situations is their lack of coordination with government. L. Bird

stated that *“a lack of effective coordination has been highlighted as a major barrier to quality provision of education in post-conflict situations. A harmonized and coordinated approach to educational management and provision is the ideal that sector-wide approaches (SWAs) are supposed to deliver”*²³⁴.

Working with the government for sustainability and coordinating programmes with other humanitarian

agencies is a way to avoid duplication and share good practices. Within a SWAp, the government will need to decide what are its priorities within the education sector. A drive for improving girls' education would be valuable in this respect.

After an emergency, many humanitarian agencies are confronted by a dilemma: how to reconcile the reality of dependency exacerbated by rapid outside intervention with the need to ensure sustainable education for children affected by emergencies after the initial intervention itself. Working

with the system and working to strengthen it is a far more constructive approach than setting up parallel delivery structures. As S. Ndaruhutse stated, *"it is important not to develop a parallel system of aid management devoid of government involvement"*²³⁵. Emergency education responses must, wherever possible, be conducted in partnership with whatever local authorities exist. If a viable government structure exists, it is of greater relevance to support maintenance, capacity building and reconstruction of that system than to develop parallel provisions through NGOs or donor supported projects.

SRI LANKA

The presence of one agency for many years has had a positive impact on the response to educational needs after the 2002 ceasefire and the tsunami in Sri Lanka. *"The continued presence of GTZ in the NEP over several years, and working directly with and in the NEP government education offices, provided them with a network and a knowledge base which has enabled a rapid response to meet the reconstruction needs of the education system, and to address the priority needs for schooling"*²³⁶.

Launched in 2005 after the Tsunami, the Education for Social Cohesion programme advises the national Ministry of Education, the National Education Institute and the Basic Education Department of the North East Province on issues concerning educational policies, in the further qualification of management and professional staff as well as in curricula development. The 'Basic Education for Children in Disadvantaged Areas' programme has also been designed to pay special attention to improving the basic education of war-affected children, dropout children, over-aged children and out-of-school children.

PAKISTAN

In the remote Achhro Thar region of Pakistan, Oxfam is currently coordinating and facilitating the hand-over process, thereby helping Makhi Welfare Organization (MWO) to define its future role. MWO and the community will continue to monitor the schools which will be upgraded to 'branch schools', the first step towards gaining official status. Exams and teachers' salaries will be the responsibility of the GED, and the community has agreed to provide local teachers in addition to those appointed by the government. MWO has also advocated for the opening of girls' schools in the area of Shah Sikandarabad. Recently, the District Education Office has promised to open two girls' schools, though they will have male teachers as there are no literate women in the area who could become teachers.

NEPAL

In Nepal, education programmes for girls and women constituted about one per cent of the total education budget for 2000/01²³⁷. This amount is obviously too small to cover the needs. Since 2004, UNICEF has been supporting the Gender Equity Section (GES) of the MOES, which used to be the Women's Education Section. UNICEF provides technical and financial support to GES and seeks to build and strengthen capacity of this section. UNICEF has also supported GES to tailor a strategy for girls' education. According to S. Tuladhar, working in UNICEF Nepal, many achievements have been critical for improving girls' education. The staff of the MOES, including the lower level staff, have been exposed to gender issues, have conducted orientation workshops and built gender networking groups with various partners at different levels. GES has also established positive discrimination measures for female teachers and has drafted indicators for gender parity. Although these are important achievements, S. Tuladhar has mentioned some problems linked to the high rate of turnover of high level staff, which hampers continuity in the policy. Furthermore, according to SC Norway, "*the MOES is not in a position to internalize the issue. Since the MOES is doing what the donors want and does not have a clear vision of gender equity, it will take some time to speed it up*"²³⁸. The ownership of that kind of programme is therefore essential to ensure MOES' commitment to addressing girls' educational needs.

Agencies should place increased emphasis on emergency preparedness and response, including strengthening the capacity of governments and partners to prepare effectively, and developing joint emergency planning mechanisms. The government must take the lead and provide strong leadership to coordinate the different actors offering assistance. After emergencies, external assistance can meet the needs in the short run only if it is accompanied by an equally strong state effort, which is not suffering from gender blindness. The success of Sri Lanka, the Maldives, Bangladesh and India in recent years in bringing girls to schools in almost equal numbers with boys indicates what public action can achieve. Sinclair has noted that *“there is an 18 to 24 month post-crisis period, during which ideas for an improved education system can take hold before people and institutions become rigid in their approach”*²³⁹. Therefore, in emergencies, the important need is for the national government to accept women’s empowerment, girls’ education and gender equity as a high priority intervention requiring the topmost attention. Only then can external funding be useful in a sustainable way.

4. Advocacy towards donors

In South Asia, there is a need for more resources to consolidate gains in accelerating girls’ education. MDGs cannot be met globally if drastic gains are not made in India, Bangladesh and Pakistan, which have large populations. Sri Lanka and Maldives have demonstrated that it is possible to achieve gender parity and universal primary education participation and completion. However, these countries have been affected by the tsunami and the effects of the armed conflict in Sri Lanka are still tremendous. Afghanistan and Nepal have formidable challenges: remoteness and social and political unrest as well as resource mobilization constraints. Bhutan has a difficult geographical terrain, increasing the need for diversity of approaches. Given the numerous and increasing emergencies South Asia faces, these situations should be opportunities for boosting girls’ enrolment, one of the main barriers to Education For All. This can only be achieved through increasing the funding of education programmes targeting girls.

In emergencies, effective education programmes exist but funding is

inadequate. The Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA)²⁴⁰ was the first international development agency to publish a position paper on its official approach to development assistance for education in emergencies. It is likely that other governments will similarly commit to funding education in emergencies, especially girls' education. The inclusion of education in the UN Consolidated Appeals Process (CAPs) is a great achievement and an illustration of the importance attached to education. However, it is illustrative to review the success of the education appeals. For instance, in Afghanistan, US\$ 67 million was pledged in 2002 although the total appeal for education was US\$ 97 million. Moreover, only half of the amount required to implement a DDR process has been delivered²⁴¹.

There is evidence that some emergency-oriented donors still consider education to be a development activity and, therefore, do not fund education in emergencies. Girls are still overlooked in emergencies even if the World Bank has recently mentioned girls' specific needs in the aftermath of the Asian earthquake. Mainstreaming girls' education in emergencies in financial investment is a key factor in improving girls' education. Evidence also suggests

that external assistance from developed countries can be useful only if it is seen as supplementing national efforts. There is no substitute for national efforts for resource mobilization.

5. Monitoring and evaluation

Programme development is limited by a lack of adequate information. Without information on the target group, it is difficult to plan effectively and conduct objective impact assessment. Although girls are recognized rights-holders, interventions are not always aimed at establishing minimum standards. Therefore, gender-sensitive performance indicators should be integrated in planning, implementing, monitoring and evaluation of emergency programmes. There is a need to assess the most effective means of providing support and education to girls affected by emergencies.

Monitoring activities should be established at the outset of a crisis. Evidence suggests that *“the institutionalization of effective monitoring and evaluation systems put in place at the outset of a project can save considerable time later when there is a need to review and revise programmes in the light of experience”*²⁴². While responding to

girls' educational needs in emergencies, assistance should be conceptualized and delivered within a broader development perspective, assessing girls' specific vulnerabilities, needs and capacities. This is essential to follow up and record the evolution of each situation over a long period.

Most of the educational research undertaken has been donor-supported. Donors usually view such research in a limited perspective, limited in the sense that they are interested in the assessment of projects funded by them. Donors should require reporting not only of positive achievements but also of gaps. The process of implementing a project, evaluating its success, writing up findings and recommendations and disseminating material is necessarily

lengthy, but worthy. In emergencies, there is a need to assess how agencies respond to girls' educational needs, bringing out issues and lessons for practices in emergency preparedness and planning process.

Finally, K. Tomlinson and P. Benefield have suggested that *"a greater collaboration between practitioners, policy-makers and researchers might help to ensure that research that is carried out is accessed, valued and operationalized by greater numbers of stakeholders"*²⁴³. This would facilitate the sharing and dissemination of lessons between agencies which implement education programmes targeting girls so as to define alternative and effective strategies aimed at providing educational opportunities to girls in emergencies.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The concluding section of this paper contains a number of recommendations. Although they mainly relate to the experience of programmes in South Asia, it is hoped that they may promote further reflection amongst agencies seeking to introduce or further develop girls' education in situations of emergencies. These recommendations may be summarized as follows:

Policy

- **Emergencies are opportunities to introduce changes and innovations to the policies and practices that address the shortcomings of the past in the provision of education for girls.** Continued efforts are required to look beyond and ensure equal

access, participation and achievement of both girls and boys in education while responding to an emergency.

- **Education should no longer be excluded from emergency budgets.** Education is most often funded as a development rather than emergency intervention. Donors are reluctant to prioritize education in the initial emergency phase, for fear of long-term commitment. **However, education is an essential stabilizing force in all phases of emergencies, re-establishing a sense of normalcy and structure after destruction and chaos, especially for girls whose vulnerability and needs are higher. That is why education should be**

made the fourth component of emergency assistance (in addition to food and water, shelter and healthcare) and be provided at the outset of an emergency.

- **Evidence suggests that the artificial division between humanitarian and development assistance should be overcome.** When agencies are responding to an emergency, it is essential to have a long-term view since agencies are planning for the future. Disaster risk should be incorporated into development planning.
- Given that the number of disasters increases in South Asia, **it is critical for humanitarian agencies to give up the ‘Dominant Approach’ which deals with disasters only after they happened and adopt the ‘Alternative Perspective’²⁴⁴.** This new approach, advocated by the South Asia network for disaster mitigation Duryog Nivaran, proposes ways of mitigating disasters that would include all aspects of risk reduction, disaster preparedness, immediate relief, rehabilitation and long-term reconstruction. An ounce of prevention is worth more than a pound of care.
- ALNAP and Provention Consortium²⁴⁵ have made some recommendations regarding the centrality of gender analysis in humanitarian response. **Gender-sensitive performance indicators should be integrated in planning, implementing, monitoring and evaluation of emergency programmes,** emphasizing girls’ protection and educational needs.
- In many places, there are concerns that refugees receive a better standard of education through humanitarian agencies than the government-run schooling offered to the local settled population and to IDPs. Here the seeds of conflict may be sown. **Humanitarian agencies should pay more attention to providing educational opportunities for displaced girls and care will need to be taken to avoid inequities in service provision between affected areas and other poor families.**

Advocacy

- There is a need to safeguard the rights of children in all types of disasters and adopt mechanisms to monitor their implementation. This observation leads Plan International

to recommend **the extension of the terms of reference of the UN Special Rapporteur on Children in Armed Conflict to include children in natural disasters.**

- **The needs of girls, as adolescents, affected by emergencies must be placed concretely on the international agenda for coordinated and mainstreamed actions.**

Highlighting the differences between adolescents' experiences and those of younger children need not create a competition for scarce resources but rather should serve as an urgent call to expand the allotment of resources and support so that all children's and adults' rights and needs might be better addressed and ensured.

- **Adopt a proactive stance with regard to donors and governments for the support of girls' participation in situations of emergencies.** Girls' capacities should be assessed at the same time as needs are assessed. It is critical to invest in adolescents' strengths and capacities and build on girls' qualities as active survivors creating solutions for themselves, in addition to society as a whole. Further research is needed to establish clearly the capacities that

must be enhanced and to determine the responses which will not undermine existing capacities. Girls affected by emergencies will one day play a critical role in the rebuilding of their own countries. Not investing on their education will make this crucial task all the more difficult.

- **There is a need to programme from a human-rights-based perspective, as opposed to a needs-based approach, to ensure that human rights are considered as the framework for designing interventions, determining acceptable outcomes and creating legal and social protection for girls.** In this perspective, it is essential to carry out gender-based violence prevalence research in conflict-affected settings to assess girls' needs and capacities. States should also ensure that perpetrators of violence against civilians, particularly sexual violence against children and women and the recruitment into armed groups, are prosecuted.
- **All children associated with armed groups have a right to be supported, not just those actively engaged in hostilities or those who have been using weapons.** This includes girls

recruited for sexual purposes and/or forced marriage. In the processes designed to help children leave armed groups, a special pool of funding should be established to meet girls' specific needs during demobilization and reintegration. Since few girls are part of a DDR process, other specialized programmes need to be developed to redress this discrimination. Eventually, there must be a clear distinction between the short-term, military component of the DDR process (disarmament and demobilization) and the long-term, civilian component (reintegration) and those who implement them. Children must have access to education, as this can act as a form of prevention for recruitment and for preserving their integrity.

Research, Dissemination and Evaluation

- **There is a need to learn from and scale up the successes in local contexts. This can be achieved through a close cooperation between practitioners, policy-makers and researchers.** Issues and guidelines for good practices need to be developed and adapted for field-based practitioners, encouraging a culture of learning.
- There is a danger that initiatives will be repeated without an assessment of whether or not they achieved their intended aims, and whether they have had unintended impacts. **There is a need for implementing agencies to evaluate and measure the impact of their interventions, in order to identify what works and what impact – unexpected and negative or otherwise - their activities have.** Systems of monitoring and evaluation should be established at the outset of any educational programme, based on gender indicators.

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