

Chapter **12**

NON-FORMAL EDUCATION

SECTION

3

ACCESS AND INCLUSION



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MAIN OBJECTIVES

- To provide emergency-affected out-of-school children, youth and adults with educational activities that meet their needs and interests.
- To supplement formal schooling of emergency-affected children and youth with subjects relevant to their protection, well-being and psychosocial needs.

CONTEXT AND CHALLENGES

DEFINITION OF NON-FORMAL EDUCATION

“Any organized and sustained educational activities that do not correspond exactly to the definition of formal education. Non-formal education may therefore take place both within and outside educational institutions, and cater to persons of all ages. Depending on country contexts, it may cover educational programmes to impart adult literacy, basic education for out-of-school children, life-skills, work-skills, and general culture. Non-formal education programmes do not necessarily follow the ‘ladder’ system, and may have differing durations, and may or may not confer certification of the learning achieved.”

Source: UNESCO (1997: 41).

In many countries that are affected by emergencies or facing the task of early reconstruction, the formal school system does not have the capacity to enrol all of the country’s children and youth and/or children are not able to take advantage of it. Parents and children as well as teachers and educational authorities tend to seek rapid restoration of formal schooling to avoid losing a year of school studies. The possibilities of non-formal education may be overseen or underestimated, resulting in denied educational opportunities for children and youth who cannot enrol in formal education. Non-formal educational activities give out-of-school children and youth access to structured learning, reinforce their self-esteem and help them find ways to contribute to their communities. In some cases, these activities may serve as a ‘bridge’ to help out-of-school children and youth improve their academic skills

to the point where they can re-enter the formal school system. In emergencies, however, national organizations that already undertake non-formal education may be interrupted by lack of core and stable funding to cope with a greatly expanded scale of operations. Such funding should therefore be sought and also included in project budgets. Non-formal education activities are frequently affected and curtailed during periods of conflict and insecurity and their organization is not necessarily easier than organization of formal schooling.

Non-formal educational activities can take the form of literacy and numeracy classes, cultural activities such as music, dance or drama, sports practices and teams, education regarding child rights or more subject-specific learning. Depending on the provider and the context, non-formal education may also include so-called accelerated learning programmes aimed at getting youth and children who have missed years of schooling back into the formal education system.

ACCELERATED LEARNING PROGRAMMES

Most accelerated learning programmes (ALP) are 'catch up' initiatives to assist older children/youth, who have missed years of schooling, to complete their basic education and to obtain educational qualifications in a relatively short period of time. For example, an ALP can be a three-year programme that condenses six years of primary schooling. Planned in partnership with educational authorities and covering essential elements of the official curriculum, a programme attempts to cover rapidly education content spanning years of missed schooling. In reality, accelerated learning is difficult to achieve, and will only become possible when effective teaching and learning methods are a strong focus. At the end of the 'catch-up' period, students are integrated into a regular classroom. Specific target populations can include displaced children, girls, or child soldiers. As these children have missed significant portions of schooling, reintegration into formal school is a strong support to demobilization.

Source: NRC (2005: 56); Nicolai (2003: 40).

(See also the 'Tools and resources', section 3, 'Key considerations of accelerated learning programmes'.)

For adolescents in particular, non-formal educational activities may greatly expand their opportunities for learning. Non-formal courses, workshops or vocational training are likely to be in high demand amongst refugees and IDPs who lack other employment opportunities. In situations of conflict, many adolescents will have missed years of formal schooling and may not want or have the time to attend primary classes with younger children. As a consequence, they may drop out of the educational system completely if other options do not exist. Some may want to enter the formal school system but may be prevented from joining because of space constraints or due to legal age restrictions. Adolescents who do not have readily available and accessible educational options are much more vulnerable to dangerous situations, such as recruitment to armed militias, engagement in illegal activities and involvement in unsafe income-generating activities. Non-formal education therefore serves as a positive alternative, and can often be a vital protection strategy.

Even in acute emergencies, in secure camp situations, non-formal education activities can be organized quickly to provide children with positive ways to spend their time until other, more formal, options are put into place. However, co-ordination is vital as non-formal education activities are often organized by a variety of education providers, as well as organizations supporting health programmes, income-generation projects, etc.

Non-formal education may also be a critical supplement for students enrolled in formal schools. In emergency situations, formal school curricula often cover core subjects only or certain topics critical to survival in their new environment. The short length of school days in most early emergency situations makes it difficult to add more subjects to the curriculum. An alternative that can reach some of the students is to offer extracurricular non-formal learning activities. In conflict, or after a natural disaster, non-formal education activities may need to be focused on specific subjects, such as environmental education, landmine awareness, peace education and conflict resolution, reproductive health, hygiene, disease prevention (such as cholera), HIV/AIDS awareness and prevention, psychosocial awareness, and human rights. The case study below gives a good example of specific issues caused or exacerbated by a natural disaster which non-formal education programmes could be used to address.

These themes can be explored through non-formal courses to further students' understanding and to provide them with accepting social environments in which to discuss these issues. Many children who attend school will not participate in non-formal courses, however, due to other commitments, parental concerns about security, etc., and will therefore miss out on life-saving messages. When possible, therefore, these topics should also be included in the formal school programmes.

For returnees and non-migrants, the reconstruction of homes, rehabilitation of fields, etc. may mean that people have little time for non-formal education. This is especially the case if people have to travel long distances to attend courses or workshops. Organizations that provide non-formal education and accelerated learning programmes during protracted emergencies and reconstruction may focus their efforts in only a few locations, leaving many areas uncovered; and co-ordination can be problematic. Although the community may prefer that teacher training and education efforts be directed to re-opening schools, attempts should be made to emphasize the importance of a combination of formal and non-formal educational programmes.

When designing non-formal educational activities, it is important not to overlook or underestimate learner concerns or needs. Some may be unrealistic, but none are unimportant. Learners should know that their concerns have been heard and that their ideas have been incorporated as far as is possible. Quality education is partly a result of gaining buy-in, trust, and participation/ownership from learners.

SUGGESTED STRATEGIES

Whilst school enrolment and the provision of free and compulsory quality education for all will be a priority for educational authorities and providers, non-formal education should be considered a way to complement and strengthen these efforts. Non-formal education is easily organized in refugee and sometimes also in IDP camps since travel distances for government and agency staff are relatively small, and NGOs are often present. Outside camps, the provision and co-ordination of non-formal education may prove to be more difficult. In early reconstruction, funding and expertise may be sought to rebuild the education ministry's programme for non-formal education. When possible, the use of non-formal educational tools such as radio may be considered for maximum outreach. Some key strategies for exhausting the opportunities of non-formal education are noted below.



Summary of suggested strategies

Non-formal education

1. **Prepare a framework for non-formal education, according to the phase of emergency. At the early reconstruction phase, prepare a national plan of action.**
2. **Provide guidance to civil-society organizations on the conduct of non-formal education programmes.**
3. **In the immediate aftermath of an emergency, education providers should consider establishing organized sports and recreational activities.**
4. **When setting up non-formal education activities, education providers should consult with children, youth, parents and community groups.**
5. **Education providers should consider enriching formal schooling with non-formal activities.**
6. **Education providers should develop a plan for raising interest in, and pilot testing, the proposed non-formal education activities.**
7. **Education providers should develop a system of monitoring and feedback.**

Guidance notes

1. Prepare a framework for non-formal education, according to the phase of emergency. At the early reconstruction phase, prepare a national plan of action.

Consider the following when designing non-formal education activities:

- According to the educational needs assessment (see the *Guidebook*, *Chapter 4*, 'Education for all in emergencies and reconstruction' and *Chapter 28*, 'Assessment of needs and resources'), how many children and young people are not in school? Based on the current situation and past approaches, assess the demand for non-formal education for adults.

(See the 'Tools and resources' section of this chapter for possible non-formal education activities.)

- Consider a range of activities, from radio programmes to short thematic courses, literacy courses and accelerated learning courses.
- Consider linking non-formal education with sports, recreation and cultural activities.
- Liaise with other ministries that provide non-formal education and training (youth, sport, culture, health, labour, agriculture, etc.).
- Develop a programme for the training of trainers and teachers for non-formal education and youth outreach.
- Address issues of certification for students and teachers.
- Address issues of payment for teachers working full time, part time or occasionally in non-formal education.
- Develop a strategy for involving civil society in providing non-formal education, for piloting and evaluating innovative programmes such as community learning centres, for the use of radio and other communication technologies, etc.
- Are there experienced non-governmental organizations that can manage/ implement the selected non-formal education activities?
 - Consult with United Nations organizations and NGOs (international and national) that are present in the country.
 - If the desired experience is not already present, solicit assistance from UNESCO or UNICEF to locate experienced organizations.



ACCELERATED LEARNING PROGRAMMES: CREPS IN SIERRA LEONE

The Complementary Rapid Education Program for Primary Schools (CREPS) was set up in May 2000 by the Government of Sierra Leone's Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MEST) with support from UNICEF and the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) as an accelerated learning programme. It was designed to target children between the ages of 10-16, who had been unable to complete their education during the conflict either because of involvement with fighting factions or due to school closures or displacement. It was estimated that 500,000 children were eligible. CREPS condenses the regular 6 years of primary schooling into 3 years, after which the children are able to mainstream into the formal school system. Classes are held in primary schools usually in the afternoons when the buildings are not being used or in temporary shelters. Teachers are trained specifically to deliver the CREPS programme and are supported with ongoing training. All learning materials are provided, children do not have to pay fees to attend classes and uniforms are not compulsory. The programme is functioning in 185 centres across the country, and enrolment in March 2004 was 26,646. Demand for the CREPS programme continues to be growing but expansion is being stymied by the government's inability to pay the salaries of the recruited teachers.

Source: UNICEF (2005).

(For additional information on accelerated learning programmes, see the 'Tools and resources' section of this chapter.)

- Who will teach or support the activities?
 - If non-governmental implementing partners are used, how will they be selected?
 - How will teachers/facilitators be identified? (See also the *Guidebook*, Chapter 15, 'Identification, selection and recruitment of teachers and education workers'.)
 - Are special qualifications needed?
 - How much training will teachers need? Who will conduct the training?
 - Will teachers be compensated? Who will pay them? (See also the *Guidebook*, Chapter 16, 'Teacher motivation, compensation and working conditions'.) How does this relate to previous or current payment schedules for non-formal education in the country concerned (or country of origin of refugees)?
 - Who will support and/or monitor the teaching or programme activities? (See also the *Guidebook*, Chapter 17, 'Measuring and monitoring teachers' impact'.)
- What materials or supplies will be needed for the programme?
 - Adapt existing in-country or international materials to the local environment.
 - Develop new material only when satisfied that appropriate models do not exist elsewhere.
- Is funding available? (See also the *Guidebook*, Chapter 35, 'Budget and financial management' and Chapter 37, 'Donor relations and funding mechanisms'.)
- Will the non-formal activities lead to something else? For example,
 - (Re)entry to the formal system?
 - Some type of certificate?
 - Better employment options?
 - Better health, and peace-promoting activities?

NON-FORMAL EDUCATION IN TIMOR-LESTE

The International Rescue Committee (IRC) non-formal education project in the Oecussi district of Timor-Leste "... explored means of mobilizing local resources within schools, youth organizations, and other community groups to increase available education and recreation opportunities. Through an emphasis on a participatory planning process, the activities were community defined and developed in partnership with local organizations. Each initiative undertaken was led by a local group: a children's centre was organized and staffed by the young women's group Grupo Feto FoinSae Enclave Timor; structured sports activities were arranged by the youth group network Juventude Lorico Lifau; and the Oecussi District Education Committee took leadership in district teacher training" .

Source: Nicolai (2004: 81).

2. **Provide guidance to civil society organizations on the conduct of non-formal education programmes.**

The field of non-formal education attracts many organizations that may lack the pedagogical expertise needed for effective programmes. There may also be a clash between organizational modalities and policies that can cause difficulties, on matters such as payments to teachers, arrangements for in-service training, certification, etc. Some elements of good practice are indicated in points 5-9 below.

COMMUNITY LEARNING CENTRES IN THE ASIA-PACIFIC REGION

"In the Asia and Pacific region, Community Learning Centres (CLCs) have emerged as potential grassroots-based institutions for the delivery of literacy, basic and continuing education and other community development activities.

Learning centres are defined in the Asia-Pacific Programme of Education for All training materials . . . as: local institutions outside the formal education system for villagers or urban areas usually set up and managed by local people to provide various learning opportunities for community development and improvement of people's quality of life. Community Learning Centres are for every citizen and are adapted to the needs of all people in the community through active community participation. The CLC is often located in a simple building. Its programmes and functions are flexible and well adapted to the needs of the community in that they cater to the needs of adults as well as young people, and in particular to disadvantaged groups."

The programmes are found in Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, China, India, Indonesia, Iran, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Thailand, Uzbekistan and Viet Nam. CLC activities may include education and training, such as literacy classes, provision of education and skills training activities, promotion of lifelong learning and training of non-formal education personnel. They may also have a function in community information and dissemination of resources, community development, co-ordination and networking between government and NGOs, linking traditional village structures with official administrative structures, etc.

Source: UNESCO (n.d.a).

(For information on how to set up CLCs, see the 'Tools and resources' section of this chapter.)

5. In the immediate aftermath of an emergency, education providers should consider establishing organized sports and recreational activities.

Organized activities will help structure children's time and are a valuable part of their psychosocial healing process and (re-)learning of social and emotional skills. (See also the *Guidebook, Chapter 19, 'Psychosocial support to learners'*.)

- Who can organize sports and arts activities, so that safety, order and supervision are ensured? Can parents be involved?
- Have activities for both boys and girls been considered?
- What supplies are needed?
 - Are they readily available?
 - What can be contributed from parents or the wider community?
 - Can children and youth be engaged in making or collecting the supplies that are needed?
 - Can they be procured locally or can they be accessed quickly through UNICEF?
- Has a system been developed to encourage regular activities and attendance? Who will be responsible for maintaining the schedule?
 - Has a detailed programme been developed in collaboration with the communities, and has the programme been publicized?
 - Are all potential participants able to access the programme? If not, how are barriers to access being overcome?
 - Has a register been developed of who is responsible for running the different activities, and who may be able to provide backup if someone leaves, falls ill, etc.?
 - Has a system been developed by which both facilitators and participants can report if a programme is not running satisfactorily? Who will be responsible for follow-up?

6. When setting up non-formal education activities, education providers should consult with children, youth, parents and community groups.

Consultations should be as inclusive as possible.

- What types of educational activities do people want (see the 'Tools and resources' section for brief descriptions of various non-formal options)? Under which circumstances would they attend?
- What is their educational background?

- What are the reasons that some children and youth are not in school? (See the *Guidebook, Chapter 4, 'Education for all in emergencies and reconstruction'*.)
 - Lack of places in formal schooling?
 - Youth are too old to attend primary school or do not wish to attend?
 - Youth are engaged in income generating activities or have domestic responsibilities?
- At which times can out-of-school children and youth or adults (men, women) participate in non-formal education?
- When can the activities be offered? How frequently will they be offered?
 - Will the proposed times conflict with the schedules of working children and youth?
 - Will there be multiple offerings for different groups, e.g. adolescents, teenage mothers, working youth, etc.?



NON-FORMAL EDUCATION FOR WAR-AFFECTED YOUNG ADULTS IN SIERRA LEONE

The Youth Reintegration and Education for Peace Program sponsored by the United States Agency for International Development Office of Transition Initiatives in Sierra Leone emerged as a nationwide, community-based, non-formal education initiative for ex-combatant and war-affected young adults. The programme consists of five modules based on issues that community focus groups considered 'critical components for building peace in Sierra Leone'.

- **Who am I?:** Module 1 is a course for improving self-awareness, designed to facilitate the movement of youth from a world of warfare to an environment promoting values related to peace.
- **Healing mind, body, and spirit:** Module 2 is a life-skills course designed to enable youth to improve their ability to manage their daily lives, improve their ability to take calculated risks, make sound judgements, communicate effectively, manage their emotions, and solve day-to-day problems.
- **Our environment – what it is, preserving it, conserving it, and using it effectively:** Module 3 is a course aimed at raising participant awareness of the need to reclaim the environmental foundation of Sierra Leone, provide knowledge of ways to prevent/reduce environmental hazards, promote good farming practices, and increase awareness about judicious use of the environment.
- **Health and well-being:** Module 4 provides information on the symptoms and treatment of common local diseases, the medicinal use of local herbs and roots, methods for clean drinking water, prevention, identification and treatment of sexually transmitted diseases (including HIV/AIDS), and maternal and child health.
- **Democracy, good governance and conflict management:** Module 5 focuses on democracy as a form of government, the basic principles of democracy and how they work in action, the causes, costs, and control of corruption, conflict management, and how citizens can contribute to rebuilding Sierra Leone.

Source: Hansen *et al.* (2002: 22-25).

7. **Education providers should consider enriching formal schooling with non-formal activities.**

When considering supplementary non-formal activities for children and youth who are attending formal schools, discuss options with educators, the community, parents, children and youth. (See also the *Guidebook*, *Chapter 21*, 'Health and hygiene education', *Chapter 22*, 'HIV/AIDS preventive education', *Chapter 23*, 'Environmental education', *Chapter 24*, 'Landmine awareness' and *Chapter 25*, 'Education for life skills: peace, human rights and citizenship.') Note that these topics should also be included in formal schooling, since many students may not have time or family permission to participate in non-formal supplementary activities.

- Which subjects are needed?
 - Consult with national organizations of civil society (NGOs, religious groups, labour unions, employer organizations, universities, etc.) to determine needs.
- What resources will be needed to introduce these subjects (teachers, meeting places, materials, etc.)?
 - Consult with UNICEF, UNESCO, UNHCR and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) present in the country to determine what materials already exist.
 - Review existing materials and adapt them to meet the local situation. Obtain input from community members and local educators.
- Work with school directors, education leaders, etc., to make sure that the time for testing the modules, training the teachers, and starting the activities does not interfere with core subject work. Under conditions of severe stress and low salaries, efforts must be made to involve teachers and administrators in new initiatives in a way that minimizes strain and resentment. Resentment is especially likely to occur if programmes are seen as imposed from the outside and interfering with the work of running a school and teaching students.

8. **Education providers should develop a plan for raising interest in and pilot testing the proposed non-formal education activities.**

- What type of 'advertising' will be used?
 - Announcements in formal schools that children can pass on to their families and friends.
 - Support from members of parent-teacher associations or school management committees who will agree to tell other community members about the programme.
 - Announcements through community or religious leaders.

- Consider a pilot test of the project to increase interest among targeted groups.
 - Share draft plans with targeted learners.
 - Revise the project according to the concerns, needs and ideas of the pilot participants and community members.
 - Enlist young people from the potential participant group to help with the evaluation of the pilot project.
 - Enlist the support of programme participants to encourage others to enrol/attend.

9. **Education providers should develop a system of monitoring and feedback.**

- Are the non-formal activities reaching the intended target group of children/youth/adults?
- Do the children/youth/adults that enrol attend throughout the programme?
 - If so, why? If not, why not?
 - What adjustments can be made to the programme to encourage attendance/completion?
- Do the activities achieve their intended impact, such as:
 - Behaviour change (e.g. less aggression and anxiety among children, adoption of specific hygiene practices, etc.)
 - Entry into the formal school system: do children/youth that complete bridging/accelerated learning programmes re-enter formal school? For those that enter, do they start at the intended grade level?
 - Literacy: can children/youth/adults read at a functional level after completion of the programme?
 - Employment ability: do employers seek 'graduates' from these programmes? Do 'graduates' succeed in starting their own businesses?

TOOLS AND RESOURCES

1. Options for non-formal education activities

Organized recreational and sporting activities. These activities can be started early in the acute phase of an emergency and give children and youth a critical opportunity for play and socialization that will aid in their healing processes. While open access to these activities is critical, social tensions must also be kept in mind. Competitive games, if not organized with peace-building in mind, can support, and not defuse, social rivalries in communities. In addition, organizers of sports and recreational activities must make sure to consider the needs of both boys and girls.

UNICEF has pre-packaged recreational kits that can be made available quickly during an emergency. These kits consist of:

- Balls for several types of games.
- Coloured tunics for different teams.
- Chalk and a measuring tape for marking play areas.
- A whistle and scoring slate.

Organized cultural activities including music, art and drama. These activities can have powerful healing effects on children, youth and adults who have experienced the horror of displacement. In addition, vital messages related to peace, awareness of HIV/AIDS or other health issues could be usefully conveyed via these media. This results in increased knowledge of both programme participants and community members who view their work.

Basic literacy/numeracy training: For children, youth and adults who cannot or will not attend formal school, such training may be the only way they will achieve literacy. These programmes can be offered in people's homes or in community facilities, and programme times can be scheduled around the work schedules of participants.

Foreign-language training: Especially in refugee situations where the refugees and the host community speak different languages, language training may help refugees communicate with their surrounding hosts. Learning or improving competency in an international language increases self-esteem and employability, and may be helpful if formal education is resumed. In some instances, learning the language(s) used in the country of asylum may help refugees acquire jobs and, especially for older students, allow them the opportunity to attend secondary school in the host country.

Bridging programmes: The objective of bridging programmes is to enable older students who have missed years of education to (re)enter the formal school system. In general, these programmes are aimed at adolescents (aged 10-17) who study intensively for one year and then take a national examination to enter the school system. The goal is often for these

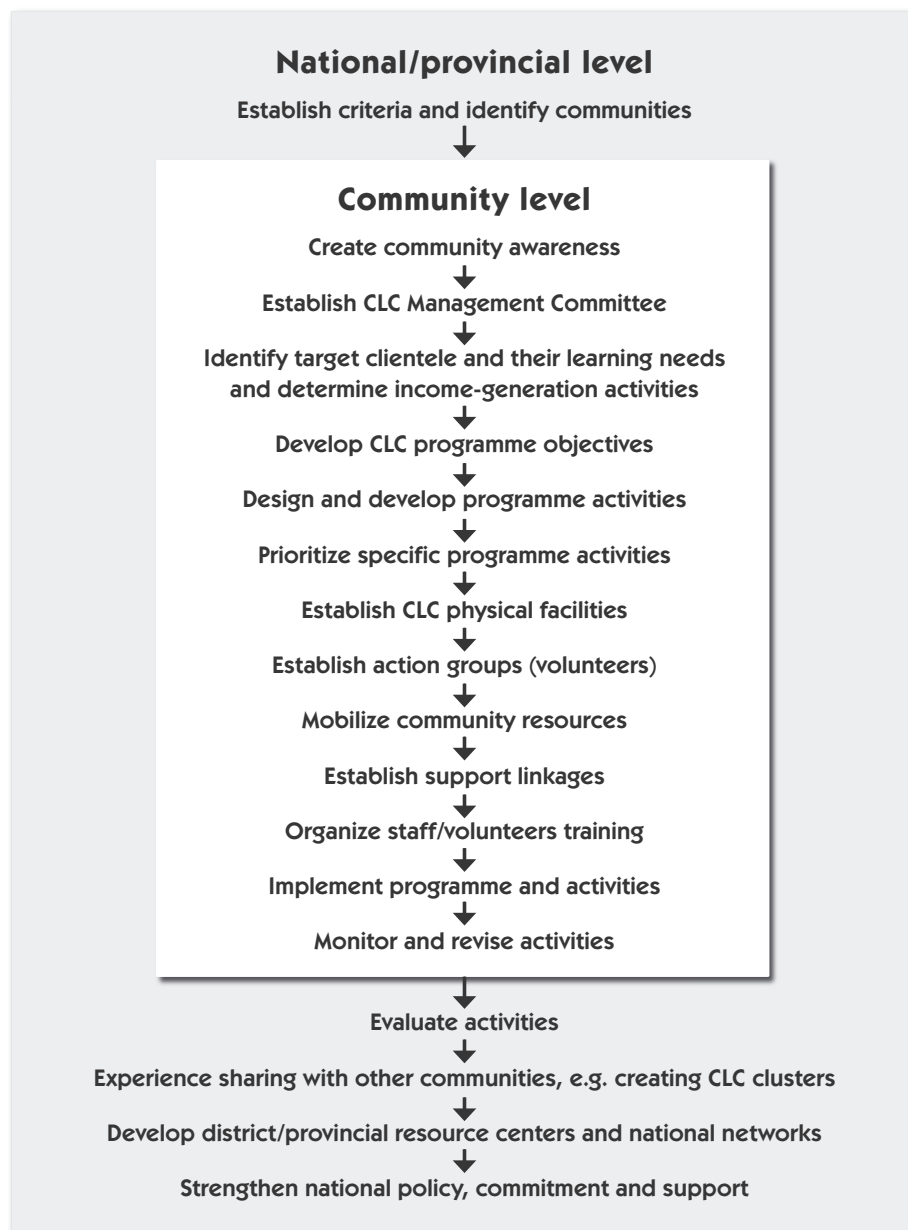
students to begin their formal schooling in grade 2 or 3. Bridging programmes may also be required for students in higher grades who are transferring from one system of education to another.

Accelerated learning programmes: The goal of accelerated learning programmes is to provide educational opportunities to adolescents who have not completed (or started) a primary education. In many post-conflict situations, adolescents have often been denied their right to education. In general, these programmes were developed to enable them to study six years of the standard curriculum in three years. Upon completion of the accelerated learning programme, students should have achieved functional literacy and numeracy and can take an examination in order to (re)enter the formal school system.

Vocational programmes: Non-formal training for emergency-affected programmes can be provided through training centres or, often more effective, sponsored apprenticeships with local craftsmen and businesses. These can be combined with literacy/numeracy and life skills courses where desired. (See the *Guidebook, Chapter 26, 'Vocational education and training'*.)

2. Steps for setting up CLCs and preparing CLC activities

All community learning centres (CLCs) benefit enormously from community involvement. Discussions with the community members precede the establishment of a CLC in order to assess the community's needs. In many cases, local materials and labour are used to build CLCs. In order for a CLC to be self-sustaining, community members are mobilized to establish and manage their centre themselves. Administration of the centre is the responsibility of a management committee, which consists of schoolteachers, retired professionals, community and religious leaders and other community members.



Source: UNESCO (n.d.b).

3. Key considerations for accelerated learning programmes

	KEY CONSIDERATIONS	COMMON ACTIVITIES
ACCELERATED LEARNING PROGRAMMES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With catch-up curriculum, teaching quality is doubly important as there is less time to learn the same amount • Groups targeted are out-of-school for significant periods – this might include child soldiers, girls, or displaced children • Sitting in classrooms with younger children can be a disincentive to attend • To promote integration, where possible, involve other community children 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop curriculum based on approved state content • Train teachers in new curriculum and child-centred teaching pedagogy • Co-ordinate with education ministry so that examinations will be recognized and allow for entry into state system • Monitor children’s progress as they integrate into the state school system

Source: Nicolai (2003: 40).

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CHAPTER **12**



SECTION 3



United Nations
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International
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Planning