

Reimagining Girls' Education

Solutions to Keep Girls Learning in Emergencies

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I. Orientation and Introduction

1. Why focus on girls' learning opportunities during emergencies

Reimagining Girls' Education: Solutions to Keep Girls Learning in Emergencies presents an empirical overview of what works to support learning outcomes for girls in emergencies. Research¹ shows that girls in emergencies are disadvantaged at all stages of education and are more likely to be out-of-school than in non-emergency settings.¹ Girls are also struggling to learn: in fact, it is estimated that **by 2030, one in five girls in crisis-affected countries will not be able to read a simple sentence.**²

This solutions book seeks to highlight promising evidence-based actions in education for decision makers who are designing and implementing interventions to support girls' education in low and

middle-income country humanitarian settings and settings where education has been interrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic. It documents practical examples of approaches that have been or are being tested, and from which lessons can be drawn.

The overarching aim is that this evidence be used to inform programming in crises and support diverse stakeholders in mitigating the impact of emergencies on girls' education.

2. Document organisation

Part II of *Reimagining Girls' Education: Solutions to Keep Girls Learning in Emergencies* has four sections. The first three sections align with the foundational programming principles of education in emergencies. These programming

principles, which promote learning outcomes for girls, have been adapted for use in the COVID-19 pandemic and complement other education-in-emergencies resources (see also Part IV, Complementary Standards and Resources). A fourth section offers real-life examples of programme costs and value for money.

The four sections provide a sequenced package of considerations and promising practices in the planning, design and implementation stages to support the continuity of girls' learning in emergency settings.

Each section provides a concise, user-friendly review of the evidence, along with critical area and essential actions checklists.

i. In 2019, approximately 20% of primary school-age girls in crisis-affected countries were out of school, compared to 16% of primary school-age boys and 3% of girls in non-crisis countries. This worsens as girls age, with 52% of adolescent girls of upper secondary school age in crisis-affected countries out of school, compared with 46% of boys and 29% of girls living in non-crisis contexts.

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1. Promoting gender-responsive and inclusive planning

Section 1 focuses on considerations to ensure equitable and gender-responsive education during the planning of emergency preparedness, response or recovery activities. It also highlights how girls' meaningful participation in planning educational responses can provide opportunities for change.

2. Strengthening gender-responsive distance education provision and learning outcomes

Section 2 examines distance learning modalities and highlights evidence-based programmes, differentiating between no-tech, low-tech and high-tech approaches to promote continuity of learning for girls in emergencies.

This section illustrates how, unless carefully planned, distance education can exacerbate gender inequality and highlights key steps to mitigate this possibility. Section 2 also reveals how a gender-responsive curriculum can address discriminatory gender norms that impede girls' learning and includes approaches to support digital literacy and STEM.

3. Leveraging social protection strategies to reduce financial barriers to ensure that girls remain learning during emergencies and can eventually return to school

Section 3 explores social protection approaches, especially "cash plus" approaches, that address financial and other social barriers and enable girls to continue learning in emergency settings. While the evidence of direct effects on learning is limited, there is evidence that these approaches enable continuation of learning opportunities, a necessary pre-requisite for learning.

4. Understanding programme costs and how to get value-for-money

Section 4 focuses on how information on costs from successful programmes is vital for equitable targeting.

3. How can you make the most of this solutions book?

The solutions book *Reimagining Girls' Education: Solutions to Keep Girls Learning in Emergencies* distills a wide range of evaluation literature evidence into a user-friendly format with accessible summaries of key aspects and drawing on evaluations of past and ongoing successful girls' education in emergencies programmes. It provides a menu of evidence-based solutions to support learning outcomes and continuity of learning for pre-primary, primary, and adolescent-aged girls in a variety of emergency contexts. In essence, this solutions book supports users to identify elements for making decisions that effectively respond to the needs of girls in emergencies and prioritize their learning. The promising practices presented here are not meant to be exhaustive; rather, they are intended as illustrations of what has worked at certain junctures in the education cycle for different groups of girls in diverse low and middle-income emergency contexts. Features that have enabled the success of these interventions are highlighted, and each section provides references to a wide range of sources and guidance materials.

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4. Methodological approach

The methodological approach of *Reimagining Girls' Education: Solutions to Keep Girls Learning in Emergencies* is akin to a rapid evidence review. For each section, we identified a cross-cutting set of dimensions to explore in both grey and peer-reviewed evaluation literature. A range of practices were identified that either provide robust evidence of impact or show promise and innovation. Given that there is always a publication lag with robust evaluation evidence, the authors also consulted UNICEF country offices as well as a reference group of girls' education experts from UN agencies, multilateral and bilateral donors, NGOs and researchers for suggestions of additional promising practices, including emerging practices in the COVID-19 context.

As the evaluation evidence emerges in the coming years from these experiences, the intent is that this solutions book be approached as a living document and periodically updated.

For the purpose of this solutions book, a "promising practice" is defined as a practice that is relevant and effective and has shown either successfully documented impact or evidence of potential for advancing girls' education in emergencies. In documenting promising practice, evidence of impact on girls' learning outcomes is the priority. While not all practices target girls exclusively, all provide evidence of positive impact on girls' education in emergencies. The solutions presented in this solutions book are not comprehensive, but they provide a good sample of initiatives that have shown positive effects on girls' learning outcomes from both low-income and middle-income countries.

Iraqi pupils wearing protective masks walk to school on the first day of the new academic year in the northern city of Mosul, amid the COVID-19 pandemic.



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5. Key terms

The following list of key terms can be used to navigate the three sections of this solutions book.

Key terms	Definitions
Asynchronous teaching	Teaching and learning that happens at different times and in different places (e.g., recording lectures and having students respond on their own time).
Blended learning	When traditional classroom teaching and learning approaches are complemented by self-directed (often remote) learning, where learners can practice and progress at their individual pace, on their own time and in different places.
Cash plus	Interventions that combine cash transfers with one or more types of complementary support. Types of complementary support can consist of (i) components that are provided as integral elements of the cash interventions, such as the provision of additional benefits or in-kind transfers, information or behavioural change communication or psycho-social support, and (ii) components that are external to the intervention but offer explicit linkages and/or referrals to services provided by other sectors.
Cash transfers	A transfer (either regular or one-off) corresponding to the amount of money a household needs to cover, fully or partially, a set of basic and/or recovery needs. The multi-purpose cash can contribute to meeting a Minimum Expenditure Basket (MEB) or other calculation of the amount required to cover basic needs but can also include other one-off or recovery needs. Cash transfers may be unconditional or conditional, i.e. provided on the basis of a household fulfilling certain stipulations, such as ensuring children's school attendance.
Child marriage	Any formal marriage or informal union where one or both of the parties is under 18 years of age.
Disaggregated data	Statistical and qualitative information that is separated and nuanced into multiple dimensions including by sex, age group, geographic location, migratory status, disability, etc.
Distance education	An educational process where all or significant proportions of the teaching is carried out by someone or something physically removed from the learner. Distance education requires structured planning, well-designed courses, special instructional techniques, and organizational and administrative arrangements.
Distance learning	A system and process that connects learners to learning resources. Distance learning can take a variety of forms, but all distance learning is characterized by (1) physical separation between instructor and learner and among learners; and (2) interaction between the learner and the instructor, among learners, and/or between learners and learning resources conducted through one or more communication channels.
Education technology (EdTech)	Technologies that are used in education – in ministries, schools, communities and homes – and includes digital technologies and processes as well as non-digital technologies such as radio and television.
Data-driven gender analysis	The process of using qualitative and quantitative data disaggregated by sex and other factors to identify and understand existing gender disparities as well as gender-biased norms and practices related to access and learning for girls and boys. Data-driven gender analysis provides more disaggregated and nuanced data regarding what is happening and why it is happening. Data analysed through a gender lens provides critical evidence that can be used to inform programme design, implementation, partnerships, monitoring and reporting to accelerate results in gender equality in education. Gender analysis should be integrated into education sector assessments and responses.

5. Key terms (cont.)

Key terms	Definitions
Gender norms	“Rules” and expectations about how men and women should be and act that are learned and internalized early in life, setting up a life-cycle of gender socialization and stereotyping. Some gender norms may serve to enable certain children, based on their gender, to be enrolled in school, attend school regularly, complete their schooling and learn effectively when in school, while other gender norms may serve to hinder or prevent certain children, based on their gender, from ever being enrolled, from attending school regularly if they are enrolled, from completing their schooling and from learning effectively when in school.
Gender-based violence (GBV)	The most pervasive yet least visible human rights violation in the world, it includes physical, sexual, mental or economic harm inflicted on a person because of socially ascribed power imbalances between males and females. GBV also includes the threat of violence, coercion and deprivation of liberty, whether in public or private. In all societies, women and girls have less power than men over their bodies, decisions and resources. Social norms that condone men’s use of violence as a form of discipline and control reinforce gender inequality and perpetuate GBV. Across the globe, women and girls, especially adolescents, face the greatest risk. ³
Gender-responsive	Programmes and policies that acknowledge and consider women’s and men’s specific needs. ⁴ Gender-responsive programming includes two critical processes: 1) identifying gender norms, roles, and relations; and 2) taking actions to reduce the harmful effects of these gender norms, roles, and relations. ⁵
Gender equality	The concept that women and men, girls and boys have equal conditions, treatment and opportunities for realizing their full potential, human rights and dignity and for contributing to (and benefitting from) economic, social, cultural and political development.
Gender equity	The process of being fair to women and men, girls and boys and importantly, the equality of outcomes and results. Gender equity may involve the use of temporary special measures to compensate for historical or systemic bias or discrimination. It refers to differential treatment that is fair and positively addresses a bias or disadvantage that is due to gender roles or norms or differences between the sexes.
Gender neutral	Anything – a concept, an entity, a style of language – that is unassociated with either the female or male gender. Unfortunately, the nature of systemic, embedded or internalized bias is such that what is often perceived as gender neutral is in fact gender blind.

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