ICRC

Framework for Access to Education

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1. Scope and definition

The purpose of this document is to outline how and to what extent the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) will engage in operations and policy in education. Our primary objective is to respond, reactively or preventively, to the disruption of the education sector in situations of conflict and violence by enabling safe access for children, teachers and families.

We see education as a learning process that allows children and adults to acquire skills that allow them to develop socially and professionally. Education allows people to develop their resilience, ability to self-protect and to appreciate human values – all of which are life-long essentials. This applies not only to formal education, but also to non-formal education and informal learning.[1]

While this framework takes into account all types of education and learning, our priority lies in working with the formal education sector. That said, how we respond to education needs in armed conflict and violence is context specific. This includes meeting the specific education needs of individuals, be they staff or affected communities, to develop the skills they need to deliver humanitarian services.

This framework has been developed to respond to the increasing needs of people affected by conflict and violence, and the needs of States and other humanitarian organizations to support efforts to ensure education is part of any humanitarian response. The framework's primary focus is to enable access to education, whether it be formal or less formal. The framework is accompanied by a three-year strategy (2018–2020), which will be updated based on operational experience and analysis.

We recognize the broad value of education for communities affected by conflict and violence and how it helps them to develop sustainable humanitarian solutions and coping mechanisms. It enshrines our commitment – working in partnership with the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement (the Movement) and other organizations – to provide a better future for affected communities.

2. Introduction

2.1. Education as a humanitarian need

Education constitutes a humanitarian need first and foremost because it is manifested as a key concern of children, parents and communities in humanitarian situations. A report by Save the Children, which analysed 16 studies reflecting the voices of 8,749 children, revealed that "99% of children in crisis situations see education as a priority".[2] The study also takes into

[1] Formal education is institutionalized, intentional and planned through public organizations and recognized private bodies, while non-formal education is an addition, alternative and/or complement to formal education. Informal learning takes place on a daily basis through our interaction with our environment, outside formal learning settings.

[2] See Save the Children, *What do Children Want in Times of Emergency and Crisis?*, June 2015, pp. 1 and 16, available at: http://www.savethechildren.org/atf/cf/%7B9def2ebe-10ae-432c-9bd0-df91d2eba74a%7D/WHAT_DO_CHILDREN_WANT1.PDF, all web addresses accessed March 2018.

account the voices of parents, caregivers and communities in various situations, which also reflect the understanding of education as a priority, alongside food, shelter and water.[3]

Access to and provision of education is also recognized as a humanitarian need because of its life-sustaining and protective role for children and young people in crises.[4] Not only does education have a transformative impact on children, it also provides a safe learning environment. Children have the opportunity to learn how to contribute to the protection and well-being of their own communities, especially in the face of conflict and violence. Education provides a sense of normality, which is essential for children who have had traumatic experiences, live in unstable situations, such as protracted conflict, or have been displaced.

Humanitarian action is not simply about helping people to survive, it is also about helping people to live with dignity. People facing conflict require both emergency assistance and humanitarian interventions that enable them to live with dignity in relative safety, and this includes people who are on the move as a result of conflict. Education is essential in providing communities with the necessary skills to develop resilience and coping mechanisms to sustain their lives and livelihoods.[5]

In development terms, education contributes significantly to increasing people's income,[6] and it plays an instrumental role in lifting entire societies out of poverty.[7] The education of women and girls, specifically, is linked to substantially lower rates of child mortality.[8] However, despite these recognized benefits, development initiatives have almost completely failed to address the critical nature of education in emergency settings.

Some analytical data[9] demonstrate the critical state of education as part of humanitarian action. While the UN's Global Education First Initiative has set a modest 4% target for education funding out of all humanitarian aid, the actual amount sought by the UN

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[3] *Ibid.*, p. 11.

[4] The Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE) *Minimum Standards for Education*, the leading standard-setting document, says "in emergency situations through to recovery, quality education provides physical, psychosocial and cognitive protection that can sustain and save lives" (p. 2), available at: http://toolkit.ineesite.org/toolkit/INEEcms/uploads/1012/INEE_Minimum_Standards_Handbook_2010(HSP)-English_LoRes.pdf.

[5] See Save the Children, *What do Children Want in Times of Emergency and Crisis?*, June 2015, available at: http://www.savethechildren.org/atf/cf/%7B9def2ebe-10ae-432c-9bd0-df91d2eba74a%7D/WHAT_DO_CHILDREN_WANT1.PDF.

[6] "One extra year of schooling increases an individual's earnings by up to 10%." UNESCO, *Education Counts: Towards the Millennium Development Goals*, UNESCO, Paris, 2011, p. 7, available at: http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0019/001902/190214e.pdf.

[7] "171 million people could be lifted out of poverty if all students in low-income countries left school with basic reading skills – equivalent to a 12% cut in world poverty." *Ibid.*, p. 8.

[8] "A child whose mother can read is 50% more likely to live past the age of five, 50% more likely to be immunized, and twice as likely to attend school." International Commission on Financing Global Education Opportunity, *The Learning Generation: Investing in education for a changing world*, International Commission on Financing Global Education Opportunity, p. 99, available at: http://report.educationcommission.org/report/.

[9] This data is derived largely from the Education for All *Global Education Monitoring Report* (UNESCO, 2015), available at: https://en.unesco.org/gem-report/report/2015/education-all-2000-2015-achievements-and-challenges.

Humanitarian Response Plans has been only 2.9%.[10] Between 2000 and 2014, out of the UN's 342 Humanitarian Response Programme appeals, only 15 provided nearly 50% of all education funding.[11] Furthermore, the majority of this funding was spent on sudden-onset natural disasters (such as the Indian Ocean tsunami or Haiti earthquake) and school feeding in Sudan. These figures show how poorly education is covered during humanitarian emergencies, despite the disproportionate impact of conflict on access to education. It was estimated that in 2012, of 121 million children and adolescents worldwide who were out of school, 34 million were living in conflict-affected countries, with half of these children living in sub-Saharan Africa.

The ICRC's operations are shedding light on the myriad ways in which children are harmed and suffer as a result of conflict, and with education at the heart of a child's learning and development, it is attracting field and operational attention.[12] However, while funding for education in emergencies is receiving greater donor attention, support to education services is episodic and not consistent across the humanitarian sector.

2.2. The impact of armed conflict and violence on education

Education is arguably the public service that is least resilient to external shocks and is one of the first to be impacted by conflict and violence. Some 37 million children of primary and lower secondary age are out of school in crisis-affected countries.[13] Displacement is often the cause of a disrupted education, but a disrupted education may also cause people to move. Girls' education is disproportionately affected by conflict; worldwide, in countries affected by conflict, girls are 2.5 times more likely than boys to be out of school.[14]

In 70 countries surveyed between 2005 and 2013, education facilities, students and staff had all been deliberately targeted by armed groups, with a significant pattern of attacks observed in 30 countries.[15] Weapon contamination and unexploded ordnance in school facilities and along school access roads presents another danger, and education providers and students have been threatened, injured or killed in such instances. Moreover, when school infrastructure has been damaged or destroyed, students may go without schooling for extended periods of time. In addition, many education buildings – including those being used for teaching – have

[10] Education also had the lowest response rate from donors, receiving only 36% of the requested funds, compared with an average 60% received for all other sectors (*ibid*.).
[11] Of the 4.3 billion US dollars channelled through the CERF, CHF and ERF mechanisms between 2010 and 2014, just 3% was for education, compared with 25% for the health sector (*ibid*.).
[12] ICRC, *Children in War*, ICRC, Geneva, 2009, available at: http://icrcndresourcecentre.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/icrc_002_4015.pdf.
[13] Overseas Development Institute (ODI), *Education Cannot Wait: Proposing a fund for education in emergencies*, ODI, London, 2016, available at: https://www.odi.org/publications/10405-education-cannot-wait-fund-education-emergencies.
[14] ODI, *Education Cannot Wait*: *Proposing a fund for education in emergencies*, p. 10.
[15] Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack (GCPEA), *Education under Attack 2014*, GCPEA, New York, p. 8, available at: http://www.protectingeducation.org/education-under-attack-2014.

been occupied by the military or otherwise used by State or non-State armed groups in the majority of countries affected by armed conflict over the past decade.[16]

Military use of schools, while not prohibited as such under international humanitarian law (IHL), endangers students and staff. Schools may lose their civilian status and, therefore, face attack as lawful military objectives. Being in close proximity to weapon bearers also puts students – particularly children – at risk of abuse, such as forced recruitment, sexual violence or abduction. At best, the school learning environment may be disrupted by conflict. For example, public schools are often used by local authorities to host displaced people on a temporary basis during conflict simply because there are few sustainable alternatives; the disruption to the learning environment is significant as is the impact on broader human development.

2.3. Legal framework

Humanitarian law does not establish a right to education, but it does, however, contain rules that are aimed at guaranteeing that, in situations of armed conflict, education can continue.[17] Some of these rules specifically envisage a role for the ICRC.[18] Students, education providers and schools are also protected as civilians and civilian objects under IHL.[19]

In particular, the Geneva Conventions (GC) and Additional Protocol I (AP I) specifically address education with regard to the following situations in international armed conflict: all children under 15 orphaned or separated from their families as a result of war (Articles 13 and 24, GC IV), civilian internees, notably children and young people (Articles 94, 108 and 142, GC IV), occupation (Article 50, GC IV), circumstances involving the evacuation of children (Article 78, AP I), and prisoners of war (Articles 38, 72 and 125, GC III).

Additional Protocol II (AP II) obliges parties to a non-international armed conflict – States and non-State armed groups alike – to provide children with a number of fundamental guarantees. They must provide them with the care and aid that they require. In particular, children must receive an education, including religious and moral education, in keeping with the wishes of their parents, or in the absence of parents, of those responsible for their care (Article 4.3(a), AP II).

Under customary international humanitarian law (CIHL), which applies in both international and non-international armed conflict, children affected by armed conflict are entitled to special respect and protection (Rule 135, CIHL), which includes access to education. Generally speaking, treaty rules on the conduct of hostilities mainly correspond to equivalent customary rules.[20]

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[16] GCPEA, *Lessons in War 2015: Military Use of Schools and Universities during Armed Conflict*, GCPEA, New York, 2015, p. 6, available at: http://www.protectingeducation.org/sites/default/files/documents/lessons_in_war_2015.pdf.

[17] Arts 38, 72, 125, GC III; Arts 13, 24, 50, 94, 108 and 142, GC IV; Art. 78, AP I; Art. 4.3(a), AP II; Rules 38, 40 and 135, CIHL.

[18] Art. 125, GC III; Art. 142, GC IV. See also, to a certain extent: Article 3 common to the Geneva Conventions and Art. 18, AP II.

[19] Common Article 3; Arts 48, 49, 50, 52, 53, 57 and 58, AP I; Arts 4, 13 and 16, AP II; 1954 Hague Convention and 1999 Second Protocol; Rules 1–24, CIHL. See also: Rules 38 and 40, CIHL.

[20] See: Common Article 3; Arts 48, 49, 50, 52, 57 and 58, AP I; Arts 4 and 13, AP II; Rules 1–24, CIHL.

Students and staff are presumed to be civilians.[21] Like any other civilians, they are protected from direct attack, unless they directly take part in hostilities,[22] regardless of whether or not a school or other education facility has turned into a military objective. Similarly, schools and other education facilities are presumed to be civilian objects[23] and are, therefore, protected against attack;[24] as with other civilian objects, protection may cease when educational institutions are turned into military objectives.[25] Even in such cases, all feasible precautions would have to be taken when attacking such military objectives in order to avoid, or at least minimize, incidental harm to civilian students and staff and education facilities, and attacks expected to cause excessive incidental harm are prohibited.[26]

Parties to an armed conflict have a general obligation to take all feasible precautions to protect the civilian population and civilian objects under their control against the effects of hostilities.[27] These obligations also apply with respect to schools and other education facilities, and with respect to students and teachers.

In most international treaties, educational institutions are not listed as forming part of cultural property. However, State practice indicates that education buildings in general can be considered as part of cultural property.[28] This implies that special care must be taken in military operations to avoid damage to buildings dedicated to education unless they are military objectives,[29] and that the seizure of or destruction or wilful damage done to buildings dedicated to education is prohibited.[30] In some exceptional cases, education buildings considered of great cultural importance benefit from heightened protection (1954 Hague Convention and 1999 Second Protocol; and AP II).

Additionally, international human rights law protects education, both through the right to education *per se* and by recognizing the importance of education for the realization of other human rights.[31] Regardless of its applicability in situations of armed conflict – which raises difficult legal issues (which are not the subject of this document) – it will always apply in other

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[21] Art. 50, AP I. The presumption mentioned in this article has no customary law equivalent.
[22] Art. 51, AP I; Rule 6, CIHL. See also: N, Melzer, *Interpretive Guidance on the Notion of Direct Participation in Hostilities under International Humanitarian Law*, ICRC, Geneva, 2009.
[23] Art. 52, AP I. The presumption mentioned in this article has no customary law equivalent.
[24] Art. 52, AP I; Rule 7, CIHL.
[25] Art. 52, AP I; Rule 10, CIHL.
[26] Arts 51 and 57, AP I; Rules 11–21, CIHL. See also: Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (1998) (Art. 8(2)(b)(ix) and Art. 8(2)(e)(iv)).
[27] Art. 58, AP I, and Rules 22–24, CIHL. Rule 24 states that in international armed conflict and, arguably, also in non-international armed conflict "each party to the conflict must, to the extent feasible, remove civilian persons and objects under its control from the vicinity of military objectives".
[28] See practice related to Rule 38, CIHL.
[29] Rule 38, CIHL.
[30] Rule 40, CIHL.
[31] See, for example: Art. 1, Convention against Discrimination in Education, Paris, 1960; Art. 26, Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Paris, 1948; Arts 10, 13 and 14, International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, New York, 1966; Arts 28 and 29, Convention on the Rights of the Child, New York, 1989.

situations of violence. The right to education is also enshrined in several international human rights law instruments,[32] and education features prominently in several regional frameworks.[33]

The right to education, like all human rights, imposes three levels of obligations on States: the obligations to respect, protect and fulfil. In other words, States must refrain, and prevent others, from interfering with the enjoyment of the right and adopt appropriate measures towards its full realization. The right to education is an economic, social and cultural right. Unlike civil and political rights, which embody an immediate obligation to respect and ensure all the relevant rights, it is recognized that economic, social and cultural rights cannot always be fully realized in a short period of time.[34]

The general obligation to realize the right to education is a continuous one, which must be discharged through a series of specific obligations of a varying nature. Some of these obligations are immediate, while others are progressive (depending on the aspect of the right).[35] As for the provisions requiring immediate application, States must guarantee that the right to education will be exercised without discrimination of any kind (including with respect to the content of education), and States are obliged to take deliberate, concrete and targeted steps towards the provision of free and compulsory primary education. Secondary education must be generally available and accessible, and higher education must be equally accessible on the basis of capacity.[36]

Importantly, the right to education must be achieved to the maximum of a State's available resources through an effective use of these resources.[37] As a logical corollary, the precise

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[32] Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) (Arts 2 and 26); Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees (1951) (Arts 4 and 22); International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966) (Art. 2); International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966) (Arts 2, 13 and 14); Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (1979) (Art. 10); Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) (Arts 2, 22, 28, 29, 30, 38 and 39); Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006) (Art. 24). See also, some of the non-binding instruments that may be helpful in defining the relevance and scope of the right to education: Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement (1998) (para. 23); UN General Assembly Resolution on the Right to Education in Emergency Situations (2010); Bangkok Rules (Arts 18(b), 38–46); Basic Principles for the Treatment of Prisoners (6); Mandela Rules (77–78).

[33] African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (Art. 17); African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (Arts 11, 3, 12 and 13(2); Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women (Art. 12); African Youth Charter (Arts 13, 15 and 23); African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa (Art. 1(j) and Art. 2(b)); Charter of the Organization of American States (Art. 3(n), Art. 30, Art. 34(h), Arts 47, 48 and 49); American Convention on Human Rights (Art. 12); Additional Protocol to the American Convention on Human Rights in the Area of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (Art. 13, Art. 16 and Art. 6(2)); Additional Protocol 1 to the European Convention on Human Rights (Art. 2); European Social Charter (Art. 17); EU Charter of Fundamental Rights (Art. 14); Arab Charter on Human Rights (Arts 41, 14.6 and 40.4); Covenant on the Rights of the Child in Islam (Art. 12, Art. 2(4)).

[34] For example, Article 2, International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ESCR); ESCR Committee, General Comment No. 3.

[35] ESCR Committee, General Discussion Day: The Right to Education (Arts 13 and 14 of the Covenant), UN doc. E/C.12/1998/SR.49, 2 December 1998, para. 54.

[36] ESCR Committee, General Discussion Day: The Right to Education (Arts 13 and 14 of the Covenant), UN doc. E/C.12/1998/SR.49, 2 December 1998, para. 54, and ESCR Committee, General Comment No. 13.

[37] See footnote above.

application of the right will depend upon the conditions prevailing in a particular State.[38] In any case, however, the State is obliged to strive to ensure the widest possible enjoyment of the right to education under the prevailing circumstances.

3. Education and emergencies: state of play

3.1. Global level

3.1.1. Education as a development activity

Ownership and responsibility for education is primarily assumed by States, and significant support is provided through development mechanisms. Development funding represents over 92% of all external support[39] for education and is framed through the State-centric UN Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) process. Education activities in the development sector are worth more than 1 billion US dollars a year in aid through development institutions. In global policy terms, education is one of the 17 SDGs – a set of negotiated goals and targets which constitute the global framework of reference for the development sector until 2030. The SDGs concern all States, not just States receiving aid. The relationship between humanitarian and development aid is increasingly infusing discussions on the SDGs. Notable organizations in this sector include UNESCO, UNICEF and the Global Partnership for Education.

The ICRC's humanitarian activities and the work of the development sector (including the SDGs) are complementary; the ICRC's objective is to safeguard people's lives and dignity in armed conflict and violence where education and access to it are notably poor. This exclusively humanitarian focus can help inform development goals and processes; initial emergency assistance is then often followed by development activities. This process brings the SDGs closer to humanitarian considerations.

3.1.2. Education in humanitarian settings

Education in emergencies (EiE) emerged in the humanitarian sector more than a decade ago. It recognizes the crucial role that education plays for societies in crisis, and its value for children, young people and their communities. Education is also considered by some to be valuable in countering and preventing violent extremism (see Chapter 7).

EiE programmes focus on providing learning opportunities for all ages. The programmes provide physical, psychosocial and cognitive protection that sustains and saves lives, from the emergency phase to the early recovery phase. The value of this role in emergencies was recognized with the establishment of the Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE) between 2000 and 2001. The INEE went on to develop minimum standards for EiE in 2004, and advocated for the establishment of an Inter-Agency Standing Committee Global Education Cluster, which was endorsed in 2007, to be co-led by UNICEF and Save the

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[38] ESCR Committee, General Discussion Day: The Right to Education (Arts 13 and 14 of the Covenant), UN doc. E/C.12/1998/SR.49, 2 December 1998, para. 54, and ESCR Committee, General Comment No. 13.
[39] Education for All *Global Education Monitoring Report*, UNESCO, 2015, available at: https://en.unesco.org/gem-report/report/2015/education-all-2000-2015-achievements-and-challenges.

Children. Both the ICRC and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (Federation) are observer members of the cluster. The cluster works to uphold education as a basic human right and as a core component of humanitarian response. The creation of the cluster was followed by a UN General Assembly Resolution in 2010, which recognizes the right to education in emergencies.[40]

3.1.3. Research and global advocacy for the protection of education from attack

There has been growing civil society mobilization – in the form of research and advocacy work – around the problem of attacks against students, teachers and education facilities over the past ten years. In 2007, UNESCO issued the first edition of *Education under Attack*, which details prevalence and trends in attacks on schools, teachers and students around the world.[41] *Education under Attack* is published every four years.

In 2010, the Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack (GCPEA) was founded to provide a common platform for research and advocacy on the issue. Its steering group includes representatives from UNESCO, UNICEF, UNHCR, Human Rights Watch, Save the Children, the Institute for International Education Scholar Rescue Fund, and Protect Education in Insecurity and Conflict (PEIC), which is a programme of the Qatar-based foundation Education Above All.

The GCPEA took over the publication of *Education under Attack* and has been actively promoting the protection of schools and universities in international forums. In particular, it has worked to influence UN Security Council resolutions by calling for stronger language about attacks on education facilities. It also spearheaded the drafting of the Guidelines for Protecting Schools and Universities from Military Use during Armed Conflict[42] in 2013 – a tool aimed at safeguarding the civilian nature of education facilities. Norway and Argentina then took the lead on the initiative, finalizing the guidelines in 2014 and developing the Safe Schools Declaration, an instrument through which States can endorse and commit to implement the guidelines. The Safe Schools Declaration was launched in May 2015 and, as of May 2017, 64 States had endorsed it.

In multilateral forums, the protection of education from attack has been addressed mainly through the framework of the UN Security Council's children and armed conflict agenda and through the work of the UN Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict. The UN Security Council identified attacks on schools and hospitals as one of the six grave violations against children affected by armed conflict. This grave violation is now monitored by the UN-led Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism.[43]

In 2011, targeted attacks on schools, students and staff that violate international law became a "trigger violation" – recurrent attacks of this kind are grounds for listing parties to a conflict in the annexes of the Secretary-General's annual report on children and armed conflict.[44] The UN Security Council has also increasingly recognized the negative impact of military use of

[40] A/RES/64/290.
[41] See http://en.unesco.org/themes/protecting-attack.
[42] See http://www.protectingeducation.org/draft-lucens-guidelines-protecting-schools-and-universities-military-use-during-armed-conflict.
[43] Security Council Resolution 1612 (2005).
[44] Security Council Resolution 1998 (2011).

education facilities during armed conflict, and it has called on States to take concrete measures to prevent this practice.[45]

3.1.4. The role of non-State armed groups

Non-State armed groups (NSAGs) have a legal responsibility to ensure access to education continues during conflict. Research indicates that at any given time since the Second World War, approximately one-third of NSAGs have provided and enabled education, and half of those who have controlled territory have done so.[46]

The organization Geneva Call is raising awareness with NSAGs about the importance of ensuring access to education and protecting education facilities from attack and military use, in particular with NSAGs that have signed the "Deed of Commitment" on child protection.[47] The issue of education has been included in Geneva Call's training and awareness-raising tools.[48]

Geneva Call is a member of the GCPEA and advocates globally for the protection of education from attack, including to the UN Security Council.

3.1.5. The role of the private sector

The private sector is increasingly playing an important role in what has traditionally been a largely exclusive public service, either by providing education directly or through other forms of educational support. For example, more than 20% of education in Africa[49] and 25% in India[50] is delivered privately (both for profit and not for profit) and this growing trend provides an opportunity to engage with private sector providers. Private education is increasingly filling the gaps left by public education system failures. However, the privatization of education is seen by some as leading to further elitism and a poorer standard of education for the less well-off.

The private sector is becoming increasingly engaged as part of its commitment to corporate social responsibility and to philanthropic endeavours, through innovative financing, new technologies and education delivery. The private sector has been actively contributing to the development of education programmes, and new approaches, including possible Humanitarian Impact Bonds. These initiatives, among others, have focused humanitarian attention on the need to support education in conflict and crises. They offer potentially innovative and exploratory ways of addressing needs in education, ranging from privatization and technology-based solutions to newer forms of funding and partnership working, including with social enterprises.

3.2 International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement

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[45] Security Council Resolutions 2143 (2014) and 2225 (2015).
[46] Background paper for the PEIC/Geneva Call workshop "Education and Armed Non-State Actors: Towards a Comprehensive Agenda" (June 2015).
[47] Geneva Call's "Deeds of Commitments" are tools through which NSAGs can formally undertake to respect a set of norms; 26 NSAGs have signed the "Deed of Commitment" on child protection. It contains a commitment to take concrete measures to ensure access to education and to avoid using schools for military purposes.
[48] See, for example, Geneva Call's booklet "How to protect education in armed conflict".
[49] According to Parthenon-EY.
[50] See, for example, EY and FICCI, *Private Sector's Contribution to K-12 Education in India: Current Impact, Challenges and Way Forward*, March 2014, available at: http://ficci.in/publication.asp?spid=20385.

3.2.1. National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

As part of their auxiliary role, National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (National Societies) carry out a range of activities that help improve access to education and planning for educational continuity in the face of all expected hazards and threats. They work to protect students and staff from death, injury and harm while in school and in other education facilities, and they work to safeguard investments made in the education sector. National Society activities include promoting and supporting public authorities' efforts to integrate community engagement, risk reduction, protection, safety, gender, diversity, inclusion and resilience-related matters into disaster and emergency preparedness, response and recovery policies and practices in the education sector at local, national, regional and international levels.

National Societies also work to develop curriculums and to provide skills- and values-based education in a range of settings, including peer education. The topics they cover range from health, nutrition, water, sanitation and hygiene, shelter, road safety and risk reduction, to migration, international humanitarian law and principles, gender, respect for diversity, intercultural dialogue, social inclusion and violence prevention. These preventive activities, often led by youth volunteers, aim to develop people's knowledge, values and skills so they can, in turn, carry out humanitarian activities and help build peaceful, inclusive and resilient communities. To date, 73 out of the 191 National Societies have reported working in partnership with educational institutions.

3.2.2. International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

The Federation supports National Societies and public authorities to address education-related needs, in both emergency and non-emergency situations. Its work focuses on the most vulnerable groups of people, such as orphans, unaccompanied minors, separated children, displaced people, people living with disabilities, single-parent-headed households, and out-of-school young people. The Federation works with education organizations to design and operate safe spaces, deploys education delegates to the field, and develops global frameworks, strategies and tools, including educational materials and initiatives.[51]

The Federation also promotes and supports integrating inclusive, gender- and diversity-sensitive approaches in the education sector, as well as incorporating and providing skills- and values-based education as part of formal curriculums from the earliest age. It also advocates for globally harmonized, effective and multidisciplinary preparedness and response efforts to education-related matters – in particular with respect to access, continuity, risk reduction, protection and safety – in international and regional forums, including the Movement's statutory meetings and the International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent (the International Conference).[52] The Federation is a member of several global alliances and networks addressing these issues, such as the Global Alliance for Disaster Risk Reduction and Resilience in the Education Sector and the Alliance for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action.

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[51] Materials and initiatives include: toolkits to promote healthy lifestyles and community-based health and first aid (CBHFA); a guide on public awareness and public education for disaster risk reduction (PAPE); a manual and toolkit for youth on a participatory approach for safe shelter and settlements awareness (PASSA); and the Youth as Agents of Behavioural Change (YABC) initiative and toolkit.

[52] See 32nd International Conference pledges: "Strengthening the protection of education during armed conflict" and "Changing minds, saving lives and building resilience through values-based education for all".

3.2.3. International Committee of the Red Cross

The ICRC's role in education has mainly focused on its operational activities in situations of conflict and violence. This has included four main areas: protection dialogue with parties to the conflict; activities developed in at-risk schools and communities; economic or material support to carers and school-aged children; and cross-cutting activities targeting specific vulnerable groups (including detainees, children associated with armed forces, unaccompanied children and children of the missing), building on the first three categories of activity. In recent years, the ICRC has rolled out highly developed programmes in communities in Latin America, many carried out in close collaboration with National Societies, which have had a substantial positive impact on children, young people, families and teachers living in situations of violence.[53]

In 2011, the ICRC made "the impact of conflict and violence on access to education" one of four priorities in its Strategy for Children, which provided much-needed support and leadership for field initiatives and humanitarian diplomacy efforts.

As part of its humanitarian diplomacy efforts, the ICRC has contributed to a wide range of events and policy initiatives on the protection of education in order to share its knowledge of the legal and policy frameworks, as well as the specific characteristics of working in a conflict and how best to achieve an effective humanitarian response. Specifically, the ICRC has provided IHL-related input into the wording about attacks on schools in Security Council resolutions, based on States' requests. The ICRC also provided IHL-related input into the Guidelines for Protecting Schools and Universities from Military Use during Armed Conflict and closely followed the development of the Safe Schools Declaration. Following the adoption of the declaration, the ICRC took part in workshops on the implementation of the guidelines and contributed to implementation tools being developed by the GCPEA.

The ICRC retains a lead role in promoting humanitarian law and values, and supports National Societies to do the same. Between 2001 and 2015, this role was enacted through a structured global education programme, Exploring Humanitarian Law. Working with National Societies, the programme took the values and principles of humanitarian action to young people in schools. This work has been adopted and carried forward by National Societies in 40 countries and has proved very effective in developing social awareness among young people and in sharpening their sense of civic responsibility.

Programmes like this have the additional value of helping prevent children and young people from being affected by conflict or violence, and from getting involved with non-State armed groups. The programme also includes activities aimed at promoting humanitarian values and activism in civil society. The programme is managed by National Societies, together with their education ministries, and it has proved to be effective in building awareness of humanitarian issues among young people.[54]

3.2.4. The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement approach

[53] These include the Creating Humanitarian Spaces programme, and similar initiatives, in Rio de Janeiro, Ciudad Juárez, Medellín, and other urban environments in Latin America.
[54] Although the ICRC no longer takes a lead role, it plays a complementary and supportive role to the work of National Societies and their Federation in developing and extending this outreach to children and young people.

As part of the complementary approach being developed within the Movement, one objective is to ensure a common Movement narrative and approach, shaped by a variety of statutory resolutions and considerations.

In 2017, the Resolution "Education: Related Humanitarian Needs" was adopted by the Council of Delegates of the Movement. This resolution will be consulted on more widely within the Movement with priority areas agreed in preparation for the 33rd International Conference in 2019.

4. Challenges and gaps

It has been a decade since education in emergencies emerged as a sector and a number of challenges and gaps have become evident, all of which need to be taken into account as we work to define a common approach across the Movement.

4.1. Challenge 1: Resources and coverage

There are two main issues with resources and coverage. Firstly, education needs in emergency situations far outstrip the current capacity of governments, the private sector and humanitarian organizations. As a result, millions of children and young people in conflict zones and/or migrants are denied basic access to the pillars of education.[55] Whole communities face short- and long-term negative consequences.

Secondly, the emergency resources that are available tend to reach specific groups of people who are geographically more accessible, such as refugees in camps and students in school feeding programmes in government-controlled areas. This means that whole swathes of people do not have access to education, whether they be close to conflict, displaced in urban areas or on the move.

4.2. Challenge 2: Security threats and access

In armed conflict, education may be disrupted by school infrastructure being destroyed, teachers moving away from the conflict, schools being attacked, or military use of education facilities. Areas controlled by NSAGs and contested front-line areas, in particular, are often off-limits for EiE providers. In other situations of violence, the general security situation also limits and interferes with school attendance. Even when schools are open, violence creates very challenging conditions for students and teachers alike.

4.3. Challenge 3: Duration of education programmes

Two critical elements for effective education are regularity and duration; ideally, children and young people need access to education on a daily basis for at least a decade. Disruption to the education cycle leads to high drop-out rates and undermines efforts to ensure learning outcomes – a cornerstone of society.

To address or mitigate disruption requires EiE providers to make an ongoing operational commitment over a number of years during a recurring or protracted conflict. This commitment is often missing in current humanitarian responses, partly because of the way project funding cycles work and partly because commitment by donors is time specific.

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[55] See http://www.unesco.org/new/en/education/networks/global-networks/aspnet/about-us/strategy/the-four-pillars-of-learning.

4.4. Challenge 4: Lack of support for secondary and tertiary education

In emergency situations, disproportionate priority is given to the education needs of primary-level children, not least because basic numeracy and literacy are needed for them to play a full role in society later in life. Moreover, these skills are essential to continue to higher levels of education. Operational data reflect this and show that secondary and tertiary education is poorly supported in comparison.[56]

4.5. Challenge 5: Urbanization

A significant proportion of refugees and internally displaced people live in cities,[57] a trend that is expected to continue and intensify in the coming decades. The challenge is how to respond to the enormous demand for public education services in megacities for undocumented and marginalized people, especially since the urban exodus means that public education systems are already overburdened and under-resourced.

4.6. Challenge 6: Dialogue with authorities (State and non-State)

Education is something for which authorities tend to have exclusive responsibility and, therefore, they usually have limited dialogue with the humanitarian organizations about it. In times of conflict, the first challenge is getting the authorities, including the State armed forces and non-State armed groups, to agree to a dialogue and build a relationship of confidence with the ICRC on the subject of education. In this way, we can address the following areas: the principle of respect for continuing education during armed violence where possible, non-interference with schools or children, certification of education, transferability of documentation, movement of teachers and curriculum content. Each aspect requires a specific engagement designed to facilitate learning and to ensure that standards are accepted.

4.7. Challenge 7: Politicization

In some situations, education is itself part of the conflict stakes. Parties to a conflict may oppose certain types of education, they may oppose education for certain groups or they may see schools and teachers as a symbol of the power they are fighting against. Sometimes, education programmes and the language of instruction can effectively become an instrument to establish power. As such, any involvement in education in a conflict-affected area may be inextricably linked to particular conflict dynamics, which presents a challenge for the neutrality of humanitarian organizations.

Moreover, education is an issue of focus in strategies aiming at preventing or countering violent extremism (P/CVE). P/CVE is a highly politicized agenda and there is conflicting evidence on the impact of education on terrorism.[58] Integration of P/CVE considerations in education policy are also dividing education actors. Some see value in building learners' resilience to hateful narratives and in strengthening their commitment to non-violence and peace through education, such as UNESCO. Some NGOs see a risk that integrating P/CVE into education

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[56] UNHCR (2016) estimates that, among refugee populations in camps, 50% receive primary education, 22% receive secondary education and 1% receive tertiary education.
[57] UNHCR, *Missing Out: Refugee Education in Crisis*, UNHCR, 2016, available at: http://www.unhcr.org/57d9d01d0.
[58] S. Brockhoff *et al*. "Great Expectations and Hard Times: The (Nontrivial) Impact of Education on Domestic Terrorism", *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 59, October 2015.

policy may shift the purpose of education away from learners' needs and into political motivations, with the additional risk that young people are stigmatized.

5. The ICRC and the difference we make

5.1. Exclusive humanitarian mandate

The value of the ICRC's work in both responding to the needs generated by a disruption to education in armed conflict and violence, and providing that response in a complementary way, is based in large part on our strengths as an organization. Foremost among these is an exclusive focus on the humanitarian needs of the individual affected by conflict or violence, in this case schoolchildren and other persons in need of education, and how to respond to them.

5.2. Access to the authorities and weapon bearers

The ICRC has unique access to State and non-State authorities and weapon bearers. The relationships we build with these groups is clearly of value when working in education inasmuch as it allows us to discuss humanitarian needs in relation to education facilities, students and staff, as well their responsibilities to provide education services. Being in contact with these groups is also essential in reaching people in territories, institutions and locations that are controlled by them, which means we can reach the people who need our help and we can continue to be present for a significant period of time (see 5.3). This also means we are in a position to collect data for monitoring and analysis (see 5.4).

5.3. Proximity to affected people and continuity of presence

The ICRC places a high value on direct access to all affected communities, often where few other organizations have had access before, during or after a period of active conflict or violence. Such access is not only geographical in nature, but may relate to specific groups such as detainees, unaccompanied children, children associated with armed forces and armed groups, and children of missing people. These groups of people and hard-to-reach locations are considered a high priority in terms of education needs precisely because such groups and areas often lack effective public services.

Our engagement is accompanied by a continuity of presence over long periods of time, during which levels of violence ebb and flow, and crises may emerge, transform and fade. This engagement is also based on a knowledge of conflict dynamics and up-to-date humanitarian analysis. This proximity and continuity of presence enables the ICRC to identify and respond to needs, often including the continuity of essential public services over time (see 4.3).

5.4. Humanitarian analysis and focus on conflict and violence

The ICRC's dialogue with State and non-State authorities and weapon bearers, its proximity to affected populations and its capacity to generate a developed analysis of the humanitarian context are the basis for an understanding of priority needs and responses. The inclusion of education in such analysis allows the ICRC to tackle the humanitarian context in terms of the broadest range of identified problems and affected communities. It is through this analysis that the immediate and most urgent needs can be identified and safely responded to (see 4.1 and 4.2).

5.5. Multidisciplinary approach

The ICRC is able to address humanitarian challenges through a wide variety of existing programmes and methodologies. A multidisciplinary approach means we are flexible in how we meet humanitarian needs, responding in ways that are both holistic and consistent with our mandate and mission. A multidisciplinary approach allows us to offer flexibility in the services we offer and a capacity to respond to wide-ranging and newly emerging challenges in situations of conflict and violence. We are often required to employ a combination of different activities to ensure, for example, that not only are school premises physically safe and intact, but that students and staff receive the support they need. This capacity to adapt to new demands is one which is explicitly provided for by the ICRC's structure and response mechanisms, both operationally and in relation to policymaking (see 4.3 and 4.5).

5.6. Building a community of interest

The ICRC has the capacity to convene a broad community of interest in support of humanitarian goals, as has been shown through the Health Care in Danger project. The most immediate entry point is the strength of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement in providing a single and often powerful humanitarian message and programmes in response to needs. This can be expanded through existing networks and groups to include States, peer organizations, academics, the private sector and leaders. These alliances are often effective in determining and achieving wider goals in supporting themes, while working largely independently of each other. Within the education sector, such communities of interest are vital for sharing data, analyses, implementation plans and appropriate allocation of sector resources, as well as optimizing policymaking, operational attention and public engagement in those areas which the ICRC can address from experience, most notably conflict and other violence.

6. Access to education: key axes of engagement

Central to any ICRC engagement is understanding how armed conflict and violence impacts access to education for children and young people; and it is the starting point of our response. Population movement, school occupation, insecurity, damaged school buildings, loss of teachers – together with other factors, such as collapse of livelihoods and consequent economic insecurity – can all contribute to a breakdown of regular school attendance and education delivery. A clear understanding of what this means for children, their families and communities is at the heart of our response. In order to achieve this understanding, we collate and analyse data at each stage of the programme cycle, which originate from either internal assessments or external sources. These data provide the minimum baseline required for operational considerations.

Throughout the programme cycle – from assessment and initial talks with authorities to a full set of multidisciplinary actions – we include prevention activities in our planning. Such activities aim to prevent education from being disrupted and help raise awareness of the challenges and any solutions. Such preventive measures are an integral part of the management function of our delegations.

The four axes of engagement below offer a framework for the ICRC's responses in the field of education by organizing them according to their role in a wider time frame of work. The groups of activities below are interdependent: they may overlap and be carried out simultaneously, but no activity automatically rules out another. It is equally recognized that other programme areas may have an indirect and positive impact on access to education, such as cash grants, better public health and weapons clearance.

Partnerships, both formal and explicit, as well as informal, are recommended wherever possible for effective programme implementation. Framework agreements to be established with global EiE organizations (such as memorandums of understanding) at institutional levels, supported by context-specific context-based agreements, will facilitate this. Such strategic partnership agreements can utilize the strengths of respective authorities and organizations and can clarify the roles of partner organizations and the resources each will bring.

Armed conflict and violence varies in scale, intensity and civilian impact, and education, like other public services, will be more severely disrupted where crises are more protracted or intense; and we need to adapt our response accordingly. For this reason, larger operational delegations tend to be the focus of education programming.

Each axis includes an environment-building component that supports and underpins any wider programme responses. Building a safe environment includes activities aimed at raising awareness among the authorities, parties to a conflict and other weapon bearers about the impact of conflict and violence on education, and about their obligations and role in addressing this. These activities may take the form of bilateral discussions at delegation level, as well as multilateral discussions at regional and global level.

Specifically, the ICRC uses its convening influence to bring together education providers and security and/or military leaders to examine what disruption means in their situations. The process involves analysing lessons learnt and the support that can be offered to mitigate the risks and reduce the negative impacts of disruption (for example, by carrying out preparedness training for teachers). This includes analysing situations where attacks and violence have *not* disrupted education services in order to learn how disruption was mitigated or avoided.

6.1. Axis 1: Immediate and responsive action

Responsive action refers to short-term activities aimed at addressing an emerging situation in which affected people are (potentially) denied safe access to education. It concerns the immediate steps taken at an operational level to put a halt to threats or to overcome other obstacles that prevent access to education. Responsive action is possible because of two distinct advantages: namely, our access to the authorities and weapon bearers (see 5.2) and proximity to affected people (see 5.3). These provide us with the means to launch an immediate response to emerging needs.

The primary concern – both in anticipation of conflict and violence and in response to it – is to ensure that all authorities respect the legal basis and the humanitarian mission for education to continue and they take all measures with their armed forces to ensure the same.

In this axis, a further primary operational activity is an immediate response to the humanitarian challenge involved in accessing education on a daily basis and recording any obstacles to that. In most situations, this requires intervening initially with the national and local authorities, and those of the armed opposition, both military and civilian, to ensure that schools remain safe, open and unoccupied and undamaged, and that people in the territories under their control enjoy access to education services. Securing their understanding of and compliance with the need to safeguard education services, both as a legal priority and as a humanitarian need, is the first step in ensuring safe continuity of education.

Other important parties include local communities, children, young people and their teachers, and other local bodies, such as National Societies, religious bodies and local institutions. The benefit of including these civil society groups early on is their input in validating and deepening the first assessment and, therefore, improving the effectiveness of any subsequent response in meeting the needs of affected people.

The final element of immediate and responsive action is to identify early on any partners who can provide support in improving access to education and/or in delivering education itself, once the security situation allows. Partners nearly always include the authorities, as well as NGOs, National Societies and international organizations. It is also essential to identify individuals who are particularly at risk of losing their access to education when developing longer-term responses, as is explained below.

6.2. Axis 2: Remedial action and programming

Remedial action means restoring and/or ensuring the continuity of education in the longer term, where time is required to assess and plan for a substantive response. Remedial action can include a range of programmes that need different field departments to work together. It is based on the advantages we offer in terms of our exclusive humanitarian analysis and focus on conflict and violence (see 5.4), as well as our multidisciplinary approach (see 5.5) and our access to the authorities and weapon bearers (see 5.2).

Effective education services rely on a combination of different elements, including safe access, secure infrastructure, safe behaviours, stress management, community engagement, professionally qualified teachers, school materials, an accepted and validated curriculum and financial resources. An effective education system harnesses these elements simultaneously and over time. A broad operating model and an unparalleled capacity to negotiate humanitarian space mean the ICRC can address many of these elements through appropriate partnerships and effective education can be assured.

In order to programme our action over time, we need a coordinated assessment of the range and balance of our operations. These include negotiating with the authorities, school rehabilitation, safety measures, safe behaviour training, first-aid training, psychosocial support and training, material support, and other resources. Such activities aim to mitigate the impact of conflict and violence on existing education systems or bridge gaps in access to education. The right measure and mix of activities is context specific and is guided by the goal of ensuring access to education when it is disrupted or put at risk by conflict and violence.

In relation to working with other organizations, specific attention is given to partnerships that secure wider and longer-term sustainable programming in response to education needs. Partnerships cover a wide range of institutions and relationship types. The authorities, be they government ministries and their local branches or the political wings of NSAGs, are key entry points: given their political and legal responsibilities as well as leading on education provision, they are expected to be part of the ICRC's remedial actions and, in particular, to take a leading role in the longer term. Other potential partners include National Societies, NGOs, UN specialized agencies, the private sector, philanthropic bodies, local institutions, development institutions and donor agencies. The nature of these relationships will depend on the context and the mobilizing capacity of the ICRC and the partner, but they are crucial for sustainable interventions.

Partners are not only essential in developing and implementing programmes, but they also have a role in exit strategies by ensuring a smooth transition from an ICRC emergency programme to full ownership by communities and authorities, within a development framework.

This axis of engagement includes efforts not only to facilitate access to education, but, in the case of specific groups of people, to guarantee that they receive education. These include people, especially children and young people, who are deprived of their liberty, internally

displaced, formerly associated with armed forces or armed groups,[59] or whose parents are missing. These groups often have no education services in place to support them, so specific steps are needed to introduce an education service and then guarantee its continuity, which may mean financing its start-up. The ICRC also supports some National Societies in promoting their humanitarian education programmes, where interests overlap.

6.3. Axis 3: Support for or direct provision of education

The third axis relates to the ICRC's role in enabling academic, professional, technical or vocational education, or providing training to local community members to improve their skills with the immediate goal of improving humanitarian outcomes. This training has largely been viewed as a way of developing the professional skills of local people (with external accreditation) in order to support humanitarian services and fulfil the ICRC's operational objectives. However, this development of skills is equally valuable as an end in itself.

This professional or vocational training is often provided to people in affected communities, local and regional professionals, and National Society staff. It can take two interrelated forms:

Capacity-building to *further* develop professional skills – This type of capacity-building is critical to the delivery of our humanitarian operations. This professional development is aimed at a wide range of professionals in the humanitarian, public and private sectors, such as engineers, technicians, nurses, war surgeons, agronomists and veterinarians – some of whom may be members of affected communities. These capacity-building activities may be carried out entirely by the ICRC, or with direct support from or in partnership with accredited third-party education institutions, government bodies, NGOs or private providers. Training programmes may have external certification and accreditation. The ICRC may provide some or all of the financial support to either the institution or the individual.

Developing the skills of affected people – We can develop the skills of affected people through vocational or less formal types of training to enhance their livelihoods and their ability to access essential services. Initiatives include technical training in areas such as agricultural techniques, livestock management, water and sanitation, hygiene practices and veterinary science. This type of training may be carried out by the ICRC or in partnership with local or regional providers.

6.4. Axis 4: Global positioning, environment-building and policy engagement

The ICRC focuses its global policy and diplomacy on highlighting the impact of conflict and violence on continuity of and access to education, including, but not limited to, attacks against education facilities, students and staff. The main aim of this approach is to increase the capacity and visibility of our operational strategies that respond to these challenges.

This broad view looks at access to education as a challenge of protection in international humanitarian law (broader protection of civilians and civilian objects, special protection of children), and as a challenge of support to an essential service that cuts across the humanitarian and development sectors. This wider engagement must be built up gradually and strategically in order to ensure that policy does not run ahead of our operational practice and expertise in this new field. We also need to take into account existing diplomatic efforts and

[59] These may be boys and girls who were involved in hostilities as soldiers, or who were used in supporting roles or for sexual purposes.

mobilization by other parties, in particular existing activities that safeguard education from attack in situations of conflict and violence.

Our global policy and diplomacy should support our operational engagement in the following two ways:

Getting up to speed – We need to quickly build our knowledge and understanding of tools and practices in the field of education. We also need to gain a strong foothold in professional and policy education networks.

Adding our voice – We need to add our voice to discussions in multilateral forums by progressively leveraging our operational experience and our analysis of the impact of conflict and violence on access to education. We must also contribute to existing efforts by others to promote the protection and continuity of education in situations of armed conflict and violence.

Diplomacy efforts will enable us to outline our analysis of the relationship between conflict, violence and education (see 5.1 and 5.3) and promote the importance of supporting (access to) education as a humanitarian concern. The ICRC's specialist knowledge and expertise in situations of conflict and violence gives us a strong advantage as we strengthen existing advocacy efforts, even though we will not lead them.

Critical to this, especially as our operations in education are being stepped up, will be to examine the ICRC's past experiences in facilitating access to essential services in volatile contexts, such as water and habitat, and health care. From those experiences and our understanding of front-line realities, we can distil good practice and identify successful approaches to help inform our discussions and our input in diplomatic forums.

Similarly, we will convene communities from the education and military fields at national, regional and global level (or feed into existing communities of concern) to reflect on their experiences in addressing disruption to education as a consequence of armed conflict or violence. Diplomacy at global level will build on the results of these discussions in order to establish a set of key messages and recommendations specifically focused on ways to improve and secure access to education during armed conflict and violence.

Strategic diplomatic forums include not only those dealing with peace and security issues, such as the UN Security Council and African Union Peace, but also those dealing with the link between humanitarian action, development and the SDGs, such as the UN General Assembly. Public communications, conducted through tailored public engagement strategies, will help position the ICRC globally, and will support bilateral and multilateral dialogue.

7. Risks, limits and possible mitigation

The risks of being involved in access to education are both general and context specific, and they may change in significance throughout the programme cycle. As such, risks need constant monitoring and updating, as do the responses required to mitigate their dangers. An overarching risk, applicable in all contexts, is reputational damage, which can hamper operations in very sudden ways. For the ICRC and the wider Movement, reputation is the key to opening talks and securing access and acceptability in communities around the world.

7.1. The humanitarian sector, education and extremism

In recent years, we have seen growing interest in, campaigns for and development of humanitarian programmes in education. Donors are providing significant additional resources and the sector is rapidly developing expertise in education.

In parallel, and as an argument for increasing activity in education, a broad range of people believe that education, writ large, can be a useful tool in preventing and countering violent extremism (P/CVE). This view has taken hold among a number of donor States and is a powerful motivation for States to substantially increase their funding for education and to seek potential operational partners, including National Societies.

However, P/CVE activities may not be compatible with the Movement's Fundamental Principles (see section 4.7) and for this reason, as a matter of policy, the ICRC does not directly associate itself with any P/CVE activities. We also encourage other members of the Movement to avoid explicit or visible association with any P/CVE programmes.[60] Being aware of and managing these risks requires explicit clarity on what the ICRC does do and its rejection of any such role with all parties as a precondition for action.

7.2. Loss of neutrality and impartiality

Providing education is not only considered a responsibility of the State (or non-State armed group, if it were to have sufficient territorial control to provide education services), but also one of the most effective ways of instilling values, principles and ideologies in generations of children globally. Both the content of education and its direct management by States is structured to convey their values and ideas. By working to improve access to education, the ICRC may be challenged on the basis that education is not neutral and, therefore, the ICRC is seen as reinforcing State structures, values and systems.

As with other aspects of our work, there are unavoidable elements of reinforcing existing structures. The way we have addressed this previously has been to assure all parties concerned that every aspect of our operations aims exclusively to meet humanitarian needs – in this case, access to education. It is a fine balance between responding to needs because we are best placed to do so and doing so with the acceptance of all parties. We need to determine the criteria for action (see Chapter 8) and response at local level with the parties concerned, making sure we take into account the wider impact these activities can have nationally, thematically and regionally.

7.3. Partnerships

Partnerships are important to the implementation process, both operationally and in relation to policy. They can be framed through multi-year agreements to ensure that both access and provision of education targets are met by setting roles and responsibilities formally and explicitly.

If the ICRC's role is to enable access to education, then it falls to other parties to provide the other elements of the education service, such as resources, delivery, quality-assurance and curriculum development. The relationships between these partners are based on a matrix with the authorities taking responsibility or ownership of education, a range of organizations implementing education programmes (such as the UN, NGOs, the private sector or National Societies) and the ICRC enabling access to education. Some of these relationships fall under

[60] Background note and guidance for National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies on preventing and countering violent extremism, ICRC, June 2017, available at: https://www.icrc.org/en/document/guidance-note-national-societies-preventing-and-countering-violent-extremism-approach.

the coordination framework provided by UN structures and the Global Education Cluster in a number of humanitarian contexts.

The question is to what extent do third parties need to endorse or commit to a minimum set of humanitarian values and principles within this matrix of relationships and accountability?

This risk requires partners, as a minimum, to accept the humanitarian basis for the ICRC's response and to acknowledge it, publicly if need be. Likewise, the ICRC needs to accept some of the values and principles implicit in our partners' organizational structures. The corollary to this remains how to ensure that the ICRC's neutrality and impartiality are preserved and that through these partnerships, the ICRC's work is not perceived as violating its own operating model and the Fundamental Principles.

7.4. Fostering not guaranteeing security

The ICRC can play a role in fostering and enabling a safe environment for education to continue during armed conflict and violence, in particular through its dialogue with weapon bearers. An inherent risk exists of inadvertently creating false assurances of security through activities that aim to promote safety in and around schools. We must be careful that communities, authorities and other organizations do not see our involvement as a guarantee of safety and security. On the contrary, our action needs to emphasize security risks and how to mitigate them.

7.5. Reaching out-of-school young people

Many vulnerable children and young people in situations of armed conflict and violence are outside the education system. Activities that only focus on school environments risk missing those young people who are not or no longer in school, whose needs and vulnerabilities also need to be addressed. Examples include girls, disabled people, gang members, those forced into early work or marriage, and detainees (particularly where education in detention is not provided in collaboration with the education authorities). Children and young people may also be deprived of an education due to an absence of a formal education system. In these situations, non-formal and informal education initiatives are a more suitable operational response.

Overall, our programmes need to be balanced to improve access to education while ensuring children, teachers and parents are protected and safe, and that the children we support are not stigmatized.

7.6. Programme duration

Like other essential public services, education is a long-term service, usually with an uninterrupted 12 to 18 years of continuous provision from an early age, and it relies on the existence of and access to schools. It is, therefore, conceivable, as with other operations, that the ICRC will continue to play a role in enhancing access to education for the duration of any conflict or violence. As with other programmes, continuity over time and the criteria against which disengagement can be implemented should be included from the outset. These may change over time, but they are an essential component of early planning.

7.7. Reputation and perception issues

As outlined in sections 4.6 and 4.7, education tends to be the sole responsibility of the authorities, who control what is communicated to children through the curriculum. While many ICRC programmes focus specifically on the vulnerability of civilians affected by conflict,

education programmes are broader in scope and are always value laden, reflecting the political interests of those who retain control and power. When the ICRC interacts with States and non-State armed groups around education, therefore, there is a specific risk relating to the narrative and perception. How we are perceived as an organization relies on political-level engagement with the authorities on both sides of the divide and their acceptance of our role.

8. Criteria for action

The decision to engage in education activities should be based on an assessment of five specific criteria, all of which must be met.

i. An assessed actual or potential problem of humanitarian concern. Using baseline data from internal or external sources and/or analysis of dialogue with the parties concerned, the evidence must demonstrate the risk or gap in relation to access to education as a result of conflict or violence.

ii. The identified humanitarian problem must be linked to either the ICRC's legal mandate, statutory role or humanitarian mission. Operational responses focusing on access to education must be associated with the specificity of ICRC humanitarian action. This is framed through the applicable legal regime and through the humanitarian mission that guides the ICRC in its actions.

iii. The proposed activity must, in coordination or partnership with others, support a measurable impact in relation to both access to and delivery of safe and quality education that is appropriate and adapted to needs. The activity must explicitly include the means to measure change over time, so that its effectiveness and the roles of different partners can be assessed.

iv. Activities envisaged in relation to education must be aligned and consistent with identified areas where we can make a difference (see Chapter 5). This makes it possible to clearly identify areas where we can consider providing our resources and expertise.

v. Local authorities that are critical to the delivery and validation of education programmes (such as education ministries), as well as external organizations (such as NGOs, National Societies, education cluster members) must be involved, where appropriate, to provide coordination and sound response analysis.