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GUIDANCE PAPER

EDUCATION IN EMERGENCIES AND PROTRACTED CRISES

CONCEPTUAL GUIDELINES FOR HELVETAS INTERVENTIONS

Version 1.1



Zürich, 26 Jan 2026

1 WHY DOES HELVETAS ENGAGE IN EDUCATION IN EMERGENCIES?

1.1 HELVETAS' HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE STRATEGY

Helvetas understands that **humanitarian and development assistance are complementary** instruments that serve different but mutually reinforcing goals. In many countries, recurring disasters and crises undermine the conditions under which development can effectively occur. Early and appropriate responses are thus an important means to protect development gains. On the other hand, long-term solutions are required to improve resilience and ultimately contribute to reducing recurrent humanitarian needs.

Education in emergencies is a core field of intervention, with a focus on protracted crisis settings where Helvetas supports conflict-affected persons, usually who are displaced, in accessing basic services, including education.

1.2 HELVETAS' WORK IN EDUCATION

Education is a human right and a key factor of social cohesion and peaceful governance. Helvetas focuses on **flexible and cost-effective education services**, including education alternatives for out-of-school children, the integration of migrants into existing education systems, catch-up of foundational skills in vocational skills development (VSD), and the provision of education in emergency situations. Basic education components are also part of numerous projects in other working fields, for example in skills and migration projects.

1.3 STRATEGIC INTEREST FOR HELVETAS AND ACQUISITION OPPORTUNITIES

The education in emergencies and protracted crises (EiEPC) space presents a growing strategic interest, driven by **rising needs and evolving funding dynamics**. Demand for education support in crisis contexts is outpacing available resources, both within the education sector and across the broader humanitarian funding landscape.

EiEPC has emerged as a **strategic priority** for the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, both in field-level interventions and in global policy engagement. At the same time, Education Cannot Wait (ECW) — the leading global fund for education in emergencies — plays a central role in structuring, coordinating and financing education responses worldwide. ECW allocates multi-million-dollar grants, particularly in contexts where traditional humanitarian donors now dedicate a notable share of their remaining funding to education. In parallel, several development donors are integrating modifier mechanisms to enhance resilience and support education systems during crises.

Geneva has also consolidated its position as an international hub for EiE, hosting the headquarters of ECW, the Geneva Global Hub for Education in Emergencies, and the newly established legal entity of the Global Partnership for Education (GPE). This environment offers significant opportunities for



In Tanzania, teachers have been trained to make the lessons interactive. © Helvetas

partnership development, innovation and access to philanthropic and foundation-based funding, including through platforms such as the Friends of Education.

1.4 HELVETAS' EXPERTISE ON COMPLEMENTARY RESPONSES

1.4.1 Experience with inclusive systems for humanitarian and nexus contexts

Helvetas' work builds on the inclusive systems approach, **viewing education as a system that connects learners, educators and support functions**, even in crisis settings. In emergencies, we aim to maintain system integrity while adapting service delivery to meet urgent needs and lay the groundwork for long-term resilience.

We start by **mapping context-specific actors and functions**, identifying who can provide or finance essential services like teacher recruitment or curriculum adaptation. Flexible delivery models help ensure continuity of learning. Inclusivity is embedded through gender-responsive planning, intersectional design, and psychosocial support for learners and teachers.

Ultimately, we treat EiE as a **systemic investment**: defining exit strategies from the start, ensuring accountability, supporting local actors and promoting sustainable, locally led solutions. Rather than creating parallel structures, we promote a shared vision to support national systems, ensure alignment with local norms, and strengthen coordination between humanitarian and development actors. Interventions should aim to reduce dependency by testing sustainable models for teacher training, digital tools and school services, and scaling what works.

[More information in Annex](#)

1.4.2 Capacity to link education, training, employment and the economy

In emergencies, **alternative accelerated education** is a critical entry point to restore learning and build a **foundation for vocational skills development**, employment and entrepreneurship. Second chance, bridging or catch-up programs equip learners with core skills while enabling long-term pathways for economic resilience and self-reliance. Education responses often overlook youth-specific needs beyond primary education, particularly for mobile learners and adolescent girls and boys.

For example, in Myanmar, our approach includes aligning **non-formal education (NFE) and vocational curricula based on market needs**, introducing career exploration to connect learners with local trades and fostering entrepreneurial mindsets to enable self-employment. Linking funding to results, such as transitions from NFE to VSD or employment, can be effective to strengthen coordination between key actors and ensure sustainability.

[More information in Annex](#)

1.4.3 Merging experience in conflict transformation and peace education

In emergencies, education plays a key role in **promoting peace, inclusion and social cohesion**. Peace education fosters understanding, empathy and nonviolent conflict resolution, while conflict-sensitive approaches ensure that education does not exacerbate existing tensions.

Peace education can be **integrated into curricula and school life** through inclusive activities, storytelling and joint community projects, encouraging respect for diversity and shared values. In our education projects in Myanmar, for example, ethnic inclusion and bridge-building are key elements: Projects build ethnic networks for tutoring or bring together youth from different ethnic groups. the **"Pluralism Toolbox"** provides practical guidance to promote social cohesion across education, civil society and local businesses. Learners develop communication, mediation and decision-making skills, while educators receive training in conflict-sensitive and trauma-informed teaching. In Kyrgyzstan, we strengthened the capacities of youth and adults to engage in constructive public dialogue, with local-level exchanges on religion, democracy and peaceful discourse.

[More information in Annex](#)

1.4.4 Unique know-how to support access to education in mixed migration contexts

While much education support has focused on refugees, IDPs and asylum seekers, this narrow targeting overlooks many vulnerable children within **mixed migration flows** — including those fleeing poverty, trafficking or violence — who often remain invisible in education systems. These children face multiple and overlapping vulnerabilities, particularly when unaccompanied, and are frequently excluded from formal learning opportunities. To ensure equitable access, education responses must go beyond rigid displacement categories and adopt a broader, mobility-aware approach.

Helvetas has piloted **inclusive education strategies** for migrants in West and North Africa, revealing that despite extended stays in transit cities, many children still lack access to education. Education is often the most urgent unmet need, even ahead of food or healthcare.

Bridging the gap requires **addressing both supply and demand** — offering flexible, context-adapted solutions (e.g., accelerated learning, language support) while motivating young migrants to engage in education. We have developed a conceptual framework to analyse and address education barriers at different stages of the migration journey. [More information in Annex](#)

2 CONCEPT CLARIFICATION

2.1 WHAT IS EDUCATION IN EMERGENCIES?

“**Education in emergencies**” refers to the quality learning opportunities for all ages in situations of crisis, including early childhood development, primary, secondary, non-formal, technical, vocational, higher and adult education. Common situations of crisis in which education in emergencies is essential include conflicts, situations of violence, forced displacement, disasters and public health emergencies. It follows the humanitarian principles of humanity, neutrality and impartiality to ensure equitable access.

2.2 WHAT IS EDUCATION IN PROTRACTED CRISES?

Education in **protracted crises** refers to sustained learning opportunities for children, youth and adults in contexts of prolonged instability, where crises extend beyond immediate emergencies. These fragile settings — characterized by protracted displacement, recurring disasters, ongoing conflict or fragile governance — require strategies that bridge humanitarian response and development efforts.

2.3 WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

Education in emergencies is a lifesaving and life-sustaining intervention, protecting children, fostering resilience and supporting recovery. Beyond being a **fundamental right**, it addresses both immediate and long-term needs.



Children in a school in Burkina Faso wash their hands.
© Sawadogo

First, education provides physical, psychosocial and cognitive **protection**. Out-of-school children face heightened risks of violence, exploitation and recruitment into armed groups. Safe learning spaces offer protection, stability and psychosocial support.

Second, education builds **resilience** at the individual and community levels. It helps children cope with crises, equips them with life-saving skills, and fosters future opportunities, breaking cycles of vulnerability.

Third, education is a top **priority** for crisis-affected communities. Studies show that children and families prioritize continuity of education.

2.4 LEARNING MODALITIES

Alternative education	Provides flexible learning pathways outside the formal system to meet the needs of learners who cannot access mainstream schools.
Accelerated education program (AEP)	Designed for learners to complete the equivalent of primary or secondary education in a shorter time frame, allowing them to reintegrate into formal systems or transition to vocational training.
Bridging program	Help learners transition from one education system to another, addressing gaps in curriculum or language differences often faced by displaced populations.
Catch-up program	Tailored to learners who have missed substantial periods of schooling, helping them quickly re-engage with their grade level and peers.
Remedial program	Focused on supporting learners struggling with specific subjects or skills and ensuring academic recovery, particularly for those affected by disruptions or trauma.
Distance education, including online learning	Ensures access to learning when physical attendance is impossible.
Blended/hybrid learning	Blended approaches combine face-to-face and remote learning, leveraging technology while maintaining human interaction, particularly in contexts with limited infrastructure or difficult access.

2.5 OTHER TYPES OF INTERVENTIONS

Cash for education	When existing education services are available, cash distribution can be used to enable families to cover direct and indirect costs of schooling, such as tuition fees, learning materials, transportation and meals.
Rehabilitation of physical infrastructure	Repair, reconstruction or upgrading of damaged or inadequate school buildings to ensure safe, inclusive and resilient learning environments.
WASH in schools	Provision of safe water, sanitation and hygiene facilities to ensure a healthy learning environment. This includes gender-segregated toilets, handwashing stations, menstrual hygiene management facilities and hygiene promotion.
School feeding and nutrition	Combat malnutrition by providing hot meals, take-home rations or cash-based transfers; often linked with local food systems and agricultural support to promote sustainability.

Psycho-social support (PSS) and well-being interventions	Activities are designed to help children, teachers and communities cope with trauma and stress. This includes social and emotional learning, teacher well-being initiatives, peer support networks and referrals to specialized services.
Safe and protective learning environments	Measures to ensure schools remain safe spaces, free from violence and exploitation. This includes conflict-sensitive education, child safeguarding mechanisms, school-based protection programs, and community engagement to reinforce school security.
Teacher professional development and support	Programs to train, mentor and support teachers, ensuring quality instruction, classroom management skills and well-being support.

2.6 ADAPTED INTERVENTIONS

2.6.1 Assessing the crisis context

In **natural disasters and sudden-onset emergencies**, the priority is rapidly restoring access to learning through temporary learning spaces and school rehabilitation, ensuring children return to normal routines as quickly as possible (ideally within three months). Short-term interventions must link to longer-term recovery efforts, with handover plans for national authorities and development partners. In recurrent disaster-prone areas, education interventions should include disaster preparedness and risk reduction.

In **protracted displacement** settings, the focus is on integrating displaced children into national education systems while addressing barriers such as language, legal status and financial constraints. This requires collaboration with protection actors, government and development partners to ensure sustainable solutions. In refugee settings, coordination with UNHCR and local education authorities is essential for ensuring continuity and accreditation.

During **active conflicts**, protecting education is paramount. Schools, students and teachers often become deliberate targets of violence. Conflict-sensitive approaches must be embedded to safeguard learning environments, promote social cohesion and support resilience. When education is at risk of attack, initiatives must be coordinated with protection actors to reinforce safe learning spaces, community engagement and advocacy.

Children and youth in **mixed migration** flows often face invisibility in education systems; they are excluded due to legal status, mobility or a lack of tailored services. Beyond refugees and IDPs, interventions must address all migrant learners, ensuring flexible learning pathways, language support and recognition of prior education. By adapting policies and engaging communities, national systems can become more inclusive, ensuring no learner is left behind.



In West Africa, out of school children on the move have access to alternative education. © Helvetas/Stéphane Brabant

2.6.2 Identifying the target learners

Helvetas' response is guided by **needs and risk analysis**, prioritizing the **most vulnerable** children and youth. We focus on out-of-school learners and those at risk of education disruption, including forcibly displaced children, host communities, returnees and those in fragile or conflict-affected areas. Special attention is given to girls, unaccompanied children, those with disabilities, ethno-linguistic minorities, and socio-economically disadvantaged groups.

Education interventions are tailored to the **age and gender-specific needs** of children and adolescents, ensuring alignment with inclusive, gender-responsive policies. By addressing barriers to learning, Helvetas strives to ensure equitable access for all.

As in Helvetas' other education programs, the **focus is on basic education and vocational skills development** to ensure that crisis-affected learners have both foundational learning opportunities and pathways to employment.



Pasang Lama and his elder brother Mingmar Lama, runs for school class at temporary shelter in Manedanda Talmarang, Nepal. © Narendra Shrestha

2.7 DELIVERING A COORDINATED EDUCATION AND HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE¹

Helvetas' engagement must be **strategic** and **needs-driven**, ensuring **alignment** with local priorities, available resources and identified gaps. This requires a contextual analysis based on joint needs assessments, sector-wide coordination and locally approved priorities.

Helvetas' role should be determined by:

- The scale and nature of the needs, ensuring the intervention addresses critical gaps rather than duplicating existing efforts.
- Locally and nationally available resources, including government capacity, community-led initiatives and existing education services, to ensure complementarity.
- Planned or ongoing external support from donors, multilateral organizations and other humanitarian or development actors, maximizing synergies.
- Helvetas' own organizational resources, capacities and expertise, including financial, technical, and human resources, to contribute meaningfully within the broader education response.
- Helvetas' strategic priorities and added value, leveraging our experience, partnerships and innovative approaches to enhance education access, quality, protection and resilience.

¹ See also below: [Coordination mechanisms](#)

3 HOW DO WE OPERATE?

3.1 CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES

3.1.1 Protection²

Protection, including child protection, is central to all humanitarian responses and must be integrated into education interventions **to ensure safety, dignity and rights** for crisis-affected learners. Crises increase risks of violence, exploitation and abuse, particularly for marginalized children, while unsafe learning environments can expose them to additional harm. Education and child protection work together to prevent, mitigate and respond to risks, ensuring safe learning spaces, psychosocial support and access to essential services.

In Mali, the PROTECT program strengthens child protection by embedding it into governance systems. Local protection services and annual plans were developed at the commune level, while para-jurists and community actors were trained to prevent and respond to violence and rights violations.

3.1.2 Gender³

Gender roles and identities are socially constructed and **influence power dynamics, access to resources and education opportunities**. In emergencies, girls and young women face heightened risks, including school-related gender-based violence (SRGBV), early marriage and restricted access to education. Boys may also face forced recruitment, economic pressure and violence. Gender norms further marginalize LGBTQIA+ learners, exposing them to discrimination, harassment and exclusion. A gender-responsive education response must address barriers, promote equity and ensure safe, inclusive learning environments for all.



In Pakistan, Afghan refugees have access to catch up education through community centers. © Helvetas

² For more guidance, see the resource collection on [Child Protection](#) on the INEE website and the [Minimum Standards for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action](#).

³ See the resource collections on [Gender](#) and [LGBTQIA+](#) on the INEE website.

3.1.3 Disability⁴

Disability results from the interaction between impairments and environmental barriers, limiting equal participation in education. Learners with disabilities face exclusion risks, exacerbated in crises by physical, attitudinal and systemic obstacles to accessing schools and essential services. **Disability-inclusive education** ensures that informational, physical and financial barriers are removed, enabling full and equitable participation for all learners in emergency responses.



In Myanmar, vocational trainees successfully complete on-the-job skill trainings and receive their certificates. © Helvetas

3.1.4 Mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS)⁵

MHPSS promotes **psychosocial wellbeing and resilience** by addressing the emotional, social and cognitive impacts of crises on learners, teachers and communities. Schools provide structured, safe spaces that help reduce stress, foster hope and restore normalcy. A comprehensive MHPSS approach includes meeting basic needs, providing community and family support, offering general mental health and psychosocial activities, as well as making referrals to targeted professional services for those with more severe needs. This requires collaboration between education, protection, and health sectors to ensure holistic support.

In Myanmar's conflict-affected regions, learning centers integrated psychosocial support into non-formal education, combining accelerated learning with mine risk education and community awareness sessions. Tutors received coaching to manage stress and provide emotional support, while safe spaces and risk mitigation plans helped restore normalcy for children and caregivers.

3.1.5 Disaster risk reduction and resilience⁶

DRR and resilience ensure that education systems can withstand and recover from crises, minimizing disruptions to learning. DRR focuses on **reducing risks** through hazard analysis, preparedness and mitigation, while resilience **strengthens individual, community and system capacities** to adapt and respond effectively.

3.1.6 Conflict-sensitive education⁷

Education can be both a driver of peace or a source of tension, depending on how it is delivered. Conflict-sensitive education ensures that education policies and programs do no harm, avoiding exclusion, bias or reinforcement of grievances. It requires understanding the context, analysing education's role in conflict, and adapting interventions to reduce risks and promote inclusion. By integrating conflict sensitivity, education can **foster social cohesion and support peacebuilding** across the humanitarian-development-peace nexus.

⁴ See the resource collection on [Inclusive Education](#) on the INEE website and the [Humanitarian inclusion standards for older people and people with disabilities](#)

⁵ See the resource collection on [MHPSS and SEL](#) on the INEE website.

⁶ See the resource collection on [Risk Reduction and Resilience](#) on the INEE website and the Global Alliance for Disaster Risk Reduction and Resilience (GADRRRES) [Comprehensive School Safety Framework](#).

⁷ See the resource collection on [Conflict Sensitive Education](#) on the INEE website.

In southern Kyrgyzstan, education activities were designed to reduce tensions in ethnically diverse regions by fostering dialogue and inclusion. Youth and educators engaged in participatory forums and community dialogues on religion and democracy, while a new curriculum on self-awareness and personal development promoted critical thinking and informed decision-making.

3.1.7 Climate crisis⁸

The **climate crisis disrupts education** through extreme weather events, infrastructure damage, displacement and economic instability, disproportionately affecting marginalized learners. Education in emergencies (EiE) can mitigate these impacts by integrating crisis-sensitive planning, disaster risk reduction (**DRR**) and climate-resilient infrastructure. **Equipping learners** with environmental knowledge, technical skills and sustainable livelihoods prepares them to adapt to and address climate challenges, making education a key tool for building resilience and climate action.

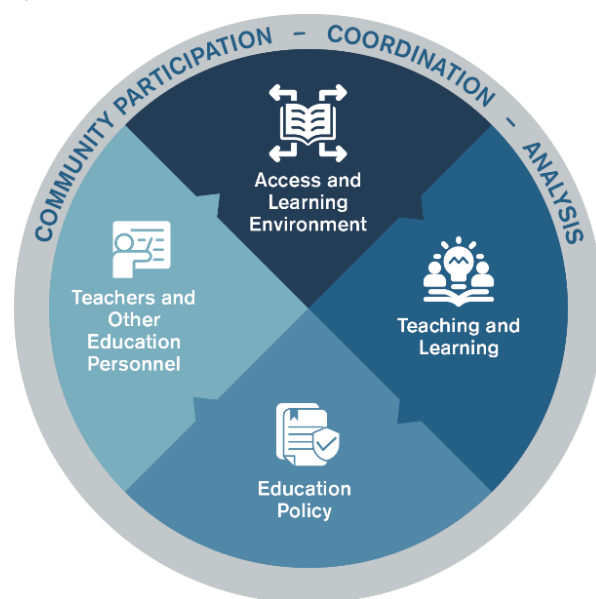
3.2 INEE MINIMUM STANDARDS: A FRAMEWORK FOR EDUCATION IN EMERGENCIES

First established in 2004 and revised in 2010 and 2024, the **INEE Minimum Standards for Education: Preparedness, Response, and Recovery** serve as a foundational tool for humanitarian and development actors in planning, implementing and evaluating education responses. Each of the 19 standards includes key actions and guidance notes. Their purpose is to improve the quality of educational preparedness, response and recovery; to increase access to safe and relevant learning opportunities; and to ensure that the actors who provide these services are held accountable.

They are structured across **five key domains**:

For each standard, **key actions** are suggested, accompanied by guidance notes, proposed indicators and additional reference documents. We strongly recommend using these different tools when developing and implementing interventions.

Given the diversity of crisis-affected settings, a one-size-fits-all approach is not feasible. **Contextualization** is essential to translate these global standards into concrete, actionable steps that align with local realities.



3.2.1 Domain 1: Foundational standards for a quality response

Participation

Community members participate meaningfully, transparently and without discrimination in the analysis, planning, design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the education response.

Resources

Community resources are identified, mobilized and used to implement age-appropriate learning opportunities.

⁸ See the resource collection on [Climate Crisis](#) on the INEE website

In Myanmar, the SCORE project empowers communities to co-lead education planning through inclusive forums where parents, youth, educators and local businesses shape priorities for non-formal education and vocational training. Community groups receive coaching on planning and fundraising, enabling them to mobilize local resources for learning spaces and digital libraries.

Coordination

Education coordination mechanisms are in place to support the stakeholders who are working to ensure access to and continuity of quality education.

Assessment

Timely education assessments of the emergency situation are holistic, transparent and participatory. Inclusive education response strategies include a clear description of the context and the barriers to the right to education, as well as strategies to overcome those barriers.

Monitoring

There is regular monitoring of education response activities and of the evolving learning needs of the people affected.

Evaluation

Systematic and impartial evaluations improve education response activities and enhance accountability.



Where there is a lot to learn, movement and play should not be missing, as an integral part of an active teaching and learning pedagogy. Tanzania © Helvetas/Christian Bobst

3.3 DOMAIN 2: ACCESS AND LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

Equal and equitable access

All individuals have access to quality and relevant education opportunities.

In Pakistan, non-formal education centers provided learning opportunities for Afghan refugee children who faced barriers such as a lack of documentation, poverty and cultural constraints. Accelerated and catch-up programs enabled over 6.600 children to resume education, with 80% transitioning to formal schools. Linking education with food security and hygiene awareness reduced dropouts and promoted inclusive access for girls and vulnerable families.

Learning environments are secure and safe, and they promote the protection and the psychosocial wellbeing of learners and teachers and other education personnel.

Education facilities promote the safety and wellbeing of learners and teachers and other education personnel, and are linked to health, nutrition, psychosocial and protection services.

In Morocco's earthquake-affected areas, schools were rebuilt to provide secure learning spaces, complemented by WASH infrastructure and Women and Girls Friendly Spaces to promote wellbeing. Training for teachers, parents and local women ensured maintenance and safe space management, while links to protection and hygiene services reinforced holistic support for learners and educators.

3.4 DOMAIN 3: TEACHING AND LEARNING

Curricula

The curricula used to provide formal and non-formal education are culturally, socially and linguistically relevant, and appropriate to the context and learner's needs.

During COVID-19, in Bhutan, Pakistan, Honduras and Mozambique curricula, were digitalized and adapted to local languages and cultural contexts to ensure relevance for diverse learners. Teachers were trained in blended methodologies, fostering participatory and learner-centred approaches, even in remote settings.

Teaching and learning processes

Teaching and learning processes are learner centred, participatory and inclusive.

Assessment of holistic learning outcomes

Appropriate methods are used to evaluate and validate holistic learning outcomes.

In conflict-affected central Myanmar, non-formal education centers applied a multi-criteria assessment combining attendance, monthly performance checklists, final subject tests and completion status. Learners were evaluated across core subjects and life skills, with scoring systems to track progress and identify those needing remedial support.

Training, professional development and support

Teachers and other education personnel receive regular, relevant and structured training in line with their needs and circumstances.

3.5 DOMAIN 4: TEACHERS AND OTHER EDUCATION PERSONNEL

A sufficient number of appropriately qualified teachers and other education personnel are recruited through a transparent and fair process, based on selection criteria reflecting diversity and equity.

Teachers and other education personnel have clearly defined conditions of work and receive appropriate compensation.

In eastern Myanmar, education responses were co-designed with ethnic education authorities to strengthen legitimacy and ensure fair recruitment that was aligned with local standards. Rather than creating parallel systems, tutors and non-formal education providers were supported to develop sustainable models, including clear roles, training and compensation structures.

The support and supervision mechanisms in place for teachers and other education personnel function effectively.

3.6 DOMAIN 5: EDUCATION POLICY

Law and policy formulation

Education authorities prioritize the continuity and recovery of quality education, including free and inclusive access to learning.

Education programs and activities reflect international and national educational policies, laws, standards, plans and the learning needs of the people affected.

3.7 COORDINATION AND COHERENCE MECHANISMS⁹

3.7.1 Education coordination mechanisms

When education authorities lack capacity, coordination may be led by inter-agency mechanisms such as the education cluster or refugee education working group. These structures align responses with national policies, facilitate joint planning and enhance government engagement.

3.7.2 Cross-sector collaboration

EiE must integrate with child protection, health, nutrition, WASH and cash assistance to address learners' holistic needs. Joint assessments, shared training and inter-sectoral planning improve efficiency and reduce duplication.

Education interventions are often combined with protection, WASH and livelihood components to meet learners' broader needs. For example, in crisis-affected areas, learning centers are complemented by mine risk education, psychosocial support and community awareness sessions, while safe spaces incorporate hygiene facilities and risk mitigation plans. Linking education with food security and vocational training further strengthens resilience and reduces barriers to participation.

3.7.3 Humanitarian-development coherence

Humanitarian education coordination should align with national education plans (ESP), ensuring continuity in teacher management, financing and policy integration to enhance sustainability.

3.7.4 Accountability and results-oriented coordination

Coordination mechanisms must ensure transparency, monitoring and accountability by identifying gaps, promoting inclusion and engaging affected communities. Data sharing and participatory feedback reinforce effective and principled coordination.

⁹ See also Annexe 1.2: [Humanitarian – Development nexus and the “new way of working”](#) and [Domain 1](#), Standard 3 “Coordination”

4 ANNEXE 1: WHAT SETS US APART

1. INCLUSIVE SYSTEMS APPROACH IN EMERGENCIES AND NEXUS CONTEXTS

Helvetas' work is based on the inclusive systems approach. For the education sector, it means understanding learning and teaching as a system consisting of a **demand for and supply of knowledge and skills**.

If the core function can usually be described as a **transaction between a teacher and students** in a classroom, it can also encompass digital remote or blended learning, peer-to-peer support, tutoring and community intergenerational learning. To make this happen, a wide range of actors need to provide supporting functions and related policies. (cf. figure 1).

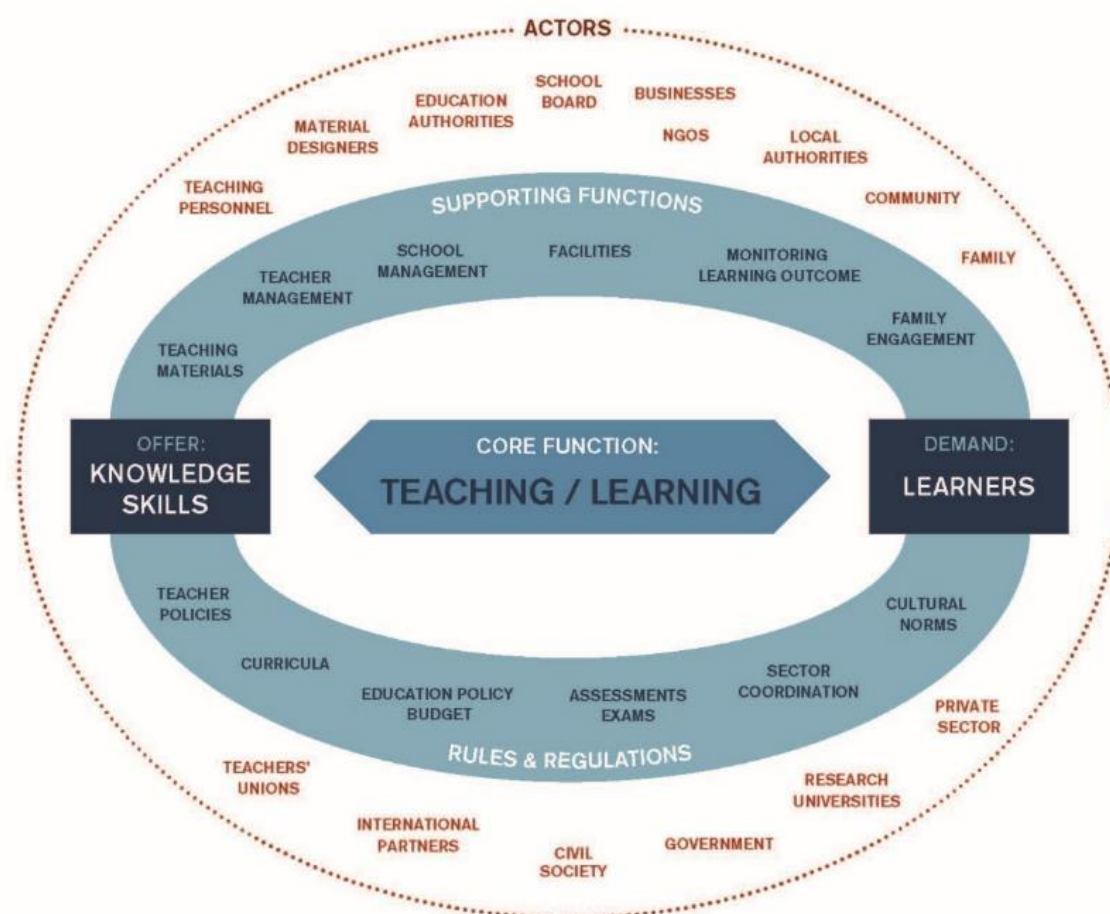


Figure 1: Education ecosystem

We aim to maintain the integrity of education systems while addressing the unique challenges posed by instability.

This involves:

4.1.1.1 1. Identifying actors and functions

In the early stages of a crisis, education systems are often weakened or fragmented. Teachers may be displaced or unreachable, and ministries may be unable to coordinate responses. In such cases, non-state actors — including NGOs, communities or informal providers — often step in to fill critical gaps. One of the first actions is to map the core and supporting functions of the education system: Who manages teachers? Who adapts curricula? Who tracks learning outcomes? And critically, who is responsible — and capable — of financing these functions, both now and in the longer term?

4.1.1.2 2. Supporting service delivery

To maintain learning for the most vulnerable, we adapt **flexible and cost-effective delivery models**. Blended learning, community-based instruction and intergenerational learning approaches allow education to continue when schools are closed or unsafe. These adaptations must align with the long-term vision of reintegrating learners and teachers into formal systems. For youth, we integrate vocational and skills development components to build employability and economic resilience.

4.1.1.3 3. Developing a shared vision

Emergency interventions must not operate in isolation. From the outset, Helvetas works to build a shared vision among stakeholders, rooted in the **long-term strengthening of the education system**. We avoid setting up parallel systems and instead support legitimate local structures — such as education authorities and teachers' unions — to play central roles. Consensus-building processes ensure that emergency responses reinforce rather than fragment the education ecosystem.

4.1.1.4 4. Reducing dependency and scaling up

A core principle of Helvetas' approach is the progressive reduction of dependency. We work toward scalable solutions through the testing of locally adapted, **sustainable business models** for services like teacher training or curriculum development. Crises can also serve as entry points for needed reforms, such as accelerated learning pathways or second-chance education programs.

4.1.1.5 5. Inclusivity

Inclusion is at the heart of the inclusive systems approach. We ensure that **gender-responsive** measures are embedded — such as recruiting female teachers and addressing hygiene-related barriers for girls. Helvetas' programs respond to **intersectional vulnerabilities**, such as those faced by girls with disabilities or learners from minority backgrounds, offering adapted resources like sign language or culturally sensitive materials. We also prioritize mental health and **psychosocial wellbeing**, integrating support systems for both learners and educators. For **migrants** and refugees, we work to ensure their integration into national systems, providing language support and capacity building for teachers to meet diverse needs.

4.1.2 Embracing the nexus: Coherence and sustainability

The nexus approach **ensures that humanitarian and development actions are aligned**, delivering immediate aid while also building systems for long-term sustainability. This involves connecting education interventions to broader efforts in resilience, peacebuilding and risk management.

Resilience-building requires a proactive approach. We rely on the design of risk-aware education sector plans, promote disaster risk reduction (DRR) and help establish early warning and preparedness systems. Education response must be aligned with longer-term recovery strategies, reinforcing systemic continuity and avoiding fragmentation.

Humanitarian action should also intentionally **strengthen national education systems**. Helvetas supports the channelling of resources to local duty-bearers, ensuring alignment with existing teacher policies, curricula and quality assurance frameworks. We advocate for sustained investment in national and sub-national institutional capacities so that governments are better equipped to manage education through and beyond crisis.

We work actively to promote coherence between humanitarian and development actors. This includes **joint planning and coordination mechanisms**. By developing cross-nexus expertise, our teams can navigate the differing logics of crisis response and long-term system strengthening, ensuring they complement rather than contradict each other.

Helvetas' vision goes beyond “do no harm.” We treat every intervention as a **systemic investment**, starting with an exit strategy that clarifies who will take over responsibilities and how services will be sustained. We support accountability at all levels, promote local ownership and work with recognized education authorities and community-based organizations to reinforce trust and legitimacy.

We also explore and promote **financially viable models** for education support services — such as cost-sharing mechanisms for digital tools, teacher training or school maintenance. These models are tested in real conditions, with the aim of scaling up across systems and reducing long-term reliance on external funding.

Finally, we apply several **practical measures** to reinforce systems:

- Aligning our work with national frameworks such as teacher and quality assurance standards
- Respecting local incentive structures to avoid distortions
- Integrating EiE activities into existing monitoring and evaluation processes
- Contributing to common repositories of learning and teaching materials
- Sharing the benefits of our programs with host communities and beyond
- Ensuring engagement in coordination mechanisms

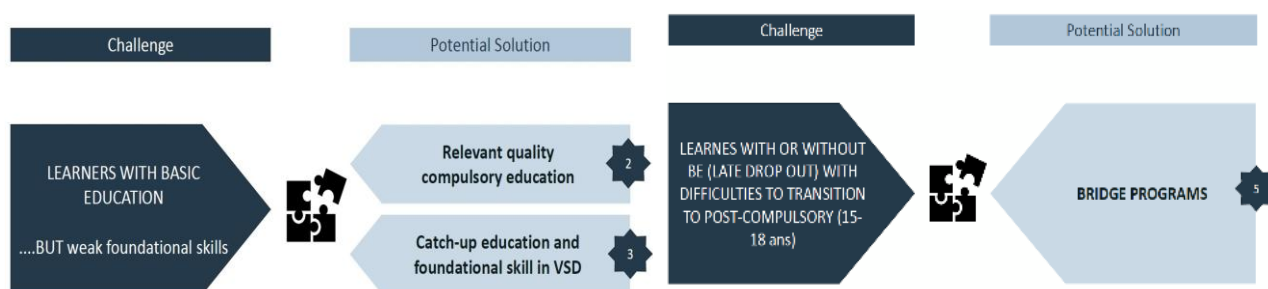
2. WORKING ALONG THE EDUCATION-EMPLOYMENT-ECONOMY CONTINUUM

In emergencies, basic education, including NFE, serves as a critical entry point for addressing educational disruptions, equipping learners with core foundational skills while preparing them for future opportunities in VSD, employment and entrepreneurship. NFE programs not only provide immediate learning solutions but also foster long-term pathways for economic resilience and self-reliance.

Recent NORCAP research revealed primary education as the predominant EiE priority. Girls' education efforts often overlook pressing female youth challenges while support for boys' and male youth education is largely absent. Education delivery is largely stationary, while many youths are mobile.

4.1.3 Options for foundational skills development

Depending on the diverse needs of learners, and considering their age, prior educational experiences, skills gaps and future aspirations, the following options can be considered:



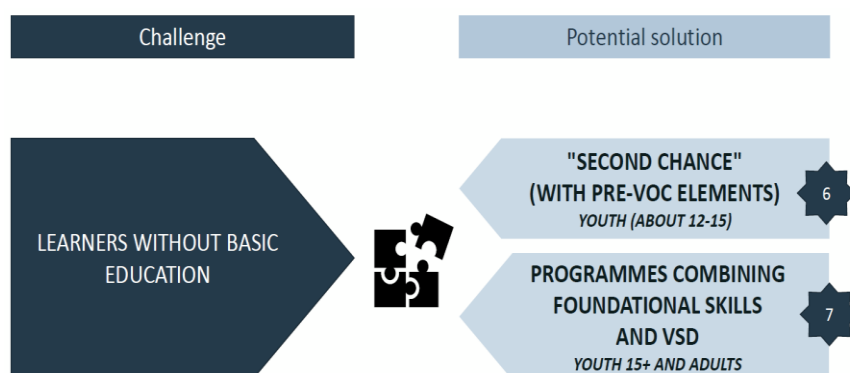


Figure 2: Overview of key challenges concerning basic education and vocational skills development interlinkages.

4.1.4 Strategies for demand-driven education-to-employment pathways during crises

In crisis-affected environments, young people often face severe disruptions to their education and limited access to economic opportunities. At Helvetas, we support approaches that **bridge basic education, vocational training and employment**, ensuring that learning remains relevant to learners' aspirations and the realities of local labor markets.

One of Helvetas' core strategies is to **align NFE and VSD** through close collaboration between curriculum developers, vocational trainers and local employers. By identifying a minimum set of foundational competencies required for common trades — often through rapid market assessments — we ensure that learners gain both academic skills and practical knowledge. For example, learners might practice drafting budgets, writing invoices or simulating customer interactions — activities that help prepare them for the workplace while still in a learning setting.

We also invest in **early career exploration**, partnering with local actors to introduce learners to potential professions. In programs in West Africa, this has included mentorship sessions, industry visits and skills demonstrations, helping youth visualize pathways toward meaningful employment or further training. Learners receive tailored guidance on how to transition into VSD opportunities that match both their interests and market demand.

In contexts where formal job opportunities are limited, we promote the development of an **entrepreneurial mindset**. Our programs integrate life and business skills — like resource management, initiative-taking and problem-solving — and bring in local entrepreneurs to share success stories, helping to inspire learners and show what is possible through self-employment.

A key factor in making these interventions sustainable is **stakeholder engagement** across the education-to-employment continuum. In Myanmar, Helvetas facilitates dialogue between education authorities, training institutions, private sector actors and community-based organizations. This collaboration helps align programming with economic realities and supports the development of a shared vision, reducing dependence on external aid.

Finally, **performance-based models** can strengthen accountability and impact in NFE programming. Funding for education providers is linked to measurable results, such as successful transitions into vocational training. We also invest in tracking learner trajectories, using the data to continuously improve program design and ensure that interventions genuinely lead to enhanced economic opportunities for young people.

3. PEACE EDUCATION AND CONFLICT TRANSFORMATION TO FOSTER SOCIAL COHESION

In crisis-affected contexts, education offers more than just academic learning — it serves as a vital platform to **promote peace, inclusion and social cohesion**. At Helvetas, we see peace education and **conflict-sensitive programming**¹⁰ not as add-ons, but as integral components of quality education in emergencies. Helvetas' approach recognizes the complex interplay between education and conflict and seeks to ensure that education contributes to reducing tensions and building more cohesive, resilient societies.

Peace education in emergencies is about creating **learning environments where diversity is celebrated**. This involves fostering inclusivity through culturally relevant activities such as storytelling, language exchanges or community events that highlight different identities and traditions. In Myanmar, for instance, our programs have supported inter-ethnic youth activities and peer tutoring through existing community networks, promoting inclusion in divided contexts.

Another important dimension is equipping learners with **conflict resolution and communication skills**. Through participatory exercises — such as role-playing, group discussions and mediation simulations — young people learn empathy, active listening and collaborative problem-solving. Programs can also include modules on participatory decision-making, promoting constructive dialogue and consensus-building. These tools are further reinforced by integrating peace-related themes across the curriculum. Lessons in literacy, geography, or art can explore concepts like justice, cooperation or environmental stewardship, helping learners apply these principles beyond the classroom.

In deeply divided or post-conflict settings, peace education also means **building bridges between groups**. Activities such as joint sports events, art projects or facilitated dialogues offer neutral spaces for interaction and mutual understanding. These initiatives can play a key role in rebuilding trust and reducing social fragmentation over time. Civil society organizations can also play a catalytic role, both in delivery and in amplifying the reach of such initiatives, including discussions on shared values, history or aspirations.

Teachers play a pivotal role in creating peaceful and inclusive learning environments. Their training must go beyond content delivery, focusing on conflict-sensitive, trauma-informed pedagogy and nonviolent communication. These skills help educators manage classroom tensions, support learners affected by distress and foster a culture of dialogue and empathy. We also develop and share practical resources, such as the **Pluralism Toolbox** in Myanmar, which offers guidance for promoting peace and inclusion in diverse learning contexts.



Teachers are trained in peace education using the “pluralism toolbox”, Mawlamyine, Myanmar © Helvetas/Thet Paing

¹⁰ More internal reference on [Pamoja](#)

A strong peace education program must also be grounded in **conflict-sensitive education planning**. This begins with a sound understanding of the local context, including the underlying drivers of conflict. Learning materials and teaching practices must be reviewed to ensure they do not reinforce bias or exclusion. Schools and learning centers should be safe, neutral spaces where all children feel welcome, regardless of their background. Teacher recruitment and management practices must ensure that educators reflect the diversity of the communities they serve and that no group is excluded from the teaching workforce. Participatory planning processes can help align education initiatives with peacebuilding objectives.

Finally, Helvetas' work strongly emphasizes **youth empowerment**¹¹. Young people are not just beneficiaries — they are key agents of change. They take the lead in designing peer-led workshops, participating in youth councils and using creative platforms to promote peaceful dialogue. These experiences equip them to become active contributors to reconciliation and social transformation in their communities.

4. EDUCATION FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH ON THE MOVE: LEAVE NO MIGRANTS BEHIND

4.1.4.1 The challenge of focusing solely on forced displacement populations

In efforts to address the education needs of **displaced populations**, much attention has been given to refugees, internally displaced persons (IDPs) and asylum seekers. While these groups face critical barriers to accessing education, prioritizing them exclusively creates unintended consequences, particularly in the context of mixed migration flows.

This refers to movements of people, including refugees fleeing persecution and conflict, victims of trafficking, and people seeking better lives and opportunities. Motivated to move by a multiplicity of factors, people engaged in **mixed migration** have a range of legal statuses as well as a variety of vulnerabilities. Although they are entitled to protection under international human rights law, they are exposed to multiple rights violations along their journey. In addition to the general risks faced by all migrants, there is an intrinsic vulnerability linked to childhood, especially for unaccompanied or inadequately accompanied children and youth.

Focusing only on forced displacement categories risks ignoring many vulnerable children on the move that remain invisible in education statistics and are excluded from targeted education interventions, leaving them without access to essential learning opportunities. To ensure equitable access to education, programming must transcend rigid categorizations of displacement and embrace a broader, **inclusive approach to mobility**.

4.1.4.2 Innovative approach to inclusive education for people on the move

Helvetas is experienced in working with IDP and refugees, and we have **developed innovative strategies** to incorporate migrants into existing education systems in West and North Africa.

¹¹ Additional internal resources on [Pamoja](#)



In Tanzania, lessons in hygiene and cleanliness are also part of the curriculum. © Helvetas

Findings of a recent study regarding access to education in West and North Africa¹²

Access to education for migrant children is limited: 57% of caregivers reported that the children in their care were not accessing childcare or education services.

Access to formal or informal education is the most frequent need expressed by caregivers for the children in their care (29%), compared to 20% who mention food assistance and 18% who indicate access to healthcare.

Respondents spent on average 263 days in the city of the interview, meaning that most had enough time available to enroll in and participate in a school program.

On the **demand side**, young migrants may lack the time, desire or resources for education. On the **supply side**, despite efforts to be inclusive, systems often fall short due to capacity constraints. Bridging these gaps involves influencing demand (e.g., persuading migrants to delay departure for schooling), adapting supply (e.g., flexible schedules) and tailoring integration measures (e.g., language courses).

To better understand the diversity and education needs of children and youth on the move, we conducted **innovative surveys**: engaging youth groups to organize dialogues, identify migrant communities and administer a child- and youth-friendly questionnaire that reached vulnerable and often hidden groups.

We developed a **comprehensive conceptual framework** to analyse the barriers faced by children and youth in accessing education services at different stages of their migration journey and along the various steps of their educational path. This framework provides a systematic approach to identifying challenges and designing targeted interventions to address them.

By using this framework, we accompany education actors to adopt a holistic approach that ensures **no child is left behind, regardless of their migration status**. By enhancing the capabilities of national stakeholders and developing appropriate tools, we aspire to move closer to a situation where the needs of children and youth on the move are consistently taken into account.

¹² "Educational realities and needs of migrant children and youth in West and North Africa", 2024, Projet EJM et Mixed Migration Center

5 ANNEXE 2: PROJECT EXPERIENCES

5.1 LEARNING CONTINUITY DURING CONFLICT AND PROTRACTED CRISIS

5.1.1 Skills for Community Resilience and Empowerment (SCORE), Myanmar

Duration	2023-26	Volume	CHF 5.2 Mio
Client / Funding source	EU – NDCI Asia		
Key partners	Local partner organisations		

The **SCORE – Skills for Community Resilience and Empowerment** project aims to strengthen human capital and foster sustainable development in Myanmar's conflict-affected regions by expanding access to inclusive education and vocational training. The initiative combines **NFE** with market-oriented technical and vocational education and training (TVET). At the same time, SCORE invests in **digital resources and community-led planning mechanisms**, ensuring that education and skills systems are locally owned, gender-sensitive and resilient.

Results

- NFE: 80 providers supported, 4,000 learners achieved the cycle
- TVET: 4,000 youth trained (50% female), 45 employer/trainers engaged
- Entrepreneurship: 2,000 youth trained, 200 start-ups supported

Insights

- Strong integration of NFE, VET and employment pathways for vulnerable youth in conflict affected areas, leveraging localisation, flexible delivery and digitalisation
- NFE is effective for marginalized learners, while their transition to VET is made easier.
- VET components suffer from limited supply and mobility barriers (checkpoints and conscription laws). Diversifying partnerships and expanding trainer/employer networks is essential.

5.2 EDUCATION FOR PEOPLE ON THE MOVE

5.2.1 Children and Youth on Migration Routes (EJM), Guinea – Mali – Niger – Marocco – Tunisia

Duration	2022-25 (Phase 1)	Volume	CHF 23 Mio
	2026-28 (Phase 2)		CHF 14 Mio
Client / Funding source	Swiss Development Cooperation		
Key partners	Consortium with Terres des Hommes Suisse Ministries in charge of Education and VSD, local authorities, local NGOs		

The project *Children and Youth on Migration Routes* addresses the urgent need for protection, education and socio-economic inclusion of children and young people affected by mobility across West and North Africa. Operating in five countries – Mali, Niger, Guinea, Morocco and Tunisia – the initiative strengthens national and regional systems to provide inclusive education opportunities, vocational training and pathways to dignified livelihoods.

By combining direct service delivery with systemic capacity building and policy advocacy, the project promotes a rights-based approach that ensures vulnerable children and youth can access quality education and develop skills for resilience and self-reliance. The project also fosters cross-border coordination and digital innovation to enhance learning continuity and protection along migration routes, while influencing policies to integrate mobility into education and employment frameworks.

Results – Phase I (2022–2025)

- 35,600 children and youth on the move accessed protection, education, vocational training, socio-economic insertion, health and psychosocial support, life skills and information services.
- 2,362 actors trained on child protection, inclusive education, mobility and psychosocial support.
- Pilots launched for mobility sensitive education and adapted vocational training in Guinea, Mali, Niger, Morocco and Tunisia.
- Development of toolkits and e-learning modules (e.g., safe migration).

Insights

- **Inclusive Education:** Integrating mobility into planning and teacher training has enabled children on the move to access formal and non-formal education in Guinea, Mali and Niger.
- **Vocational Training:** Short, market-oriented courses combined with life skills have boosted employability. Partnerships with private sector actors are key for sustainability.
- **Employment Barriers:** Administrative status and limited opportunities remain major challenges, requiring advocacy and stronger collaboration with labor institutions and trade unions.

5.2.2 Humanitarian response to address the immediate needs of vulnerable Afghans communities in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (VAC), Pakistan

Duration	2022-24	Volume	CHF 950,000
Client / Funding source	DG-ECHO		
Key partners	HI (consortium lead) Local implementing partners		

The decades-long conflict in Afghanistan has led to a significant influx of Afghans seeking refuge, security and livelihood opportunities in Pakistan. This has caused a protracted crisis with the creation of parallel systems (health, protection, education) to meet their basic needs, as the public system does not have the capacity to absorb the refugee population.

Although Afghan refugees are, in principle, allowed to attend public schools, there are no systems or support structures in place to address the challenges they face due to their vulnerable circumstances.

Results

- Access to education for 6,660 children in 40 non-formal education centers through catch-up and bridging classes in 3 cycles/batches of 8 months each.
- Upon completion of each cycle, a two-month period was dedicated to supporting children — through coordination with public schools — in their reintegration into formal education.
- 5,500 children (84% of graduates) transitioned into formal schools.

Insights

- Strong collaboration with local partners was critical in facilitating the transition of Afghan refugee children from non-formal education centers to formal public schools.
- Combining educational support with initiatives to improve food and nutrition security contributed to a reduction in child labor and increased school retention rates.

5.2.3 Afghan Refugees Support Action (ARSA), Pakistan

Duration	2023-25	Volume	CHF 300,000
Client / Funding source	Swiss Solidarity		
Key partners	Commissionerate for Afghan Refugees (CAR), UNHCR, Refugee Village Administrations (RVAs), and Education Department of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa		

The ARSA project aims to integrate school-eligible Afghan refugee children (ages 5-12) into formal education through Non-Formal Education Centres (NFECs) offering bridging and catch-up programs and to improve food and nutrition security for families to reduce child labour and keep children in school.

Results

- 46 NFECs established and equipped.
- 2,656 children enrolled; 80% completed courses and transitioned to formal schools.
- 28 teachers trained in EiE.
- 2,124 families receive food packages for six months.
- 2,656 children and their parents/guardians sensitized on hygiene and food handling.

Insights

- Linking education with food security addresses socio-economic barriers and reduces dropout rates among children aged 10+.
- Targeted counselling helps overcome cultural barriers for girls' education.
- Coordination with CAR and the Education Department ensures transition of NFEC graduates to formal schools; exit strategy includes handing over materials to local schools.

5.3 RECONSTRUCTION AFTER NATURAL DISASTERS

5.3.1 Multi-sectorial recovery response in earthquake-affected hard-to-reach areas (Phases I–III), Morocco

Duration	2023-25	Volume	CHF 450,000
Client / Funding source	Swiss Solidarity		
Key partners	Acted and local NGO's (implementing partners)		

Following the September 2023 earthquake in Morocco's High Atlas region, communities in El-Haouz, Taroudant and Chichaoua provinces faced severe destruction of homes, schools, WASH facilities and women's centers. Over three consecutive phases (Oct 2023 – Dec 2025), Helvetas and Acted, in

partnership with local CSOs, implemented a comprehensive response to restore essential services and strengthen resilience in hard-to-reach areas.

Results (Phases I–III)

- 19 schools rehabilitated, enabling 900+ children to resume education in safe, functional spaces.
- Capacity building for 160+ adults (teachers and parents) on maintenance and monitoring of rehabilitated school infrastructure
- 8 Women and Girls Friendly Spaces (WGFS), including Dar Talibat boarding schools, rehabilitated and equipped, restoring safe spaces for 400+ women and girls.
- Training for 100 women on infrastructure maintenance and safe space management
- 26 WASH infrastructures (latrines, wells, pumps, water distribution systems) rehabilitated or reconstructed, benefiting ~2,900 individuals.
- 110 masons trained on Build Back Better/Build Back Greener (BBB/BBG) techniques and CBDRM principles, creating a skilled local workforce for safe reconstruction.
- Total Beneficiaries: Approx. 4,500 direct beneficiaries, including children, women, households and trained masons.

Insights

- Community-centered recovery efforts significantly accelerate the restoration of essential services and foster a sense of ownership among local stakeholders.
- Investing in local capacity building not only ensures the sustainability of reconstructed infrastructure but also strengthens long-term community resilience to future disasters.

5.3.2 Skills and employment fund for reconstruction after the earthquake (Phase 1-2), Nepal

Duration	2015-19	Volume	CHF 2,5 Mio
Client / Funding source	Swiss Solidarity, SDC Humanitarian Aid, and DFID		
Key partners	Acted and local NGO's (implementing partners)		

Helvetas launched an integrated humanitarian and development response in Nepal following the devastating earthquakes in April and May 2015 that killed nearly 9,000 people and destroyed over 600,000 buildings. The approach combined emergency relief, reconstruction of essential infrastructure, and vocational training to strengthen resilience and livelihoods.

Results (Phases I–II)

- Immediate humanitarian assistance: tarpaulins, medicine and food delivered to Sindhupalchok and Gorkha districts.
- 781 earthquake-resilient homes built with technical assistance and grant support for disadvantaged households (including single women, elderly, and persons with disabilities)
- 34 schools rebuilt and equipped with water supply systems and latrines; repairs to damaged suspension bridges to restore access.
- 6,500 bricklayers and 1,000 carpenters trained in earthquake-resistant construction techniques under UK DFID commission.
- 300 local experts trained on model house construction using dry masonry and wood.

Insights

The integration of reconstruction with vocational training created long-term benefits beyond immediate humanitarian response. Building back better principles were applied to housing and water systems, while skills training enhanced employment opportunities and resilience. Collaboration with National Reconstruction Authority and local authorities ensured compliance with national guidelines and sustainability.

5.4 PROTECTION

5.4.1 Strengthening the Protection System for Populations (PROTECT), Mali

Duration	2023-26	Volume	CHF 7 Mio
Client / Funding source	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), Embassy of the Netherlands		
Key partners	Humanity & Inclusion (consortium partner)		

The PROTECT program aims to reinforce an integrated and functional protection system in Mali, ensuring populations live free from violence and rights violations. It operates in regions heavily affected by insecurity and displacement (Sikasso, Mopti, Tombouctou, Koutiala, Bougouni, Taoudéni, Koro, Douentza). The approach combines governance strengthening, legal frameworks and community-based mechanisms to prevent and respond to protection risks, while promoting inclusive governance and resilience.

Results

- Updated local development plans for 13 communes and regions, integrating protection priorities into annual protection plans.
- Creation of 5 communal protection services and development of 13 autonomous plans for sustainability
- Training modules for para-jurists and local actors; promotion of gender-sensitive and inclusive governance practices
- Dialogues and awareness campaigns on civil documentation and rights; support for birth registration and legal identity

Insights

- Lack of civil documentation remains a major barrier to education and protection.
- Persistent insecurity and displacement disrupt economic opportunities, increasing youth migration and vulnerability; linking protection with employability strategies is a priority.

5.5 PEACE EDUCATION

5.5.1 Youth United for Future (YOU), Kyrgyzstan

Duration	2017-25	Volume	CHF 2 Mio
Client / Funding source	Fondation SmartPeace and other donations Own funds		
Key partners	Youth of Osh, Progress Aravan, National Institute for Professional Development and Retraining of Educators		

The Youth United for Future (YOU) project aims to foster social cohesion and resilience among young people (15-29 years) in southern Kyrgyzstan, particularly in Osh and Jalalabad regions, which are prone to social unrest due to ethnic diversity, low economic development and migration pressures. The project addresses the intergenerational gap and equips youth with personal and professional orientation skills, while promoting constructive dialogue on religion and democracy at the municipal level.

Results

- 5,400 young people received the core “Tune in training; 5,900 received thematic training; 250 developed and implemented 45 social initiatives; and 1,670 participated in the career orientation training.
- 1,567 teachers were trained as trainers of the “Tune in methodology”.
- Direct engagement of 1,350 young men and women and adults (parents, teachers, imams, professors) as mentors
- Development and rollout of the course “Self-awareness and Personal Development for Adolescents,” based on advanced pedagogical and psychological methodologies, promoting critical thinking, goal-setting and informed decision-making.
- Teacher’s manual handed over to the National Institute for Professional Development and Retraining of Educators in September 2025, paving the way for national scale-up.
- Organization of community dialogues and participatory forums to strengthen peaceful public discourse and reduce susceptibility to extremist rhetoric.

Insights

The project’s unique approach — bridging generational gaps and combining personal development with civic engagement — has proven effective in reducing feelings of alienation among youth and mitigating risks of radicalization. Collaboration with national institutions ensures long-term integration of the methodology into formal education systems.

5.6 RESPONSE TO THE COVID CRISIS

5.6.1 Resuming Education with Adaptable and Durable solutions amidst COVID-19 Project (READ), Pakistan

Duration	2022-24	Volume	CHF 450,000
Client / Funding source	Swiss Solidarity		
Key partners	Rural Community Development Society (IP)		

The READ project was designed to help children resume education amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. School closures due the COVID-19 pandemic for more than a year (2020-2021) disrupted the education of more than 40 million students across Pakistan. Children from poor households, especially in rural and semi-urban areas, were completely excluded from education. School closures led to a learning crisis for primary school children, who were at the beginning of their learning journey. The project mainly focused on two major components:

1. Promoting the return to school for out-of- school/drop-out children
2. Ensuring that children overcome learning losses resulting from the effects of COVID-19 lockdowns.

The geographical focus of the project was the low-income semi-urban industrial areas of Lahore and Sheikhpura districts in Punjab. The beneficiaries of the project were school-age children between the ages of 5 and 15. The project benefited the children of industrial workers, agricultural workers, daily wage earners and brick kiln workers in these districts. The project was implemented in 40 government schools in low-income communities.

Results

- 15,000 students and 300 teachers equipped with IT equipment.
- 3,000 teachers trained (2,400 women)
- Catch-up classes benefiting 1,500 students (1,200 girls)

5.6.2 Uninterrupted access to teaching-learning for hard-to-reach and digitally disadvantaged children, Bhutan

Duration	2020–21	Volume	CHF 150,000
Client / Funding source	SDC Education Fund		
Key partners	Helvetas Bhutan, Ministry of Education, private multimedia producers		

COVID-19 school closures in Bhutan left many children without access to education. The project aimed to ensure inclusion and equity by providing uninterrupted learning opportunities for digitally disadvantaged learners. It supported the production of teaching materials in multiple formats (TV, radio, print, online), teacher training and system preparedness for future disruptions.

Key Innovations:

- Multi-channel delivery of learning materials (TV, radio, print, online) to leave no one behind
- Cascade training model for teachers to adapt to blended learning.

Main Strengths:

- Strong national coordination engaging government, media and private actors.
- Built on teachers' initiatives and strengthened their capacity.
- Attention to equity by tailoring technology to learners' realities.

5.6.3 Transforming technical education for youth in the context of the COVID-19 crisis, Honduras

Duration	2020–21	Volume	CHF 300,000
Client / Funding source	SDC Education Fund		
Key partners	Network of Community Technical Institutes (CTIs), Ministry of Education		

The project supported 28 CTIs to continue technical education during COVID-19 lockdowns by introducing hybrid learning modalities. It aimed to strengthen resilience and risk management capacities while maintaining quality education for indigenous and rural youth.

Key Innovations:

- Development of hybrid teaching and learning processes at scale, including two digital platforms and adapted curricula
- COVID-19 prevention campaign reaching learners and families nationwide.

Main Strengths:

- Systemic change approach with strong participation of teachers, students and families
- Creation of governance structures to validate new curricula and materials

5.6.4 Neighbourhood training during COVID-19 crisis, Mozambique

Duration	2020–21	Volume	CHF 200,000
Client / Funding source	SDC Education Fund		
Key partners	Local artisans and SMEs		

In rural northern Mozambique, the project aimed to equip youth with market-oriented skills through a Cooperative Group Approach (CGA), leveraging informal apprenticeships during the closure of training institutions.

Key Innovations:

- CGA model combining informal apprenticeships with structured curricula for five-month training programs.
- Win-win approach: trainees gain skills and providers benefit from increased production and business growth.

Main Strengths:

- Builds on local dynamics and traditional skills transfer mechanisms.
- Creates synergies between formal and non-formal training systems.
- Results-based financing to reduce dropouts and ensure commitment.