



PROGRAMMING

SUMMARY:

These suggestions on education programming were developed during CAP international meetings in Uganda and Colombia.

15. EDUCATION ISSUES

WHAT IS EDUCATION?

- a tool to build our capacities and skills;
- a way to build our abilities to understand our situations, to see what is happening with us and with others whose realities are different than our own;
- the passing of knowledge. Two things are important: how we understand this knowledge and how we use it;
- the process whereby we come to understand our situation and also to transform or change these situations;
- the development of our capacity to understand our past, our present and to project ourselves into the future.

WHAT ARE OUR EDUCATIONAL NEEDS?

1. Education should be completely free.

“This should include costs for supplies, as our parents don’t have the funds for this. Although the schools belong to the government, parents still have to pay for pencils, pens, books and notebooks.

It is important to eliminate hidden costs. For instance, in order to pass you often have to attend special private classes. These cost money but if you don’t attend, you are likely to fail the exam.”

2. There should be programs to help us catch up after a war.

“In Bosnia the schools were closed because of the war. Afterwards we had to go quickly. Kids lost two or three years – they just continued with their age group. So there were a lot of gaps in our education, it wasn’t proper.”

3. Education should reflect the values of our cultures.

“In most countries there is the right to education. The question is what kind of education and also about access to that education.

Without the cultural elements it has no meaning. Education is not only about information it is also about values. We need to rescue our history, our values and respect for the elders of our community. This is important if we are to stop the violence.

The new generation needs to learn about their own culture so they can restore that culture in the post-conflict phase. Also, our education systems must respect cultural differences, such as for indigenous people”

4. Schools in refugee camps are good but have some problems:

“The programs should be accredited. For example, students in the Burma-Thai camps get a certificate when they graduate, but this has no standing in the outside world. International volunteer teachers should commit at least one year. Teacher training should be a priority.

6. There should be special programs for child soldiers.

“Schools are not prepared to receive kids who were involved in the conflict. They need special programs to cope with these kids.”

7. The different needs of girls and boys should be recognized.

“We have to recognize that there is a special situation between girls and boys. The games, the classes and the organization of schools are all built around men’s values. This needs to change.

Instead of talking about equality we need to address the real situation and work to address the differences so that real equality is achieved.”

8. Displaced children need special programs.

“When displaced children arrive in the city they are often still in primary school because that is just how it is in the rural areas. Often they will not be accepted in the city schools – they will say that they are too big for that level. So many just stop school.

Also culturally it can be difficult. They fear that they will not be welcomed, that there will be no place for them. There needs to be a special program to help with the transition.”

9. Education should include information on the conflict.

“Our situation is complex. As young people we need to understand it. If all you hear in school is one plus one is two, then school doesn’t seem that relevant to our real situation.”

10. There should be training and monitoring of internationals working in emergency situations.

“There needs to be cultural awareness training for international teachers. Just because we are refugees or displaced doesn’t mean that we should have any curriculum – it should be in keeping with our local culture.

There needs to be protection against possibilities of sexual abuse. In emergency situations there is contact. There needs to be a monitoring of the people who are close to the kids.”