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The complexities of providing education services in the emergency-affected areas of South Sudan have created substantial coordination challenges. Two members of the Global Education Cluster Rapid Response Team were deployed in late August 2014 to work with the Education Cluster team in Juba: Annelies Ollieuz (Cluster Coordinator) and Tyler Arnot (Information Management/Needs Assessment Specialist).

In this interview, Annelies and Tyler share thoughts on their deployment and the education situation in South Sudan.

Annelies, you were previously deployed to South Sudan in March-April 2014 as roving Cluster Coordinator for the three most affected States (Jonglei, Unity and Upper Nile). What has changed?

This time I was based in Juba and haven't been to the field at all. Sill, I have noticed some differences.

More partners have interventions in the conflict affected States compared to six months ago. Some partners have returned to areas they had programmes in before the December 2013 crisis, while others have expanded their areas of interventions. This is very positive.

However, the lack of payment of teacher salaries has turned into the biggest challenge to the Education Cluster's response.

What has been the impact of the de-prioritization of education?

Because the Education Cluster did not receive a CHF (Common Humanitarian Fund) allocation for the second half of 2014, education partners were not included in the mobile response mechanisms linked to the CHF, limiting the scale and coverage of the EiE response. It has also " sil-oed " the response, limiting the options for integrative and rapid services.

The de-prioritization of education has also limited education partners representation in inter-cluster needs assessments and joint response missions. This all contributes to a very-one dimensional response, which is not always connected with the actual needs on the ground and with other services and activities taking place.

Not prioritizing and allocating space to education in the Protection of Civilians (POC) sites has meant that thousands of children and youth are more at risk of being recruited, engaged in risky behaviour

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and in negative coping mechanisms. For example, out of the 22,000 school-aged children in Bentiu POC, only 4,000 are engaged in education activities.

Has the Education Cannot Wait advocacy efforts helped to get more support for education?

The advocacy brief was shared widely at global level and engaged donors in conversations about EiE funding in South Sudan. At national level, humanitarian decision-makers and stakeholders became more aware of the impact of the crisis on children and the risk of a lost generation. Other Clusters were made more aware of what EiE is (and what it is not) and made verbal commitments to help fund, support and advocate for education. The Education Donor Working Group became better aware of the challenges and has been meeting to support the Education Cluster in a plan to encourage more Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MoEST) support.

The advocacy brief remains a powerful piece that can be updated, circulated and used to remind donors and decision-makers of the detrimental consequences of letting education wait. Furthermore, this advocacy effort has led to a research initiative, _Education in Emergencies: a community' need, a child's right_, led by Save the Children, UNICEF with Cluster partners, which documents the priority crisis-affected children and their parents place on education.

> " When we were in Bor, some people took children away. But if they are in school, children know what is going on and they know to stay out of violence."
> Mother, Child Friendly Space, Mingkamen*

What are the Education Cluster priorities?

To ensure children can go to school, key priority is teachers. The response evolves around an EiE package that guarantees access to quality learning in an emergency consisting of trained teachers, supplies and a learning space. It is important to understand that without the teachers, a Temporary Learning Space (TLS) will be simply a structure and supplies that are more likely to find their way to a market than to a child in need of learning. As such, the teacher is the

key component to ensuring both access and quality.

A teacher must be both trained and paid. Without remuneration, we cannot retain teachers. Without trained teachers, we don't have an education response that can provide learning, life skills, psycho-social support (PSS) and protection.

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Lack of payment of salaries, in areas led by the opposition forces and in government controlled areas is a key issue. The Ministry is not paying all its teachers, and will not pay in non-government controlled areas. In addition, some donors have restrictions on the use of their funding for teacher compensation. In the future, we will need a two-pronged strategy on teacher remuneration: one for government controlled areas, and one for non-government controlled areas.

Tyler, you were deployed to provide technical support to strengthen the cluster's Information Management (IM) systems. Can you tell us about IM systems and your work in South Sudan?

One of education's greatest challenges in finding space in the humanitarian sector is proving the necessity of learning opportunities in the face of emergency. Creating conceptual understanding of EiE is of course a challenge, but without a quantitative evidence-base it is even more difficult. In country, the solution has often been to increase the amount of information asked for from Cluster partners. However, the result is a greater burden on those already implementing in a difficult environment, thus reducing the quality of the data provided.

The Education Cluster in South Sudan has recognized difficulties in collecting evidence for advocacy, identifying gaps in service provision and coordinating partners in areas where access is already limited. The most important improvement is a strengthened 5Ws database which tracks «Who is doing What, Where, When and for Whom». The 5Ws will give the Cluster a much better picture of the implementation of Education in Emergencies.

*" We need the humanitarian community - all the NGOs - to support education. We can see the changes. We have been inthis situation before. Education is the only answer to all these problems." Volunteer teacher, UN PoC site, Juba**

The Cluster has also begun to consult with other entities that are collecting education related data to ensure there is no overlap and further, that the 5Ws complements the other efforts. Most importantly, the 5Ws will serve as the definitive database of EiE in South Sudan.

Interview conducted by Lisa Sabot-Schmid in October 2014
* Quotations from the recent survey "Education in Emergencies: a community's need, a child's right"

What is the Education Cluster Rapid Response Team?

The Education Cluster Rapid Response Team (RRT) is a group of education in emergencies experts who are rapidly deployable to support education coordination in humanitarian situations. The Rapid Response Team members are deployed to UNICEF or Save the Children hosts at the country level, at a minimum of 48 hours notice. The RRT can support:

1) Coordination at national and sub-national levels; establishing or leading Education Clusters and liaising with cluster partners, Ministries of Education, OCHA and other UN agencies and NGOs, with first priority given to large scale sudden onset emergencies (L-3).

2) Management of inter-agency assessments; focusing on sudden-onset needs assessment, but also assessment in slow-onset or chronic emergencies.

3)Technical assistance in the area of information management; supporting Education Clusters with the development of IM systems and tools, training on IM issues, website development and more.

RRT Education Cluster Coordinator, Annelies Ollieuz (Norwegian Refugee Council) joined the RRT in August 2012.

RRT Information Manager, Tyler Arnot (Save the Children UK) joined the RRT in August 2014

For additional information on the Rapid Response Team, visit the Global Education Cluster website.