Rapid response

Programming for education needs in emergencies

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Education in emergencies and reconstruction

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Research depends first and foremost on the contributions of the people who are interviewed, and the writers are particularly grateful for the openness and generosity of those who contributed to this work. They were assured of confidentiality, hence are unnamed in this book, but the thanks due to them is considerable.

Foreword to the series

UNESCO is increasingly requested to provide an educational response in emergency and reconstruction settings. The organization is in the process of developing expertise in this field in order to be able to provide prompt and relevant assistance. It will offer guidance, practical tools, and specific training for education policy-makers, officials, and planners.

The fifth of the eleven objectives adopted by the Dakar World Education Forum in 2000 explicitly focuses on the rights of children in emergencies. The Dakar Framework for Action (World Education Forum, 2000) calls for national Education for All plans to include provision for education in emergency situations. Governments, particularly education ministries, have an important role to play in an area that has often been dominated by the actions of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and United Nations (UN) agencies.

Moreover, the field of educational planning in emergencies and reconstruction is still young. It must be organized into a manageable discipline through further documentation and analysis, while training programmes are being designed. Accumulated institutional memories and knowledge in governments, agencies, and NGOs on education in emergencies are in danger of being lost due both to the dispersion and disappearance of documents, and to high staff turnover in both national and international contexts. Most of the expertise is still in the heads of practitioners and needs to be collected, since memories fade fast. Diverse experiences of educational reconstruction must be more thoroughly documented and analyzed before they disappear.

This task includes the publication, in this series, of country-specific analyses being conducted on the planning and management of education in emergencies and reconstruction. They concern the efforts currently being made to restore and transform education systems in countries and territories as diverse as Pakistan, Burundi, the Occupied Palestinian Territory, Sudan, Kosovo, Timor-Leste and Rwanda. They have been initiated and sponsored by IIEP, in close collaboration with colleagues in other UNESCO offices.

The objectives of the country studies are to:

- contribute to the process of developing knowledge in the discipline of education in emergencies and reconstruction;
- provide focused input for IIEP training programmes targeting government officials and others in education in emergencies and reconstruction;
- identify and collect documentation on the management of education in various countries;
- capture some of the undocumented memories of practitioners;
- analyze the responses in very different situations to educational provision in times of crisis;
- increase dissemination of information and analysis on education in emergencies and reconstruction.

IIEP's larger programme on education in emergencies and reconstruction involves not only these country studies, but also a series of global, thematic, policy-related studies. In addition, IIEP has published a *Guidebook for planning education in emergencies and reconstruction* for ministry of education officials and the agencies assisting them, and is developing training materials for a similar audience. Through this programme, IIEP will make a modest but significant contribution to the discipline of education in emergencies and reconstruction. Its hope is to enrich the quality of the planning processes applied in this crucial field.

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Mark Bray
Director, IIEP

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Foreword by CfBT Education Trust

The educational needs of children affected by conflict, emergencies and social, political and institutional fragility have become an increasing area of attention. The Dakar Framework for Action stresses the importance of meeting "... the needs of education systems affected by conflict, natural calamities and instability and conduct[ing] educational programmes in ways that promote mutual understanding, peace and tolerance, and that help to prevent violence and conflict" (World Education Forum, 2000: 9). But achieving the Millennium Development Goals and Education For All targets is being seriously impeded by continuing conflict and persistent fragility.

CfBT Education Trust recognizes that studying the provision of education during periods of conflict, emergencies, fragility and reconstruction is an emerging discipline. While our understanding of how best to provide education in these challenging situations has grown, we nevertheless believe that there remains a need for more research which is both rigorous and more widely disseminated. The research partnership between CfBT Education Trust and IIEP UNESCO was established to address this need. The partnership has therefore worked to improve our understanding both of the specific interventions and of the strategies and methodologies that can be deployed to improve access to, and the provision of, a quality education for those currently denied it.

CfBT Education Trust has long sought to find ways of overcoming the barriers to education for the most disadvantaged children wherever they are in the world. A key underlying aim of our research and operational work is to improve educational opportunities for learners and to enhance the quality of their learning. This research partnership with IIEP has allowed us to combine our practical experience working in the fields of education and emergencies with rigorous research. I hope that the fruits of this research partnership will encourage further collaboration between researchers, practitioners and policy-makers. I hope also that it will foster an increasing adoption of evidence-based policy-making and practice, with a revitalised interest in using practice-based research to plan and deliver education services in situations of conflict, reconstruction and social and political instability.

The research produced as a part of CfBT and IIEP's partnership is a component of CfBT's broader Evidence for Education research programme. This programme was established with the aim of investing in a coherent body of practice-based development and research that can be shown over time to have a positive impact on educational policy and practice both in the UK and worldwide. It is our ambition that through this research partnership with IIEP we are able to contribute to this vital field of education provision and so help improve the opportunities for millions of children whose ability to contribute to the future of their communities would otherwise be jeopardised.

John Harwood
Chairman, CfBT Education Trust

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List of abbreviations

AU	African Union
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
CCF	Christian Children's Fund
CRS	Catholic Relief Services
DFID	Department for International Development (United Kingdom)
ECHO	European Commission Humanitarian Aid Office
ECPAT International	End Child Prostitution, Child Pornography and Trafficking of Children for Sexual Purposes
EFA	Education for All
FFE	Food for Education
FALINTIL	Forças Armadas de Libertação Nacional de Timor-Leste (Armed Forces for the National Liberation of Timor-Leste)
FRETILIN	Frente Revolucionária de Timor-Leste Independente (Revolutionary Front for an Independent Timor-Leste)
HQ	Headquarters
IASC	Inter-Agency Standing Committee
ICT	Information and communication technology
IDP	Internally displaced person
IIEP	International Institute for Educational Planning (UNESCO)
INEE	Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies
INGO	International non-governmental organization
IOM	International Organization for Migration
IRC	International Rescue Committee
LRA	Lord's Resistance Army
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
NGO	Non-governmental organization
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN)

OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OFDA	Office of US Foreign Disaster Assistance (USAID)
PTSD	Post-traumatic stress disorder
SLM/A	Sudan Liberation Movement/Army
SPA	Safe Play Area
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UPE	Universal primary education
USA	United States of America
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WFP	World Food Programme (United Nations)
WHO	World Health Organization

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Executive summary

Education is increasingly accepted as an important emergency response, yet conflict environments often do not allow for state provision of education. UN agencies and national and international NGOs seek to fill this gap, often using standardized programmes. This book, written for the CfBT Education Trust/IIEP-UNESCO research partnership, examines the influences on educational programming in conflict-induced emergencies. It questions whether standardized interventions are appropriate and effective educational responses, and focuses on child-friendly spaces, school-feeding programmes, and pre-packaged education kits. It draws on a review of literature, interviews with over 80 specialists across the globe and country studies of Sudan, Lebanon, Uganda and Timor-Leste.

Decisions regarding educational programming have to be made quickly. The research examines the factors which impact on this process, including the relationship between an organization's field offices and headquarters, and advocacy relationships with other actors. While donors' willingness (or otherwise) to fund education in emergencies impacts on the ability to programme, *what* is programmed is less affected by donor policy. The same is true of publicity: while the use of images of children is widespread, there is very little evidence that this affects what is done for these children. It is the regular use of standardized educational interventions that has the greatest impact on programming. Although communities' needs are often said to be at the root of programming, in practice these needs are often described in terms that fit existing intervention models, and assessments focus on *how* rather than *what* to implement.

The history of school feeding in the West highlights that the influences of publicity and fundraising on programming are not new concerns, nor are debates around the pedagogical impact of feeding through schools. Pre-packaged education kits are intended to provide materials quickly to restart education, but issues around appropriate content, sourcing of materials, logistics of distribution and usage *in situ* continue to be raised. In addition, child-friendly spaces represent an uneasy balance between educational and child protection responses, with understandings of the claimed 'psychosocial' support differing as much as the capacity to deliver such support.

Four country studies examine these standardized initiatives in the field. In south Darfur, Sudan, provision for the most vulnerable children and for secondary school-aged youth was problematic, as was the dual role of Humanitarian Cluster Lead Agencies as donor and co-ordinator. In Lebanon, the importance of national and international NGO partnerships was highlighted, as was the lack of systematization of psychosocial activities and variations in co-operation with the state sector. In northern Uganda, 'emergency' measures, such as education kits and school-feeding programmes, were used in attempts to achieve 'development' objectives, and community participation in child-friendly spaces was problematic. In Timor-Leste, well-organized, inter-agency co-ordination impacted on the extent to which community initiatives and desires were supported, while payment for 'volunteers' was a contentious issue.

In many emergency contexts, programming staff question whether standard 'off-the-shelf' responses are suitable for the local context. Co-ordination should provide an administrative lead without imposing its own models of programme design, and organizations should consider whether structural distinctions between education and protection prevent holistic responses to children's needs. The term 'child-friendly spaces' needs accurate definition to prevent differing interpretations between headquarters and field staff, and the extent to which the initiatives meet community desires for education should be examined. Where school-feeding programmes are used for developmental purposes, sustainability should be considered from the outset, and implementation should include strategies for the most vulnerable children. Organizations need to consider revision of education kits to ensure culturally appropriate and locally sourced provision for boys and girls, secondary schools, and children with special educational needs.

Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Overview

Violent conflict frequently disrupts education. Hostilities can make school attendance unsafe, and schools themselves are often destroyed or deliberately targeted for attack. Displacement of teachers and pupils puts strain on the structures of the formal school system, resulting in overcrowding in some areas and collapse of schooling in others. Even after hostilities have ceased, governments are rarely able to immediately resume support for structured, formal education. Children are often not in a position to take up schooling, whether for reasons of physical location, psychological difficulties, administrative barriers or other causes (Save the Children, 2006). As a result, it is estimated that 39 million children in conflict-affected fragile states are not in school (Save the Children, 2007*c*). Furthermore, many donors remain unconvinced of the importance of funding education in emergencies, seeing education as a development issue (Save the Children, 2007*b*; Sommers, 2005).[1]

Yet, education remains a human right whatever the security environment, as enshrined in the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child (Smith and Vaux, 2003). As such, the importance of providing education in an emergency is increasingly being recognized. The Dakar Framework for Action confirms this commitment to "meet the needs of education systems affected by conflict, natural calamities and instability and conduct educational programmes in ways that promote mutual understanding, peace and tolerance, and that help to prevent violence and conflict" (World Education Forum, 2000: 9). Similarly, the goals of universal primary education (UPE) and gender parity were adopted as Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by the United Nations General Assembly in 2000.

Where governments are unable or unwilling to provide for children's education in conflict or post-conflict situations, NGOs, UN

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1.   This will be the subject of a forthcoming IIEP-CfBT publication on donor engagement in conflict-affected countries.

agencies and communities often step in to try to fill this gap in provision. Frequently NGOs and UN agencies make use of initiatives that they have implemented elsewhere in the past. Alongside alternative education provision, 'child-friendly spaces'[2] in particular have become a popular emergency response to both conflict and natural disasters. A child-friendly space is a place "developed with communities to protect children during emergencies through structured learning, play, psychosocial support[3] and access to basic services" (Save the Children, 2007*a*: 4). In consultation with communities, an agreed area – perhaps a building or a tent – is allocated for use by children. It is supervised by adults, who provide structured activities, including play, sports, cultural activities, safety instruction, and non-formal or (less frequently) formal education. The ages of the children using the space vary, although activities are usually targeted more towards younger children. The space may operate on its own, or as a complement to alternative education programmes, or even formal education, where it still exists or is being re-established.

The widespread provision of child-friendly spaces, providing not only educational but also psychosocial and other forms of support, points to increasing attention on the role of education as a means of contributing to the protection of children, which has arisen since the publication of Machel's report on children and armed conflict in 1996 (Bousquet, 1998; Nicolai and Triplehorn, 2003; Nicolai, 2005). Indeed, organizations supporting children in conflict zones usually share an agenda of affirming and defending children's and adolescents' rights.

Yet, agencies have to compete with one another for limited funding, in order to be able to continue and expand their programmes. This has led, during the past three decades, to the growth of increasingly professional public relations and media divisions within many humanitarian and development organizations (Harrell-Bond, 1986; Slim, 2002). Recent years have also seen an increase in organizations' advocacy work – the use of information and the representation of citizens' needs to bring about change. This might be centred on policy, public opinion, or funding – whether to benefit the organization in question (particularly in bringing

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2. This concept has various names depending on the implementing agency. A recent roundtable hosted by Save the Children USA proposed the term 'emergency spaces for children'. We refer to 'child-friendly spaces' throughout this report because this was the name overwhelmingly used by our interviewees.
3. At its simplest, this may be understood as support for a person's psychological and social development, or their holistic well-being (Machel, 2001).

in funds), or to benefit others (as with advocacy to change policy or practice).

It has been suggested that field-programming decisions for education in and after conflict have been unduly affected by the requirements of fundraising and attracting the media (Hancock, 2006; Maren, 1997). There is a concern that the need to deliver quick, media-friendly (and hence highly visible) services to humanitarian beneficiaries may divert field programme priorities away from comparatively dull but essential educational service provision towards interventions which are more attractive, more donor-friendly – 'sexier', as some put it. These 'advocacy-driven' educational responses are said to be an attempt to appeal to broad public interest, sympathy, and emotions (Allen, 2004). It is feared that their implementation may be more a response to an agency's political and advocacy demands than a professional analysis of educational needs in conflict-affected communities.

The research addresses this contention. Given the high value placed on education by communities worldwide, as well as by many NGOs and international organizations, it is essential that emergency programmes are designed primarily to fulfil children's educational needs, rather than organizations' advocacy agendas. We therefore ask what is behind the decision to use particular initiatives in an emergency intervention, in particular looking at the role that advocacy requirements play in these choices. We also question whether there is a relationship between the factors that influence the decision to use particular initiatives, and the appropriateness of the initiative as an emergency response in a particular context.

This book focuses on a number of programming issues relating to child-friendly spaces, school feeding and provision of education kits. Firstly, the book addresses concerns relating to programming for child-friendly spaces in conflict and post-conflict situations. We recognize that child-friendly spaces are also used in emergency responses to natural disasters, but we focus primarily on conflict contexts for this work. We also recognize that child-friendly spaces are not the only educational initiatives used in such contexts. Indeed, child-friendly spaces have arisen from a history of educational programming in emergencies, and it is important to reflect on this history, and the use of similar initiatives in order to understand the factors that influence decisions to use certain initiatives.

Secondly, school-feeding programmes are common in post-conflict contexts, and as such are also discussed in this book. School feeding involves providing children with culturally appropriate and nutritiously prepared food for immediate consumption and/or the related provision of take-home rations (packaged foodstuffs) given to children for consumption at a later time by them or their families. The provision of food is often conditional to regular attendance, as increasing attendance is often an aim of the programme.

Thirdly, education kits are similarly used as standard emergency response initiatives, intended for quick distribution as an interim measure to provide resources for rapid resumption of education while the formal system is re-established. They are typically a collection of basic educational materials for teachers and students contained within a lockable, transportable container. The contents may include exercise books, pencils, erasers, scissors, a teaching clock, counting cubes, and posters, with the box lid doubling as a chalkboard. The kit may include a teacher's guide, and training on best use of the kits is sometimes provided (UNICEF, 2007*a*, 2007*b*, and undated).

1.2 Research methodology

This book is based on research conducted from May to November 2007. While the main focus of the research was based on four countries in which child-friendly spaces and other emergency education initiatives have been implemented – Lebanon, Sudan, Timor-Leste and Uganda – it was also important to relate to existing knowledge on the topic, and to understand the views of staff working at UN and international non-governmental organization (INGO) headquarters (HQ). We therefore consulted approximately 300 documents during a review of literature on child-friendly spaces, education kits, school-feeding programmes and advocacy, as well as literature on education in emergencies and child protection, especially in conflicts. We were helped by generous sharing of agencies' internal documentation, unpublished or 'grey' literature, including a number of manuals and reports. We then interviewed a range of experts working in the fields of education and child protection.

For the first round of interviews, we spoke to 23 people located around the world. These interviewees came primarily from the HQ of INGOs and UNICEF, working mostly in education or child protection. The interviews focused on agencies' decision-making processes in emergency contexts, the relationship between head offices and field

staff, and interviewees' field experiences. Where possible, discussions focused on child-friendly spaces in the countries, but interviewees were also encouraged to provide examples from other countries, and to discuss their experience of education kits and school-feeding programmes.

To supplement this information, we attended several public events in the United Kingdom (UK) at the London School of Economics, the Overseas Development Institute, the School of Oriental and African Studies, and the University of Oxford. Additionally, it was opportune for the research that Save the Children USA organized an Emergency Spaces for Children Roundtable early in the research period. Kathryn Tomlinson attended this event in Washington over two days in July 2007, during which senior members of USA-based INGOs and UN agencies debated and agreed upon a definition of 'emergency spaces for children', a phrase used to encompass agencies' differing terminology. In addition, towards the end of the research period, the Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE) hosted the World Food Programme's (WFP) online consultation on Food for Education. Insights from all these sources have contributed to this book.

The second stage of the research involved field visits to countries in which child-friendly spaces had been implemented in conflict or post-conflict contexts. Visits were undertaken to Sudan, Timor-Leste and Uganda. A visit to Lebanon had to be cancelled for security reasons, so the planned interviews were conducted by telephone instead. The countries were selected on the basis that they represented a range of both current and recently ended conflicts, and that they were representative of Africa, the Middle East and Asia.

The results of these field visits are examined in detail in the country studies (*Chapters 4* to *7*). Overall, we carried out 61 interviews (10 from Lebanon, 20 in Sudan, 17 in Timor-Leste and 14 in Uganda). The majority of the interviewees were INGO and UN staff, but we also interviewed representatives from local and national NGOs, staff working in child-friendly spaces, local and national government officials, and representatives of multilateral donor agencies. Across Sudan, Timor-Leste and Uganda we visited a total of six child-friendly spaces, three schools and two centres in internally displaced person (IDP) camps. We also attended child protection support and working groups in Timor-Leste and Darfur, Sudan.

In conflict contexts, there are sensitivities from many sides regarding what is happening on the ground, so we assured confidentiality to all interviewees. Consequently, this book does not name individuals nor, in most cases, the organizations for which they worked.

Chapter 2

The development of standard emergency education responses

2.1 Child-friendly spaces

The early twenty-first century has seen a continuation of the increasing involvement of civilians in conflicts, including children (Dallaire, 2007). "Caring for and protecting children in countries of conflict has become increasingly complex. Even if children's physical survival needs are being met, the displacement, multiple losses and violence children are forced to endure interrupt normal healthy child development" (International Rescue Committee, 2004: 3). The need to address this situation has prompted a wide variety of responses from the education and child protection communities. Recognizing children's multiple and inter-related needs in situations of conflict or fragility, many agencies now implement child-friendly spaces.[4] UNICEF's desire to work 'inter-sectorally' led to its development of "an integrated services model in the form of child-friendly spaces" (Aguilar, cited in Nicolai and Triplehorn, 2003: 14). These aimed to "provide integrated educational, health and social support services for conflict-affected families." Their first use by UNICEF was in 1999 in the Kosovar refugee camps in Albania and Macedonia (Nicolai and Triplehorn, 2003). The concept has been developed since then to the model we have today.

The name for this intervention varies between agencies, but so too does the way in which it is conceived and implemented. In response to these diverse practices, in July 2007, Save the Children USA hosted an inter-agency roundtable to agree on a common name and understanding of 'emergency spaces for children'. The roundtable involved representatives from a number of the major implementers of child-friendly spaces programmes, including Christian Children's Fund

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4.   Terms used by individual agencies include 'child-centred spaces' (Child Fund, Christian Children's Fund), 'safe spaces' (Save the Children USA), 'safe play areas' (Save the Children UK), and 'child-friendly spaces' (ECPAT International, International Rescue Committee (IRC), MercyCorps, Plan International, UNICEF and World Vision). As mentioned in *Chapter 1*, this book uses the term 'child-friendly spaces' because this was the name most often used by interviewees.

(CCF), Catholic Relief Services (CRS), International Rescue Committee (IRC), Save the Children and UNICEF. INEE disseminated the results. Moreover, all those individuals present were HQ-based, albeit with sometimes extensive field experience.

Participants at the roundtable recognized that the vagueness of the concept could lead to dangerous misunderstandings, and that varying terms and practices across agencies made co-ordination, comparison, and analysis difficult for the public, for beneficiaries, for donors, and for the implementing agencies themselves. However, there are common strands across all agencies' conceptions of child-friendly spaces, including the provision of psychosocial support, of safety or protection, and of play and socialization. The idea of structured activities recurs, as do those of continuity, familiarity, or 'normalcy', and a focus on space. Most agencies talk about providing children with safety or a sense of safety. Most do not talk of providing security, in the sense of physical protection against conflict-related violence. The establishment of a child-friendly space takes place in an area which is already physically safe (for example, from landmines), with the aim of giving children the sense of psychosocial safety – often used in the field interchangeably with the term 'protection' – which comes from playing, learning, or interacting with others.

Differences in conceptualization are perhaps fewer than the similarities. Most notable is the varying stress on education. For some agencies, the facilitation of education is a principal reason for the safe spaces. Usually this is in the form of informal activities (CCF, 2007), although in Pakistan, child-friendly spaces provided the first formal education for some children (Hermoso, 2006). Other agencies' definitions of child-friendly spaces do not mention education at all.

The definition that emerged from the roundtable was that 'emergency spaces for children' are "places which are developed with communities to protect children during emergencies through structured learning, play, psychosocial support and access to basic services" (Save the Children, 2007*a*: 4). The term 'education' was deliberately left out of the definition in order to clarify the fact that child-friendly spaces are not schools – although some might be housed in schools – and usually do not seek to provide formal schooling. Where education is a goal at all, it is informal education, often conceived as a preparation for a return to formal education, although the research found weaknesses in this. Rarely did the activities undertaken in a child-friendly space intersect

with government curricula or structures, particularly lower down the age range.

The spaces "are not a collection of activities focused on a specific area, but rather a community programme to create a larger protective environment for children during emergencies" (Save the Children, 2007*a*: 4). In terms of the questions of timescale and developmental function, they can be "a short-term emergency response provision which can either phase out or transition into long-term programming, such as after-school activities, early childhood and youth programming" (Save the Children, 2007*a*: 4). A potential tension uncovered by the research was whether a child-friendly space was seen as a contributor to long-term development (such as preventing school dropout) or as an immediate, stop-gap response.

The age range of children catered for in a child-friendly space varies between 0 (from birth) to 18, sometimes up to 25, but the focus tends to be on younger children. This is frequently true of education in emergencies in general, which can sideline adolescents (Davies, 2004). Different agencies' emphases on the role of the community vary, although few definitions include who actually implements child-friendly spaces. This would lead one to presume that it is the agency which does so, or at least which takes the lead.

Child-friendly spaces as protection

Perhaps the strongest point of convergence among agencies currently is the concentration on the child protection and attendant psychosocial aspects of the child-friendly space intervention, and it is this which seems to underlie most programming. This has not always been so. When the various terms around child-friendly spaces were first used for a specific humanitarian intervention aimed at children in a conflict or post-disaster context in the late 1990s, education was a more discrete component of humanitarian responses (where it was a component at all). Similarly, protection was generally considered in a stand-alone context, and where it was considered to apply specifically to children, it was viewed more from the perspective of providing security in schools.

Nicolai and Triplehorn (2003) identify two interpretations of protection in relation to children: protection of the right to education during conflict, and protection against the risks arising from conflict. They draw attention to the intersection between education and protection, and note two main operational frameworks for emergency education which

operate at this intersection: the phased approach (such as UN agencies), and the child-centred approach (such as Save the Children). In the former, the focus of efforts shifts with time (although the stages may be implemented simultaneously), from establishing recreational programmes through non-formal education to formal education. This model has been developed into the 'immediately, sooner, later matrix', which includes a stronger emphasis on psychosocial support and protection. In the child-centred approach, the cognitive and psychosocial well-being of the child is placed at the centre of four sub-approaches: existing education, out-of-school alternatives, measures to return children to school, and non-school age programmes.

The debate on education and protection in the mid-1990s revolved around two distinctions: (1) safety and security, and (2) prevention and protection (Bousquet, 1998). Here, 'safety' implied physical safety, such as the avoidance of accidents. In this sense, risks to safety are measurable and foreseeable, and can be 'prevented' by the adoption of rules and thorough design. This makes safety conducive to rule-based provision, for example, through legislation. The provision of 'security' here implies guarding against human rather than physical threats, both internal and external, and in this sense is achieved through 'protection'. Whilst safety and prevention can be designed into the material fabric of the building, security and protection need to be woven into the social fabric of the community in which a school (or other institution) is situated. The research found that interpretations of the terms 'security', 'protection' and 'safety' vary in the field. Some interviewees felt that child-friendly spaces offer a safe environment. Others acknowledged that external concerns, such as unrest in camps, means that spaces have to close at times because the role of child-friendly space staff cannot extend to guarding children against physical danger. As one education co-ordinator in Darfur said, "It goes beyond our mandate to look at physical protection."

Policy-makers and practitioners tend to agree that a child-friendly space can only be set up where it was safe to do so; this is one outcome of the roundtable discussion. In Sudan, although a programme manager asserted that "the very fact that there is a child-friendly space is a protection", in practice, as an education co-ordinator explained, "when camps are tense, the number of children in the centres goes down." At the time of the research visit to Darfur, most child-friendly spaces were not operating due to the heightened tension in the camps. Child-friendly spaces do not achieve safety: they take advantage of it and, in principle,

contribute to developing practices to keep children safe from harm. As one interviewee summarized, "A safe space does not mean a secure space."

Clearly, the interaction with the community is of paramount concern. The safety of the spaces depends on all members of the community – including belligerents – recognizing the space. Most agencies recognize that involving the community is, therefore, vital to the very function of a space.

It is therefore equally vital that participation exercises do impact meaningfully on programme design. As Malley and Triplehorn (2005: 18) stated, with reference to Basra in Iraq, "Communities are resentful when they are assessed and their needs noted but services do not materialise." One of the key questions is the extent to which community voices are sought and accommodated in child-friendly space programming. 'Participation' can clearly range from a perfunctory consultation for form's sake to Chambers' "handing over the stick" i.e. communities taking full ownership of the decision-making process (Chambers, 1994: 1,441). A useful reference point is whether participation is 'transformative' ("getting communities to decide on their own priorities") or 'instrumental' ("getting people to buy into a donor's project") (Nelson and Wright, 1995: 5). As will be seen in the Uganda and Timor-Leste country studies (*Chapters 6* and *7*), while frequently the intention is to be transformative, often the outcome appears instrumental.

It should not always be assumed that local contexts are benign. In a conflict, communities may well be riven by perceived ethnic differences, and even in non-conflict conditions, the community may 'legitimize' violence against children. One of the criticisms of Nicolai and Triplehorn's 'education as protection', for example, is that it did not sufficiently take into account the prevalent conditions of society in a non-conflict mode. In some communities, sexual abuse of girls by teachers and extreme forms of physical violence, such as school- and community-sanctioned disciplinary methods are common (Davies, 2004; Harber, 2004). Education clearly does not always protect.

The links between this structural, endemic violence, cultural norms and the carry-over into conflict situations do not seem to be adequately addressed. Conflict, in one view, is not something extraneously imposed upon a society. It is usually a product of that society. As such, it is not an anomaly, but an alternative form of normality. A school, or a

child-friendly space, is not a separate part of this situation, but it is as much a product of cultural norms as the conflict itself, especially since the links with the community are so stressed. It is probable that in stressed populations, gatherings of children will be more likely to contain "a significant deformation of interpersonal relationships and roles, which is manifested in, for example, humiliation, intimidation, blackmail and even torture" (Matúšová, 1997: 98), ranging from bullying to inter-ethnic confrontation. This was an issue particularly in Timor-Leste and Darfur, where violence in the community was replicated in camps, thereby affecting the programming of child-friendly spaces. In Darfur, a local NGO worker commented: "The camps have many tribes ... There is discrimination between tribes ... Outside camps, these tribes fight. Inside, these IDPs are forced to stay in the same place. At first, when they need emergency services, they keep quiet. After a while, they see issues which cause them resentment and they cause problems." As the research found in Sudan, this was an issue which a number of child-friendly space programmes attempted to tackle head-on by including peace-building and reconciliation threads in their programmes. Another angle of approach is to use the child-friendly space as a platform for advocating child protection in the community, as was found in northern Uganda.

One concept emerged from the research as a continual refrain: a child-friendly space gives children the space to be children. However concepts of what is 'a child' are embedded in cultural perceptions. Even the age at which a child becomes an adult differs between cultures, and often within a culture. Concepts of what it *means* to be a child differ even more profoundly. Cultures where economic necessity or cultural practice cause families to involve their children in activities, such as housework or looking after animals, and where play is not something which is organized by adults for children on a structured basis, may find it difficult to comprehend the Western antipathy to 'child labour' and fondness for play groups. Indeed, one interviewee commented that, "'safe-play areas' is a concept we have taken from our [Western] play schemes in the park to there." In Sudan, one interviewee self-corrected a sentence thus: "Some national NGOs are trying to make kindergartens – sorry, child-friendly spaces – in camps." While a senior child protection specialist stated that, "Play, developmentally, is the work of the child. When play is done well, it is cognitively stretching." This, however, may not be a perspective valued or understood by the parents of children likely to attend child-friendly spaces.

Equally, Western NGO workers might find it difficult to understand the local viewpoint that a child looking after siblings or helping with cooking is not seen as an abuse, but as an important part of the cohesiveness of a family working together, supporting one another, and a way of imparting knowledge about life skills from one generation to the next (which is, in effect, psychological support). Cultural concepts of the nature, value and importance of play might differ, and assuming that 'a child's job is to play' is universally applicable could be construed as privileging certain views of the nature of childhood above others. External NGOs and UN agencies entering an emergency situation should always be aware that their assumptions regarding the value of their interventions may not be locally understood or ascribed to.

Psychosocial spaces

"We sometimes think we're giving counselling, but we're not."
Consultant, Uganda

Education and child protection were often seen to be brought together in child-friendly spaces through the provision of psychosocial support. The term 'psychosocial' was heard all frequently, but it is far from clear whether interviewees had a common, or even a clear, understanding of what the term meant. As one interviewee said, "No one knows what 'psychosocial' means." The problem is less that there is no understanding of the term; it is more that the term covers multiple perspectives, and different people focus on different aspects. When asked what it meant, one advisor said: "That's a huge question! I can give you the definition which is emerging from the psychological and child protection fields. It came out of a history of people not taking account of the psychology or moral development – whatever you want to call it – aspect of children in programmes. There was a want to take account of more abstract issues. It is an abstract term, and there are 101 different interpretations."

This problem of definition is not just an issue for this research. Indeed, the recent Inter-Agency Standing Committee's (IASC) *Guidelines on mental health and psychosocial support in emergency settings* deliberately uses this composite term to address the differing perspectives of various professionals: "Aid agencies outside the health sector tend to speak of supporting psychosocial well-being. Health sector agencies tend to speak of mental health, yet historically have used the terms psychosocial rehabilitation and psychosocial treatment to describe non-biological interventions for people with mental disorders.

Exact definitions of these terms vary between and within aid agencies, disciplines and countries" (IASC, 2007: 1).

The danger is that these complexities are not conveyed to nor understood by all staff, which impacts on how psychosocial support is provided in the form of child-friendly spaces. An experienced child protection professional, reflecting on the term's use in relation to child-friendly spaces, said:

> The dominant meaning [of psychosocial] is 'enabling emotional well-being in its emotional, spiritual, and social components, as they inter-relate'. In a collectivist society, emotional well-being is tied up with social relationships, having an appropriate social role, being an appropriate daughter, and so on. Conflict disrupts the normal social relationships. It causes emotional distress but it also destroys the social fabric. So, child-friendly space participation is about enabling rebuilding of social relationships, and with a caring adult. And re-engagement with society.

Context is vital to a child's development (Bronfenbrenner, cited in Anderson, Hamilton, Moore, Loewen and Frater-Mathieson, 2004). 'Development' in this context refers to children's ability to accommodate to changes in their environment – and of the environment's ability to adapt to the child (Miller and Affolter, 2002). In practical terms, this means that protecting the child's development involves both creating conditions conducive to facilitating the child's own adaptive ability, and adapting their environment to their needs by controlling the rate at which that environment changes. In 'normal' circumstances, most changes are gradual, but in conflict situations, they are sudden. As one field practitioner interviewed said:

> Children grow up in a certain environment. In an emergency, they see the deaths of their families and friends. They are – I don't want to use the word 'traumatized' – distressed. They need to be returned to the routines they grew up with. They need to be returned to normalcy. So it's not a medical response. That's provided by the medical support staff. It's about helping them to understand why their neighbours turned against them, and why they had to run away.

A key concept in psychosocial provision is resilience: the process by which "children overcome adversity to achieve good developmental outcomes" (Masten and Coatsworth, 1998: 205, cited in Anderson *et al.*, 2004: 6). Davies (2004) saw teachers as the key to resilience, whilst

Fortin (2003) saw a strong over-reliance on teachers in emergency education psychosocial provision. Madfis, Barry, Rono, Triplehorn and Matyris (2007: 8) noted that, "A guiding principle underlying all Safe Space activities is the facilitation of the natural strengths and resilience of children and their communities as a means to improving their physical, emotional and cognitive safety."

There is no clear visible distinction between well-integrated and resilient, and poorly-integrated less resilient children, as they can move between these states of being. Moreover, signs of poor integration may emerge long after the initial disturbance. There may indeed be extreme and permanent tension manifested in learning, integrating and behaviour (Nguyen, Chi Lan and Nguyen, 1983). Levin suggests that the degree of children's exposure to violence – and the degree of that violence – proportionately affects how they are affected by that force (Levin, 2003), yet Gibbs counters by arguing that generally speaking, children tend to be more resilient than vulnerable (Gibbs, 1994). Strengthening children's resilience is the key to achieving the psychosocial objectives of child-friendly spaces.

The research identifies a number of different threads running through the concept and practice of psychosocial support in relation to child-friendly spaces. One, notably most frequently mentioned by non-specialists, is the space for children to express their experiences. In the words of a child-protection specialist, this leads to "validation of feelings, affirmation and acceptance of feelings." For example, a UNICEF staff member said:

> A child-friendly space is physically an area for children to come to express themselves through sport, recreational activities, drama, drawing, games, theatre. They can be indoors or outdoors. Some children can't express themselves in front of people, so drawing can help expression for them and also help children to remember their familiar backgrounds. There can also be indoor games. Sports facilities are the physical aspect.

A number of interviewees reported significant progress in children's behaviour as a result of the activities run in child-friendly spaces; as one programme director said, "Psychosocial and artistic activities do heal children." However, there seems to be an assumption for many that the expression of feelings is in itself supportive, and possibly sufficient. This led some interviewees to question the value of expression. "For

[agencies] there's a question, what do you do with it once people express? I don't think we have well-orientated models. It can be dangerous." Interviewees suggested that it is where expressive activities are integrated with counselling in a structured way that children's disturbed behaviours (such as aggression) are reduced.

The second aspect of psychosocial support is the value of collective expressive activities. A child-protection expert said, "If they are done well they can help you see that you are not alone. Being with others reminds you that you are not abnormal. From a psychological point of view, this is worth its weight in gold." This aspect of psychosocial support is very rarely mentioned by practitioners, despite the frequent mention of the existence of sports, theatre and other collective activities.

The third thread is, as an NGO worker put it, that of "restoring a sense of normalcy" through providing "a structure to the day, continuing with what they were doing before. If their world has been shattered they need to see that the world hasn't ended." The emphasis on normality is a reaction to the evidence that psychological harm tended to result from disruptions to a child's personal attachments, physical location and familiar ways of living (Fullilove, 1996). UNICEF (2003) advocates child-friendly spaces as a way of promoting healing, and notes that involving children in the design and running of such spaces is important (Melville and Scarlet, 2003).

This thread was repeated by several interviewees, stating that, "For healthy development, children need routine." In relation to the immediate context, one said, "Studies show that kids like continuity, daily routine. It really does help resilience in conflict. We have a place during the emergency phase." And to break this down into the details of daily life: "Children have always had some sort of routine. They get up in the morning, fetch the water, help cook the breakfast, feed the younger children, and then trot off to school. In an emergency that routine is broken. There may be more tasks for them to do, but they still need a routine where they can be children."

The fourth thread is the role of child-friendly spaces in identifying children with serious psychological issues. Although all children are affected by trauma, fewer are 'traumatized'; an interviewee estimated that only 10 per cent of children are affected by new trauma, and that depression or substance abuse affects children more than post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). In any case, the degree to which children are

prone to PTSD is debatable, and some think it is culturally variable (Marten, 2001). But certain children do need more specialized support than others. It was often intended that child-friendly spaces should provide a forum for screening such needs, as one child protection adviser explained: "If people are well trained, hopefully they will be able to identify these and follow up. And hopefully if they are doing community mobilization they can also look at how the family is doing. I'm not trying to imply that we know how to do this all well."

One interviewee explained the role of humanitarian agencies in relation to the 'psychosocial pyramid':

> Imagine a triangle with four parts, the bottom one very much larger than the others. That's 80 per cent of interventions carried out in the community, routine activities, meeting basic needs. At the next level, two, it's group support, carried out by trained but not specialist volunteers. Above that, level three is mental health activities, and then level four is psychiatry. We're working at level one, with a little bit at level two. That's the same for all the agencies.

Providing these sorts of activities and an environment which inculcates a sense of safety is not the same as providing therapy (Save the Children, 2007*a*). As one agency worker commented, "The organization that works there should have a bit of psychological background. You can't play with a ball for 15 years. Few organizations have this psychological approach." While most organizations running child-friendly spaces say they are providing psychosocial activities or support, in practice few are experts in the field of mental health. Additionally, in conflict or post-conflict contexts, the opportunities for referral to government-run specialist services are few. Moreover, there are questions over the contextual appropriateness of many interventions. Summerfield (1996: 12) states that, "Projects have been either subsumed under the general term 'psychosocial' or more specifically designated as 'trauma' work, rapidly becoming attractive and even fashionable for Western donors." He calls for "interventions which acknowledge that each situation is unique, that indigenous understandings are crucial, and whose focus is community-wide" (Summerfield, 1996: 29; see also Machel, 1996: 41-42). The Bernard Van Leer Foundation (2005: 6-7) states that many programmes designed to assist in children's recovery from traumatic events, "have uncritically applied Western, individualised

approaches to counselling and therapy to cultures in which they do not readily apply."

It is sensible that aid agencies focus on the bottom of the psychosocial pyramid in implementing child-friendly spaces, but the extent to which they are able to identify and support children with greater psychosocial needs is questionable. Rather than clarifying the role of child-friendly spaces, the use of the phrase 'psychosocial support' often seems simply to add another term which is used in too many different ways to provide a clear structure for supporting children. As a result, an HQ interviewee said: "My fear is for many people it means a collection of activities. For me it is a process of engaging with all these different elements – cognitive, physical, emotional, spiritual – in a way that reduces risk. It does not mean building a child-friendly space."

Our research suggests that this fear is justified, and that attempting to engage with all elements of psychosocial support within a child-friendly space is at best optimistic. For many, the child-friendly space is essentially a forum for providing activities for children – and this is described as psychosocial support. As a result, in some cases, people with limited in-depth knowledge of psychosocial needs attribute to child-friendly spaces a far greater role than they actually play.

Similarly, for school-feeding programmes the evidence from the research indicates that perceptions regarding the benefits of school feeding are given greater weight than the reality.

2.2 School-feeding programmes

As was observed in the previous section, there are fundamental questions raised by the use of standardized programmes: are programming decisions being made along purely rational bases, according to dispassionate, objective analyses, and the straightforward selection of the best choice from the available information? Or are decisions still made because they fit in with predetermined patterns of what agencies think the best decision ought to look like, based on previous ways of doing things? This section tries to address some of these key questions relating to programming choices, particularly in the case of school feeding.

In 1866, an idealistic young Irish doctor, named Thomas Barnardo, arrived in London intending to leave for China to undertake missionary work. But, shocked by the destitution of children in the East End of London, he stayed to open a school providing poor children with not

only education, but also nourishment (Barnardo, 2007). As one of Barnardo's reports from that era says, "We find in many cases that food is more essential to the boys and girls than education" (Barnardo, 1887). Barnardo understood that the connection between food and education was two-way: the provision of food attracted children into the school to receive the benefits of education, providing their families – where they had them – with an incentive to send their children to school, and also allowing children to learn better. Education enabled nourishment and nourishment enabled education.

In order to create the funds required to support his 'ragged schools' and children's homes, Barnardo established a photographic studio in one of his homes. From then on, every child who entered one of his homes was photographed in a 'before' and 'after' state. These photographs were used to make postcards, which were then sold to raise funds (Goldonian, 2007*a*). Despite, or perhaps because of, the great popularity of these cards, charges were laid against Barnardo that he had manipulated the images for maximum public impact, alleging that he deliberately made the children in the 'before' pictures look more destitute than they actually were – charges which he strongly denied.

With the most noble of intentions, and the pressing need to ensure the continued supply of funds, he used images of children in a creative way for a good cause. Very similar issues face many organizations today.

Barnardo's experience contains further lessons. The photographic recording of the impact his programmes had on children, in today's terms, provided an immediate monitoring mechanism, and a source of visible evidence for their success, which could be used to persuade the government and the public of the worthiness of the organization and its activities; in other words, to engage in advocacy (McHoul, 1999). This ability to demonstrate measurable results in turn enabled him to hone a winning edge for his organization in the highly competitive pursuit of funds among similar endeavours, and also fed into the structure of the programme itself, as the keeping of detailed and accurate records affected its very working.

Philanthropic school feeding established two things firmly in the public consciousness: the link between education and school feeding, and the link between education and advocacy. In the late nineteenth century, there was great interest in school feeding (Allen, 1890), and it was generally felt that the cause of universal education, which is both

a sign and a cause of development, could be underwritten by national school-feeding programmes (Pollock, 2005).

The connection between the provision of school meals and attendance was mirrored in other countries. For example, in the USA in the 1930s, Save the Children provided school lunches for undernourished children, which it claimed led to an immediate rise in school attendance and academic achievement. UNESCO had similarly been concerned, following the immediate aftermath of World War II, primarily with the welfare aspects of school feeding (and clothing) (Loewald, 1986). School meals were seen as a social necessity rather than a means to ensure other educational objectives.

Over time, the focus on social welfare provision changed, and more pedagogical aspects began to emerge and predominate. By the early 1980s, UNESCO (1983) was claiming that historically, school feeding in Western countries had been a conduit for social welfare schemes, but that this negated the educational role of school. It was time to move beyond the traditional goals of improvement of school attendance, reduction in the number of drop-outs, and improvement of pupils' attention in the classroom and academic performance, to using school-feeding programmes as a tool to improve education itself, namely curricula, teaching materials and teacher training.

At first, this focused on the direct learning opportunities that school-feeding programmes presented. Turner and Frost (1986) showed how the science curriculum could be taught by reference to the feeding programmes being undertaken in a school. Chicot (1986) felt that, additionally, learning outcomes about hygiene and nutrition could be achieved through the process of actually taking part in a school-feeding programme, and that growing food could teach about agriculture as well as providing nutrition directly. The ultimate aim for school feeding was that it should be self-sufficient.

Levinger (1986*a*) expanded the pedagogical aspect to include not only curriculum content, but also more general cognitive development. School-feeding programmes achieved this by removing the obstacles to learning caused by malnutrition. She also redrew attention to the role of school feeding in increasing enrolment, achieved by offsetting some of the costs of attending school. This firmly placed school feeding in the context of the push for universal primary enrolment. Levinger (1986*b*: 3) summarized the objectives of a school-feeding programme in the

mid-1980s, which, until the present day, remain as a key objective, "to increase school enrolment and attendance among school-age children; to improve the nutritional status of children in school; and to improve the cognitive or academic performance of these children." Proper targeting and the provision of an adequate ration were considered the key programme design issues, relating not only to changes in nutritional status, but also to attendance and performance outcomes. This was particularly true for girls, whose work at home tended to keep them from school more than boys, and for marginalized communities.

Levinger suggested that school-feeding programmes were most effective where attendance was not already high and where children were from low socio-economic backgrounds, in stable, rural, poorer areas. However, programmes had to be regular in order to have a positive impact (1986*a*). This immediately raises questions about their efficacy in unstable situations such as emergencies, where programmes may be short-term or interrupted by rising insecurity. Above all, the context of the intervention was considered key: "Mild-to-moderate malnutrition acts synergistically with social and environmental factors. The risks for a malnourished child, living in a culture of poverty, are multiple, interactive and cumulative" (Levinger, 1986*b*: 4). For maximum effect, the pedagogical environment must be taken into account – the key is to combine nutritional input with a developmentally stimulating environment (Levinger, 1986*b*).

Levinger noted that very little research had been done on the effectiveness of school-feeding programmes. Her review of feeding programme evaluations confirmed that there was little conclusive evidence that they affected enrolment and attendance. Sack (1986) similarly claimed that there was no empirical evidence to show that there was a causal link between school feeding and educational results.

Whilst the debate was very different from that of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the basic underlying premise remained, even if it was not frequently acknowledged: that school feeding had enabled the education systems in now-developed countries to progress, and that this could – and should – be replicated as other countries went through apparently similar stages of development. This orthodoxy was challenged by Loewald (1986: 3), who questioned every aspect of the school-feeding programme:

Most of the many attempts to 'justify' or denigrate school-feeding programmes stem from a carefully maintained fiction that development projects, whether they involve food aid or not, are developed on the basis of 'neutral scientific' techniques. In fact the decision on what kind of project should receive food aid or any other kind of assistance for that matter is usually a complex one based often on the policies or the prejudices prevalent in donor countries and aid-giving agencies.

Loewald argued that school-feeding programmes could actually harm education, for example, when they were not well organized or when undertaken with poor standards of hygiene (1986).

Issues affecting school-feeding programmes were seen by WFP to be the same in development and emergency situations: "There is no clear distinction between school feeding in emergency or development contexts." The former is seen as being an intensified version of the latter (WFP, 2007*b*: 3). This is in line with arguments that have increasingly recognized that emergency education interventions condition future development work (Machel, 1996; Nicolai, 2003), if indeed there is any clear distinction between 'emergency' and 'development' phases (Smith and Vaux, 2003). As with the lack of distinction in principle between education kits for conflicts or disasters described below, this indicates that implementation is a case of adapting a generalized model regardless of context (WFP, 2006*c*).

Other points made by Loewald remain pertinent. School infrastructure needs to be better financed and organized if feeding programmes are to be effective. If school education is of poor quality, and meals have to be scheduled at certain times in order to ensure children attend, then the programme is inefficient and other ways to disburse food aid should be prioritized. Feeding programmes tend not to reach the poorest of the poor, as people have little time to make use of projects. The diversion of food aid from more directly economically productive projects, such as food-for-work, is developmentally less beneficial.

Current trends

There are strong parallels between the West's movement towards universal education and the current global drive towards Education for All (EFA) as a signifier of social welfare (Andresen and Tove Elvbakken, 2007). Using feeding programmes to underwrite access to and attainment at school is seen to be important in achieving universal

basic education in the West. Whether universal basic education has actually been achieved even in the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries is contentious, given the number of children who are effectively excluded from the formal system. As such, "school feeding programmes have come to represent a central component of development assistance" (Janke, 1996: 15). School-feeding programmes are viewed as very valuable tools to managers of education:

> School-feeding programs are known to contribute to the improvement of school enrolment and attendance, increase retention, and improve children's ability to concentrate by relieving short-term hunger. Introducing a school-feeding program in the initial stages of the education program can also help to improve the learning capacity of students, while also improving their overall level of nutrition (IRC, 2002: 29).

Relieving hunger is no longer assumed to be the primary reason for undertaking a school-feeding programme; rather, it is to increase school attendance, although some commentators do stress the role of feeding programmes in contributing strategically to long- and short-term food security (Hicks, 1996; Kyeyune, 2007). There is also a complex relationship between alleviating hunger and improving education: "The objectives behind all FFE [Food for Education] programmes are directed towards improving educational outcomes through improved access to education and by alleviating short-term hunger, which enables students to concentrate and learn better" (WFP, 2007*d*: 1).

This shift from nutritional to education management reasons for school-feeding programmes, and in particular the focus on primary school attendance typically in food-insecure areas, reflects the global push to achieve the MDG of UPE and the EFA targets (WFP, 2006*c*). Feeding also promotes normalcy, giving it a psychosocial dimension (WFP, undated). It is, however, easier to measure school attendance, at least in theory, than it is to measure the increase in attainment by children due to better nutrition or normalcy. This convergence of approaches is reflected in the increasing emergence of standards and guidance on school-feeding programmes, such as the INEE guide (2006) and the joint WFP, UNESCO and World Health Organization (WHO) handbook (1999).

Until recently, donors were increasingly supporting school-feeding programmes as a tool to achieve these targets (Bennett, 2003). Given

the urgent need to get more girls into school, and the related MDG goal of gender equity in education, it is not surprising that school-feeding programmes have also assumed a significant gender dimension, with claims being made that feeding programmes – and, most notably, take-home rations – particularly assist girls' attendance (UNDP/UNFPA, UNICEF and WFP, 2007). A WFP study of programmes in Morocco, Pakistan and Niger found that, when targeted at girls, take-home rations increased enrolment and attendance and the drop-out rate improved. In a programme in Cameroon, which fed both boys and girls, enrolment increased all round, as did academic success (WFP, 2004*b*). The sense now is that generally "take-home rations and in-school feeding work best for the poorest, most food-insecure households" (WFP, 2004*b*: 9). This is markedly different from Loewald's view, which was that families needed to be at a certain level of socio-economic stability before they would be able to make use of food support programmes.

The current research indicates that the focus on education outcomes rather than nutrition appears to be reflected in the nutrition inputs of school-feeding programmes, and supplementary programmes have been established with the aid of secondary donors to add nutritional value. Supplementary feeding programmes are being run by local NGOs in Darfur to add to WFP rations. In Uganda, the inadequacy of WFP rations was highlighted by teachers interviewed, and in Khartoum, efforts by local NGOs to enhance the nutritional value of the rations contributed by donors were not supported by those donors. Interestingly, the difference between *trend* and *need* was explicitly referred to. "The trend now here is to give, where there is food support, breakfasts for one year. The need is for more than that", as one education programme manager said.

The WFP is by far the largest implementer of school-feeding programmes, which is in turn the biggest of the feeding initiatives it implements under its FFE programme (Martin, Kirk, Baxter and Kaufmann, 2007). Other WFP initiatives include take-home rations and food for teachers or for adults engaged in literacy projects. In 2005, WFP provided school meals to 21.7 million children at an annual cost of US$34 per child; in total, WFP food reached 96.7 million people in 82 countries (WFP, 2006*a*).

Figure 2.1   The number of beneficiaries of WFP school-feeding programmes
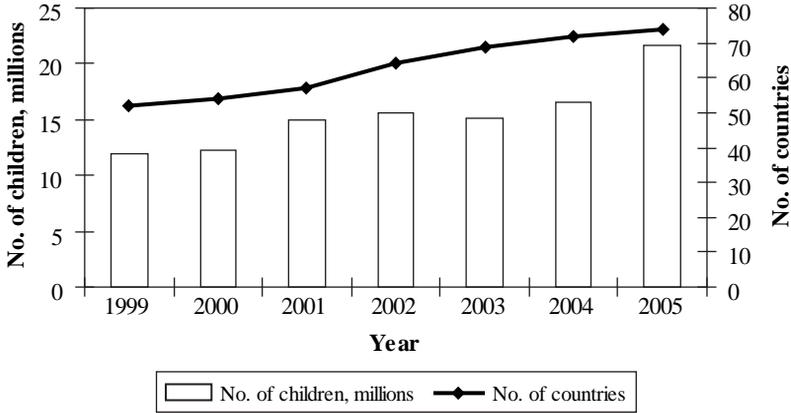
WFP frequently works in concert with UNICEF or other agencies to provide integrated education support packages, known by the WFP as 'essential packages', which might include projects for basic education, school meals, clean drinking water, gender-separated sanitary latrines, micronutrient supplementation, de-worming treatment, school gardens and basic skills education. This is in accordance with a general trend towards greater inter-sectoral programming integration (Janke, 1996).

A good example comes from Lebanon, where a school nutrition programme, described as "like school feeding without the school feeding", was being used to improve nutrition in a holistic way, rather than to tackle malnutrition as a discrete entity. To sum up the intervention, the manager said: "It's a comprehensive programme – if you want to improve the performance of the children you have to work on different lines. If you do school feeding alone it won't have a big impact ... We're seeing impact on performance, eating habits, attendance ... There's also an improvement in the attitudes of the children, and the school environment."

There are indications that donor support for school-feeding programmes may be on the wane due to an increasing focus on developmental rather than humanitarian concerns, helping people to obtain their own food through employment rather than handing it out to them (UNDP/UNFPA, UNICEF and WFP, 2007). This has increased

the impetus to see school feeding not as a humanitarian response, but as a developmental educational and management tool. There are of course numerous other types of nutritional interventions (Allen and Gillespie, 2001) but few others involve the iconic combination of food and school.

The evidence that school-feeding programmes contribute significantly to the FFE objectives has been disputed (Janke, 2001). The Cochrane/Campbell School Feeding Review was the first systematic review of the evidence for the claimed benefits of school-feeding programmes (Kristjansson *et al.*, 2007; WFP, 2006*b*). It found surprisingly modest gains given the size and ubiquity of the programmes, including small effects on weight gain and absenteeism, little or no effects on height gain, and evidence for performance gain only in mathematics and on-task behaviour (WFP, 2006*b*: 22). With particular regard for low-income countries, which see the highest concentration of conflict, it found: "Children who were fed at school attended school more frequently than those in control groups; this finding translated to an average increase of 4 to 6 days a year per child. For educational and cognitive outcomes, children who were fed at school gained more than controls on math achievement, and on some short-term cognitive tasks. School meals may have small physical and psychosocial benefits for disadvantaged children" (Kristjansson *et al.*, 2007: 2).

Other studies report contrasting viewpoints. In its study on food security in Haiti, CARE International (2007) noted that, "stand-alone school feeding was found to have no positive impact on either nutrition or education", causing it to advocate a more targeted, cross-sector integrated approach. However, Bennett (2003), in his review of school-feeding programmes funded by the UK's Department for International Development (DFID), stated that enrolment and attendance benefits were easily demonstrated; cognitive or nutritional benefits less so. Simeon (1998: 1) in his review of Jamaican school-feeding evaluations, also found that the "alleviation of hunger was one of the mechanisms by which school feeding improved academic achievement" and that "undernourished children are more likely to benefit from school-feeding programmes than are adequately nourished children." In summary, there is little undisputed, conclusive evidence of the positive impact of school-feeding programmes.

These gaps in the evidence around the effectiveness of school feeding emerged as an issue in the field research. Monitoring and evaluation were considered to be very difficult. As one interviewee put it, in relation to school-feeding programmes, "We haven't done impact studies ... They're difficult to do in a place like [this]. We are doing school feeding in an emergency: it's difficult to measure the impact ... We wish to say: this is what is happening in [a certain context], but there is no concrete study so far."

The main reason given by interviewees for commencing a school-feeding programme was that it overwhelmingly increased enrolment and attendance, with some interviewees further noting that gains could be seen in pupil performance. However, evidence for this tended to be presented as demand from parents, and more than once, *belief* in school feeding was identified as a factor in programme decision-making. Great demand from communities was reported, but demand cannot on its own be taken as evidence of effectiveness. One comment from an interviewee exemplified those of several interviewees: "Parents are very supportive of the programme, and it does increase enrolment." Notwithstanding, those who administrated the reception of food supplies, as opposed to the distribution, did seem to be able to offer documented, empirical evidence that school feeding did contribute to increased attendance and enrolment (such as the detailed records kept by a school head teacher in Uganda). One interviewee noted, however, in relation to school feeding in Sudan: "People are doing it because they believe in it, that there is a short-term hunger need. They are not going to address long-term needs, there is a good awareness of that." This succinctly captures the apparently contradictory combination of belief rather than evidence as a determining factor in programming, and simultaneous awareness of the limitations of programming based on this.

The lack of evidence and problems with implementation have led to criticism of school-feeding programmes. Baxter (2005) notes that school feeding does not address quality, could promote dependency and could cause conflict if it favours one section of a community over another by targeting only certain portions of that community. Queuing for food takes valuable time out of a child's school day, whilst preparing food takes time for the community. The food on its own may not be sufficiently nutritious. Children may only come on ration days as capacity constraints mean that school attendance is not properly kept. The issue of time allocated to school feeding is highlighted by Baxter (2005: 37) who suggests:

The issue should not be school feeding or no school feeding but whether it is justified for teachers and school administrators to use time and resources administering an adjunct to an education programme. Could this time be better spent improving the quality of the teaching and learning programme? Could the funding allocated to this area be more effectively spent improving teacher training? In a cost-benefit analysis, do the advantages outweigh the disadvantages?

Other problems noted in relation to school-feeding programmes include women teachers being disproportionately burdened by the implementation of school feeding; whether school feeding is substituting for rather than adding to children's meals at home, and whether children are coming to school and leaving as soon as they have received food or rations. There are also questions about the effect of school-feeding programmes on the local economy. While sourcing food locally can boost local production, imports are frequently used where local supply has been disrupted, especially in a conflict situation. This may distort the market or undercut local retailers or producers. This is particularly the case with take-home rations, where imported goods, especially subsidized agricultural produce from Europe and the USA, such as grain and vegetable oil, can end up on local market stalls at prices which substantially undercut local producers and force them out of business (Sparshott, 2004). Importation of food for school feeding (all the food seen in school stores in northern Uganda came from the USA) may also undermine the local economy. As indicated below, the use of imported materials in relation to the local economy is also a contentious issue in regard to education kits.

2.3 Education kits

Education kits[5] contain, in one easily transportable container, the basic physical materials (such as exercise books, pencils, erasers, scissors, a chalkboard and chalk) that teachers need to teach a group of children in an emergency. They are specifically designed as a transitional measure for use for up to six months in circumstances where the formal provision of education has been suspended or disrupted due to an acute emergency. Their chief purpose is to facilitate informal cognitive teaching after the commencement of recreational activities and before the resumption of

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5.   An education kit is known as a 'school-in-a-box' by UNICEF and a 'Teacher Emergency Package' by UNESCO.

formal schooling (Miller and Affolter, 2002), although in practice they are also used in formal schools. Another purpose claimed for education kits is to facilitate a sense of 'normalcy' – by enabling education to continue, albeit in an altered environment with new materials – so supporting psychosocial development (Thomson, 1999).

An INGO worker reported that education kits were first used in the late 1980s in Khartoum, Sudan: "There was a huge influx of refugees, and the churches particularly set up schools everywhere. They weren't allowed to set up churches by the government, so these were part-school, part-churches. And every now and then they got bulldozed. So I decided that it had to be possible for the school to be picked up in front of the bulldozers. It was as simple as that."

Sinclair (2001) states that education kits were developed by UNESCO in response to the breakdown of formal provision of education in Somalia in 1991, and were first implemented there in 1993. Education kits have subsequently been developed, notably in Rwanda and Angola, in relation to conflict zones (Abrioux, 2006), but also in numerous other locations, particularly in countries affected by the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami. They are used by a number of humanitarian relief agencies, as well as some development agencies, and their forms have been widened to include recreation, sports and art kits.

Education kits are designed to be culturally neutral (for example, the exercise books do not have margins on the left or the right) and they are considered a 'standard response' (UNICEF, 2007*a*). The idea of a 'one-size-fits-all' solution, together with the sourcing of the components from non-local sources, and the question of what one actually does with an education kit, have led to a lively debate about their value. It has been argued that they allow rapid restocking of education supplies where normal distribution systems have been disturbed by the emergency, and that they therefore provide breathing space for indigenous educational structures to re-establish themselves while allowing students to access education. But they are expensive (and hence the contents may be stolen or re-sold, or left unused due to their high value), difficult to replenish, promote dependency on outside interventions and have a negative impact on local producers of school supplies (Abrioux, 2006; Eversmann, 2000; IIEP, 2004 and 2006; Miller and Affolter, 2002; Molinaro and Blanchet, 2003; Sinclair, 2001).

The terms 'school-in-a-box' and 'package' carry connotations of completeness, whereas in reality a school is far more than the supply of pedagogic materials. Therefore, kits are, ideally, part of a process including training teachers and providing teachers with manuals (UNICEF, undated). This was reinforced by one interviewee who designed his own kits and who outlined the effect materials can have on the professionalism and self-confidence of teachers: "If it's for a teacher, the kit has a dictionary, a lot of red pens, plentiful stationery, and a lamp – things to help the teacher be professional. Sometimes I include an allowance to give them shoes, so that the teacher can stand in front of the class in shoes rather than flip-flops."

Kits can play a role in improving teaching methodology. One consultant interviewed noted: "The kit is not only a passive aid to good teaching: it can also promote good teaching. The presence of an actual object in the kit, such as a mirror or a thermometer, presents a challenge to the teacher to make his or her lessons real rather than theoretical."

Abrioux (2006), in her review of UNICEF's use of education kits after the 2004 tsunami in Aceh, Indonesia, identifies how problematic their use can be in an emergency setting where infrastructure and communications are significantly disrupted. She reports that in Aceh, initial kits had to be standard ones, as there was no apparent local capacity to produce the required materials, and little training was given to teachers on how to use these often unfamiliar kits. Our research heard differing opinions on teacher training, between the distributors of the kits, who felt teachers could use them without training, and those who worked in schools, who felt training was necessary. An education programme manager in Darfur said: "We normally do teacher training, but are mainly concerned with teaching methodology and how to make a school child-friendly, not really in how to use the kits. Teachers don't have a problem using them; we do monitoring to check they are being distributed and used properly."

Conversely, an education specialist in Sudan said, "The reality is the capacity of teachers is quite low, especially in an emergency where the conditions are exacerbated to the point where schools-in-a-box are necessary. Eventually, they might be able to use them, but initially it's overwhelming." She even suggested that the kits should not be used by teachers as intended: "I've used schools-in-a-box personally in the Darfur refugee camps in Chad – they're most useful if you take them apart and re-distribute the materials. It's not helpful if you just give them to schools. They don't know what to do with them."

Eversmann (2000) examined the use of education kits in Somalia between 1994 and 1997. As in Aceh, he found a lack of training and a similar gap between agency expectation of 'improved' teaching practices, and actual teacher use of materials in rote learning practices. Abrioux (2006) suggests that it is unrealistic to expect teacher training designed to introduce participatory methodologies to happen in the midst of an emergency, yet this is implicitly anticipated by the use of foreign kits, even while the most basic training on how to use the kits is overlooked. This raises questions about the decision to implement education kits if, in reality, planned training does not materialize.

The debate surrounding education kits has encouraged the design and utilization of kits which recognize the idiosyncratic conditions in which they will be used, and the move towards using local suppliers. In order to be able to respond quickly to emergencies, UNICEF stores standard education kits in warehouses in Copenhagen. This is supposed to enable swift distribution when needed, but in practice, several interviewees reported considerable delays. One NGO in Darfur had to wait for over a year to obtain them. Because of the time taken to get UNICEF kits from Copenhagen, pre-positioning by NGOs was mentioned as a positive development by one interviewee: "There were pre-positioned kits in Indonesia designed by children in Indonesia. They were therefore good, and they were based on local things. Not perfect, but good ... [The pre-positioning] was good as the things were there already."

Apart from the contested issue of the speed with which Copenhagen-stored kits are distributed, the use of such standardized kits draws criticism for other reasons. One is the relevance and cultural-sensitivity of the contents of the kits. One consultant was frustrated by the lack of consideration of local context apparently inherent in some of the materials included in kits: "Those ... stupid cubes ... anything with games in is a waste of time, it panders to Western ideas of what children do. Anything with board games or games that use four or five children ... in classes of 80 kids, they're useless." Additionally, an animator at a child-friendly space visited during this study said, "From our observations, the smallest toys are not good as the children put them in their mouths or pockets, and go away with them. They are lost in a short time." There were also concerns about quality. An INGO representative said that, "The footballs in the recreation kits are completely defective", and an NGO worker reported that, "Pens don't work in the schools-in-a-box." As staff of another NGO explained, this is partly a consequence of the need to

have kits in storage ready for quick despatch in an emergency: "Before they arrived in Sudan [they were] approximately ten years in [storage]!" A further issue of concern is the negative impact on the local economy of not purchasing school supplies in the vicinity.

Thus, increasingly, the ideal is local purchase and adaptation of materials for education kits. During our research, the comments heard were ambivalent, with implementing partners (and UNICEF HQ guidelines) advocating local sourcing, yet UNICEF country offices not achieving this in practice. An INGO worker said, "UNICEF brings the materials from abroad as that is cheaper [*sic*]. The only things from here are textbooks and teachers' guides as they are for the Sudanese syllabus. The kits are thus changed for the local context." Another interviewee simply said, "There's no adaptation." A number of interviewees did stress the importance of adaptation. One of them said that the kit he designed (not a UNICEF one) was "very much a living thing", adding: "It has to respond to the real needs of the situation. A lot of the things in it you wouldn't necessarily think of ... It's very difficult to get a school bell in many parts of Africa ... In north Rwanda the school bell had an incredible impact on the whole camp. Suddenly there was time keeping. The bell would ring and at eight o'clock the children would traipse out of their tents and shelters towards the school."

In general, our research found that the use of locally sourced materials was not a high priority, despite UNICEF guidelines which encouraged this. Convenience seemed to overshadow support of the local economy. One interviewee said that the reason standard, non-adapted kits from Copenhagen were used in Darfur was the acuteness of the emergency. Given the long time taken for NGOs to acquire the kits from UNICEF, and that materials were readily available on the local market (a number of interviewees were replacing defective materials in the UNICEF kits with supplies from the market), this seemed unjustified. Moreover, no attempt was made to source locally in northern Uganda, despite the fact that the emergency was over. Interviewees generally agreed that it was usually possible to source materials locally: "A guy had a chalk factory up and running within weeks of the genocide! If we can get chalk in Rwanda why get it from Copenhagen?" Interviewees in Uganda and Timor-Leste expressed concern about the attractiveness of foreign kit contents as being an incentive for theft.

Bird (2005) examined whether the local context was being adequately addressed. Although she found that programme designers

increasingly do take into account the educational and social contexts from which refugees or IDPs originate, this near-exclusive focus on the refugees or IDPs means that the host populations remain insufficiently considered. This sometimes leads to local tension and resentment. She also found a continued promotion of Western pedagogies inherent in education kits, which may be inappropriate to locally preferred ways of learning or be detrimental to creating normalcy and, therefore, detract from the psychosocial benefit derived from familiar ways of working. Furthermore, it risks assuming the provision of training in alternative methodologies, which, as seen above, is not always present.

Eversmann (2000) found that, in Somalia, the lack of age and gender sensitivity in the kits meant that younger boys tended to benefit from them more than girls and older children. In our research, few interviewees mentioned gender aspects, despite the importance of this topic and its prominence in rights-based humanitarian discourse. One consultant noted the lack of attention particularly to girls' needs in recreation kits: "They have five different sizes of ball, and it doesn't matter what you designed it for, I don't care, the boys will take them and play football. There is nothing in these kits designed for girls." Similarly, and rarely discussed, was the lack of resources designed for disabled children. While some NGOs did try to provide for disabled children as best they could with the resources (such as facilitating 'sit-down volleyball'), most agreed that they could do more. Furthermore, education kits were only designed to support primary schools; they did not provide for secondary school-aged youth.

Particularly pertinent to this study were differences in perception as to the purpose of the kits. One interviewee noted, "The kits are used as a way of transitioning." Another stated, "We have been seeing them as an emergency intervention." She continued, "If in reconstruction you keep on giving boxes each year it raises questions of dependency if they're not coming through the government." The issues raised by this are addressed in the Uganda country study in *Chapter 6*, where the kits' principal use was as a tool to increase enrolment, attendance, and retention as opposed to the emergency provision of materials. In some circumstances, there was also the question of programmers entering 'default programming mode', essentially undertaking education kit programmes because that is what one does in an emergency. In Timor-Leste, one programme facilitator recounted the actions of an emergency education programme manager: "His thought was: Let's bring them in; better that we have them

and don't use them." Another interviewee claimed that local people's views were not listened to regarding the direction programming should take in Timor-Leste: "They insisted on doing their ... school-in-a-box."

As with child-friendly spaces, ambiguity over the purpose of kits enabled them to be used flexibly: "So many organizations, including UNICEF, won't put a time on the kit; they won't say whether it's for a year, a term, a week. A lot of it was very visible for the media. It's amazing how reluctant people were to put a time on it. Many people saw it as a one-off thing. In my view it was a dynamic thing, it needs to be supported with re-fills."

Standardization, however, brings convenience. One senior adviser noted: "The value is you don't have to think – you can just respond. It doesn't work to try to develop things in an earthquake. It doesn't matter how good your materials are if they are not distributed in a timely way." Eversmann (2000) suggested that the problems around education kits resulted in complacency in agency utilization of kits: they tended to encourage people into thinking that they were a solution in themselves, rather than a single input in a larger context.

The research found that the education kits used in northern Uganda were not for emergency use – they were not used during most of the 20-year conflict – but for post-emergency purposes, and in particular for a 'back-to-school' campaign. One consultant noted that kits were also used in this way in Liberia, Afghanistan, Indonesia and Pakistan. Whilst this may be successful, there should be a qualitative difference between education kits for 'emergency' programming and those for 'development' programming. A kit used for reconstruction, rather than for acute response, does not need to be standardized in order to simplify and speed up distribution. Whilst the local context is increasingly being used to design programming, this only translates into adaptation of the same basic education kit. This does not sufficiently address Davies' (2004) and Bush and Saltarelli's (2000) concerns that return to, as opposed to reform of, the extant formal education system will replicate the factors which contributed to the conflict. Education kits for use in conflict and post-conflict situations should be designed from the ground up with peace-building at their core – not just in their contents, but in the ways in which they are distributed and used. They should prioritize local sources of materials, in order to help re-construct the local economy, and should be integrated with other programmes of teacher training and school rehabilitation.

In contrast to the negative reactions outlined above, many interviewees responded positively to education kits. As one education officer put it, "School-in-a box – they were appropriate, though pretty expensive. They gave teachers materials, and also gave them a pat on the back. And the recreation kits, sports equipment – these were very much liked." Notwithstanding other problems, Abrioux (2006) states that the use of education kits in Aceh, Indonesia did allow larger numbers of children to return to education more quickly after the tsunami, and that this education was more effective than would otherwise have been possible. Eversmann (2000) similarly found that education kits contributed to greatly increased access to education and improved educational effectiveness in Somalia between 1994 and 1997. One programme manager said that, "They definitely have an impact on attendance and enrolment." When asked whether a study had been done to confirm this, the manager stated, "No, but we know through monitoring and interviews with teachers, students, and parents that they are an important element."

The debate about education kits is vigorous and likely to continue. This research highlights one key issue regarding the popularity of education kits, which often centres on their 'sheer physicality'. This often becomes a driving force when donors wish to see visible, speedy, and quantifiable results. It is relatively easy to measure the number of education kits distributed (and hence the number of beneficiaries: 40 children per kit, or 80 if used in double shifts), and where and to whom they were sent. Providing items that are visible and utilized gives the impression of a successful intervention. It also furnishes agencies with empirical data, witness stories and images which validate their interventions. Whilst logistics, implementation and monitoring are sometimes difficult, education kits provide donors with a tool that gives tangible, numerical results. This quantifiable aspect of education kits, together with their visibility, is attractive to advocates for emergency education seeking to demonstrate the benefits of their programmes.

However, this physicality, which to some appears as a strength, can also be perceived as an Achilles heel. Counting the number of children and teachers who have access to the kits can divert attention away from those who do not, i.e. those who are not in school and the reasons why they are not.

Chapter 3

Factors in the choice to use standard initiatives

3.1 Introduction

If an organization is to claim legitimacy for its programmes, it must show that they are developed with communities, that they meet communities' needs, and that they are effective. This translates on the ground into much talk of 'participation', 'needs assessments', and 'monitoring and evaluation'. But organizations do not come to this discussion with a blank sheet, open to all ideas. They come with a mandate. They come with the weight of previous personal staff experience in the field and of the knowledge shared through past reports. They come with the need to obtain funding from both institutional donors and from the public, and the need to use the media to provide information about what they do. They come with a well-established structure, often very large, which has a certain way of doing things, and in which different departments may have different priorities. They come with values and beliefs. Individual staff come with their own particular professional expertise. The community too will come with its own ideas, its expectations, experience, knowledge and its own way of doing things.

This chapter looks at how each of these issues influences programming, and how they inter-relate in a complex web of factors. The research suggests that a frequent response to the complexity of this web was to rely on what had gone before. Organizations are getting better at passing on lessons learned from experience through the preparation of guidelines, manuals and reports on past interventions. These appear to give evidence of their effectiveness, creating institutional pressure from the centre of an organization for certain interventions. In other words, programming, rather than being designed with the affected community in mind, is becoming standardized into a 'one-size-fits-all' model. The latter is the intervention of first resort in an emergency; in short, it is 'rationalistic' rather than 'rational' (Loewald, 1986).

3.2 Community needs and desires

Most people interviewed about setting up child-friendly spaces or other initiatives indicated that they consulted with the community during this process. We regularly heard comments such as: "The community guides what will happen in the programme" or "from the beginning we used a participatory approach, creating this space with the community." What this consultation process in fact involved is a little less clear. While there seems no doubt that most did indeed talk to community members about their needs and desires, circumstances sometimes made this difficult. "Communities want some of the burden taken off them and they look to you for support. In the first few weeks communities are so stretched, to be asked yet another question about what are their needs! ... Then as [their] life gets more stable, they want it to be the best for their kids, they get more involved."

For some, the nature of the context meant that communities were not in a position to provide representation. "You cannot expect a fragmented community, where a strong chief has died, to provide a response." There was also the awareness that some things were similar across emergencies (particularly when agencies used standard responses in each case). For one senior practitioner, "Having been around in a lot of emergencies ... people will say the same things. They need food, they need water. They are generally happy for people just to pay attention to their children."

An additional problem facing those attempting to consult the community is that this term covers a multitude of stakeholders. As one interviewee said, "Who defines community? Whose needs, and who defines what needs are? It's a huge package. There will be some for whom some needs are being met, but not all, and that's fine, because we can't do all." This was an unusual admission of the limitations not only of any one organization, but also of the concept of 'community' as a self-evident term. Conflict situations by their very nature complicate communities: "In this setting, the 'community' was a disparate grouping of people randomly put together. The mixing of villages caused tension." Manuals and some interviewees indicated that consultation should "start with who's got power and work down." But political concerns meant this was not always possible. An HQ interviewee mentioned that in Sudan, sheikhs were left out of the decision-making process, "due to concerns about corruption" and "too much weight is being given to youth participation."

On a superficial level, community participation implies that what different members of communities want will be similar, and that all the INGO or UN agency has to do is go out and ask them. Of course this is not the case. There has been a history in development of using multiple approaches to ensure that diverse perspectives are heard. This may not be easy to do in an emergency. In practice, as indicated by an interviewee at HQ who came from a development background, "the participation exercises can be cursory."

Some people questioned the extent to which it was necessary or appropriate to consult the community. Occasionally this related to the recognition that community members might have had better things to do with their time, as mentioned above. In some cases, however, the restrictions put on community participation had more to do with the agency in question already having decided what to implement, or being unable to deal with the responses they received when they did consult.

"We wonder how much participation we should have. We have a lot of feedback from beneficiaries and we try to support their demands. When we ask what their needs are they ask for a lot of things we can't help them with, especially as they are returning to their homes where you want them to have more ownership than in a relief setting where your focus is on saving lives. There is some dependency and they don't always see how they can help themselves."

Another often-heard complaint by agencies was: "They hadn't seen a child-friendly space. They don't understand the mission or the focus. After the programme was going well the leaders sent their children to the child-friendly space." This seems to indicate that 'participation', if at all, in such cases, was limited to discussion of the form and location of the building, appointing staff, and perhaps the kinds of activities. As one child-friendly space co-ordinator said, "The role of the community is to select the children and help if there are constraints or problems, especially during implementation." This was far removed from the expectations of a staff member at HQ who said: "It's less about what happens in the safe spaces than about the community relationships. Rapid response has to be less about a service and more a process to empower local people to do things ... It's not about spaces, but about mobilizing the community to address protection, psychosocial needs and education."

The research found examples of agencies whose work with the community seemed to be exceptionally collaborative. Work in the Solomon

Islands was mentioned by interviewees from two agencies, noting the positive engagement with the community and the way in which teachers came forward and organized people. Notably in this case, at least one agency had a pre-existing relationship with the communities in question, and the crisis was precipitated by an earthquake, not a conflict.

Frequently, however, what the community said it wanted was refracted through an agency's existing programming model. As an INGO field worker said:

> Child protection is the fulfilment of a child's rights, and this includes the right to education. However, from a community's perspective, they think child-friendly spaces are an alternative to school, a place of formal learning. Communities don't want a child just to play or to learn life skills. Communities don't realize that normalcy must come before schooling. If schools can be set up then children can be integrated into them.

This last point is troubling in a world flooded with the language of participation. It suggests that the communities do not know what is best for them. A related comment was made by an interviewee in Sudan, who said, "We've looked at what parents want from child-friendly spaces. They want learning."

Both quotations demonstrate that interviewees recognize that what communities say they want is education, and that their usual model for education is a school. As a result, the agencies have tried to develop or present child-friendly spaces in such a way as to seem to the community that they are in fact what they wanted. The framing of community participation within a pre-decided initiative is often explicit. For example, a field worker said, "We found out what they wanted – e.g. kindergarten, vocational training, sports – and tried to see how we could fit that in with child-friendly spaces." Indeed, in some cases, there was clearly a need to convince the community that what the organization was doing was going to be beneficial. "Before the child-friendly spaces were set up on the ground, we held meetings with the community, telling them what we were planning to do for their children. Once we got acceptance ... they were afraid of indoctrination. We had to explain; get their confidence."

There were very few examples of agencies that had decided not to run child-friendly spaces following consultation with the community. The next example from Save the Children UK's evaluation of these initiatives indicates the importance of taking what communities say seriously.

Unlike other communities approached by the organization, community members of Keramat village ... preferred Save the Children to construct a second floor on an existing community building for SPAs [Safe Play Area] rather than constructing a new building. The Infrastructure, Construction and Engineering sector refused this suggestion on the basis of SPA buildings' uniformity in Aceh. Though reasonable in terms of organizational coherence, this refusal passed up an opportunity to involve community members in decisions regarding their own infrastructure, even when they were certain of their needs ... Keramat village members eventually refused to host SPA's activities in their area. (Tan, 2007: 10)

Community participation is thus valuable not only for its own sake, as a positive process, but because it is likely to impact on how the initiative operates and the latter's sustainability. Yet, the research shows that exercises in community participation tend to seek approval for preconceived programming options rather than seeking community collaboration in design. As a result, needs assessments were often self-fulfilling; they pointed to the implementation of initiatives that the agencies had already planned.

A related issue is children's participation and advocacy. As one interviewee explained: "We encourage child participation; in a culture which is highly patriarchal, this is slowly being cultivated. For example, asking them: Where do you want child-friendly spaces to be? What activities do you like? Do you feel threatened in this area?"

Involving children in developing initiatives and consulting them about the space around them may well be beneficial, not only in terms of the children's own psychosocial development, but also in order to ensure the programme is appropriate, that it will be used, and that it will have the intended impact. It can also be important for well-functioning future societies that children are exposed to meaningful, democratic participation (Hart, 1992). What is of concern, however, is the assumption that encouraging participation of children is automatically appropriate. It is important that in 'consulting the community', organizations recognize that there are established culturally appropriate ways of engaging with different members of a society, and that bypassing these could result in unintended impacts on community norms. In one of the country studies, an NGO worker said:

> The youth have a voice; there is strong participation in the programmes by youths. This has created a dilemma. We have 'empowered' youth. We gave them a voice. As NGOs, we are the people they talk to. One of the problems is that the youth have become so empowered that it has created intergenerational conflict. Their voice is strident and they are very forceful in their demands; so forceful that there have been instances of physical threats underwriting demands. So, safe spaces can actually contribute to increased insecurity in the community.

In another country study, an interviewee related that he had been telephoned by a district administrator, saying, "You have to talk to this NGO! None of the children are coming to school because the NGO told them they had a right not to!" The NGO in question of course had no intention that this would be the outcome of their child-rights' advocacy. But, as the interviewee pointed out, since they did not return to evaluate the outcome, they had little understanding of their unintended impact.

Pragmatically, Tan notes (2007: 20), "Encouraging children's participation in designing the SPA building is laudable, but feasibility in terms of materials, contract and timeframe, especially during the emergency phases, must be considered for future programmes." This can apply to community participation in general. It seems that while there is good intent behind the insistence on 'consulting the community', in practice the consultation is less to understand what communities really want for their children, and more to see how their expressed needs can be made to fit into agencies' pre-decided responses.

3.3 Advocacy

> *"Education has always been one of those areas where something is the flavour of the month. Education in emergencies has not escaped that particular trap."* Consultant

Since communities' needs do not seem to be the driving force behind programming decisions, we need to look elsewhere to explain why child-friendly spaces and other initiatives are used repeatedly in conflict and post-conflict environments. As discussed in *Section 3.1*, it appeared that the need to undertake 'advocacy' is a key factor in programming decisions. There are multiple definitions of advocacy, and multiple interpretations of those definitions. At its lowest common denominator, advocacy involves the use of information to try to bring about change. The change in question may benefit the organization doing

the advocating or it may benefit someone else. It may bring money to the organization or to another group. It may bring about a change of policy that has beneficial outcomes for the advocating organization or for others. Most advocacy is, therefore, directed outside, external to the organization advocating. However, the use of information to bring about change can also occur internally.

It is possible to distinguish between advocacy that directly addresses those in a position to bring about policy change, and that which increases people's understanding of certain issues in order to increase public pressure for policy change. A distinction may also be made between advocacy that is intended to bring money into the advocating organization, and that which is intended to inform and promote a response from the public.

The language used in advocacy and to describe advocacy has changed over time. In the 1960s and 1970s, NGOs used to campaign, demonstrate or protest for changes in public policy. Networks between activists were built up and provided the foundation for mobilization around campaign issues. But then questions were asked about NGOs' entitlement to campaign and on what their views were based. How were policy-makers and the public to know that the people they claimed to be campaigning for really wanted the demanded outcomes? These concerns led to the soliciting of beneficiaries' input into campaigns in order to provide legitimacy (Fowler, 1996). If the voices of those affected by public policy were transmitted by NGOs, then the NGOs could claim to represent those whose voices were marginalized, such as the poor or the powerless (Hudson, 2000). The experience of working in emergency situations alongside beneficiaries gave NGOs the authority of 'being there', to use Borren's (2000) term, or 'credibility', in the words of the Jesuit Refugee Services (JRS, 2007).

In the 1980s, with the increase in the prominence of the media in the political sphere, came new methods of campaigning (Benthall, 1991). Interpersonal networks became subsumed by the greater impact, scale, and penetration offered by mass media. NGOs began to lobby through the generation of mass popular pressure for policy change through newspaper, television and cinema by advertising, awareness-raising, organizing, marketing, branding and other means. Concerts and popular music were used as a vehicle for raising awareness and funding and to mobilize the public.

The greater public presence and perceived moral authority of NGOs were accompanied by a more important role for them in delivering services. The multi-national NGOs were not governed by international law nor by the market-driven demands of shareholders, and questions were again raised about the accountability and transparency of INGOs in particular (Lewis, 2002). Hancock (2006: 16) even described the humanitarian and development business of the late 1980s as: "A capitalism of mercy in which aid organizations compete to boost their own size and prestige – with precious little reference to those who are meant to benefit from their programmes ... a situation in which the means has become an end in itself."

In the 1990s, the ideas that NGO accountability to their beneficiaries could act as a surrogate for public accountability, and that the provision of detailed information about their projects made them transparent, led to the formalization of participation by beneficiaries in NGO structures and programmes. *Representation*, in the sense both of acting as a medium between beneficiary and donor, and of representing the NGO itself, has become one of the most important themes in many NGO campaigns. It is representation which gives an NGO the moral authority and the reputation to influence the public sufficiently to build momentum for change – and for it to win service delivery contracts.

There is clearly a crossover between campaigning and representation, and both embody a broad continuum of action. Advocacy itself has two aspects: to represent the view of another and to press for a certain outcome. Both these meanings are implicit in the advocacy campaigns, which currently are the dominant mode of public awareness raising and fundraising. Lobbying and campaigning are now done under the auspices of advocacy.

For education development work, the distinction is more frequently being made between advocacy and service delivery. Increasingly, international and national NGOs see one of their primary functions as advocating for change, rather than delivering services. The latter is in turn seen as the role of the government. This shift has come about due to a combination of factors, including the donor emphasis on direct budget support, with donor governments providing funds directly to the budgets of recipient governments with the expectation that the recipient government provide basic services (Berry, 2007; Collinson, 2006). Some feel that civil society fills (or should fill) the accountability gap, by

advocating for the good use of the budgets to support EFA and the MDGs (Tomlinson and Macpherson, 2007). Fundraising in these circumstances is less about generating new funds than influencing the allocation of existing government funds between sectors. Advocacy for education therefore competes with advocacy efforts for other sectors. This often leads to competition within sectors, for example between basic, secondary and higher education (Latham, Ndaruhutse and Smith, 2006). Emergency education is, to some degree, less affected by this shift, since the countries in question, by definition, are in conflict or affected by disaster and therefore not always in a position to provide formal education for all their citizens. UN agencies and INGOs therefore, sometimes play a considerable role as providers of education in these contexts.

Most actors, including governments, are signatories to the MDGs and EFA targets and consequently are accountable for failing to deliver on them. The existence of the MDGs and EFA targets as an advocacy rallying point impacts directly on emergency education programming. The MDGs and EFA influence the education policy not only of governments, but also of donors and implementing agencies. "The normative forces of international declarations, the impact of new aid modalities and the political and economic powers of external actors, like donors, are all closely bound to each other and cumulatively, in effect, become a strong external force capable of standardizing education policies in different countries to specific areas prioritized in MDG/EFA paradigms" (Yamada, 2007: 39).

The implementation of EFA and MDGs has tended to result in a heavy focus on the provision of primary education, as a result of advocacy, historical reasons and the interests of international financial institutions, including a desire for measurable outcomes (Yamada, 2007: 39). It is difficult to argue against educating children, and so the provision of primary education is an easy target for advocacy. Policies for emergencies are not independent of this general global convergence. Many of the most influential campaigns on increasing access to education are run by the same organizations that undertake emergency programming, like Save the Children and UNICEF. This goes a long way to explaining the tendency of emergency interventions to drift towards facilitating greater access for children to primary school, which was seen particularly in the use of school feeding and education kits in Sudan and Uganda, and the standardization of programmes.

3.4 The need to raise funds

"At times you have to dance to their tunes." NGO project co-ordinator

According to many informants interviewed, funding for emergencies seemed in general to be fairly easy to come by. "Emergency is really a hot potato" or, in another country: "The war hit and we ended up getting lots of grants." One donor commented, "I see after every emergency we have this huge influx of money and programmes for education, from embassies and especially the small donors. It's because it's sexy, it's attractive." This influx of money is not necessarily a good thing, particularly as it leads to instability in NGOs as funding shifts from emergency to development phases. As an interviewee in Lebanon explained, "We got lots of money for the recovery. Big infusions of money that tend to drift away quickly."

Children in emergencies were also said to be attractive to donors. An interviewee in an agency's HQ said, "Funding for children's programmes hasn't been an issue; I've always had money if I've wanted." Another interviewee added: "In crisis situations, donors open their pockets quite quickly. Children look good. If you work with children you're in a good position to blackmail donors to give you money. When donors are going to visit we have kids there. Anything around kids sells well." However, funding for specific child-focused initiatives was generally not seen as so easy to come by. Several interviewees noted that tangible, countable items catering for nourishment and shelter were more attractive. For example, after the initial emergency had passed in Timor-Leste, "organizations in these areas were without funds at one point, especially health, education and child protection. Donors were bored with these areas. But food, etc. is still popular." Elsewhere this was also true: "It's easy to get funding for physical needs, but protection and education activities always lag behind."

Not everyone agreed. A field officer in Sudan said, "For child protection, it's incredibly popular. We don't have a lot of trouble selling it." This could simply have been an issue of comparison to education, since several people concurred with an NGO representative who said that donors "don't fund education" but have "got it when it comes to child protection." On balance though, difficulties clearly remain in attracting funds for education and child protection activities. This is somewhat ironic, given the attractiveness of stories and images of

children as publicity tools, in part to serve the whims of donors. It is particularly interesting that some interviewees felt that child-friendly spaces, themselves an amalgamation (in theory at least) of education and child protection provision, were easier to raise funds for than either sector individually. "It's becoming something more acceptable. Donors don't fear it; they accept it immediately. [A large multilateral donor] has embraced the idea and sees the benefit from last year. It's not only a space where children are drawing that you can show on TV! It's quite easy to sell. It makes quite a lot of sense to have a space where children are allowed to be children ... It's easier to explain than 'protection' work."

The problem of measuring impact was raised in this context, with building schools being considered measurable, but "contributing to building up safe spaces, a place for children to come to ... it's very, very difficult to measure impact." This need to provide countable evidence relates to the influence that donors and their priorities have over humanitarian programming. A few unusual interviewees stated that donors did not influence their programmes, and one in particular said: "We are driven by humanitarian imperatives, not donors." This was notably true particularly where funding was unrestricted, or from private donors.

For the most part, humanitarian agencies' work is influenced by donors' priorities "more than we like to admit", as one location manager put it, for the simple reason that if donors do not like something, they will not fund it. As an NGO staff member said:

> As a small organization, we are entirely dependent. Programmes have been enormously driven by what donors say. If there's an opportunity, we will write a proposal and say we can do it. There's another way that donors influence programmes. UN money often needs to be spent very quickly. That means there's no time for correct thinking-out of the programme, and the rush to spend quickly means that things get left out or not done in the way that you would like to do them.

Another interviewee suggested that while donors might push NGOs in particular directions, the latter still have a say, since "it's up to the NGO to agree or not." While donors may play a significant role in how agencies present what they wish to undertake, aid agencies do have some power in this relationship. A donor summed up the relationship between NGOs and donors in this context, saying, "There is a balance between being open to discussion and taking the opportunity to influence them."

The relationship between donors and implementing organizations is thus one of mutual advocacy, in which the need for funds and the desire to change policy are 'interlinked and interconnected'. As one senior INGO manager at HQ summarized it, "There is no response if there is no money. There's no money if there is no policy and there is no policy if there is no political will. If you see it as a cycle we can intervene at any point."

3.5 Generating publicity

> *"It's at the back of my head that the media are out there."* INGO field co-ordinator

Publicity clearly needs images and narratives, and the most obvious source for these is field officers. Hancock (2006: 4) suggests that "emergency relief work has a much greater capacity to mobilize public generosity than ... more routine long-term development activities." Both Borren (2000) and Jabry (2005) note the tendency of relief agencies to use emergencies as an opportunity to raise public awareness or funds through the use of images. The shocking nature of some of these images has been termed 'disaster pornography' by Omaar and de Waal (1992). Whilst the research shows that, with one or two exceptions, any pressure is in fact for positive images, there is clearly demand for material which showcases more emergency-oriented stories, even when interventions are being used for developmental purposes.

INGO and UN staff interviewed were very aware of the role of publicity and its relationship to accessing funds, as well as the role of images of children in this process. "It's much more sexy to film children playing games than it is to film food distribution." For the most part they accepted, more or less willingly, the importance of their contribution to this process. This approach was summarized by a field worker who said, "Today I feel that, in general, if providing images demonstrates the reality, and if doing that will get us more money so that beneficiaries will benefit, then it's justified." Others had similarly positive feelings towards the process:

> When we have fundraising campaigns in [the donor country] we are asked [to provide material for media work]. It's easier for the [donor country] population to give money when they have a specific image in mind, e.g. the opening of a newly constructed school. I am comfortable with that, with interviews with girls who will tell charming stories of how happy they are. The approach

is always the happy one, not on the kids who aren't going to school or whose school is under a tree. It's basic psychology, like advertising.

A few felt pressured to provide what they saw as inappropriate images. One field worker explained that HQ wanted photos "of the most malnourished or the unhappiest children. This irritates me. Most of our kids are okay. But that's the kind of image they're looking for. They'll be very specific about that. Vultures." But for the most part, interviewees demonstrated that they had sufficient control over the process. For one, "Headquarters sometimes ask for us to write stories but it's up to us to decide to write or not to write." For another: "The cold fact is: what brings in money? Dirty children, heartbreaking stories. I take a personal affront to these things. I'm not a fundraiser ... I'm okay with showing pictures to let people know what we're doing, but singling out a child's own story for a couple of dollars – I won't do it."

The theme of not allowing the media in, or refusing to provide pictures when the timing or the images was inappropriate, was repeated by several interviewees. One co-ordinator said: "We won't use pictures which demean or otherwise affect the dignity of the child, but we will pick positive pictures, ensuring the authorization of the care-giver. Unless we can find an adult to release permission we won't use a photo." Another programme manager explained that although HQ wanted "a direct approach, using individuals, which connects with the public," she refused, due to the inherent dangers of recognition for the children concerned. In general, agencies also reported on being "prepared to be resistant to direct requests from the media."

It appears, therefore, that even though field staff are regularly asked to provide pictures and stories for use by their organizations' communications departments, generally they have considerable latitude in what they provide, and will not usually provide material when they feel it would (adversely) affect the programme or the beneficiaries. Although there were exceptions who saw this as 'a necessary evil', for the most part, the need to provide publicity and fundraising materials was seen as "not a bad thing as it supports our work."

A communications officer who wrote for donors "to show how support has been realized" explained that, "It's a bit intangible what a child-friendly space can do. That's how feature stories can work. It allows you to measure things that are less tangible. It's not always easy to write a

story on child protection." Concerning education kits, a field worker said, "They're very sexy for the media – the media love them. It's something clean and concrete, not abstract. It's so obvious." Both these comments point to the difficulty of conveying what things like child-friendly spaces are set up to do. This was a problem recognized internally, as one INGO representative said, "I've been asked by [our] own media people whether there is a difference between what UNICEF and [we] are doing [regarding child friendly spaces]. Not really." This may also have been a reflection of the confusion over what a child-friendly space was, given the myriad different names and lack of clear definition and purpose. An interviewee from one of the agency's HQ said, "Communications departments get too eager to oversell what we do."

Much of the aid agencies' publicity work is channelled through communications and advocacy departments. However, sometimes they interact directly with independent media representatives. The research did gather a couple of negative stories, including one of an agency which "took the BBC out, and they were saying, 'Where's [*sic*] the children crying in the corner? Where's the orphan?' I said to them, 'Sorry, we're not identifying children'."

There was surprisingly little concern about the nature of external media coverage. When concerns did arise, they were related more to the interruption of programme activities by visits from high-profile visitors or journalists. As one interviewee noted:

> One of the difficulties is that everyone says they don't want pre-fabricated visits but people fly in, have very tight time schedules and have to meet the authorities before they meet the children. Most children are in the child-friendly spaces between 8 a.m. and 11 a.m. So they have to wait around, and may be unfed in that time. So it's not intentional, but due to tight time schedules it becomes difficult. I've had situations when I've had to sit for hours waiting for a donor, singing songs etc., when the children wouldn't normally be there.

A particular incident in Aceh, after the tsunami, illustrated the impact on children that media attention would bring when not well handled. "We had just opened the first child-friendly space. There were endless visits from journalists, with the result that the children were using the Lego bricks to build film cameras, and were playing at sticking microphones in each other's faces! The lesson we learnt is: don't just build one child-friendly space, build several – to dissipate the media!"

Neither of these examples is particularly worrying for the long-term consequences of the programme or for the children involved. In other respects, interviewees were adamant that programming decisions were not influenced by the attractiveness of particular interventions by the media or donors. "For us it is never an influence. We are professionals. We are not seeking visibility." This was a consistent message from interviewees, even when they were aware of the appeal of particular interventions. As one of them said, "It's not true that people choose schools-in-a-box for the camera." Indeed, an NGO worker commented that there was no temptation to focus on programmes that generated attractive images, adding that "it's much easier to fund programmes which are less obviously media-friendly. We have a better success in getting funding for water and sanitation than for those centres."

While the media might be invited in to highlight certain stories to show great suffering, this is said to be to raise funds. Yet "the advocacy department does not influence programmes." Thus, although it was recognized that, "Organizations that are first to respond are mostly likely to be seen, and most likely to get resources. So media creates a pressure to get out there and do something tangible", this pressure does not generally influence *what* is done. A couple of interviewees mentioned the role of the media in bringing attention to a country in which the situation was deteriorating, thus prompting a response in that country, while increased media profile of the emergency raised the levels of HQ involvement. But again, this had no relationship to what was done in the country concerned.

It is clear that organizations take advantage of opportunities for publicity when they arise, and that these more often arise whilst working with children than in other sectors. As summarized by an experienced practitioner, "Everyone milked the tsunami for what they could." However, the research found no evidence that agencies would decide on a particular programme approach in order to create such opportunities. On the contrary, there was far more evidence of field staff controlling access to and provision of images of children where they felt it was inappropriate for the programme or the children concerned. The evidence suggests therefore that standardized initiatives, such as child-friendly spaces, are not usually initiated in order to fulfil demands for publicity.

3.6 Internal matters

The structure of an organization can impact on how decisions are made. Most INGOs have their HQ in one country and offices in other countries where programming is implemented. The relationship between the programme staff in these geographically dispersed offices and the extent of decentralization of responsibility for decision-making affect how programme decisions are made in a specific context. In one institution, a senior member of staff at HQ stated: "Decisions in [the organization] are decentralized. Headquarters is there to support these decisions. Things start with all departments involved, through conference calls, etc. Teams on the ground give advice based on situational analysis. Headquarters might intervene in some circumstances, when needs on the ground have been underestimated."

In other organizations, the structure is much more explicitly decentralized. For example, in World Vision International, country offices form part of a partnership with common policies, but they are independent organizations with their own boards of directors. They have considerable latitude in making their own decisions concerning programming, so that in the event of an emergency, as a HQ staff member explained, "The response depends on the World Vision in the country."

The Save the Children Alliance model is more complicated, in that not only does each member agency have an HQ and country offices, but the various Alliance members across the world co-ordinate their efforts in the event of an emergency. Depending on the circumstances, either one Alliance member responds to the emergency, or multiple members work together with a designated lead agency. A member of staff explained:

> There's an emergency liaison team who, within the first 24 or preferably 12 hours of an emergency occurring, decides whether it's an individual agency. Increasingly it is an Alliance response ... A lead agency is established, which comes with different responsibilities. It's not only the programme response, but also for funding, communication, advocacy. They put together an assessment team, and together with national and local government, the UN and other INGOs, they decide what we can do. They put together an appeal and start targeting donors.

There are thus differences between organizational approaches, yet in almost all cases, respondents repeated similar sentiments, as this particular interviewee: "Our country programme has developed the

content of our methodology, but the final say and approval come from [headquarters]." There is minimal differentiation between the various agencies' programmes for children in emergencies, or even possibly little space for differentiation.

One reason for the involvement of HQ staff in field decision-making is the specialization of the staff involved. In the event of a sudden emergency in a country where an agency already has an office staffed by development personnel, the latter do not necessarily have expertise in emergency response. This was the case in Timor-Leste, when conflict broke out in the capital, Dili, in 2006. At the time, the agencies then still present in Timor-Leste were working on development and emergency personnel were flown in to assist. These experts were valued by development personnel. They provided support in different ways by: (1) meeting elsewhere with field staff when the latter were evacuated during the height of the conflict; (2) acting as very temporary advisors, for example, one UNICEF expert visited Timor-Leste for approximately three weeks; (3) serving as short-term emergency personnel brought in to provide training and to begin the co-ordination and implementation of emergency initiatives.

3.7 Education and protection

"We had a big argument about whether it's child protection or education." INGO programme manager, Sudan

One issue that affects decisions around programming for children is the way in which agencies institutionally address children's diverse needs. Humanitarian organizations supporting children generally either approach children's needs through the separate lenses of education and child protection, or view the child holistically. However, the movement towards the mainstreaming of education in an emergency has been paralleled by its integration with the provision of other basic services, such as health and protection. Child-friendly spaces have mirrored this evolution; in fact, they can be seen both as a result and an emblem of the integration of education with protection and basic service provision. Yet, child protection and education are still seen as separate sectors by the UN Cluster system.

Child-friendly spaces are seen by some as a 'bridge' between education and child protection departments, facilitating – at least in theory – a holistic approach despite the practical realities of organizational staffing structures. In one child-focused organization, "Education and

child protection are two different divisions ... and education is subsumed within child protection in child-friendly spaces. But they are all interdependent; education and child protection are inseparable."

In several agencies, the structural division seems to create more barriers than bridges. How the dynamic plays out differs depending on the context on the ground. An interviewee in one of the country studies reported that, for her organization, "Child-friendly spaces are seen as non-formal education with a protection component." For other organizations, the opposite is true, and child protection carries more weight. One interviewee said, "There's more of a child protection ... than an educational [slant], but it's a partnership between the two. We don't want to take away from the schools; we don't want to be in competition." Another said that, "The core purpose of child protection is a clear mandate ... If child-friendly spaces were programmed solely under education, [the education department] wouldn't appreciate the protection component of the space."

Even within the same agency, there are differences of opinion over the degree to which child-friendly space are for education or protection. For example, one UNICEF staff member said, "Child-friendly spaces were considered the property of child protection." Yet a colleague reported, "Child-friendly spaces do child protection and education work increasingly together." A UNICEF officer in another country noted: "I like to think of education as holistic. Speaking as UNICEF, we do try to characterize these programmes in order to work effectively. There's not a lot of education taking place, which is not the same as saying there's not a lot of learning taking place. Education has schools, protection rarely has a space. Education has probably become a dirty word!" A number of other interviewees saw protection as an entry point at the start of the emergency, which would then develop into an education programme. This meant that in some cases, education officers were not assigned until a later stage in the emergency.

Such commentaries indicate the difficulty agencies have in providing a truly holistic intervention for children. In general though, within the context of child-friendly spaces, the educational aspect is seen as a subset of the protection agenda. As a result, some questioned their educational impact: "They are born of the experience of child-rights and child-protection programmes, and this has conditioned their function." Moreover, where child-friendly spaces are more frequently implemented

by protection staff, it appears that education is a lower priority and that protection takes precedence in an emergency. Part of the problem for some is that they simply do not have the staff with the required expertise, and so consultants have to be called in. As one donor said, "It would be good for the ... programme to have someone with knowledge beyond an administrative focus, with more of an education background."

A couple of interviewees asserted that the reasons for this inappropriate division lie in donors' priorities. One interviewee felt that donors were more interested in psychosocial aspects than protection issues, and were not really interested in education: "Donors tend to see things as separate, not integrated." Another explained that the 'system' rarely allowed them to work in both education and community services, for example, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) separated contracts for the different sectors. This division also relates to the division in donors' funding methods, namely, funding for emergencies and funding for development. Several interviewees commented that protection tends to be viewed as an emergency humanitarian response, while education is seen as a development response.

Such diversity of perspectives regarding which sector should be responsible for the implementation of child-friendly spaces illustrates a common conundrum. As we have seen, the standard response of the majority of agencies working with children in an emergency situation is the creation child-friendly spaces. Yet, there are divergent opinions, even within the same office of one agency, as to which set of needs should be addressed. This indicates a critical area of concern regarding the division between education and child protection: that it responds to organizational needs for structure and order, rather than actually responding to the needs of children.

One practitioner, reporting on the situation in a specific country, said: "It was basically child protection. It was disorganized, they didn't know what they were doing. Providing safe spaces that weren't really safe. We had teachers there, so I said, 'Forget about child protection, we'll do emergency education.' So I got them to come up with a curriculum, a set of structured activities." Here the model of organization was decided in relation to the resources available, rather than the needs. Taking this a step further, another interviewee noted that their organization "wasn't looking at education, it was just looking at the child-friendly spaces

model." This illustrates the reality that the child-friendly space model has become something that organizations automatically undertake, and the relationship to educational or protection needs has become, in some cases, irrelevant.

Organizations are themselves unsure how to manage this dilemma of linked but separate fields. In one, in which the emergency department was going through re-organization, leaving confusion as to where emergency education concerns were best placed, an interviewee asked, "Where is education going to be? Is it going to be under education, which is a much larger team, or is it better to have them in protection?" A representative of another agency claimed to be "struggling with what it [child protection] is" adding, "I'm a bit nervous about it just coming under education. That's my personal view. Education tends to have a much more formal structure. The community outreach bit gets lost." Field research indicates that a sometimes arbitrary and often unhelpful distinction is drawn between the education and psychosocial sectors. It sometimes precludes effective co-operation between education and child protection experts. Some agencies prioritize child protection over education issues, partly because of the mandate, values and priorities of the organization, and partly because in an emergency, donors are more likely to release funds for protection than education interventions. It sometimes results in confusion over the types of activities which are most appropriate in a child-friendly space. At other times it prevents the realization of an integrated strategy for children as a whole.

Where there is a conflict of ownership between education and child protection sectors, there is a danger that this could adversely affect programming, as focuses become unclear and protection and education objectives either conflict or are neglected. Where protection is privileged, education risks being sidelined, even though people *think* it is being addressed because child-friendly spaces are being provided. This is a long way from addressing the recognized need to ensure that the right to education is not compromised in an emergency.

The impact of the division between sectors is especially noticeable where there are separate Cluster Leads for education and protection. In Sudan, for example, there are different offices and different working groups for education and protection (although officers consult one another). It was reported that the Child Protection Working Group in Southern Sudan actually has a strong education focus, whilst the one in

south Darfur does not, instead concentrating on protection. The lack of consistency risks creating gaps in provision for children's needs.

As a result of this evidence we suggest that a *children's sector*, incorporating both education and child protection sectors, might be a useful way of addressing these issues.

3.8 Consolidating institutional experience

Agencies working to educate and protect children in post-conflict situations have consolidated their experience and approach in a number of ways. Training provided to field offices in running child-friendly spaces was mentioned by several interviewees, and provides one explanation for the consistency in using these initiatives. In part, training is needed to address the lack of specialization of the staff on the ground.

> Staff working in safe spaces and in child protection generally don't have a professional, trained, qualified background. This is true of many in child protection. They go out and learn on the job, and do what they do without the benefit of a sound analytic understanding or an approach informed by academic rigour. This is not true of education, where people tend to be qualified teachers with skills and knowledge which transfer easily. Child protection teams tend to have fewer qualified staff.

Training in child protection should seek not only to provide an understanding of the general issues around child protection, but also to convey the specificities of the intervention chosen by the agency to meet these needs. Manuals serve a similar purpose: to increase the understanding of staff around the needs of children in emergencies, and also to lay out the usual agency response to emergencies. While manuals may have a beneficial result in terms of quality of implementation, they also standardize responses, and for some become the main assessment tool. When deciding what to do in an emergency is based primarily on a laid-down procedure contained in manuals, such manuals need to be of sufficient quality to ensure that programmes not only are implemented in line with planned objectives, but also that the assessment opens up rather than limits options. As one manager said of their agency's assessment documentation, "These can come to define what will happen, pre-empting responses, even though they do incorporate an element of choice." UNICEF lays out which initiatives it will implement regardless of the outcome of a needs assessment, stating in its *Core commitments for children in emergencies* that it will establish "temporary learning

spaces with minimal infrastructure" and resume schooling by "providing teaching and learning materials and organizing semi-structured recreational activities" (UNICEF, 2005: 13-14).

An additional factor in decisions around emergency programming is the high turnover of staff in emergency contexts. One way of managing this issue is for HQ to take greater control over programming decisions. HQ staff in one agency reported that they had developed its technical unit over the preceding ten years in order to address the "tremendous inconsistency in the quality of programmes." They went on to say that much depended on "who was on the ground", adding that in order to ensure quality control, mission statements and policy documents have been agreed upon, so that, although there is a "very different response in Darfur or Lebanon, there are overriding key principles that will still apply."

Agencies have predefined mandates within which they operate, and will only respond where they are able to do so within their mandate. As one senior staff member said, "We look at what the needs are and whether they are needs we have a mandate to respond to." However, in practice, needs assessments are done in line with an agency's existing mandate. Some interviewees talked of a needs assessment being the beginning and the basis of a decision-making process. For example, one project manager said, "The needs assessment is done here; that's the beginning of the design of the programme." However, the interviewee continued with a description of how the initiative in question had previously been 'piloted' in another country:

> That was then forwarded to [headquarters], who gave the go-ahead, on the basis of a one-year pilot. There are basic guidelines, lessons learnt from [the pilot country], but there are also opportunities to learn from experience on the ground here for the things which can't be replicated or do not transfer. We have lots of room to make our own decisions in accordance with the realities on the ground, but certain decisions do need to be shared.

The needs assessment was not, therefore, the beginning of the design of the programme, as suggested. On the contrary, in many contexts it seems that needs assessments are themselves designed with a particular initiative in mind. Other interviewees reported that "before people arrive in the country they are already talking about child-friendly spaces" or that "a draft budget for a child-protection programme which

included child-friendly spaces had already been put forward before the assessment took place." Some interviewees reported that advisers were not brought together to "read the situation, assess, and analyse together" or that "the assessments are usually quantitative and don't provide sufficient evidence." In practice, if the organization has already decided – explicitly or otherwise – to implement a certain initiative, the needs assessment becomes an assessment not of what to do – or indeed what the overall needs are; nor of whether to implement that particular programme – but only of *how* to implement it. Indeed, sometimes there are, as an INGO worker said, "Strong ideas already on the how." This suggests that organizations are not innovating with each new emergency, nor meaningfully designing interventions with individual communities, but rather that responses are indeed standardized.

Child-friendly spaces are one such standard intervention. Time and again, interviewees noted that child-friendly spaces are "a very standard programme", a "large standard component of humanitarian response", or a "knee-jerk response." As a senior representative at an INGO's HQ said, "Everyone is doing them." While this is not strictly true, a large proportion of INGOs and UN agencies, and hence their national or local partners, are using child-friendly spaces in their initial (and sometimes longer-term) programming. Such agencies include CCF, IRC, Plan International, Save the Children Alliance, UNICEF, War Child Holland and World Vision International.

The reasons given for this standardization, in and across agencies, included that they are "flexible, quick, holistic models", "communities 'get' them, and see that 'Aah, we're able to help our children'", "They are the basic platform of [this organization] in the context of child protection", "the model most agencies are using", or, as one UK interviewee said, "It's almost become *de facto*, it's something that just happens, it's universal. It's so flexible that you can meet the needs of any situation." In some agencies, this has spread even further, in that child-friendly spaces are used developmentally as well as in an emergency response. It is notable that this response is not confined to one or a few agencies; representatives from all major agencies agreed that child-friendly spaces have become the norm.

This standardization is supported and even encouraged by the humanitarian community as a whole. The movement of staff (along with their skills and training) between agencies are among the reasons for

this homogeneity, alongside the ease with which reports can now be disseminated through the Internet. Also the increasing use of guidelines prepared by global organizations or coalitions of NGOs has meant that interventions are actually converging on industry-wide standards. The role of UNICEF, as both donor and co-ordinator of child protection and education programmes, is another reason for standard practices to be adopted, as addressed in *Chapter 6*. The existence of INEE is a further factor. With its myriad resources, good practice guides and engagement in training and online consultations (such as that on school-feeding programmes that occurred during this research period), INEE provides a focus both for sharing of 'good practice' and for encouraging standardization of practice. Other bodies also take this process forward; the 2007 UNHCR NGO Forum included a session on child-friendly spaces and Save the Children USA's recent *Emergency spaces for children roundtable report* (Save the Children, 2007*a*) was an explicit attempt to standardize the definition and practice guides.

We are not suggesting that using agreed standards or programming based on tried and tested initiatives is a bad thing; indeed, where evaluation and feedback are undertaken, it is commendable. However, the research did not reveal whether much rigorous evaluation has been undertaken. A researcher of INGO practice stated:

> There is a huge weight of influence of previous practice on current [practices]. The biggest influence is what was done before. Only a crisis within the organization might shift things. But the default mode is what was done before. Organizations feel that they are doing the right thing. If it ain't broke don't fix it. Absent evidence to the contrary, that is what organizations do. The key thing is to build that body of evidence to the contrary.

Sometimes, there is a reluctance to put one's programmes up for scrutiny, particularly in a world in which competition for funds is high and reputation important. As one interviewee remarked: "We don't have any really serious evaluation that will feed into programmes ... An honest evaluation: I don't think too many of them happen. To come in from the outside, to have someone sit down and go, 'This is going well; this is not.' Very often we're frightened of evaluations." If evaluations are undertaken, they need to be used to feed back into the programming cycle, to improve on all stages of programme design and implementation. The research found little evidence of this occurring in relation to standardized initiatives like child-friendly spaces.

Many interviewees saw nothing wrong with this approach; child-friendly spaces, the humanitarian world's flexible friend, were seen to meet all needs. But some dissenting (often senior) voices were heard, such as one UK-based education manager:

> There should be a greater set of alternatives and more investigation of children's needs in emergencies, including their psychosocial needs, whatever that means. Child-friendly spaces are described as if we are really meeting needs (nutrition, health, education, psychosocial), but I wonder if we really are. There is nothing wrong with child-friendly spaces, but do we have a full understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the family and community, and do child-friendly spaces address them?

The research shows that initiatives like child-friendly spaces were implemented largely because, as an NGO HQ interviewee stated, "The belief in what is developed creates a momentum for replication." Its value and place in the pantheon of emergency interventions is expected and assumed. While other factors, discussed above, play some role in programme decision-making, in practice, in education and child protection, the 'decision' to implement certain initiatives, such as child-friendly spaces, has often already been made before any emergency occurs.

In order to examine on-the-ground use of standardized initiatives in detail, we developed four country studies of their use in specific emergencies. We visited Sudan, Uganda and Timor-Leste, and interviewed experts in Lebanon by telephone. The following four chapters present the results of the country study research.

Chapter 4

Country study: south Darfur, Sudan

4.1 Introduction

This chapter examines the extent to which child-friendly spaces and school-feeding programmes in Darfur provide for the most vulnerable children, including secondary school-age children. It argues that what was programmed by NGOs was affected by the dual role of UNICEF as funder and co-ordinator, and by the profile that the emergency had with donors and the public.

In 2003, low-level violence between groups in north, south, and west Darfur erupted into major conflict. Combatants in this fractured conflict include groups of mostly Arab, nomadic, pastoralist militia, known as the Janjaweed, allegedly supported by the Government of Sudan. Opposing them are a variety of rebel groups, frequently agriculturalists, who themselves are splintered into sub-groups. The main rebel groups are the Sudan Liberation Movement/Army (SLM/A) (including factions both allied and opposed to the government) and the Justice and Equality Movement. The Janjaweed are also said to be factionalized, such that inter-factional violence is the greatest source of death and displacement in Darfur (Save Darfur, 2007). Estimates of the number of casualties vary widely, but around 2.2 million people have been displaced (OCHA, 2007*b*), and between 200,000 and 400,000 killed (Daly 2007), by far the majority of whom are civilian. Nyala, the capital of south Darfur, is the epicentre of the conflict.

The causes are complex, with pressures on the environment, under-development, political marginalization, ethnic differences and the deliberate exacerbation by the government of tribal tensions being claimed among the factors (de Waal, 2007*a* and 2007*b*). The region has a history of occasional conflict between pastoralist and agriculturalist groups, originally over water and land. This has been exacerbated more recently by desertification, population growth and climate change (Bromwich, 2007). Several interviewees said the Arabization policies of the government are the primary cause of the violence, emphasizing ethnic aspects of the conflict.

Map 1   Map of Sudan

Source: Perry-Castañeda Library Map Collection, the University of Texas at Austin, USA.

At the time of the research visit, there was an African Union (AU) peacekeeping force in Darfur with a limited mandate. A combined AU and UN peacekeeping force – with a personnel of 31,000, the largest ever peacekeeping force – was to be deployed in 2008. Despite a series of peace agreements signed between various combinations of protagonists, the situation has been deteriorating since November 2006.

The effect on civilians has been severe, as protagonists have acted in areas frequented by the militia, in order to cut off their alleged support networks. Villages and crops have been burnt, civilians killed and raped, and children recruited by the militia (UN, 2007). This has led to large-scale displacements of civilians to IDP camps throughout Darfur and further afield to Khartoum state and Chad (Save Darfur, 2007). Some camps exceed 100,000 people.

Frequently, different ethnic groups live within the same camps. Some interviewees claimed that the Government of Sudan paid

unemployed young men in the camps to commit violence in order to foment inter-communal tension. This, it was alleged, provided the police and army with a justification to enter the camps and forcibly relocate large numbers of people. However, the forced relocations were denied by the Government of Sudan (BBC, 2007). The atmosphere in the camps is therefore tense, with frequent, severe disruptions to the lives of the people living there.

The humanitarian response accordingly has been dramatic, with a substantial number of agencies supplying essential services to camp residents and host communities. Thirty per cent of the global food aid commitment was to Darfur at the time of the research visit, up from 5 per cent prior to the emergency. Interviewees said there were 2 million people in the camps and over 4 million people dependent on general food distribution. In south Darfur, the response is co-ordinated by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) with UNICEF as Cluster Lead for child protection and education.

Jonathan Penson visited Nyala in October 2007, when tension was extremely high, consequently severely curtailing access to the camps. However, he managed to visit the child-friendly spaces in one of the more accessible camps at the time. He also visited the educational facilities in an IDP camp on the outskirts of Khartoum, and interviewed donors and NGO staff in Khartoum. This enabled a comparison between programming in a high-profile emergency to one devoid of the public's gaze. Interviewees included field workers and national co-ordinators, local and regional programme managers, community volunteers, and child protection and education specialists from local, national, and international NGOs, UN and other multilateral agencies.

4.2 Supporting the most vulnerable

Child-friendly spaces

"We are not reaching all of the most vulnerable children in camp." NGO worker, Darfur

A visit to a child-friendly space in Darfur can be an encouraging experience. The children seem happy and relaxed; they look healthy and well dressed – especially those in the donated football shirts. The space is well used, and various activities are going on, supervised by friendly staff. Step outside the boundaries, however, and the picture is different. Large numbers of children, of all ages, hang about their huts, play by the

side of the road, or walk purposefully from place to place. They are not in school; they are not in the child-friendly space.

What prevents these children from attending child-friendly spaces? Are the needs of the most vulnerable being addressed by these initiatives? One reason given for children's absence is the economic necessity of child labour. An animator explained: "At the moment, the numbers [in the child-friendly space] are fewer because it is the harvesting season in October and the children are working there, pushing wheelbarrows and working in the local markets." The director of a local NGO noted that when insecurity increased, "most children leave the camp in the morning and come to Nyala to do domestic labour in town, especially the girls."

It may be that the activities provided in the child-friendly spaces are not sufficiently attractive for children. When asked whether they had friends outside the space who did not attend, and if so why, children answered, "We know children who don't come here or go to school. They are not interested. They have their own ways of playing or to be relaxed elsewhere." One animator talked about measures they took to prevent their charges 'escaping': "We need dates and sweets to encourage the children not to escape from the centre and to increase enrolment." When asked about the attractions of escape, he answered, "They join their friends playing outside, or they work in town." 'Escaping' was seen as a big problem by the animators. We thought that this was an interesting choice of word, and indeed an interesting situation, especially since a number of interviewees noted that children attend child-friendly spaces because there is insufficient capacity in schools, and they are seen as a next-best option.

Children could be drawn to the child-friendly spaces by the resources they receive there. It was reported that children sometimes went from space to space in the camp, collecting toys or other freely distributed items. Attendance in one space fell when it stopped giving away soap. This underlines the economic aspects affecting attendance – even when related to activities, there seems to be a cost-benefit calculation necessary, which possibly keeps the poorest children away. The older children stated unequivocally that they preferred learning activities to playing. Perhaps, part of the reason for this is that learning is seen as equipping children with marketable skills, which have a future financial value. Where play has too high a profile, children possibly see the cost as too high in relation to the likely benefits.

The presence of people from different tribes also has implications for attendance in child-friendly spaces. One co-ordinator said, "You can't put Arab and non-Arab children in one centre." This includes the staff as well. "People who are from Arab or non-Arab backgrounds cannot work in other tribes' areas, so [one organization] employs people according to their area [i.e. their ethnic affiliation]." One interviewee explained that he could not visit the camp for which he was the programme manager, as people would think he was Janjaweed. Another could not enter his respective camp in case people thought he was not Arab. A number of allegations were made by some interviewees about ethnic partiality in the co-ordination and management of child-friendly spaces: "Some of the humanitarian community discriminates, but it's the beneficiaries who discriminate [most]." Some organizations saw child-friendly spaces as vehicles through which to engage communities in peace and reconciliation activities. One interviewee said, "Our main objective is reconciliation; trying to find co-existence processes in the community. Child-friendly spaces stress our activities of reconciliation and coexistence between populations."

During the pre-field visit interviews, a number of interviewees said that they felt that their organizations were not adequately addressing the needs of disabled children. This was forcefully underlined during one field visit, when a blind child was brought to the front of the crowd of children around the researcher, who was then told that they catered for disabled children. There is therefore an awareness that children with special needs might require special attention to access child-friendly spaces, but more understanding and training is required before they would be integrated in a fully sensitive manner, and their individual needs addressed.

Once children are attending child-friendly spaces, there seemed to be measures in place to address vulnerabilities. A register of children's names was taken every day, and we were told that absences were investigated by the animators: "They keep a daily attendance register of names. If a child is missing, they will go and check where they are, whether they are ill, or left the camp, or whatever." There is clearly great commitment to ensuring that the monitoring of students is undertaken seriously. A programme director underlined this, mentioning co-ordination with two other organizations, and visits to hospitals and Koranic schools to find missing children. However, there did not seem to be similar systems in place to identify children for referral to specialized counselling services.

Child-friendly spaces like the school-feeding programmes described below were introduced to Darfur to address the protection and education needs of children, yet it is not clear whether they were identifying or catering for the most vulnerable children. Indeed, the need to 'attract' children to attend, or worse, to prevent them from 'escaping', suggests that the activity comes before the needs of the intended beneficiaries have been fully assessed or understood.

School-feeding programmes

"Food for Education is important. It's not just to give food – food alone won't have an impact." UN worker, Darfur

Ideally, initiatives for children are planned and then implemented, so that resources are directed to where they are most needed. Programme design, in response to a careful assessment of beneficiaries' needs, is, however, not always possible, particularly in contexts as demanding as Darfur, where insecurity is one of the biggest constraints affecting WFP's programmes (WFP, 2007*a*). Agencies, therefore, often use pre-existing initiatives and try to identify those who would most benefit from support. WFP as an organization has identified "locally-driven programme planning as an essential element of response to these challenges" (WFP, 2007*b*: 3). The programming of school feeding in Darfur illustrates the difficulties inherent in this approach. One interviewee commented, "Lots of local context is included." Nonetheless, working at the community level was seen to be particularly challenging: "This may be more a wish than what is actually happening."

In IDP camps, general food distribution is provided. Consequently, in line with WFP's policies, school-feeding programmes are not undertaken within camps as this would constitute 'double feeding'. This policy is under review globally. A number of interviewees working in education in the camps felt that supplementary feeding programmes for schools were necessary. An NGO undertaking such a programme reported that, "It is supporting attendance and enrolment, even with the general food distribution in the camp."

One reason given for providing school feeding *outside* the camps was that children need food to walk to school and to keep them there, since "if they go home for lunch, they might not come back." Thus, attendance and retention were the main aims of school feeding outside the camps. In the camps, where walking distances are not great, this justification did not exist. Another NGO interviewee suggested that in-camp school

feeding did not occur because "schools could not cope with the numbers which would come." His experience in another camp in south Darfur showed that "enrolment increased and attendance stabilized." Whether or not this is the case, school feeding is prioritized in Darfur outside the camps rather than inside.

School-feeding programmes are undertaken in rural areas where host communities are not being supported by general food distribution, that is, in what are not considered to be 'food-insecure' areas. Interviewees confirmed that the programme's aims were not nutritional, but to increase school access, attendance, and retention. As one interviewee put it very succinctly, "The point is not to alleviate hunger, but to increase school retention and increase the capacity to contribute to increased access to education and increased enrolment, especially for girls."

Locations for school-feeding programmes are selected according to the socio-economic status of school communities, with priority given to the lowest ranking. Within these, priority is given to those schools with low enrolment rates, especially for girls. Gathering the necessary data, however, is problematic, as many organizations depend on the Ministry of Education's statistics, which are not always available nor that reliable, even when available. An interviewee engaged in programme design for school feeding expressed the views of several others when he said: "We wanted [the Ministry of Education] to tell us their priorities, e.g. where enrolment rates are low, especially for girls; where security makes programming possible. The Ministry of Education was absolutely unable to give us figures. We are basically working with NGOs who do assessments to give us data."

NGO assessments risk being incomplete because the security situation prevents systematic access to the areas in question. The situation is further complicated by the flows of people from one place to another in insecure circumstances. Furthermore, targeting the most vulnerable groups proves difficult, as statistics tend to be out of date, incomplete or inaccurate. The targeting of school-feeding programmes must be co-ordinated or else the effects can be disruptive, as children may switch schools depending on where food is available.

Another factor that affects where school-feeding programmes are implemented is the demand from the community. While, ideally, this would be appropriate – in so far as programmes could be provided where communities identify a need for them – one programme manager said

that demand from parents arguably could bring about inappropriate programmes. When asked whether she had felt pressure to implement programmes she had not felt comfortable with, she replied, "For school feeding yes, but from the community. Everyone wants school breakfast. I as an individual don't feel that what we're doing is helpful, it's not the battle I want to fight."

It is frequently the case that those with the loudest voices are able to access the greatest proportion of resources, while the marginalized are left behind. In the absence of reliable data enabling accurate targeting, those communities with the best contacts or the best-organized schools receive programmes, to the detriment of more inaccessible communities. One multilateral official reported: "If a school is not really ready, we don't just say no, we try to work flexibly. It's important to take the local context into account, for example, kitchens vary across Africa. We know where to be flexible. At the beginning, we were very strict. We said if there was no kitchen or no latrines, there would be no food. Now we are supporting schools who [*sic*] do not yet have these things. We're getting better at that."

These systemic difficulties in targeting the most vulnerable groups increase when the controversial issue of indirect cost reclamation for school feeding is considered. The fees that are allowed to be levied are not directly for food; rather, they contribute towards the costs of meal preparation (either materials or teachers' costs). One co-ordinator told us that WFP supported the food and UNICEF the cooking materials, whilst school fees covered the costs of the teachers involved in food preparation and administrative tasks. The co-ordinator claimed UNICEF encouraged these fees, since its funding does not always cover food preparation costs, such as secure storage, cooks and firewood.

Some parents are willing to contribute towards a school-feeding programme. This is healthy in terms of reducing dependency and contributing towards sustainability, but most interviewees felt that in very constrained financial circumstances, any fee, no matter what its size, would be a disincentive, particularly for the poorest. When asked whether the fee influenced attendance of the most vulnerable children, an interviewee working with schools said: "It stops the poorest children. It has a bad effect. Even for the 'rich': all are in need, all are IDPs. If you have four to five children this will affect you, you can't send all your children. It also affects the nutritional side."

Outside the camps, fees have a similar detrimental effect on the poorest. One programme manager noted: "In west Darfur, the most vulnerable are not accessing education, that is, the at-risk groups cannot raise the fees. When school fees are collected because of on-site feeding I wouldn't say school feeding increases enrolment. School feeding may increase *overall* enrolment, but it will discriminate against the most vulnerable."

Programmers also recognize that providing food alone is insufficient in supporting all children's education, let alone that of vulnerable children. A UN representative said, "WFP does not implement school-feeding programmes where UNICEF is not working, as providing school feeding alone is not enough; UNICEF needs to provide support." If school feeding does increase enrolment, then that has significant implications for teacher-student ratios and the provision of classrooms and related resources such as textbooks. In short, when school feeding efforts are successful at increasing access and attendance, unless robust measures are implemented in preparation for increased student numbers, the quality of education may well be eroded.

For school feeding to be effective in increasing attendance and retention of any vulnerable children there is a need for co-ordination between several agencies, as well as access to targeted data, and in some cases, community contributions in cash or kind. These are all difficult to arrange in a conflict situation. Despite the implementing agencies' awareness of these issues, it is not clear that school-feeding programmes adequately target the most vulnerable.

Provision for secondary school-age children

"The teen age is very dangerous." Local NGO worker, Darfur

A problem repeatedly mentioned in Sudan was the limited provision for secondary school-age children. This was partly because of the lack of space in schools in both Darfur and Khartoum. The director of a local NGO said:

Why are there no higher secondary schools in camps, despite there being secondary school-age children? Most left school when they finished primary. They stay in camp. If there is no school, they become criminals, and even commit sexual violence. UNICEF says they are only doing primary. But in higher secondary, most are under 18. Most of the violence is committed by under-age boys. Girls are particularly attacked, even by members of the

same community, as well as outsiders. If we find high schools, we can keep them there and give them the special care they need at that age.

Secondary school-age children are particularly vulnerable to the effects of war, like recruitment into militarized groups or sexual abuse (Richards, 1995 and 1996; Davies, 2004; Beah, 2007). The relationship between education – or the lack of it – and violent conflict is increasingly being recognized (Novelli and Lopes Cardozo, 2007). One might thus expect a greater, not lesser, focus on adolescents in conflict situations. Yet, almost all interviewees in Sudan prioritized the provision of programmes for primary school-age children in their child-friendly spaces.

The stated policy of one of the largest INGOs, for example, is not to focus on the secondary or tertiary age, despite the INEE draft guidelines' recommendation that child-friendly spaces should cater for ages 0 to 18 (INEE, undated). One child protection officer commented, "We don't have the ability to do everything we would like to do, so our priority is children over youngsters [i.e. youth]." This prioritization of younger children over older, and in particular, primary-age children over secondary, is arguably one of the by-products of the advocacy push for UPE and gender parity in education by 2015, two of the MDGs. When asked why his organization did not focus on secondary education, one interviewee replied, "We believe [primary-level] parity is still lagging behind. The first priority is to bridge the gender gap."

Where there is specific provision for the older age group, it is typically vocational training. A programme manager in Darfur said this provided "some level of legitimate alternative to joining the militia, which is a real opportunity for them to support themselves – it's attractive; they're heralded as heroes in the community." This underlines that the lack of opportunities for secondary school-age youth can lead to the continuation of the conflict, as taking up arms provides a means of survival. As shown in Uganda (*Chapter 6*), vocational training is often provided for children who have missed out on the earlier stages of education. Whilst not wishing to denigrate the value of vocational education, effectively deciding (on their behalf) that children will undertake vocational rather than academic education does limit their options. How this may feed into the cycles of frustration and resentment inherent in a conflict situation deserves further research.

Some child-friendly spaces also try to provide for this age group, although the provision varies, partly as a result of the division of ownership between the education and child protection sectors. Some managers see the spaces as sites for vocational training, others as a base for literacy classes. For most organizations, however, there seemed to be gaps in provision for crucial age ranges. The director of one local NGO, whose child-friendly spaces catered for children aged 0 to 12 years and youths aged 15 to 19, noted:

> There is a gap between the two sets; there are no activities for 13 to 14 year olds. [Under] 13, a female is a girl; if she is older she is vulnerable to sexual violence. Boys of the age of 13 to 14 – this is a critical age, but there are no concrete activities – we try to convince them to go to school. Even bigger agencies have a gap in the 13 to 14 age range. In the Child Protection Working Group this is not mentioned, we don't know what they are doing. We need it. It's a very important issue.

This age gap is also true of education kits, (which are discussed in depth in *Chapter 6* on Uganda). In Sudan, they tend to be distributed only to primary schools. The education programme officer of one NGO stated: "UNICEF only supports primary. Secondary schools want edu-kits ... I know the situation. They are in bad need."

Local cultural perceptions of the concept of childhood also impact on children's participation in child-friendly spaces. One co-ordinator, when asked what a child was in Sudanese culture, replied: "The Sudanese community sees a child as 0 to 12 years. Then they are a youth, not a child." When asked the same question, a programme manager, simply replied, "a big subject", adding that "there are some children who find it too difficult to come, because there are strong traditions here, elders sometimes prefer Koranic schools, etc."

Where a focus on psychosocial support predominates in a child-friendly space, this translates into a concentration of play-orientated activities, which are inappropriate for older children, or are not seen as valuable by the local community. Attempting to integrate vocational training into child-friendly space programmes suggests that a set-piece initiative is used, without thinking creatively about alternative activities that could be more appropriate for this important and neglected group.

4.3 Competition and the dual role of co-ordinator and funder

In Darfur (like in Timor-Leste), UNICEF is the sector co-ordinator for both education and child protection. Co-ordination is needed to address the problem of different agencies carrying out their own mandates and objectives without taking other agencies' work into account. In the past, this has caused duplication and gaps in humanitarian responses (Sommers, 2004). Some NGOs in Darfur, however, are not co-operating fully with the co-ordination efforts; instead they compete with one another or have withdrawn from the co-operation mechanisms. The reasons for this include dissatisfaction with UNICEF's leadership and management, the need for funds, and the wish by NGOs to pursue their own interests, such as implementing non-UNICEF-led interventions.

UNICEF is also one of the most significant funders of the programmes in Darfur. The dominance of UNICEF as a funder meant that many NGOs were competing for the same funds, rather than a *range* of funds, which encouraged negative competition. One child protection specialist from a large agency claimed that: "The big problem is not inadequate co-ordination but competition." A local NGO programme officer said, "Everybody is chasing the same prize." This resulted in allegations of certain organizations sabotaging others. In this environment, the degree to which an organization's proposed interventions matches UNICEF's is perceived to be the principal predictor of success for their proposals.

The UNICEF concept of child-friendly spaces, for example, is clearly the dominant model for local NGOs dependent on UNICEF funding and it is clear that compliance with the model is a condition for funding. The director of a local NGO explained: "There are two steps. First, UNICEF has a mandate they don't change from. They give you guidance and you prepare your proposal to meet that. Second, [this organization] and the community have their own mandate, so we discuss together with UNICEF ... It takes a long time to get funding ... It's a concern. It's an emergency!"

Some interviewees noted that UNICEF was open to developing the child-friendly spaces concept, and to working with local NGOs to make it locally relevant. The most frequently articulated opinion, however, was that UNICEF's expectations of uniformity, along with some burdensome

administrative procedures, meant that international and local NGOs had to alter the nature, scale and timing of their programming. Consequently, some of the NGOs with sufficient internal funding tend to run programmes unilaterally.

This unilateralism extends to some INGOs not regularly participating in sector meetings or working groups. It is difficult to ascertain exactly why they did not attend. No doubt, the pressures of time and resources are factors. There is also a sense that the freedom to act according to one's own values is important. The assistant area co-ordinator of one INGO, which had been accused by local NGOs of not co-operating, said: "UNICEF controls the funding for national NGOs which implement its programmes. It, therefore, has a strong say over its partners' programmes. [This organization], however, has its own donors ..."

The issues of the dual role of the sector leader, the capacity of the sector leader and the lack of co-operation between NGOs clearly has significant implications for effective co-ordination. In some emergency situations, like Uganda (as discussed in *Chapter 6*), the ability of the government to enforce co-operation means that NGOs' unilateral tendencies could be managed, at least in theory. In Darfur, where some areas are not under government control, and where the Government of Sudan has difficulties in engaging constructively with humanitarian organizations, this option is not available. UNICEF cannot force organizations to comply with its wishes, other than by denying funding, which is ineffective for organizations that have other sources of funds. Furthermore, the option of an organization to exit from a system they disagree with is considered an important democratic principle.

The underlying issue here is that of accountability, especially in a situation where the main donor and the co-ordinator are one and the same. This means that clients of the co-ordination services – NGOs and, through them, beneficiaries – are dependent on the same agency to provide both services and necessary funding. This reduces accountability in two ways. Firstly, NGOs are reluctant to openly criticize the co-ordination efforts of the very organization that is also funding them. This is problematic, because in the absence of open criticism, the co-ordinator will not be able to respond effectively. Secondly, those NGOs which are able to exit from the co-ordination structures thereby rupture the relationship between the co-ordinator and the implementing partner. In Darfur, UNICEF was well

aware of the criticisms made against it, and was clearly making efforts to address them.

4.4 The need for funding

"It's easier to get funding for Darfur as it's sexier." INGO country director, Sudan

Donors affect programming in emergencies in two primary ways. Firstly, whether donors consider an intervention to be generically 'development' or 'humanitarian' affects programming. Funds are more readily available for humanitarian interventions, so implementing agencies will tend towards them. Secondly, whether the nature of a specific intervention fits with a donor's preconceived notions affects programming, in that agencies will tend towards the donor's model in order to secure funds.

A major donor in Khartoum reported that it would not fund education in Darfur, as education was considered to be a development activity, and it did not fund development activities in an emergency situation. The donor representative agreed that education should be considered a priority humanitarian response, but policy required that she could not allocate funds to education in an emergency. A number of organizations stressed that this was the case. They were concerned that education was often not seen to be an emergency activity. A national-level programme manager noted:

> The whole issue of education to IDP children needs to be emphasized or flagged as much as possible. Donors think it is a temporary thing and unimportant, so it's very difficult to get funding for education in emergencies. Some proposals have been denied because they say they are funding development. More than half the children in Southern Sudan are not enrolled, and only 20 per cent of the other half are actually attending; there are 100 to 150 students in a class. The whole education sector is in a state of emergency.

A related issue was the division between child protection and education, and the donors' preference for funding the former over the latter. This had a significant influence on programming. As a senior INGO specialist said:

> It's much harder to get education funding than child protection. Donors have 'got it' when it comes to child protection, as blatant violence, abuse, exploitation, and neglect ... [of] the

most vulnerable is easy to see. Donors – however – don't get it when it comes to education; they don't get it that we need it, that it's a priority. The major donors – DFID [Department for International Development (UK)], OFDA [Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (USAID)], ECHO [European Commission Humanitarian Aid Office] – don't fund education ... To date, for emergency education, I haven't had a major donor.

This was a recurrent theme. An education co-ordinator said, "For child protection, it's incredibly popular. We don't have a lot of trouble selling it", whilst another INGO representative said that even "in another context, I would probably still do safe spaces, because that's what donors fund and they don't fund education in emergencies." A programme manager stated, "We are donor-driven of course, but it doesn't matter, as they will never give enough money." She explained that her organization was influenced by donor priorities, particularly when approached by donors "to implement a programme so it fits into their package. We do things we're uncomfortable with sometimes ..."

Not all donor influence works negatively. The same manager noted, "Sometimes donor pressure works in a positive manner." She explained that NGOs tend to prefer to work where it is easiest, such as the capitals of states. Donors, therefore, clump 'difficult' and 'easy' regions together in one proposal, obliging NGOs to cover the former if the donors want to work in the 'easy' regions. This forces NGOs to increase their coverage to areas which would otherwise be left neglected, if the donor did not do this and the NGOs were left to their own devices. She added: "If it was not approached in this way, no-one would cover Unity state. I think there are no NGOs there – it's inaccessible for six months a year."

Some interviewees felt that the process should be led more by the NGO or the community than by donors. A national-level deputy director commented, "Donors are always worried why these things are not happening quickly ... Donors expect strong structures and don't understand the war has destroyed them." This approach by donors reinforces the limitations of NGOs' attempts to engage in meaningful community participation, because of the breakdown of civil society structures.

Donors were also said to influence projects by adopting a numerical, report-led approach, and by the complexity of their requirements, excluding some communities from accessing funds for programmes.

One programme manager said, "Of course [programmes] are report-orientated. How do you quantify psychosocial support? I know that at the end of the day I need to generate numbers. How can I balance that, so I provide numbers and run programmes? It's difficult." A teacher said, in relation to applications for school feeding and education kits, "Sometimes the requirements of donors are very sophisticated. We are required to do a lot of things before a project is approved. It makes it difficult for a community who doesn't understand what is needed."

Yet there were both donors and a number of national and international NGOs that felt funding was sufficiently flexible. A donor in Khartoum noted that proposals were frequently the product of negotiation and discussion: "We say what we expect and the ones applying adapt their proposals, but the call was very general and we were still open to suggestions." A specialist in an implementing agency agreed: "Donors are very flexible. But [this organization] has strong commitments, which we advocate donors to accept. It's a chicken and egg situation. Are donors leading us? No. These issues are priorities for us – gender, participation, capacity building of government. The commitments are the same."

The perceived needs of private, as opposed to institutional, donors could also be said to have an influence, inasmuch as there was an awareness of the desires of public relations departments: "In terms of PR, children do sell really well," said one programme manager. She expanded: "Selling the child programmes is easier for government and donors. Youth programmes are more difficult, yet this group is incredibly important to address. It's hard because this group is so much more politicized. Private donors say that their donations have to go to children. Youth funding for us must be much more flexible."

Most interviewees reported that they felt confident in resisting the temptation to gear programmes towards donors. However, since it is so much more difficult to find funding for older children, this must surely have an impact on the programmes that donors eventually support. In conclusion, it appears that donors' failure to fund education in emergencies skews interventions away from education towards protection and psychosocial concerns. Also, the focus of private donors on younger children draws programming away from provision for youth – a problem identified above.

4.5 Public visibility

"Foreign support is no longer there." Local NGO director, Khartoum

In an emergency, public awareness is very closely related to donor visibility; frequently they coincide. Hence, separating out the effect of one from the other is hard. We visited a long-established IDP camp on the outskirts of Khartoum to which people who had been displaced in a series of emergencies (Nubia, Darfur and Southern Sudan) had come. It began as a squatter camp and housed mainly southern IDPs, but doubled in size to 15,000 families by 2007 and now includes IDPs from other areas. Almost all of the agencies providing education and other services for children in the camp are national, and many are connected to religious groups. During the years when the civil war (which mostly affected Southern Sudan) was the principal emergency in Sudan, a large number of international agencies worked in the camp. Although the Comprehensive Peace Agreement was not signed until 2005, the public profile of the situation waned from 2003, as did the engagement of international agencies. That same year, Darfur hit the headlines.

The deputy director of an NGO working in the camp noted, "When donors stopped in 2003 – they started in 1989 – support was being given to schools, with free food, books, teacher incentives. That all stopped in 2003." He went on to note the effect on beneficiaries: "They know what they wish for, but practically they can't sustain it, which leads to anger. Why? Donors are not thinking properly about it ... The funding just stopped. It's very dangerous. [The donors] were sympathetic and then suddenly [we're] told it won't be sustained. The government won't meet the gaps as they say it's not planned for." He felt that, "The displacement is long-term, it's not an emergency, but donors will say they will only support [the programme] for six months to one year, and the camps have been depending on relief for 10 to 15 years." The lack of funding meant that the enhanced nutrition school-feeding programme that his NGO had been supporting was reduced significantly and was about to be abandoned. In an attempt to continue the school-feeding programme, fees were introduced with a direct effect on attendance in school and the child-friendly space. Animators and teachers worked entirely voluntarily when INGO support for incentives ceased. Most were actively looking for alternative careers and said they would leave as soon as they were able. One animator noted, "The cancellation of support means that

teachers don't come to work any longer. The children were free of any payment, then cost recovery had to start and some families cannot pay. Some children have been left out."

When asked whether the media ever came to the camp, a focus group of teachers and NGO staff replied, "No. They are not known. [Only] donors come and talk in general." This contrasts sharply with Darfur, where interviewees had come to regard the constant visits by celebrities as a nuisance. "One problem is that any big shot from anywhere will want to visit children," a programme manager said. There is not a simple connection, however, between public profile and programming. Another interviewee in the Khartoum IDP camp was of the opinion that, "The media has increased since 2003, as has donor interest. Many organizations have left the camps." He went on to explain this apparent paradox by saying that he felt now that "all funds go to Darfur." This was the reason that so many NGOs and donors had pulled out of the Khartoum camp. He felt that the monies which did come to the camp were merely 'incidental' to the Darfur effort. In other words, there *is* a connection between programming and profile – it is simply the case that the public profile for Darfur was so much greater than that of Southern Sudan at the time, and so the 'incidental' funding was greater than the original amount. Whatever the truth of this, it indicates a certain acknowledgement that media, donor and public interest are all intertwined with what is possible to programme.

4.6 Principal findings

The overriding impression of a visit to Darfur is not the desperateness of the situation – although that should not be underestimated – but the commitment and dedication of the people responding to that situation. One of the most important aspects of programming is the experience, knowledge, professionalism and passion brought to caring for children by so many diverse people. That any of these programmes exist in such challenging circumstances is extraordinary. However, we found that at times, the planning for support to children began with an initiative – particularly school-feeding programmes and child-friendly spaces – rather than with a flexible approach to the actual needs of the Darfur population.

Integrating school-feeding programmes with educational access initiatives can increase school enrolment, attendance and retention, especially for marginalized children. School feeding can similarly increase

education quality when it is part of a carefully co-ordinated, integrated programme where feeding, increased resources and capacity building are complementary. This can lead to increased numbers of teachers who are able to cope with higher student numbers, together with teacher training, and which result in reduced teacher-student ratios and better classroom pedagogy. However, when there is a fee for school feeding, this limits access for poor children. Although financial assistance was offered to schools in some circumstances, this was inconsistent. Feeding programmes thus need to ensure that these costs are not passed on to the most vulnerable.

Child-friendly spaces are also a clear benefit to many, but not all children. The strong inclination towards primary provision, which coincides with UNICEF's aims and with global advocacy campaigns for UPE, has left a gap for secondary-age children, who are generally offered mainly vocational options. The lack of provision for older (and vulnerable) children further indicates that while child-friendly spaces and other standardized initiatives may have value, their use must not prevent creative ways to provide for others for whom child-friendly spaces are not appropriate or attractive. The focus on primary is also true for education kits; their provision could usefully be extended to secondary schools, providing that the contents are sourced locally, are of sufficient quality, and reflect the needs of girls and disabled children.

One of the strongest themes which emerges from this research is the very passionate commitment to the idea of psychosocial activities as a form of protection. There is an exceptionally wide range of interpretations of the meaning of 'psychosocial', although these tend to converge around the standardized UNICEF definition. While this reflects the dedication of workers towards improving children's well-being, it also means that more traditional, learning-oriented activities are neglected, not necessarily as a result of the preferences of children or the community. It also means that alternative programming options are not considered. The concentration on protection efforts coincides with donors' preferences for protection rather than education, and indeed with many NGOs' own preferences. In addition, the international public awareness of the emergency, through the media, seems to have shifted donors' attention away from the victims of older conflicts towards a focus on Darfur. This reflects how such attention, even indirectly, influences programming.

Chapter 5

Country study: Lebanon

5.1 Introduction

Over recent decades, Lebanon has had a history of conflict. From 1975 until the early 1990s, a civil war raged in which Israel, Syria and the Palestine Liberation Organization became entangled. Syrian troops invaded Lebanon soon after the start of the civil war and remained until 2005. Israel also invaded twice during this period and only fully withdrew in 2000. Violence erupted again in July 2006 when Hezbollah, the Shiite paramilitary group that controlled much of south Lebanon, captured two Israeli soldiers. Israel responded with a 34-day attack, carrying out massive air strikes and artillery fire, an air and naval blockade and a ground invasion of the south of Lebanon. South Lebanon and south Beirut were particularly badly hit, with huge numbers of cluster bombs released onto arable land, making inhabitation difficult.[6] Approximately 1,000 Lebanese were killed during the conflict and nearly a million people were displaced.

Although many international organizations arrived during the 34-day war in 2006, much of the emergency response had to wait until bombing had ceased on 14 August. Child-friendly spaces were primarily established in the aftermath of the bombings, particularly in the worst-affected areas: southern Lebanon and southern Beirut. Cluster bombs dropped by the Israeli military particularly affected children's safety and continued to inflict casualties. As an INGO worker said, immediately after the war there was a "huge, very vibrant presence of INGOs." This indicated the large sums of money available for emergency programming. By late 2007, many of the agencies that had responded to the 2006 crisis were transitioning away from emergency activities towards development as the relief funding grants came to an end.

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6. Between May and September 2007 there was also heavy fighting between the Lebanese army and Fatah al-Islam in the north of the country, and in the Palestinian refugee camp, Nahr El Bared. However, this research focused primarily on provision for those affected by the 2006 conflict.

Map 2   Map of Lebanon

Source: Perry-Castañeda Library Map Collection, the University of Texas at Austin, USA.

A research visit had been planned for October 2007, but shortly before this a member of parliament was killed in a car bomb in the capital, Beirut. As a result, the UN felt it appropriate for international staff to keep a low profile and for the researchers not to visit. Consequently, Kathryn Tomlinson undertook ten pre-arranged interviews with international, national and local NGO personnel, and UN and government staff by telephone from the UK. The lack of a visit means the research in Lebanon focuses almost exclusively on child-friendly spaces to provide psychosocial support, as these were the programming intervention of choice for a number of international agencies. The choice to programme in this way was driven by a number of factors, particularly the highly politicized environment and the availability of local NGOs as partners. Relationships with government schools varied, which has implications for the long-term development of the country.

5.2 The political environment

"I think Lebanon is very difficult to explain. Such complexities. If I didn't explain it to you, you wouldn't believe me." INGO staff member

The nature of the conflict, and in particular the continued presence of vast numbers of cluster bombs was mentioned by several interviewees as a key reason why it was vital to provide child-friendly spaces, because children otherwise would have nowhere safe to play. An INGO representative explained the extent of the problem: "It's unbelievable that in southern Lebanon one million cluster bombs were dropped. This is still a big, big problem. These cluster bombs could not be removed ... People live by cultivating apples, grapes. Mainly the bombs were dropped in these gardens. So when farmers started to work they were killed. They are made in a way that looks exactly like a fruit, hanging from a tree. You pluck it and you are killed."

Another interviewee, for whom "Safe spaces was our main intervention in Lebanon", explained why they also ran a landmine awareness programme: "I had a situation where I had a child pick up a cluster bomb in front of me. That was when I thought, 'Oh my God, we have to do something about this'."

This conflict environment, combined with existing cultural norms, impacted on the gendered usage of the child-friendly spaces. An international organization's programme manager said: "In some areas we can boast that by the end there were equal numbers of boys and girls. But some of the villages weren't totally clear of mines [so parents were reluctant to let girls out of the home]. It took a couple of weeks for parents to trust who [the child-friendly space staff] were, and allow their girls to go."

For one local organization, however, there were more long-standing cultural norms preventing girls from using the child-friendly spaces: "All children can't benefit from the child-friendly spaces. Lebanon has its own culture, social arrangements. So those who can't attend benefit from the outreach work. It is mostly girls who can't come. It's an agricultural society, so they ask their girls to stay inside and look after their younger siblings."

This organization, instead of expecting girls to attend the child-friendly spaces, was developing vocational work for girls. A

representative of another organization, which had over 50 per cent attendance by girls in its child-friendly spaces, identified the problem as stemming from the local facilitators: "In some villages we faced a problem with the animators who refused to mix genders together. Later on, through negotiation, they asked the staff to do it (but not directly). So they did it eventually ... At the beginning it was hard creating a common group for boys and girls. It wasn't easy to convince the volunteers not to make this kind of discrimination." Such issues point to the necessity to understand the wider cultural context in a country in which one is programming, in order that initiatives like child-friendly spaces do not become tangential or irrelevant to the real needs of the population.

The national political situation was another factor in the programming decisions that were made following the 2006 war. Lebanon has a diverse population, including Sunni and Shiite Muslims, Maronite Christians and Jews. The representation of these groups in parliament has been defined since the French colonizing authorities left in the 1940s, and was formalized in the Taif Agreement, ratified in 1989 at the end of Lebanon's civil war. The roles of Speaker of the Parliament, Prime Minister, President, and Chief of the Armed Forces were each assigned to different ethnic groups. As a result, as an interviewee from an INGO said, "It's a very segregated society." Although the ethnic balance has changed since the 1940s, particularly with the emigration of many Maronite Christians, there has been no census since 1931. The government seems unwilling to undertake a census, in part because the majority Shiite population might demand a larger share of political power. This had implications in the 2006 conflict, since the populations most affected were the Shiite Muslims in south Beirut and southern Lebanon. An INGO representative explained that these populations were "extremely poor" due to lack of government investment, and as a result they "developed a parallel government," in which Hezbollah was "doing a lot of social work."

This had implications for humanitarian organizations when planning their programmes. An INGO representative said, "If we say we support the poorest of the poor, then it has to go to the Shiite population. But Hezbollah has a presence in these areas; how do we work with them?" Although international agencies benefited from working with local organizations, political considerations meant that they had to check that the NGOs were not related to Hezbollah, in order not to breach funding regulations. At the same time, they had to prove to the communities that none of their funding was coming from the government of the USA. The

relationship (or lack of it) with Hezbollah also affected the implementation of child-friendly spaces. Reflecting on attempts to control access to the spaces by British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) journalists, an INGO representative said: "We had Hezbollah coming out too, saying, 'No, [the journalists] can't come in.' Many of the areas we were working in were Hezbollah strongholds – that's why they were targeted. They told us who could and couldn't come in. It was a very difficult situation for us because we couldn't be seen to be working with Hezbollah."

Taking account of these political and cultural issues is clearly vital for an agency deciding what to do to support children in an emergency. Emergencies, however, by their very nature, often happen without warning, and the time for careful political analysis is not always taken or felt to be available. One INGO representative said she had "rather critical glasses on the last year's performance ... We didn't sit down enough [to analyse the situation]." Another said: "As a child rights organization we're a bit afraid of saying that we need political analysis, but in a man-made crisis it is vital that you take an extra eight hours to look at this. In Lebanon, food and water will not run out for a long time, but the impact on children will be felt from the first gunshot."

It is essential that organizations take or make time for sufficient analysis of the context, in order that their programming reacts to the actual needs on the ground, rather than only relying on established programming practices.

5.3 International and national NGO partnerships

Programming decisions were partly affected by those available to undertake the work. For a number of reasons, international organizations worked closely with Lebanese NGOs in implementing child-friendly spaces. The geo-political nature of the conflict was one factor, particularly for NGOs from the USA. An interviewee from HQ explained: "I was going to go [to Lebanon], but ... [being from] the US, it's difficult. Politics." For others it was the convenience of existing links that led to the partnership in provision of child-friendly spaces, either through previous partnerships or individual contacts. One such partnership came about in part because the national NGO had been formed as a Lebanese version of an INGO, when the INGO had previously left the country. Another INGO explained how they had chosen their partner, saying: "One of the biggest challenges in Lebanon is finding good partners. There's a danger of overloading them. One approach is to fund NGOs

not already working with children, but [which] have access and are established. They were close to the camps. We would have been doing the same thing with another partner; what [this NGO] pre-determined was *where* we worked."

Building on existing links also helped speed up and expand the scale of an intervention, as an INGO representative explained: "Because we were working in the country already, we decided to use national partners, so that we could go to scale quickly; we didn't try to implement them ourselves." Because the local organizations were also displaced during the 34-day war, INGOs and UN agencies had a chance to meet and discuss future work with them while they were in Beirut. As a result, "child-friendly spaces were operational almost immediately, within a week ... We talked to them while they were here, and then once they got back they could start up immediately."

One of the advantages of channelling assistance through established Lebanese organizations was that they could expand on existing activities, as an NGO worker in the south explained: "We already had animation centres that incorporated psychosocial programmes, but we didn't have them as separate activities. After the July war, we realized that there was a need for a separate project, for a safe space for children. We started in the south in villages, but also in the camps. We had staff who were already working in the animation centres, and volunteers in the centres. So they already had experience of working with us."

Starting from a position of experience has obvious benefits, including the existence of pre-trained staff and links to communities and authorities. Using local organizations meant that these relationships could continue, particularly after the initial tranche of emergency funding had been spent, and international organizations had been withdrawn. An INGO representative said: "The safe spaces are still going now. I just talked to one of our national partners. They've been a great source of community strength, as fighting has continued. They've changed nature now; they've changed to after-school clubs ... They've really brought the communities together ... If you really work with the community from day one, you do get that support, and they do continue."

For those international organizations interviewed, the reliance on local partners was successful, with the result that INGOs and UNICEF relied on their partners' judgements. As one interviewee put it, "We worked with our local partners and they saw the need." She continued:

"We involved our partners, and did send the expats out [of the country] early. This is a bigger focus. From day one it was the partners who were leading on it. Our partners were already doing development work with us, they already knew about protection and education."

Use of local partners by INGOs and UN agencies meant that, once the bombing stopped, programmes for children were established or expanded quickly and efficiently. This has implications for other responses to emergencies in countries with developed civil society, and might impact on expatriate staffing levels in the future. An INGO representative said, "We made an analysis and trust our partners' judgement. Don't fly in a lot of expats. Most likely they're not needed." Thus, the use of local partners had obvious benefits for the organizations concerned, and allowed children's programming to commence quickly. What was less clear was whether the interventions were the most appropriate for the context. It seems that child-friendly spaces were used widely, perhaps because they were easy to roll out. Their usage relates to the widespread conviction that psychosocial activities are a priority.

5.4 Psychosocial activities

"The psychosocial issue is a huge issue in Lebanon." Donor

Several interviewees commented on the large number and wide range of psychosocial activities being implemented for children in the immediate aftermath of (and in some cases during) the 2006 war. A local organization described their work:

We created fantastic places, really safe places equipped with recreational tools and equipment. We have activities for four hours each day. The main activity we focused on is painting; the children can draw trauma, psychological pressure. We also created 'expressing groups', where the children can tell their stories, kind of imagination, to express their stories of the war. There are theatre groups, plays created by the children themselves. These ran for two months.

Another local NGO felt that "non-formal activities are very important [for] making them relieved from stress" and thus provided similar activities for parents and siblings: theatre, storytelling, drawing, singing songs. As discussed in *Chapter 2,* this returns us to the question of whether such activities actually provide psychosocial support as claimed. Some interviewees felt that, after initial scepticism, parents and municipal authorities "saw the impact these spaces were having

on their children; [the children] were less aggressive, less traumatized, looking for negotiations." For another observer, such activities were not so unusual, given that many areas would have had summer camps during the school holidays. "So for most organizations, this was not new to them, they would have normally done it, just not so intensely! We added a psychosocial element."

Part of the reason for so many psychosocial activities was that they provided a response to the fears that people expressed in a context of ongoing insecurity. An experienced practitioner said: "The war really surprised a lot of people, caught them off guard. For young people, this was their first experience of bombings. For older people, it was more of what they had experienced their whole lives. It had a huge effect on the psyche of the people, but it also plunged them into a political crisis. Now the war here never stops. It's a political mess."

These fears determine how initiatives are implemented. Describing a child-friendly space, an INGO representative said, "You don't see gardens, but you see big halls decorated with children's paintings. Maybe because of fear of declaration of war, of further conflict, these are not outside." This illustrates that while donors and INGOs may be coming to the end of an emergency phase, for local people the conflict is far from over. A local NGO was explicit that addressing this issue was part of their work, saying, "We are immunizing children and parents, so that if they face the same kind of circumstances in the future, they can deal with it. We want to give children and mothers the tools to cope with an emergency."

NGO programming was also influenced by the fact that other actors, including Hezbollah and several Gulf States, took responsibility for much of the physical reconstruction. Hence, NGOs needed to find a niche. An INGO representative explained: "Frankly speaking, there were limits to what people could do with recovery money. If you can't do development, something a lot of agencies like to do is psychosocial activities. Construction projects are expensive and time consuming and you can't really make a drop in the bucket with your money. While with the money we had we could make an impact with psychosocial activities."

Co-ordination of psychosocial activities during and after the war came under the auspices of the Ministry of Social Affairs, in the form of the Higher Council for Childhood, a national body responsible for

"co-ordinating all social policies concerning children." A special committee on psychosocial support for children was established within a few days of the start of the war. It included the Ministry of Social Affairs, UNICEF, UNHCR, UNESCO, INGOs and Lebanese NGOs, as well as psychologists from private practices and universities. Within the committee there were differing perspectives on how psychosocial activities should be undertaken, with some questioning whether the Western approach was too medical. As an INGO participant explained, "We did get general agreement on the *modus operandi*. There was a large focus on using art, recreation activities. There was a pattern among the psychologists and psychiatrists. One of the early battles was between the two schools of thought: those who wanted to medicate and those who didn't. Because there were lots of social science people there, social workers could push for the non-medicating route."

Although an inter-agency charter was agreed, with which all stakeholders were to comply, in practice co-ordination to ensure compliance was limited. A programme manager reported that staff tried to co-ordinate through local branches of the Ministry of Social Affairs and the Ministry of Education, but co-ordination between INGOs was limited. "Most of us pretty much did our own thing, and co-ordinated on a case-by-case basis. It varied from location to location; it's been a bit spotty." Co-ordination was necessary because it was NGOs, rather than government bodies, that were providing services. An INGO representative reported that assessments were done with the ministry, "not so much an assessment of what needed to be done as what we *could* do." The danger of this approach was that while there could be co-ordination between different groups, overall there was an uneven or inadequate response. A donor lamented: "The Ministry of Social Affairs, they rely on NGOs, and have worked with the same NGOs for 20 years. No one checks the quality of what they are doing, and there is no way to get rid of them. The Ministry is subcontracting to NGOs, and they themselves are doing much less ... They have very, very little control."

Interviewees said that assessing the impact of psychosocial activities was difficult. For example, one programme manager said: "I'd like to say that it has supported the psychosocial well-being of the children. I say, 'I'd like to say' because unfortunately we didn't do a qualitative baseline. But from what I've seen talking to people, there is a general sense of 'well-being', of 'happiness'."

The significant role given to NGOs in providing for children, the breadth of psychosocial activities undertaken and the lack of effective regulation mean that it was unclear whether the psychosocial activities undertaken during the emergency were of appropriate quality and usefulness. A donor said of children's programmes, "There's too much sometimes, and of an inappropriate type ... There's a theatre piece here, inter-community dialogue everywhere. The way it is done I'm not sure it's rigorous."

The widespread and unregulated use of psychosocial activities illustrates the inconsistent use of the term 'psychosocial', and the limited evidence that the activities achieve the impacts intended or needed by the populations they serve, as discussed later in *Chapter 6*. Additionally, co-ordination was problematic. Where it did occur, it was unable to ensure quality (despite attempts to agree on an approach), and focused rather on enabling interactions between organizations. It is again unclear that child-friendly spaces were used as a response to assessments on the ground. Rather, it seems that agencies decided psychosocial activities were necessary and deliverable, and hence child-friendly spaces were used to deliver them.

5.5 Relationships with schools

Co-ordination between humanitarian agencies and the formal education sector was also patchy. This has potential implications for longer-term support for children in Lebanon. A donor reported that the Ministry of Education was formed in the late 1990s from three separate institutions, which were said still to be functioning disparately, independently, and as a result, the Ministry was "very new, and very weak." The co-ordination of psychosocial activities by the Ministry of Social Affairs was said to have led to tension with the Ministry of Education. An international interviewee said, "They do overlap, they do not co-ordinate, they do not consider there is one government ... Everyone is doing their own things. It's a big mosaic."

Some organizations faced difficulties collaborating with the Ministry of Education, from whom they needed permission in order to organize activities with children. A programme manager explained: "To get to use a public school you need ministerial permission, which can be delayed, withdrawn. It's fickle." Consequently, some chose to avoid working with schools. A local organization said, "We avoided the schools. For the kind of activities we are doing it is better to work away

from the schools. And to avoid teachers becoming volunteers." Often the municipality "wanted to provide us with schools." An international organization's representative explained that they were "trying to move out of schools" because "I really believe a school should be a community place. But *de facto* it isn't, and I don't see that as a battle worth fighting for these spaces."

Some organizations had explicitly chosen to work directly with schools. An INGO that had established three centres for 6 to 18-year-olds said, "The safe spaces were based in schools. We actually worked inside schools. They continued when school started. We are continuing with this intervention." As explained by another local NGO: "We aim to sustain the activities inside the schools. We started a series of activities with teachers to run activities. We thought, you can't start these activities without thinking of sustainability. We started outside the schools and made the linkage to the school. We consider the schools as a vital part of our programme ... From the beginning we thought: How can we make the emergency programme more sustainable?"

Initially, this organization met with reluctance from the municipality, which thought that having a child-friendly space would involve more work for the teachers. The organization, however, persisted, talked to the teachers, and found them happy to "keep going over the summer." The schools provided buildings and the NGO established corners for a library, music activities and handicrafts. These appeared to benefit the school as a whole.

It is notable that one organization that specifically did not implement child-friendly spaces with schools, felt it was important to work with the school system. A representative explained: "We wanted to be involved in public education. We genuinely thought that one of the best and most important ways to get children back to safety was to support the schools. They spend a lot of time in schools; this is the most important area for them." This organization also recognized the difficulties of working with the Ministry of Education and, as a result, where it did psychosocial activities (approved by the Ministry of Social Affairs), it did them with local partners rather than schools. This points back to the politics of co-ordination and the danger of being affected by sometimes difficult relationships, in this case between the two ministries involved in co-ordinating work with children. It illustrates how careful NGOs need to be in responding within conflict environments. The same was true in Uganda and Sudan, where the programmes run in child-friendly spaces

made no connection with the formal programmes in school to which children would eventually return.

Given the problems with sharp distinctions being drawn between the 'emergency' and 'development' phases, and the overall needs of the education system in Lebanon, it is unfortunate when agencies choose to respond with psychosocial activities *outside* of the formal sector. Even in emergencies, it would be desirable if organizations looked to the long-term future, not only of the individual children currently in need (who will, shortly, have to return to school), but also to the needs of the education system as a whole.

5.6 Principal findings

Although, unlike the other country studies, the conflict in Lebanon in 2006 was a cross-border war, many of the same issues arose here as elsewhere in relation to responding to the education and child protection needs of children. Due to the huge number of cluster bombs, there was a clear need for physically safe spaces in which children could play. Child-friendly spaces tried to fill this gap. The conflict coincided with the closure of schools and operation of non-formal vacation activities, which generally occurred at this time of the year.

Several international agencies relied – seemingly successfully – on local partners. They also relied on psychosocial activities as the mainstay of provision for children. While this research could not evaluate the impact of such activities, it seems that those who ran these activities were not actually in a position to fully support the psychosocial needs of war-affected children therefore, the claims about the effectiveness of these activities were not always based on evidence.

Some agencies operated child-friendly spaces in schools, while others deliberately avoided working with schools due to the complications of engaging with government authorities. For the long-term sustainability of child-friendly spaces (if that is desired) and the development of the school system as a whole, however, this avoidance may be short-sighted. While donors are criticized for an artificial distinction between emergency and development activities, we suggest that implementing agencies could also do more to ensure a smoother transition between such 'phases'. By working more closely with schools and the Ministry of Education, humanitarian agencies would support the national structures that continue to provide for children's education and well-being, once they have moved on to the next crisis.

Chapter 6

Country study: northern Uganda

6.1 Introduction

Since 1987, a rebel group known as the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), led by the spirit medium Joseph Kony, has been operating in northern Uganda. The LRA's aim is to establish a government based on Acholi[7] traditions and the biblical Ten Commandments (Doom and Vlassenroot, 1999). Despite attacks on civilians, there was some local support for the LRA (Gersony, 1997). Government attempts to mobilize the population against the LRA, however, resulted in increasingly punitive acts, including the mutilation by the LRA of villagers whom they felt should have been supporting them in accordance with their spiritual beliefs of violence as therapy (Allen, 2005). This resulted in greater alienation of people from the LRA. A vicious cycle was established, including the abduction of children and adults to serve as rebel soldiers, and of women and girls to serve as 'army wives' (Annan, Blattman and Horton, 2006*a* and 2006*b*). The conflict spread into Southern Sudan, which Kony used as a base, with the alleged support of the Sudanese Government, and, more recently, into the Democratic Republic of the Congo. After 2001, in the wake of the American response to the September 11 attacks, Sudan's support for the LRA waned, and the Government of Uganda renewed its military effort against the LRA, including setting up 'protected villages'. This provoked an intense reaction from the LRA, and the conflict entered a particularly violent stage.

In 2006, the International Criminal Court issued warrants for the arrest of Joseph Kony and a number of LRA commanders. That same year, a series of peace talks was held between the LRA and the Government of Uganda, resulting in a ceasefire and truce in August. Since that time, the region has been generally stable, and there is increasing hope that the peace will be permanent.

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7. The *Acholi* is a tribe living in northern Uganda.

Map 3   Map of Uganda

Over the 20 years of conflict, 4 million people were displaced (IRIN, 2007), though not all at the same time. Added to this were the daily 'night commuters', children who walked up to 20 km to seek sanctuary in towns, peaking at 40,000 in 2002 (Invisible Children, 2006). IDP camps developed around perceived nodes of security, such as army barracks and town centres, particularly in Gulu, Kitgum and Pader. The camps generally consisted of traditional, mud-walled, grass-roofed huts that were grouped closer than normal for security. The environment was perhaps best described by one government source:

> Given the emergency setting, over 90 per cent of the population had been forced to move into camps. These were not organized ... camps, just people moving to district headquarters, barracks or urban areas. They move with their children and start life again with nothing. So five to seven schools now have to fit into one school. There were very poor living conditions generally,

and parents had been killed, or children abducted. The children were traumatized. The teachers ran away.

The humanitarian response included the provision of medical and health services, food distribution and educational services. But it was slow to arrive. An interviewee in Gulu noted that six years ago there were only three INGOs present and perhaps six expatriate workers, whereas by 2007 there were hundreds. Now, many of the programmes for IDPs focus on children. Since the peace agreement beginning in 2006, the security situation has settled sufficiently for large numbers of IDPs to begin to return to their homes.

Jonathan Penson visited Gulu, the largest town in northern Uganda, in October 2007. He interviewed NGO and UN agency field workers involved in providing psychosocial and material support to children around Gulu. He also visited child-friendly spaces and schools in which school-feeding programmes and education kits were being used, and went to an IDP camp housing 23,000 people. In Kampala, he also interviewed government officials and local and international NGO staff, including professional advocators.

Penson observed that interventions designed for implementation in emergencies were being used as development tools, and that the role of the community in planning these interventions was not optimal. Furthermore, the co-ordination of the humanitarian interventions faced challenges, whilst the assumed value of psychosocial programming affected what was programmed.

6.2 Emergency interventions as development tools

At the time of the research visit, security in northern Uganda was vastly improved, such that most interviewees spoke of the conflict in the past tense. Emergencies, particularly in conflicts, rarely follow a set phased path from emergency through transition to reconstruction and development. The immediate response in an emergency often sets the conditions for later development (World Bank, 2005). One of the most interesting aspects to emerge, therefore, was the continued (or in a number of instances the new) use of interventions nominally designed for emergencies.

Child-friendly spaces

"When I came in 2004 there were hardly any child-friendly spaces. The conflict is 18 years old." INGO programme officer, Uganda

Chapter 2 highlights the vagueness of the term 'child-friendly space'. Research in Uganda demonstrates that the concept was malleable, with multiple interpretations of its form and function within and between organizations. A child-friendly space may be used for different purposes according to changing circumstances, particularly in the shift from an acute emergency to recovery and reconstruction. The 'child-friendly spaces' visited in Uganda ranged from a play area (supported by organized activities and trained staff) to an integrated training centre for 14 to 20 year-olds, which combined vocational instruction with catch-up learning programmes and the provision of community services. Most organizations' current interpretations did not portray child-friendly spaces as emergency spaces. A programme development manager discussed child-friendly spaces that were to remain where they had been established during the conflict:

> When child-friendly spaces first started, people were in the camps. We had a different understanding of safe spaces within the team. For me, they are a place for children to stay, play, and for informal education. Schools do not provide that. Slowly, starting with child-friendly spaces as a sheltered place, they have developed into buildings, which look good but which are not mobile. We put them at places where people will stay anyway, such as near district headquarters and trading centres – that's one of the criteria. Even if the people have gone [from the camps], the place can be used, hopefully as more than a community centre. Now we have a new strategy. We still use the concept, not as a building, but as a place where children can play, so near a school or in a community.

Another organization said that following the return of people to their homes "the strategy is to move the child-friendly spaces to the parishes." Thus, the child-friendly space concept was used flexibly both within an area and at differing stages of an intervention. As one location manager put it: "Child-friendly spaces are a work in progress."

Ideas vary about the functions of the spaces when the emergency appears to be over. Some interviewees foresaw that the centres would transition into general community centres (although they hoped that they

would retain a child focus). Others saw the essential function remaining the same, but that they would move location with the people. A number agreed that the shift from a conflict to post-conflict environment had forced them to re-evaluate their operational modalities. Little, however, had been done to develop exit strategies. A co-ordinator observed: "The dispersal is good, but a big challenge for us. We need an increase in resources; we need to rethink approaches and adjust; refresh skills. It's harder ... It could be because we were handling it as an emergency, not preparing for times when things would be better. We were not working to transform thinking and minds, to work on these mental health issues, by planning ahead."

There seemed to be a reluctance among programme managers to relinquish child-friendly spaces developed for the emergency when circumstances changed. In this sense, the child-friendly space ceased to be a response to a need. Exit strategies do not seem to have been included from the start, or, if they were, the 'exit' was to pass the space on to the community or local government. This is a long way from the concept of a child-friendly space as a short-term, interim measure that seeks to ensure child protection in an acute emergency.

School-feeding programmes

"It should not be seen as an emergency measure." Primary school head teacher, Gulu

As noted in *Chapter 2*, the impact of school-feeding programmes has been questioned due to the unavailability of evidence regarding their effectiveness, especially concerning the nutritional benefits they bring. Identification of this gap has coincided with a shift in focus for the programmes, as their role is currently seen as being primarily to increase school enrolment, which is much more easily measured. Also, globally, WFP seeks to promote local solutions, strengthening local development by basing school meals on locally produced food and designing exit strategies into programmes from the outset (WFP, 2004*a* and 2006*d*). Implementers in Uganda, as in Sudan, saw programmes mainly as a means of increasing enrolment, and thus viewed impact in those terms, but also questioned the commitment to local solutions and the effectiveness of the exit strategy.

Implementers of school-feeding programmes seemed to be in a good position to offer evidence for their effectiveness, at least in terms of enrolment. The head teacher of a primary school said of the feeding

programme in the school: "It has been very, very useful. Enrolment has increased, from 900 before it started to 1,009 now. Attendance and performance have also increased; children are able to concentrate in the afternoons; they are not sleepy in the afternoon. Children at home have starved. Parents don't have time to cook a midday meal." This head teacher kept meticulous records of attendance, broken down by gender, which supported this statement. Giving food did seem to increase attendance proportionately more for girls, as the giving of food is a surrogate transfer of resources, and it was often economic reasons which prevented girls from attending. Although the head teacher acknowledged that improved security might have been a factor in the improved attendance figures, she went on to say, "Last term, the programme was suspended; there was not even porridge. Attendance went down to 600. The children went to other schools." It is not an ideal situation in terms of continuity of learning if children are changing schools to get food. Also, as in Sudan, cost reclamation was keeping the poorest children away, as one interviewee explained: "WFP expects parents to pay money, but parents claim that they have no money."

The reduction of the food, first from a hot lunch to breakfast porridge, and then temporarily to nothing, was seen as very problematic: "Midday meals are needed; at the moment only porridge is supplied." Teachers did not understand the reductions, and thought they perhaps were connected to food shortages due to the increase in the price of grain. The protracted time between deliveries was also seen as causing difficulties, because schools struggled to find secure space to store the food, and attendance peaked after the once-a-term food delivery.

Using school-feeding programmes as an access intervention rather than a nutritional one appears to have reduced the importance of the nutritional value of the food. Teachers and NGO workers reported that the quantities given to children were insufficient to alleviate hunger. A school administrator said, "The quantity for each child is small. We try to increase the daily amount, but we run out faster." An NGO that was assisting schools in becoming self-sustaining in terms of food had been working with an agricultural expert to attempt to quantify the nutritional shortfall. Provisional results indicated that the children required 200 g of beans and 250 g of maize daily, whereas WFP supplied 45 g and 100 g respectively. (WFP also supplied 75 g of soya for porridge, as well as 10 g of sugar and 5 g of cooking oil.)

Both the school and the NGO identified shortfalls in ancillary support which reduced the programme's effectiveness. Unlike Sudan, where teachers also received food, in Uganda they did not. This was seen as problematic. The school also had to convert an office and some classroom space into stores for the food, ironically increasing the pressure on teaching space in order to run a programme that increased student numbers. Although it was not surprising that not all requests were granted, often WFP simply did not reply: "We made a proposal to upgrade the kitchen to them. The community would supply the bricks and do the work, but we were not listened to."

It seemed that the programme sat somewhat uncomfortably between emergency and development interventions. It did not supply sufficient nutritional benefit to reach the most vulnerable. At the same time, while some aspects of the programme encouraged schools to develop long-term feeding provision, insufficient resources or technical assistance were provided to turn it into a sustainable strategy for the school. Necessary support should therefore be provided to enable school self-sufficiency. A clear exit strategy is also desirable, in part to avoid sudden reductions in feeding provision. This would help overall planning if school-feeding programmes are to be used as development rather than emergency interventions. One key lesson to emerge was that providing clear information is critical. The lack of definition about whether the programme was for emergency or development purposes made it difficult for the beneficiaries to accommodate the programme in a systematic way. The unannounced changes in quantities of food and support meant that they could not take ownership and make the programme locally sustained. This was true as much for a child wishing to attend school as for a school wishing to provide food for its children.

Education kits

"The principle is the emergency." Multilateral organization programme officer, Gulu

A range of UNICEF's partners, particularly WFP, were distributing education kits at the time of the research visit, apparently for the first time in the history of the conflict. One interviewee explained the difference between acute emergency response and the recovery phase, saying: "We are trying to change attitudes: go to school, back to school, stay in school." This indicates that the purpose is primarily to increase enrolment, attendance, and retention. The logic, as one interviewee put it,

was that, "It's a good time to give out materials as people are returning to safe areas. People can't afford pencils. It makes schools more attractive, it's a good time to get children back." The huge push towards UPE as part of the MDG and EFA advocacy drives made it easier to get funding for education kits. A project officer stated that "because of the global back-to-school campaign, it came from the national office that these are the interventions, part of the strategy to reach the MDGs. It was not something we had to justify." Also of note is the strong direction from the national office; no mention was made of local assessments or of community participation. In terms of the influences on programming, for one organization it appeared that by far the most important was the decision by national office staff that, "these are the interventions" which meet global targets. Yet, for another organization, an employee said: "There is a big discussion at the moment about education: are we going to build schools, provide fees and scholastic materials etc? We are not considering using schools-in-a-box. We have our own sports equipment kit. Will we use education kits? The way I heard about it, no."

When asked why kits were not used in the emergency, one interviewee replied, "The support was already there ... but in a different way, e.g. helicoptering students to exams, giving out exercise books. School-in-a-box is not just about emergency response, but about quality." Others were responding to UNICEF's lead, as a programme manager explained: "We are distributing schools-in-a-box. The first delivery of these by UNICEF was in May 2007. The emergency co-ordination meetings run by UNICEF are one year old. The conflict is 20 years old." It was not yet certain how long the education kits would be used, although a figure of "two years at least" was mentioned. One of the deciding factors is the ability of local people to provide for themselves: "Once people get better incomes from being able to farm again, then [the programme] will be able to stop." Given the level of existing poverty in northern Uganda, this is unlikely to be for a long time.

Apart from the timing, some interviewees felt that there were issues concerning the manner of distribution. One NGO officer, who worked with a large number of schools in the area, felt that the distribution of kits was counter-productive, especially the recreation kits. She claimed that no evaluation of a school's existing stock had been undertaken, with the result that some schools consequently had a surplus of materials, while others were operating with the bare minimum. She had calculated

that 80 of the 210 schools with which she worked already had sufficient materials, yet they were all given kits. None of the materials in the kit were sourced locally, which had a negative effect on the local market. She felt that time should have been taken to evaluate schools' needs, as this would have been more cost-effective in the end. In contrast, other interviewees noted that greater effort went into ensuring more even coverage, although there were still some distribution issues.

The way that the kits were used meant that blanket coverage in the focus areas – which were selected according to the degree to which they were affected by the emergency and where UNICEF had staff – was thought necessary. One consultant said, "The kits are used as a way of transitioning. They are a way of giving damaged schools some materials to start off with again, and of thanking the host schools in IDP camps. Also, you can't give them in one area and not another, due to local rivalries."

Coverage only applied to primary schools, and then only to Grades 1 to 3, in order "to achieve a good foundation in education." Secondary schools were not included in the distribution of kits: an interviewee said, "At secondary level the issue is access. School-in-a-box is not useful at that level ... You can't standardize at that level. It is easier to standardize at [a] lower level." As in Sudan, this raises questions about the reasons for the lack of attention given to secondary education. The widespread distribution of kits to primary schools is justified on the basis of 'access' in particular, and the desire for standardization. The interviewee noted, however, that there were other programmes for secondary level, although no details were provided.

Standardization has another effect. The kits includes items that are not locally relevant, and the quality of some of the items is an issue. While, like in Sudan, there were a number of comments about the low quality of items, in Uganda, the problem was generally that the quality of the items was so much higher than those available locally. Consequently, there was the temptation for people to sell them:

> The kits are very attractive, they might be sold in the market. This is happening, especially in Kitgum. The things are very expensive. We need to train head teachers to look at them as school property. The bags given to the children are very nice. The schools don't have secure stores. We don't fund stores. There is a risk of good equipment going missing in large quantities. Locally bought stuff

is not so attractive. For convenience it's better, and for above a certain level of expenditure the [UNICEF] supply department doesn't allow the purchase of local stuff.

This last comment contradicts UNICEF's guidelines for using the school-in-a-box kits, which stipulates that "whenever items are available in the country, they should be procured locally for maximum sustainability" (UNICEF, undated: 3).

Despite an important point in the UNICEF guidelines (undated: 1), which states that a school-in-a-box "must be complemented by teacher training and support, a teacher's guide and books and other didactic material based on a curriculum relevant to the child's future education", there are no teaching manuals. Therefore the national office is responsible for developing its own teacher guides. While training is given to head teachers, it is not given to teachers. The reason for these omissions, according to one interviewee, was that "the materials are simple to use ... We assume that teachers are already trained and able to use the materials." Additionally, the kits are not adapted for local contexts. One consultant said, "They're very basic, so that's not really an issue, so there's no adaptation." Another interviewee, however, did say that she would have liked the flexibility to adapt the kits to the local context. The standard approach applied to the replenishment of the kits as well as initial distribution: "Replenishment kits are going to be supplied. These replenish the consumable items, and will be distributed in the same way. The same kits will go to every school after a set period." Again, we see a tension between the demands of running a large-scale programme, which favours standardization, and the need for a locally driven, responsive programme, which some interviewees felt would be more effective. In the field, getting this balance right is difficult.

Notwithstanding, there was a concerted attempt to involve the community in monitoring and evaluation through parent-teacher associations, school management committees and using local radio. This was in part to ensure community ownership, and also to ensure that the materials were not locked up, unused, or seen as being personal property rather than school property. Despite a lack of evaluative information, the kits were said to have been very successful. One interviewee stated, "They have a real impact, a very great benefit for schools. Head teachers send children away if they don't have materials. It works to attract them. Enrolment jumped due to distribution." They were also easy to administer:

"They are very convenient and beneficial", and popular: "There was a high level of excitement about making things more effective and interesting. We have emphasized *using* the materials, not locking them up."

Education kits were originally designed for use in emergencies. The purpose in an acute emergency is to provide the minimum materials necessary to ensure that teaching and learning can continue to function. In these circumstances, the reliance on standardization is seen as necessary in order to get materials out as quickly as possible. Where kits are being used for very different purposes, i.e. as a tool to boost enrolment and attendance, a less standardized approach should be considered, taking the local context into account, including encouraging local supplies and community participation in targeting schools.

6.3 The role of the community

"We are running a community-run child-friendly space." INGO project officer, Gulu

The positive engagement of the community is vital to achieving successful outcomes for interventions. Hence, how the programme design builds the relationship with the community is crucial. A number of interviewees from NGOs identified weaknesses in their own community participation methods. Most felt that the community had not been adequately involved early enough. There was also a degree of ambivalence about the whole process of community participation. The result was that some NGOs involved the community by 'explaining' the programme, and securing its agreement. There were clearly tensions between, firstly, the genuine wish to consult the community and respond to its stated needs; secondly, the need to ensure sustainability, both by obtaining community 'buy-in' and by ensuring that NGOs have the capacity to undertake what is asked of them; and, thirdly, the wish to provide programming that accords with global standardized practice rather than what might be preferred locally, which requires persuasion rather than consultation.

One location manager for an NGO spoke of the difficulty of engaging the community in running a child-friendly space: "One of the challenges is that the community does not own them. We drafted the terms of reference for boards, we hired them, we built them and we said, 'Community, come and manage it.' They didn't participate from

the beginning, so they have a right to say that it's not theirs. There is no ownership."

A programme development manager for another NGO spoke of the difficulty of passing a child-friendly space over to the community: "They are not yet used [in a community-centred] way. Partly this is due to us: things were not done in a completely community-based approach; partly it's because the whole concept is difficult for the community to understand ... The concept is not so clear."

The manager went on to explain why it was difficult for the community to engage with projects proactively: "If people have been a long time in a relief situation, they have a tendency to accept everything, even if they don't need it." A government officer described this as 'community fatigue', saying that, in long-term situations, beneficiaries simply get tired of being required to respond to the latest NGO and their initiatives, no matter how good and well-intentioned. He said that there was also a degree of suspicion about NGOs, as they "use the community to advocate for their own resources." There is also simply the effect of living in very difficult circumstances, and the contrast between this and the opportunity it represents for NGOs. As one manager observed: "Tragically, having people in camps is such an abuse of their integrity, their being; it dismembers them and nullifies their whole existence. They are caged. But for the humanitarian community, there has never been an opportunity like having 2 million people in one place to throw stuff at, whether it be food or whatever."

Not all the initiatives developed by agencies were successful; for example attempts to involve children had a number of issues. A location manager observed, "The structures are up and the aim is to have them up and running and attractive to children. It's naïve of us to think that children would rush to join and play a leading role."

In addition there is clear ambivalence that programme designers feel concerning the role of the community. Practical assistance from the community is welcomed. A programme manager said, "The community leaders advise us where we can operate safely and where we can access." A project co-ordinator said, "The communities give a lot, in terms of land and volunteers." In contrast however, regarding project content, the influence of the community is more contentious. One programme manager said, "We go for participation: we ask an 'ignorant' person whose horizons are limited, what they want to do. They only know about

tailoring etc., so they say that." What this means is that if programmes are designed around communities' wishes, they would look the same and be limited in scope. This has obvious limitations as a strategy. One co-ordinator summed up the effect of this on local opportunity:

> If you tell a donor you want to train formerly abducted children, 90 per cent of the time the programme will rotate around carpentry, tailoring, and bricklaying. How many carpenters and tailors are you going to need? ... NGOs might be happy to be seen to be doing something, but it's a waste of time. The donors are also duped. It's money down the drain.

As described in the Sudan country study, there was a concentration on vocational training, which was seen as a panacea for children who had missed out on education. The co-ordinator went on to remark that "vocational training is very easy to sell, but catch-up education not so. Vocational programmes are driven not by need but by the high probability of finding a donor." NGOs did not seem to consider the possibility that communities asked for vocational training, because they knew from experience that such training was likely to be delivered.

There seems to be an unquestioning assumption on the part of some NGOs that it is only the community which suffers from bounded horizons. NGOs, however, also clearly have their own restrictions. Many NGOs claim that their standard way of operating is to undertake a needs assessment, and then to compare the needs with their mandate. The phrase, "It's not in our mandate", was heard quite frequently; i.e. the organization can only do what it is designed to do. This is in part to do with practicality. Some requests were beyond the capacity or area of expertise of the NGO. But beyond these explanations, there still seems to be limited creative thinking in order to respond to actual needs. Communities' needs differ. Even one 'community' is never a cohesive entity, capable of having and expressing the same wishes for all its members. What is evident from the research is that the similarity of interventions related to child-friendly spaces, school-feeding and educational kits does not match a design based on local assessment.

6.4 Co-ordination of programming

> *"NGOs don't consult government. But the government consults NGOs."* Government officer, Uganda

As seen from the Sudan country study, the co-ordination of the emergency response was perceived by many to be problematic. A key

difference between Uganda and Sudan, however, was the presence in Uganda of effective national and local government authorities whose role included overall oversight of the humanitarian response and development efforts through a clear structure. However there were frustrations. Firstly, the capacity of local government was pushed to breaking point by the sheer number of relief and development agencies. Secondly, the dual role of the Cluster Leader was a cause of concern for some interviewees. Thirdly, some agencies simply did not wish to co-ordinate their efforts with others. This caused a dilemma for the government, which valued inputs, but needed to exert control in order to maintain effective co-ordination.

When the *'night commuter'* issue hit the headlines in 2004, a large number of NGOs started operating in northern Uganda.[8] This accelerated when the end of the conflict made it safer to work there. One programme manager said: "In the last three years, there has been an enormous influx of NGOs and UN agencies ... eight UN agencies. This is crazy. Three years ago there were only two agencies, with one person each. They don't work together."

Clearly, co-ordinating the large increase of organizations, all with different mandates, objectives, and ways of operating would be very challenging anywhere. In a situation in which 20 years of conflict has significantly eroded local government capacity, the task is exponentially more difficult. A government source said that the extent to which NGOs involved government in programming decisions was problematic, adding: "Theoretically the framework for consultation exists, but not in practice. NGOs feel obliged to report only to donors. Districts have been forced to expel some large NGOs ... Their reluctance to consult government leads to duplication and community fatigue, as NGOs concentrate on some areas and leave gaps in others."

Another government source added: "The marginalization of vulnerable groups is greater during an emergency ... The very rural, marginalized areas received [the] least services, even from NGOs. NGOs say that they reach the poorest of the poor but they don't." A programme manager from an INGO gave an example of the duplication that came about when NGOs did not co-ordinate, explaining that some locations had

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8.   Every night in northern Uganda, tens of thousands of children from the countryside, the 'night commuters', converged on urban centres seeking safely in shelters set up by aid agencies to escape attack and abduction by the LRA.

three adjoining youth centres, each run by a different NGO. They were not being fully used due to insufficient demand. The manager continued: "You do have to go to the local authorities, however. In some locations, though, you can just start. This is changing, though. You are supposed to follow the district work plan, but if you don't, it doesn't rebound on you. Only if you digress on another issue, such as fund mismanagement, can you be expelled."

Local government did not have adequate capacity to consistently co-ordinate the estimated 230 NGOs working in and around Gulu. Instead, it was reported to be using the sanction of expulsion to obtain compliance with official work plans. A large INGO had been told by the government to leave the country for undertaking activities without informing the district office. An interviewee from another NGO noted that many NGOs were not informing the district offices, as simple requests required informing multiple offices and often the necessary people were not available. A government officer confirmed that "some local governments only have 20 per cent staffing levels", adding that capacity was a big problem. He pointed out, however, that: "NGOs only pretend to co-operate. If they don't provide accountability to the district office, they will be uncomfortable. If they require district staff to come out to appraise programmes, they should provide fuel. We don't know their plans; we don't know their budgets." Another government official confirmed the lack of sufficient qualified staff, saying that that NGOs were "not negotiable" in their approach.

Some observers felt that UN agencies are not able to exert co-ordination control over NGOs any more than the government. One commented, "The Cluster Approach is new, and there is not much co-ordination between Clusters. The Child Protection and Education Clusters don't share information." A government source felt that, "Clustering is more effective in delivering emergency relief like food, clothes, health – it works especially in health. In longer-term investments it becomes weak. Several institutions want independence. Everyone wants his flag up, and that is a real challenge." From the NGO point of view, a field co-ordinator said: "We have especially big problems with the UN donors here ... like dropping funding with no notice, requiring reports to be submitted in different formats two months after the submission dates, and so on ... Overall, the UN system doesn't jive with the NGO system." The co-ordinator went on to enumerate other problems like the "major delays, delays of nine months ... [or] the person who's supposed

to sign a proposal approval may be on leave ... for example, a recent four-month programme became a three-month programme. But we're still expected to keep our side of the bargain." This lack of faith in UN agencies' abilities is a serious issue as it will erode NGOs' willingness to engage enthusiastically with co-ordination efforts.

There were however contrasting opinions over the nature of the UN co-ordination efforts. One observer felt that "the co-ordination efforts of UNICEF are actually very good, but they are not sufficiently supported by all the NGOs. The major NGOs tend to be less good at sharing and collaboration than the small ones. [A major INGO] is not part of the Cluster – it refuses to join." A government source agreed, "NGOs are saying they don't want to be supervised, or to open up, or to be 'compelled' to do things." Like in Sudan, this was particularly true of the larger organizations, as an INGO representative explained: "Membership of the Cluster is optional. [This INGO] is a rich organization. It doesn't need UNICEF funding ... If you want UNICEF funds you have to do what they say, which is fair enough, but you can still go to another donor." In Sudan, the dual role of UNICEF also had implications for programme planning, as was demonstrated by a programme manager's explanation of her organization's relationship with UNICEF: "It's starting now that donors are applying pressure. In order to grow, we need external funding. UNICEF likes us, and approaches us with projects. They push a bit too much [in] which direction they want us to go. [In] one instance we said no. So, yes, it's a donor-driven thing, but also no, it's up to the NGO to agree or not."

There are very similar issues with the relationship between NGOs and the government. A co-ordinator explained why her NGO's programmes did not integrate with those of the government: "Our early childhood development programmes are not connected in any way with the government's primary curriculum. We do our own thing. We are not working closely with the district. That was due to a personality thing with my predecessor. She was the person who started up the programme, and she wasn't interested in working with the district. It was her idea ..."

One government source put the problem thus: "Some NGOs are not very transparent, we don't know what interventions they are doing. We call them 'briefcase NGOs'." It was frequently stated by humanitarian organizations that, before an intervention takes place, the implementing agency conducts an assessment. However, little use seemed to be

made of assessments previously conducted by other agencies. Yet, as a government officer bemoaned, "This country is very rich in studies." The government preferred that the NGOs co-ordinated and shared assessments and complied with the official assessments. As a government source stated: "At the beginning the NGOs' responses did not fit in with the government's. This changed after the Humanitarian Co-ordination Committee formed ... The districts began to know how to handle the NGOs."

It is of course vital that an organization maintain its independence. If, however, lack of co-ordination means that there are eight community centres operating in close proximity, as we found in one camp, then this indicates a issue of concern that needs to be addressed.

6.5 Psychosocial versus education

"Safe spaces are fantastic, but they shouldn't be glorified." INGO programme manager, UK, speaking about Gulu

Posted on the wall of one child-friendly space in northern Uganda was a well-used chart that set out the schedule of activities. Next to each activity was a column marked 'objective'. The objective for playing the board game *Ludo*, for example, was 'confidence-building'. But it is questionable, how much a rape victim, a formerly abducted child, or a former child soldier would have their confidence built by playing *Ludo*. Games can have a socializing role and they can help develop certain skills, such as thinking ahead and numeracy. They can also help people relax and engender a sense of togetherness or competition. But, does playing games in a child-friendly space in a war zone build confidence in the way claimed of them?

Chapter 2 discusses the assumptions made about psychosocial-led programming, and in particular, regarding the connection between play and psychosocial development, and the prevalence of play activities in child-friendly spaces. This section examines some assumptions that play is more important than education for psychosocial development. There are no clear distinctions between education and play – good child-centred learning should be playful; play should incorporate learning – the split between the education and child protection sectors has brought about this distinction in the humanitarian community.

That play encourages resilience, healing and a sense of normalcy in children appeared to be taken for granted among many interviewees. On

what basis, however, is this assumption being made? Notably, there was strong demand for learning from both parents and children, but parents needed to be persuaded of the value of psychosocial activities. One programme manager said, "The first programme we have is child-friendly spaces. This is a safe place where children can play, be themselves, but also learn. Education is supposed to take place." Note the use of the word 'supposed'. Another person working for the same organization noted that the children "come to play only." The difficulty of evaluating psychosocial programmes was identified by a number of interviewees, most often in respect of convincing donors, who were believed to prefer numerically quantifiable reports. One programme manager commented, "UNICEF is asking for more proof that our psychosocial activities work. This is difficult to do." So, while psychosocial activities are the preferred intervention of many organizations, the lack of an evidence base for their effectiveness is beginning to be recognized in the field.

Organizations that focus on learning activities have found themselves under pressure. The manager of a catch-up education programme explained that it had started after a comprehensive two-stage assessment in which a large number of stakeholders had been asked to prioritize their needs. Education came out high – in particular, enabling access to the formal education system. The programme manager explained the rationale: "If you want to train people, then the higher their education level, the greater the possible options. So let them complete at least primary and preferably secondary. Take a long-term view. You're not going to train everyone vocationally. Where are the doctors of tomorrow? It's a lost generation – in 20 years' time we will get the impact, when the current office bearers retire." He added that "if you talk to UNICEF, they admit the out-of-school programmes are needed, but they won't fund them."

Learning involves a sense of development, a sense of purpose. It gives people a future goal. While child-friendly spaces seem to be valued by the community and children enjoy attending them, the opportunity cost of children playing when they could be learning needs to be taken into consideration. If child-friendly spaces are to be used as long-term measures, then there should be a sense of progression.

Practitioners are beginning to reflect on this. A consultant commented, "Games etc., are good for development, but it needs a structured approach of tried and tested, assessable activities. This is not easy to do in a safe space. These things work better in schools as they need

consistent attendance." The limitations of staff were also recognized, as one education project manager noted, "The reality is, when you're using local staff in an emergency situation, who have a maximum of two days' training, they can't be people who can give trauma or psychosocial support."

In a child-friendly space, there are often referral paths for children with particular needs. The referrals are either to other more specialized agencies or to other programmes run by the same organization as a child-friendly space. One programme manager explained how psychosocial programming was being expanded, first within the existing programme: "We have a specific programme for vulnerable children: those with learning difficulties, who are aggressive or withdrawn, or who come from difficult home backgrounds." The question is, can this be done in schools as well as in child-friendly spaces; through learning as well as through play? Some organizations are beginning to think this way, and to expand the psychosocial programming into schools from the original 'home' in child-friendly spaces. The programme manager continued, "We don't intend to build schools, but have been thinking about how to train teachers in how to identify and support psychosocial needs." Similarly, the concept is being expanded into the community. One organization is working with parents and carers to support children's psychosocial needs in a 'psychosocial education' programme.

The influence of the psychosocial aspect of programming is intensifying within child-friendly spaces and expanding beyond them. Yet, there does not seem to be an equivalent for the pedagogical aspect. For instance, despite the reference to children with learning difficulties, there is no specific academic support within the programme outlined above. Nor was there much evidence of provision for children with disabilities. A number of programme managers admitted to a shortfall in this area. One of the legacies of the treatment of education and child protection as separate sectors has been an 'either/or' mentality as regards programming. One way forward is to integrate learning and psychosocial programming. A project co-ordinator explained: "They are integrated. From day one of training, the psychosocial value of education is dealt with, so it runs through all activities. It's part and parcel of the process. We also do counselling (both general and on an individual need basis). This is not only based on a Western model of psychotherapy, but also on traditional local means, which, therefore, build social interaction." Some organizations place child-friendly spaces next to schools. The former,

however, should not compete for children. There is a need to look at the local educational context and work with schools and government curricula to fill gaps in a coherent fashion.

To conclude: whereas play facilitates learning, education *is* learning, and progressive rather than cyclical patterns of interaction give a sense of development as well as routine. Furthermore, games, sports, and activities such as drama and art are a normal component of many primary schools' curricula, so it is strange that these activities are suddenly assumed to have trauma-relieving qualities when undertaken in a conflict environment. As discussed in *Chapters 2* and *3*, child-friendly spaces have the potential for bridging the gap between distinct education and child protection interventions, and for encouraging moves towards a more holistic view of children's needs. Therefore, is it necessary to separate them out from formal or informal learning? A move towards integration, as previously identified, would perhaps be more suitable.

6.6 Principal findings

At the time of the research visit to Uganda, there was relative security, yet, interventions designed for emergency responses were being used as development initiatives. This was the case for child-friendly spaces, the forms and functions of which were seen to be malleable, since implementers were reluctant to close the programmes. Education kits, designed to kick-start education in emergencies, were also being distributed, seemingly for the first time, apparently to assist with enrolment, attendance and retention. The standard kits were being distributed to all primary schools, irrespective of need. There seemed to be clear direction for this programming from agency HQ, rather than it being a response to assessments of local needs. The equipment in the kits was not locally sourced. Although the kits were said to be successful, it must be stressed that locally responsive programming is more appropriate for a development context. Furthermore, education kits are expensive and not relevant to the context.

School-feeding programmes were also being used to increase enrolment – children even changed schools to attend those providing food. Inconsistent food provision, however, meant that nutritional value was questionable. Enabling access to education for children in an acute emergency – getting as many children into school as quickly as possible – and generally encouraging greater enrolment as part of ongoing development efforts require different programmes. Yet, the same kind of

school-feeding programmes are being used in an 'emergency' situation as in a 'development' context. Planning for transition between acute emergency and post-emergency phases should be built into programme design from the outset, so that transitions can be smoother and more predictable, even though there will not always be a phased ending to a conflict. There seems to be a tendency to prefer using the formal schooling system for feeding programmes for the following reasons: the structure is in place; one entity, namely, the government can be dealt with; and the aim is to facilitate the return of children to the formal schooling system in accordance with the requirements of the MDGs. In an emergency situation, however, this can result in the exclusion of the most vulnerable children.

The research identified ambivalence with regard to community involvement in the planning and implementation of these standard initiatives. While many interviewees felt that the community had not been sufficiently involved early on, there were also suggestions that the communities' horizons were limited. Therefore many NGOs preferred persuading the community to accept NGO priority programmes. This points in part to NGOs' own limitations in creating programmes applicable to local circumstances, opting instead to use standardized or customary approaches.

Effective provision for children was hampered by somewhat ineffective co-ordination of the NGOs providing the services. Co-ordination efforts were affected by the limited capacity of local government to manage the influx of NGOs into the region, as well as some NGOs' limited co-operation with government policies. The same was true with regard to Cluster leadership, in that UNICEF's capacity for effective co-ordination was questioned. Additionally, not all NGOs engaged with co-ordination efforts, preferring independent operations to sharing assessments. As a result, some camps (within sight of each other) had multiple examples of the same intervention, which was not an effective service for the beneficiaries.

Finally, institutional focus on psychosocial activities, and particularly the assumption of the value of play over education, affected the programming decisions of organizations working in northern Uganda. This was despite strong demands from parents and children for formal education. It is questionable whether the benefits attributed to psychosocial activities in developing normalcy could not be delivered

as effectively through a greater emphasis on structured learning. This would ensure that the integration between child protection and education was more effective. Greater integration between the sections might also extend to their co-ordination, in that integrating the Education and Child Protection Clusters might help to reduce some of the co-ordination problems by adding synergies and reducing inefficiencies.

As part of the process of making the distinction between emergency- and development-oriented interventions, consideration should be made as to the best ways of supporting schools in their efforts to be sustainable. This will vary from context to context. In Uganda, schools were attempting to grow food sufficient to meet their needs. This might be incorporated into agriculture curricula. Growing food for schools might be part of a local, income-generating project for members of the community, as long as children are not exploited. Formalizing these approaches requires close collaboration among school-feeding programme policy-makers, authorities, schools and communities, but with clear divisions of responsibility between agents responsible for feeding programme quality and agents responsible for education quality. It will also require mutual responsiveness, consistency, openness and clarity about objectives.

Chapter 7

Country study: Timor-Leste

7.1 Introduction

Timor-Leste became formally independent from Indonesia in 2002, following a UN-supervised referendum in 1999. The withdrawal of Indonesia's troops and their militia supporters into West Timor was accompanied by massive bloodshed and destruction, and the fleeing of thousands of East Timorese across the border. Timor-Leste made a remarkable recovery from the devastation suffered in 1999 after the independence referendum, when 95 per cent of school buildings were destroyed (Nicolai, 2004). A huge rehabilitation programme meant that most schools were useable within a few years of the devastation.

Conflict, however, broke out in April 2006, primarily in the capital, Dili. The conflict erupted after the sacking of nearly 600 soldiers, and was complicated by political grievances and rivalry between the police and the military, along with accusations of an east-west divide. It was fuelled by a power struggle between President Xanana Gusmão and the then Prime Minister, Mari Alkatiri (International Crisis Group, 2006: i), that had been rooted in disagreements during the fight for independence between the Revolutionary Front for an Independent Timor-Leste (FRETILIN) central committee members and Xanana Gusmão, then commander of the guerrilla army, the Armed Forces for the National Liberation of Timor-Leste (FALINTIL). Matters spiralled out of control, and the violence escalated as gangs of youths became involved. Australian and other international troops arrived to quell the violence, and many still remain. A UN police force now patrols Dili in support of its local counterparts.

Map 4   Map of Timor-Leste

Source: Perry-Castañeda Library Map Collection, the University of Texas at Austin, USA.

Of the estimated total population of Dili of 180,000, approximately 70,000 people fled to IDP camps in the capital and almost the same number fled out of the city. Although many IDPs have returned home, camps remain in Dili and in the districts. As an INGO representative said, "The whole district was just a mess. Ten per cent of the whole population of Timor-Leste was displaced." Although there was an existing INGO and UN presence in Timor-Leste at the time of the conflict, its focus was primarily developmental. After the peak weeks of violence ended, and expatriate staff who had been evacuated returned, they were joined by emergency personnel. IDP camps appeared all over Dili, and in the districts, particularly in Baucau in the east of Timor-Leste. As of October 2007, it was estimated that there were 100,000 people still displaced within Timor-Leste, 30,000 of them within Dili itself (OCHA, 2007*a*).

Kathryn Tomlinson visited Dili in October 2007. She interviewed 22 people from the UN, donor organizations, national and international

NGOs. She met with representatives of all the major international agencies working on child-friendly spaces as well as local organizations contributing to psychosocial support. She visited child-friendly spaces in two IDP camps and in two community settings, as well as a large IDP camp in Metinaro, 30 minutes outside Dili, which had limited provision for children. She also attended a child protection support group meeting with local personnel. Interviewees did not discuss school-feeding programmes in Timor-Leste, and education kits were rarely mentioned. This chapter, therefore, focuses primarily on child-friendly spaces. Despite continuing confusion over the nature of the conflict, INGOs and UN agencies responded to the education and protection needs of children with a well co-ordinated network of child-friendly spaces and personnel to support them. There are questions, however, about how well this model responded to complex circumstances or the initiatives implemented by communities themselves.

7.2 The co-ordinated international response

When the 2006 crisis began, people fled to places where they felt safe, either near national or international armed forces (including Dili airport, the first place secured by the Australian military) or around churches, the cathedral and seminaries, where religious leaders organized and supported the camps. There remains a distinction between the two types of camps. A UN officer explained that in the 'church camps' nuns and priests "control who comes in and the place is respected by others." But in camps without the supervision of a religious authority, the leadership was elected by the inhabitants, which resulted in problems. Some of the 'open-field' camps were described by another UN staff member as "truly troublesome." As another UN officer said, "It's different for a nun to write down a rice recipient list than an elected person."

Exactly how many IDPs there are in the camps remains unkown. Part of the problem stems from the registration process, in that many of those no longer living in the camps are still registered, not least because they can obtain food and other provisions . Although some of those still living in the camps are doing so because they are afraid to return home, a UN representative explained that there were also "politicized rich people who want compensation from the government ... university students, who used to live with family members in Dili who are now IDPs; people who want a cheap way to stay in the city; young people who come here to work."

The lack of property law, to deal with the multiple occupations of houses after multiple displacements (post-Indonesian takeover, post-independence, post-2006 conflict), causes additional problems. The camps also serve as rallying points for opposition to the government, as demonstrated by the FRETILIN flags flying above several of the major camps. Opposition parties, therefore, may be reluctant to encourage people to return home.

The conflict in Timor-Leste was and remains complex. As one observer said, "The nature of the conflict has changed. It's gone through institutional, ethnic gangs, to political." Another was less sure, saying: "It's unclear who's fighting whom, and why." Clearly, how the crisis developed as it did, or the motivations behind continuing violence, are not fully understood. Some measures have been taken to address this problem. For example, one programme officer said that following an attack on a Ministry of Education warehouse, "We've just asked some journalists to do some investigation on, 'Why schools?' It's very targeted, burning everything down, pulling books out of cupboards. There's a lot of anger and frustration." Plan International also commissioned research into youth perspectives on the crisis.[9] The research concluded that young people "see the conflict as a high-level political issue that is playing out in the community" (Grove *et al.*, 2007: ii).

It seems that existing international staff working on development programmes were not well prepared for the conflict in 2006; as one said, "All of a sudden there were IDPs everywhere." A senior INGO representative said that, as a result: "Our capacity to respond was very weak. Our initial assessments were very weak. Initially we had no capacity. Some of the organization's programme decisions were off. We didn't fully understand the country's needs. There were issues with the crisis and how quickly it spiralled out of control. And the fact that the conflict changed so quickly, the same people fighting for different reasons."

Despite these issues, and despite not fully understanding what was going on, the international community quickly organized provision of child-friendly spaces in almost every camp in Dili. In the initial phases of the emergency, those who responded were development rather than emergency staff. As an INGO worker present at the time explained:

9.   Plan International is a child-centred development charity active in developing countries.

"Things started on a very small level, with mobile camps. But it was very clear that there were a lot of kids around, so we did child activities, games. I worked with volunteers ... a lot of people went home. Only in May did a lot of emergency staff arrive." Another interviewee present at the time of the crisis said: "In the first month, there were more important things to solve than education. Then we started to have UNICEF providing support. Plan [International] were the first ones to have a lot of activities inside the camps. The Ministry of Education was providing some responses. Groups of people organized themselves, including lots of teachers."

Fairly soon, however, inter-agency co-ordination structures emerged. Plan International and UNICEF led the way in co-ordination of child protection work through the establishment of the Child Protection Working Group. This was the strategic level group attended either by heads of agencies or by the senior programme officer concerned with child protection. A parallel structure was the Child Protection Support Group, which consisted of the field workers in the same agencies. A local representative for the group explained its role: "We ensure there are psychosocial activities in the camps, so children can play. We also provide child-friendly spaces and UNICEF tents. From last year, we just monitor and report cases of violence to the Department of Social Solidarity and the police ... In the Child Protection Working Group, we also work with the Ministry of Education, identifying the children who are deprived of the right to education."

This level of organization was mirrored in the camps themselves, with each overseen by a camp manager elected by the IDP community. They organized sectoral sub-groups, for water and sanitation, health, women, etc., as well as education and child protection, each represented by a focal point person. One INGO representative explained that the focal points were "links in camps who provide attention to women being beaten, children being abused. They are trained to use the referral system and to detect possible symptoms of abuse." Each camp had a site liaison service, a role taken on by either the International Organization for Migration (IOM) or an INGO. The site liaison service served as the connection between the camp structure and the humanitarian agencies. There was generally agreement that these co-ordination efforts were a success. One agency said, "It was one of the better examples of co-ordination at that time", and another agreed that, "What worked here was that inter-agency collaboration was good; we wanted to do stuff together."

Child-friendly spaces, "the model most agencies were using" according to an INGO representative, were established in many of the camps within ten days. She explained: "We did focus group discussions with young people and with children. We also talked with the 'camp leaders' [and] we talked with the spokespeople for the groups. From memory, they were already familiar with the model of children's activities during the day, and they said they needed that. I don't know where they knew it from; whether from other agencies or that was what they were used to doing." It seems from this and other interviews that the child-friendly space model had been decided upon before the assessment took place, as discussed in *Chapter 3*. Asked if the child-friendly spaces provided education, staff of one agency said, "Not really, it was a recreational outlet. As it developed it got more structure. It was very informal the way it started." Another explained that education was never a considerable part of the plan for child-friendly spaces in Dili: "They provide non-formal education for adolescents. Nobody said we need structured learning in child-friendly spaces. They're for non-school, or children who could not go to school, or after school: they provide play and recreation. The idea is to have one in every IDP camp."

Because of the unexpected speed with which the conflict erupted, international organizations initially did not have the staff to cope with the new situation. One organization said, "We quickly recruited and trained youth. They were from our youth training centre. It was all a young team, none of them were parents. That has affected us long-term." A local staff member said that he had received training "on how to play with kids in the camps, [how to deal with] trauma, conflict," and that thereafter, "every day for four months I went to the camps and played with children. There were three [local staff members] per camp, 20 altogether ... We played twice a week in the community, and every day in the IDP camps."

At the camp level, organizations used animators – IDPs from the camp – to organize and run the activities in the child-friendly spaces. Sometimes these people were also the child protection focal points. As one agency explained: "We established community focal points to be trained on how to conduct activities for children. They were selected by community leaders. The focal points were to build child-friendly spaces and get training, and to be backed up by the wider Child Protection Working Group, made up of UN agencies, NGOs and the government." This model was replicated when some organizations began working in communities also affected by the conflict. "In each village we have a

committee of ten people, old and young people. People who know how to play with children, volunteers from the community. The activities we did after the crisis are like those we do now. We look at who can play with children, give ... training to them, and then they play with the children. They're volunteers."

This well organized co-ordination structure has its limitations. It seems that the role of community members in engaging with their children's education and protection is limited to the roles allocated to them by the international community. As one programme officer said, "The community is involved in the selection of the focal points, the space, and in monitoring the child-friendly spaces. That's the extent of their involvement."

The aim was to set up child-friendly spaces in every camp. This suggests that the child-friendly spaces were planned to respond to generic needs, rather than those specific to particular situations. The implications of this in one camp, Metinaro, are discussed below. The politics and levels of conflict in church and non-church camps differed, suggesting that children's needs may also have differed. Long after the immediate crisis had ended – and even INGO support had ceased (at least a year and a half after the events that had resulted in the support had commenced) – child-friendly spaces continued operating. Child-friendly spaces seem to have been 'what the international community did' for child protection in Timor-Leste, and there was little evidence that this was reviewed regularly after their implementation.

There also seems to have been reliance on the process or structure of child-friendly spaces to fulfil child protection (and to a lesser extent education) needs. This is not a new problem. Child-friendly spaces had been established in Timor-Leste prior to 2006: they were also used in the aftermath of the independence referendum with returning IDPs. A number of interviewees reflected on this process, during which three agencies worked together on their development. For the most part it was not seen as a success. A consultant said: "They continued for about a year. From everything I heard it was a huge, huge failure. There was a lot of money going into co-ordination and a light touch on operations. They focused on psychosocial support and trauma healing for children, but not on the main issues of repatriation and sustainability."

Difficulties with logistics meant that recreation equipment sourced from Darwin, Australia and Indonesia took a long time to arrive.

Consequently, child-friendly spaces were not set up until at least a year after the crisis had occurred. A senior interviewee said that the opening of the first child-friendly spaces in Timor-Leste involved "lots of media but no community participation; they focused on it as a centre rather than the process." The results were not impressive. A senior INGO representative described seeing "just a handful of children sitting there looking bored. Everything tapered off; the community set up its own activities and abandoned the child-friendly space." An interviewee involved in this process said, "There was a needs assessment on the ground, but there was already guidance that the [three agencies were] going to try to work together on this ... The agencies came in ... There wasn't a lot of listening to the East Timorese."

Clearly, lessons have been learnt since 2000, although probably indirectly, channelled through the multiple experiences of establishing child-friendly spaces in other countries, before unfortunate circumstances returned the model to Timor-Leste. Co-ordination was far better in 2006, and the child-friendly spaces were operational within weeks of the crisis, rather than many months later. Yet, the issue remains of responding to the longer-term needs of populations, rather than only focusing on the immediate psychosocial activities which child-friendly spaces do best. An interviewee lamented the failure to address urgent psychosocial needs.

> Having attended the Child Protection Working Group I know that a lot of people are talking about issues, such as kids sleeping on the floor, but they're not talking about the impact of having tear gas once a week. In August, in Airport [IDP camp] there were lots of fights. The police often respond with shooting tear gas. The camp was closed down for two to three days. I wondered, what's the impact on kids? I wanted someone to go in straight away. Someone did go in as part of their normal programme, but nobody ever went for this specific purpose.

The only issue that really seemed to cause disagreements among the well co-ordinated international organizations was that of payments for animators in the child-friendly spaces. The government had stated that it did not want people paid for their roles in camps, and most international organizations were reluctant to pay. Most organizations provided a mixture of training, certificates, identity cards and branded material (such as T-shirts) to the people who ran activities in the child-friendly spaces. Only one INGO consistently paid its facilitators, which caused

some division both within the camps and between humanitarian organizations.

One interviewee claimed that, "Where they were paid they were less responsible, less motivated", but others said that, without pay "the quality of the work wasn't that good. They came when they liked, didn't come when they didn't like. And when they looked for work they would stop volunteering." An agency that paid wages reported, "When we promised them we would give them a certificate, nothing happened in child-friendly spaces. When we paid, it did." There seemed to be a desire among most international agencies, as one said, "not to ruin the spirit of volunteerism and not to be divisive." This focus on volunteerism seems out of place in a country where a daily wage of US$1 was the norm, and where a surfeit of large aid agencies' vehicles indicates the level of expatriate wealth. The insistence on voluntary work seems even more inappropriate given the difficult conditions under which IDPs had lived for over a year. A member of the emergency staff in an organization that paid wages spoke about how the issue affected her: "I was an IDP. We were really upset with everything, my mother couldn't go to work, my father is dead, my brother doesn't do anything. IOM distributes food, but there is always a problem [i.e. conflict, fighting]. So we were scared to get rice. We needed money to get food, especially for women."

It seems there was some recognition of this problem at the time, but no attempts were made to find alternative ways to compensate volunteers. A programme officer asked, "What could we have done instead? For example, all the university students who had to drop out; we could have paid their fees. The same at secondary schools. There was no creativity to say, 'Let's be creative'." It was reported that although the government did not want wages paid to volunteers in the camps, the Minister of Education was amenable to the idea of international organizations paying students' university fees instead. It is interesting to note that during the last crisis in Timor-Leste, the cost of a year's university fees was US$19 in 2000 and US$35 in 2001. During the same period, UNICEF provided school-in-a-box kits to help rebuild the education system. Each kit comprised sufficient classroom supplies to last 80 students for three months at a total cost of US$295 each (Nicolai, 2004: 80, 147). However, paying the university fees of students who run child-friendly spaces might be a more sustainable and long-term way of contributing to individuals' and to Timor-Leste's development than providing imported materials for a short period.

It is clear that the inter-agency co-ordination in Timor-Leste around child protection was well organized, efficient and collaborative. There is a question, however, over whether the co-ordination was simply too efficient, and in the drive to follow an established process, organizations missed opportunities to respond to needs in other ways. Along with the child-friendly spaces model, the belief in the value of IDPs' 'volunteerism' seems to have been imported by international organizations; it is unlikely to have developed from an assessment of the needs of the beneficiaries. The next section discusses how those delivering child-friendly spaces interacted with the expressed needs and desires of the communities and government departments with whom they worked.

7.3 Support for community and government initiatives

"We need to monitor our understanding of the needs of the community." INGO staff

There was some indication that Timorese people initially took the protection and education of their children into their own hands. A programme officer, who had been present during the crisis, said: "Women started activities for children quite fast. So early on we got requests for textbooks. We had got materials for a district that had been hit by a tornado, so we re-directed that. A lot of young people in camps tried to work with children. A lot of very spontaneous work; it was quite beautiful."

Another expatriate present at the time echoed this message, saying, "Groups of people organized themselves, including lots of teachers." However, during the research visit, there was no report of international organizations supporting such activities outside the framework of the child-friendly spaces. Additionally, a few interviewees mentioned that children were saying that they wanted to go back to school, but this message did not seem to have been immediately heard. A UN representative said: "A lot of agencies didn't respond quickly enough ... There were a lot of meetings, discussions in air-conditioned rooms, pushing for setting up camp schools. But the children wanted to go back to school. From listening [to] the kids, they said *'Fila ba Skola'*, 'Go back to school'."

Once it was realized that children wanted to go back to school, a large campaign was undertaken, including distributing school-in-a-box kits, tents and, as one interviewee said, "the nightmare task of distributing school bags to all children. I'm not sure how useful they were, but

working for big agencies, they want something sexy." It was discovered too late that teachers had insufficient school books, while international organizations' manuals were rarely used.

As mentioned above, it seems that child-friendly spaces were a top priority for most agencies working in this field, which may have prevented them from seeking alternatives. As a UN representative said, "We ended up doing child-friendly spaces without really clarifying what was needed. We used models from the rest of the world. It would have been better to build on the spontaneity we found." This is worrying, given the rhetoric of developing child-friendly spaces through participation with communities, and in response to the latter's needs. It illustrates how easy it is for standardized programmes, like child-friendly spaces, to be rolled out where there are other education and child protection needs. The process of doing this can deafen international agencies to the real desires of children, and blind them to the community's own initiatives.

Moreover, nearly a year and a half after the crisis, the child-friendly spaces were, as an INGO representative said, "being handed back [*sic*] to the community." As another explained, although INGOs would continue to 'monitor' the child-friendly spaces: "When the programme ended, we had a meeting with community leaders, the committee, the parents. We said: The responsibility is now with the community. You have had training, you have materials."

Although, at the time of the research visit, these communities were still using their child-friendly spaces (albeit in one case for only two hours on a Friday after school), it seems, that without the 'monitoring' presence of the INGO, there is no guarantee that they will keep operating. This is not necessarily a bad thing; if communities do not want to staff such an initiative, there is no need for them to do so. The language of 'handing back' to the community, however, suggests previous 'ownership' of the spaces by the community, and it is not clear that this was the case.

Child-friendly spaces did not become a springboard for developing a community sense of responsibility for child protection, as intended by HQ interviewees and as indicated in agencies' manuals. On the contrary, other separate initiatives were being undertaken at the time of the research visit, including setting up child centres and committees in villages. A senior interviewee described these as providing "a place where child protection issues can be discussed." Yet, local staff in the same organization said, "In communities we try to set up [child protection

committees] but it doesn't really work. When we go there, we always get people throwing stones." Throwing stones was a frequently used method of expressing discontent. UN and INGO cars passing large camps in Dili were regularly hit by stones.

One initiative established by communities that did continue, at least for a while, was tent schools, which were established in two 'problematic' camps, Airport and Metinaro, with the latter still a topic of considerable discussion at the time of the research visit. Metinaro was a large camp of 9,000 IDPs 30 km outside Dili near an army barracks. Until August 2007, children were going to school in Metinaro village, adding 600 students at primary and senior high so that classes meant for 40 children had 80. Tensions had flared up between the villagers and the IDPs. A UN representative reported that, "The villagers always feel like they are being harmed ... Children of ten years old were burning houses." The IDPs set up a school for Grades 1 to 3 in a long tent split into four classrooms with tarpaulin material flapping endlessly in the wind. Resources are very limited: there are seven teachers, no chairs and no teaching materials. Children in Grades 4 and above still go to the school in Metinaro, and there are no activities for children under 5. Notably, no child-friendly space was established in Metinaro immediately following the conflict in 2006, and according to a camp inhabitant, "There are no activities for children in the camp." A child protection focal point had been trained by an INGO two months prior to the research visit, but had not started activities in the camp.

Metinaro is an important example in that it houses hundreds of children with long-standing education and child protection needs. While in other locations, IDPs established camps close to their homes, so children could continue attending their former schools, in Metinaro that is definitely not the case. Furthermore, the provision of educational and child protection assistance from international organizations has been minimal. It seems that UN agencies and INGOs focused on providing child-friendly spaces in camps, and a back-to-school campaign where possible, but that this co-ordinated response failed to respond to a camp situation that did not fit neatly into its organizational structure.

The problems in Metinaro pointed to international organizations' relationships with the other group of Timorese with whom they were working: the Government of Timor-Leste. Following the government's dissolution in the middle of the 2006 conflict, it had played a limited role,

at least initially, in the relief efforts. One interviewee explained: "At the very beginning, zilch, there was no government. I had a minister hiding in my house who would not go out. From my perception their approach hasn't changed much. It's a political problem, not a humanitarian one."

Clearly it was, and remains, difficult for international organizations to co-ordinate with government officials when the government itself is in such a state of disarray. However, there were suggestions that INGOs and UN agencies could have acted slightly differently to support the authorities. As in Lebanon, co-ordination with government officials in regard to child-friendly spaces was done through the Ministry of Social Services rather than the Ministry of Education. A child-protection expert commented, "Any kind of child-friendly space should be done in co-ordination with the Ministry of Education. I don't even know if we tried to do that to be honest. Looking back, that's one thing I'd do differently." An interviewee who had worked closely with the government expressed frustrations about how UN agencies and INGOs treated the country's authorities: "I'm saddened by a lot of international colleagues who say, 'I don't agree with the government so I will do what I like.' If anything was not good, it was the [lack of] empowerment of the government by international agencies, the NGOs, and the UN."

Interestingly, an INGO representative, unprompted, said the exact opposite: "The whole thrust behind all UN agencies and NGOs has been to re-empower the government. We set up activities to hand over to the government. In the context of the emergency, we have an agreement with the government about what we are doing, so they know what we're doing." Clearly, there were very different understandings of what it meant to 're-empower the government'.

7.4 Principal findings

International agencies collaborated quickly and effectively in Timor-Leste in 2006, and as a result, a network of child-friendly spaces was established soon after the crisis in most of the IDP camps in Dili. While not wanting to dispute the value of these spaces for those who used them, it seems that the co-ordination might even have been *too* efficient. Although communities commenced activities themselves, there was no evidence of what became of these, and it seems that they may have been swamped by the international push for child-friendly spaces. Similarly, the message from children and the government, that children wanted to go back to school, took a while to be heard. The international agencies were

preoccupied with efficient co-ordination of their activities; they ignored or failed to recognize the initiatives or desires of communities and the government. Although this co-ordination and focus on child-friendly spaces was good for most camps in Dili, large camps like Metinaro remained devoid of *any* provision of support for children. Quite why this was so was not clear, but a greater emphasis on imagining alternatives to child-friendly spaces might be beneficial.

Chapter 8

Conclusions and recommendations

8.1 The overall findings

It is extremely difficult to work within emergency contexts. Their very nature requires that programme planning decisions are made quickly and in a co-ordinated manner. This research has drawn much from discussions with dedicated practitioners, working to provide the best service possible to children in conflicts. Their commitment is admirable and the initiatives they run, including child-friendly spaces, school feeding, and education kits, are of benefit to children. The aim of this project was not to evaluate these initiatives, and hence it in no way can judge their value for the children who used them. Instead, the research set out to understand the processes of, and influences on, the programming of standard initiatives. It is to these aspects that this conclusion relates.

The research shows that that, contrary to some suggestions, standardized initiatives, such as child-friendly spaces, education kits and school-feeding programmes, are *not* driven by advocacy, in the sense of seeking publicity. They are *used* to advocate, but that advocacy does not result in a change in the nature of programming on the ground. On the contrary, there is far more evidence of field staff controlling appropriate access to and provision of images of children.

In respect of advocacy towards donors, it is exceptionally difficult to convince them of the need to provide for children's educational, protection and psychosocial needs in the aftermath of conflict and disaster. This is particularly true of education. Donor priorities, therefore, do influence programming – in that if funding is not forthcoming, it is not possible to implement a programme. Yet, on the whole, this form of advocacy also does not seem to have a big impact on what is programmed. Possible exceptions, however, are UNICEF's encouragement of a particular model of child-friendly spaces and donors' continuing reluctance to fund education-oriented programmes.

It seems that these standard programmes are used with such regularity, in large part because individual agencies and the humanitarian sector in general, have become used to them. It is within this context that

initiatives such as child-friendly spaces, school feeding, and education kits can be said to be 'advocacy-driven': they are advocated for within (and between) humanitarian agencies. Unfortunately, such advocacy was not always accompanied by what one interviewee described as 'education' of staff elsewhere in the organization: "They advocate to their own staff to the detriment of their own staff's understanding. So they respond to the next emergency with feeding at lunch rather than breakfast. So they have to have women in distribution centres, because of the gender equity policy ... They are advocating up to get the policies that they want, but not educating down to make those policies usable."

In view of the fact that there are multiple interpretations of the concept of 'advocacy', it is, therefore, misleading to describe the standardized initiatives as advocacy-driven. This research found very little evidence of fundraising or publicity demands driving the initiatives; in this sense they were *not* advocacy-driven. But they were standardized, and they were often used with limited reflection or analysis of the current context or consideration of alternatives. They were also required to fulfil multiple needs using a very simple model: a good idea, but not necessarily so successful in practice.

The research also indicates a mismatch between senior HQ staffs' perception of the purpose of these initiatives and how they worked, and the experiences of the people on the ground. This was the case, despite the often considerable field experience of people working in head offices. This should come as no surprise to either group, since several people from both ends of organizations' structures recognized these problems. As one HQ manager said: "[Our headquarters] staff massively over-estimate programmes. Child-friendly spaces are just a space where children play. The movement is in the right direction, though. But ... reports do not reflect reality ... All this language – is it what we're really doing?" Or, in the words of an INGO representative who had previously worked in the field, but then returned to HQ:

> There was a high expectation to deliver. I had to set up 20 child-friendly spaces as that was what had been budgeted for. There were not enough experienced staff, and the sensitivities of the local context made this difficult. Because of the tribal and religious concerns, I was reluctant to go as fast as expected of me without trained staff. It was possible to make a 'space', but that meant nothing if there were no staff to do activities – inadequate staff can do more harm than good ... Senior management did

not care about this and questioned my management ability as a result. One can't transfer a child-friendly space from one place to another as you can tents, if it turns out that the first location was inappropriate or it's not possible to set one up there.

In emergency contexts, it rarely is easy to find or train the requisite staff with speed. Thus, programme models that require a subtle understanding to operate as planned are not ideal in such circumstances. One programme officer commented:

I dislike 'child-friendly space' because it's a buzzword which people don't understand, especially when they are trying to explain [it] to national staff. It's a buzzword people think they understand. If we don't understand it, that makes programming that much more difficult. There are five national managers in five sites in Darfur. I think they conceptualize it differently. Is it pre-school? People will run it as a pre-school if they think that. Or people will concentrate on the safety aspects.

It is unreasonable to expect field workers (and communities) to understand what is meant by such loosely defined and ambiguous concepts as a 'child-friendly space', 'psychosocial support' or 'structured learning'. On the contrary, the responsibility must be held by agency staff and structures to build their own capacity to explain in simple, unambiguous language exactly what objectives such programmes are designed to fulfil, and those that they are *not* designed to fulfil. If this is not possible – which it may indeed not be – then the expectations and promises of what programmes like child-friendly spaces will achieve must be reduced, or alternative programmes found.

Furthermore, the language of 'community participation' and 'psychosocial support' was misapplied in many cases. Unless HQ's expectations are downgraded or staff on the ground are provided with better training and practical guidance documentation, seemingly simple practices risk being subsumed into a culture of co-ordination and fast response.

So, what, if anything, are these initiatives 'driven' by? They are driven by the need for a quick response in emergencies and by a cross-sector movement for standardization. They are driven by a *belief* in their efficacy and appropriateness to needs assessments undertaken to assess *how* rather than *whether* to implement them. It seems also that despite the widespread use of logical frameworks for INGO and UN agency planning, responses to emergencies are frequently planned

by starting in the middle: with a pre-defined, pre-packaged activity. Objectives assigned to this type of activity were often generic (child protection or education) or were developed in hindsight. Community participation involved assessment of how to run that activity, rather than what objectives need to be met (i.e. what are the needs of the community?) and then working out – collaboratively, with communities – what activities might be done (and what is already being done by the community) to fulfil these objectives. Thus, standardized programming was also, unfortunately, driven by inertia. While this is not to say that child-friendly spaces and other standardized initiatives did not achieve admirable aims (although there was limited evaluative evidence to this end), in some cases, those aims were identified either in hindsight or in response to an organization's structure (the division between education and children protection, for example) rather than to the expressed needs of a population.

Child-friendly spaces (and to some extent education kits and school-feeding programmes) are required to do more than is possible for one intervention to achieve. They are usually expected to fulfil both education and child protection needs. This is the case even though agencies often have separate departments for these two areas, and where neither the departments nor the issues they address are fully integrated. There also seems to be a resistance to considering alternatives to child-friendly spaces in programming for child protection and education needs. Yet, alternatives do exist. For example, Save the Children UK's report on Safe Play Areas in Aceh, Indonesia, noted that inter-sectoral collaboration was particularly apparent in ChildFund's Child Protection and Livelihood sectors (Tan, 2007: 17):

> [B]y including a child protection officer within their Livelihood team, ChildFund was able to integrate child protection values in activities involving groups of the community other than children. The child protection officer could, for instance, familiarize women in self-help groups with child protection issues while they received trainings on economic development skills. It was this initiative that prompted further creative initiatives such as child representatives within self-help groups' management committees.

There *are* alternatives to child-friendly spaces, and these alternatives *may* better serve the needs of children. Implementing such initiatives takes up agencies' time and money, including the time spent explaining

to donors how they differ from standard responses. As a result, the resources and energy available to think about the alternatives are minimal. But, with a little more creative thinking (perhaps a luxury in the stress of an emergency, but one which could be supported by HQ staff), and a little more active listening, initiatives that respond to the culturally specific needs of communities could be implemented with more long-term benefits to all concerned. If this takes a little more time, so be it; a few days for careful analysis is likely to have huge pay-offs in resulting impact.

There are dangers inherent in programming in the current mode. They include the risks that:

- Programming does not respond to the culturally specific needs of the population concerned. Community-driven initiatives are ignored and unsupported.
- Agencies become more engaged in the process of programming or co-ordination without the ability to respond to changing needs.
- Agencies respond to immediate and generic needs of individuals rather than to the long-term needs of both the national system and the individuals learning within it.

The use of standardized initiatives is hardly surprising, and, in an emergency, not a always a bad approach to ensuring that *something* is done as soon as possible to support children in crisis. The initiatives discussed in this book, however, do not necessarily lead to support for the future, longer-term needs of the individual children, nor, more generally, to the support of an education system that will both fulfil the needs of children and help avoid conflicts happening again.

Throughout the research, it was evident that all those interviewed were working hard, and in some cases extremely hard, to improve the conditions of children in emergencies. Consequently, the above comments are in no way intended to diminish their efforts, but are aimed entirely at improving programming for children and young people in the immediate and longer-term aftermath of conflict. The recommendations that follow suggest changes in the way that programming in emergencies could be planned. Also included are recommendations regarding the three focus initiatives, namely, child-friendly spaces, school-feeding programmes and education kits.

8.2 Recommendations

As the findings have indicated, education in emergencies is still not considered a priority by many agencies and donors when programming for emergencies. It is therefore essential to advocate at all levels to include education in humanitarian policies and responses, particularly with institutional donors and other funders. Donor policies do influence programming, but more by the nature of their funding priorities, than by direct advocacy.

The recommendations below indicate what donors and agencies need to consider when programming for education in emergency situations.

Education programming in emergencies

Has a standard response already been proposed? Consider whether community participation or consultation is happening on the agency's terms rather than on the terms of the community, and whether the co-ordination solely between international organizations prevents recognition of the existence and value of community initiatives.

Be transparent and culturally appropriate. Be clear about what support is being suggested to the community, and give field workers the flexibility in programme management to respond meaningfully to local contexts. Consultation with the community should be culturally appropriate and not risk inter-generational disharmony.

Conduct a political analysis. This should be conducted during national and local-level needs assessments and include analysis of the root causes of the conflict or emergency and suggest strategies to overcome them.

Consider forming a 'Children's Sector'. This would enable organizations to bring their education and protection sectors under one umbrella. As the distinctions between education and child protection may often be the product of organizational structures and staff disciplines, it is necessary to consider how greater integration between the sectors might benefit the holistic care of children. An integrated approach may encourage organizations to use the Cluster Approach.

Work towards 'necessary change'. Change should be kept to the minimum necessary to ensure that previous negative factors (such as a discriminatory curriculum or male-oriented teaching practices) are effectively challenged.

Cater for children with special needs. Ensure that greater, and more sensitive, provision is made for children with disabilities through staff training, appropriate equipment, and layout and access arrangements.

Take a co-ordinated approach to volunteers. This needs to ensure that 'volunteerism' is not something expected of local people by international organizations, and if an emergency is longer term, volunteers' time is recompensed in a way that considers payment rather than just provision of agency-branded goods, training or certification.

Child-friendly spaces

Is the child-friendly space model appropriate in every context? Reconsider the extent to which a simple and flexible model like a child-friendly space can really engage communities in their children's education and protection, particularly at a point when their energies may be directed elsewhere.

Define clearly what is meant by 'child-friendly spaces'. Ensure that the concept 'child-friendly space' is defined and described accurately enough to remove ambiguity and differing interpretations between HQ and field staff.

Integrate education and psychosocial activities. Creatively explore ways of engaging the community in implementing activities that provide for children's psychosocial and educational needs in an integrated manner.

Provide for youth and older children. Explore ways of providing spaces and activities geared towards older children, especially those at risk of recruitment or abuse during conflict, perhaps through a range of 'vocational' *and* 'academic' activities.

Design the programme with an inbuilt exit or transition strategy. Incorporate exit or transition strategies into programme design from the outset, that are sufficiently flexible to meet a range of future probabilities.

Take a holistic approach. As for overall educational programming, children should each be viewed in their entirety, and organizational distinctions between child protection and education departments should not impinge on holistic provision for children.

School-feeding programmes

Build sustainability into the design of the programme. School feeding can be promoted in such a way that self-sustaining school meal programmes are developed through a planned, negotiated transition strategy.

Ensure a smooth exit or transition to avoid attrition of vulnerable children. Rapid withdrawal of a school-feeding programme that has boosted children's attendance can be dangerous particularly for vulnerable children. Any exit or sustainability strategies should not compromise the attendance of the most vulnerable children.

Include non-formal education programmes where possible. Consider widening the coverage of feeding programmes to include more non-formal programmes, particularly in relation to vulnerable children.

Different approaches are needed for emergencies and development phases. Ensure that the difference between the purposes of a school-feeding programme in an 'emergency' situation and one in a 'development' context is clear, and appropriate responses for each are implemented.

Education kits

Prioritize local sources. Where possible, and where it will not have a detrimental effect on local market forces, materials should be purchased locally in order to help re-construct the local economy and ensure that items are culturally relevant.

Provide culturally- and physically-appropriate materials. Where appropriate, it is important to provide items suitable for children with a range of disabilities or special needs. In addition, where necessary for cultural reasons, provide culturally appropriate items for use by girls.

Cater for youth and older children. The issue of idle youth in any context is a critical one. Therefore coverage of education kits should also include children at secondary education level.

Education kits should be contextually-appropriate. There are a range of contexts in which kits may be useful, but there needs to be some contextual analysis about the context and whether kits for conflict responses should be different from those used after a natural disaster. This might also imply that there should be two different standard kits: one for acute emergencies, to be used for short-term provision of material, and

one for the recovery phase as longer-term supplements, to encourage developmental objectives.

Teacher training programmes should include training on kits. Education kits should be consistently integrated with programmes of teacher training and supporting training and materials need to be available throughout the life of an education programme.

Needs-based assessments should be undertaken. Distribution of kits should be prioritized by need and assessments should distinguish those schools lacking materials and prioritize accordingly.

8.3 Conclusion

Children are often vulnerable victims in times of crisis and providing education is one of the most effective ways of beginning the process to rebuild their lives. How this is done has been the subject of much debate among UN agencies and international NGOs. Decisions regarding educational programming have to be made quickly and take multiple factors into account. An organization's structure, particularly the relationship between field offices and headquarters, impacts on this process, especially when HQ staff encourage the use of standard initiatives.

This research has highlighted three of the most commonly used standard initiatives – child-friendly spaces, school feeding and education kits. The research examined donors' influence and found that *what* was programmed was less affected by donor policy, although donor prioritization in *funding* did affect programming. The greatest impact of donor influence was found where education was not prioritized by donors in emergency situations, preferring instead to fund standard emergency interventions.

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