

Education Cluster Meeting

Wednesday 2 July 2008

2:00 to 4:00 pm, Chatrium Hotel

Co-Chairs: Bente Sandal-Aasen, Save the Children (SC) & Gary Ovington (UNICEF)

IM focal point: David Little

14 organisations present

1. Introduction & Welcome

- Education Cluster Co-Leads will be changing this coming week. Ms Shirley Long will replace Bente (SC) and stay until November. Ms Chiharu Kondo will replace Gary (UNICEF) in the interim, for two weeks. Both Cluster Co-Leads have ensured face-to-face handovers, a handover document and information package.

2. Action Points from last meeting

1: Two documents on DRR guidelines were shared; both useful resources for all Cluster partners:

- Document on mainstreaming Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR). Soft copies can be found online at www.ADPC.net
- Education and Safe Schools draft document.

2: Distribute Response Plan and Logical Framework on Wed 2 July.

- **Action point:** IM Focal Point will email both today afternoon: Two-page response plan and strategic framework.

3: Messages were sent from the cluster email address: imeducluster@gmail.com requesting 3W information, gaps and challenges.

3. Advocacy

- An around-the-table update on **Gaps and Challenges** faced by organisations and to be addressed for follow up:

Gaps

- The **Cluster Leads**, met with three CBOs working in Labutta at the Burnet Institute on Tuesday, which are not usually able to attend Cluster meetings.
- **UNESCO:** Technical Vocational Training (TVT) area needs to be addressed.
- **UNICEF** reminded that the MoE asked for proposals from NGOs for rebuilding projects and general guidance is to submit a proposal and wait for a response. To date no cluster partners had submitted any proposals. The Cluster Leads proposed to compile and present proposals as a cluster, and submit to MoE through UNICEF CO's established lines of communication. AMURT and Pestalozzi will contact HQs today regarding this proposition.
- **SC:** As the number of actors increases, so does the need for more coordination at the local level, including through replication of the cluster approach at the sub-regional level.
- **Pyinnya Tazaung** has identified a need for help with psychosocial issues in ECD.

Challenges

- **UNDP's** mandate in Myanmar includes some limitations on working with central government.
- **AMURT** is not yet active in education sector. However, provision of TLS will start immediately on receiving permission from MoE. AMURT is in discussion with HQ around provision of permanent structures, or of TLS with a view to expand to permanent later.

- **Pestalozzi:** One or two Pestalozzi-supported schools are in forested areas, which have planning permission controls, and it is unclear if permission to build concrete schools there will be forthcoming, or if moveable schools using lightweight materials would be an alternative. The structures were schools previously, but the area has notices indicating that it is a forested area. In this instance, permission from higher levels is likely required (MoE or other). Pestalozzi is starting with repair/rehabilitation, and waiting for funding for livelihoods support.
- **Terre des Hommes Netherlands:** The INGO's focus includes education, health and child protection. It is new to Myanmar, and contacts have proposed that it focus on the monastic education system. Terre des Hommes is looking for local partners.
- **GAA** proposed establishment of a technical working group for the reconstruction of schools in sustainable way. Evidence shows a pattern of post-emergency reconstruction using technologies that local people are not used to, which can lead to unsafe structures – especially unacceptable for schools. There is a need to review the local/national building standards and decide on which methods of construction are the more appropriate. The planning process can be quite long and extensive. There is need for timely guidance for actors who plan to go ahead, more for codes and standards than for designs at this stage.
- **Update from UNICEF:** MoE requested UNICEF to assist in view of the need to Build Back Better, Safer, Stronger and more Child Friendly, and has agreed to the construction of 7 model schools. A UNICEF specialist will arrive on 14 July, and will work with MoE engineers to test soil and structures and provide different options, for schools of at least 3 different designs (1- to 5-classroom schools) to match criteria, and children and teacher numbers. For construction, a partnership with UNOPS is likely. MoE wants to incorporate these as part of its own reconstruction plans. If organisations have the opportunity to go ahead with rehabilitation and reconstruction, proceed, but bear in mind the imperative need to consult with the community, to ensure that any school construction is appropriate to the community's needs (eg. correct number of classrooms, teachers and students).
- **The Chair** noted the need for guidance on standards and that UNICEF could work with government to ensure that standards are adhered to. The Chair advised to wait until the specialist architect arrives, to come up with plans and guidelines with MoE, and hoped that the cluster will take some leadership.

- **Action point:** UNICEF to ensure contact between the Consultant and GAA, as both parties will be working with the MoE.

MoE has put construction on hold until end of rainy season. This represents an opportunity to ensure that planning goes ahead during the rainy season. As an example, a minimum of 8 weeks is needed to tender a contractor, which can be done on a concept design only, and the time needed to finalise planning documents is significant. In the interim, GAA will use YCDC building commission guidelines.

- **GAA** is focusing on 14 village tracts, 70 villages, with 40,000 population. The TEO is the reliable source for information on schools and their location. UNICEF has target townships and schools, and so its lists might not be comprehensive, and affiliated and community schools might not be included. To date no definitive list has been compiled: UNICEF is working only with the formal sector; while SC is working with affiliated, community, and monastic settings, for which no complete record has been kept. The Cluster can try to compile a list and re-circulate it among partners (as part of 3W).
- **Action point:** Send out email from Cluster address requesting information.

- **UNICEF** noted some gaps in supplies distributed. Most schools in the affected areas have re-opened, despite an arrangement that they should open later (by today 2 July). A pattern is emerging of an increased number of Grade 1 students, often representing 50% of the whole school. With an overflowing of Grade 1, TLS cannot accommodate all children and many are resorting to a shift system. UNICEF just completed assessments, and preliminary data on 1,684 schools (mostly government) have been entered. Information on the shortage of teachers is lacking and not reflected in data collected. There are striking numbers of collapsed schools and of children that have perished. The initial assessment of a lack of usable latrines has been confirmed. Logistics is still a challenge. WFP has been transporting the very large tents for TLS to hubs, but the onward transport to sub-centres will be a bigger challenge. The school books that had been delayed are now being printed and distributed. The supplies process (procurement and delivery) has been very slow. There is a sub-cluster in Labutta for Health, Food, Child Protection, and WASH but not for Education. SC is planning to discuss support to affiliated schools, and UNICEF also had discussed. UNICEF's role is primarily to support Government schools, while NGOs are more able to support others. There is a need for coordination at field level especially with TEOs. In Twantay, an *ad hoc* coordination meeting was held with SC, UNICEF and the TEO to determine which schools needed support, and this should be regularised. The Cluster Co-lead visited Bogale, and found a similar situation. One issue is that there are not enough actors at township level to warrant cluster meetings. If only one agency is present the issue is more to coordinate with other clusters. The Cluster Leads' handover note recommends sub-clusters in five areas in the Delta. UNICEF's list of over 1,200 affected schools has still not been posted to the web, despite attempts.
 - **Action point:** The IM Focal Point will retry to post the document.

4. Cluster Coordination

- The draft revised Humanitarian (Flash) Appeal included an Education Cluster response plan, strategic framework and 9 project sheets from 8 partner organisations for a 12-month timeframe. The Cluster Leads did not vet out any project sheets, however understood that negotiations might be ongoing between OCHA and the NRC concerning its project sheet.
- The PoNJA represented a "first" of its kind and is important on a political level. The design of the VTA questionnaires could have been better, especially given more time, and with more attention to translation. The technical information provided by the VTA was limited.
- Information flow between the organisations and the education cluster:
 - The IM Focal Point is continuing to compile information submitted by partners (so far largely UNICEF and SC) into the OCHA Who What Where (3W) tool. He is working also on providing a summary of needs, coverage, and gaps – especially regarding supplies – as requested today by the Humanitarian Coordinator to be shared with the GoUM, which has often requested such information. A template for this is being developed based on UNICEF and SC reporting formats, as they have the largest supplies component in the sector.
 - SitReps – inputs by **10.00 am on Monday and Thursday**, preferably in line with the template circulated earlier. Some things get edited out, and the version submitted by the cluster can be circulated among partners for information.

- **Action point:** The IM Focal Point will circulate to the cluster the Education SitRep points as submitted.

5. **Cross-Cutting Issues**

- Psychosocial Working Group meeting at The Burnet Institute Tuesday 15 July at 10am. Agenda: Psychosocial training of teachers, Why, How, Who?
- Proposed activation of a DRR (Disaster Risk Reduction) working group within the Education Cluster that will unite representatives from MoE, SC, UNICEF, UNESCO and other interested parties, including at least two local organizations. The purpose is for planning and advocacy for DRR with the MoE. UNESCO is expected to take the lead, and will call for the first meeting in the coming weeks, to develop ToR for the group (eg. advocacy and technical support).
 - **Action point:** Get names of interested participants.
- MoE is in the process of reviewing the secondary Lifeskills curriculum and will include DRR as a supplementary module to the curriculum. In August, UNICEF will provide a consultant for this, which can provide an entry point for wider discussion around DRR. DRR has two prongs: Build Back Better, Stronger and Safer; and integration within the curriculum.

6. **AOB:**

- The Cluster thanks both Cluster Co-Leads for their efforts over the last weeks.
- Cluster meeting minutes are available from:
<http://myanmar.humanitarianinfo.org/education/default.aspx>
- Cluster contact email address: imeducluster@gmail.com

7. **Next Meeting: Wednesday 9 July: 2 – 4 pm at Chatrium Hotel.**