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New UN handbook seeks to ensure quality education for children in conflict



Children with their teacher at a primary school in West Kingston, Jamaica where civil unrest broke out in May 2010

7 July 2010 – The United Nations and its partners today released an important tool to help the 25 million children who are living in conflict-affected areas and are missing out on primary education.

“The Minimum Standards for Education: Preparedness, Response and Recovery” is a 114-page handbook, produced by the Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies and supported by the UN Children’s Fund ([UNICEF](#)), aims to raise the quality of education in emergency situations.

“UNICEF’s experience in emergencies shows that one of the best things for children is to get them back in school,” said Ellen van Kalmthout, Senior Education Specialist at UNICEF.

“This handbook is an important tool to help government officials, international aid workers and other partners react when emergencies strike, schools are damaged and destroyed, and children’s education is at risk,” she noted.

The 2010 edition of the handbook encourages preparedness, response and recovery, and focuses on the links between education, disaster risk reduction and conflict mitigation.

The standards hold the humanitarian community accountable for providing quality education without discrimination, and for coordinating their efforts to ensure the best possible outcome for children in need.

UNICEF and its partners employed the Minimum Standards in the aftermath of the devastating earthquake that struck Haiti in January to rapidly assess needs for emergency education and to plan an appropriate response.

They were also used in Chad to assist in making decisions about codes of conduct for teachers and to assess the effectiveness of work plans.

The 2010 handbook updates an earlier version that was translated into 23 languages and used in more than 80 countries by education and development professionals during emergencies.

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