

AVSI—Education in Emergencies

General

AVSI has always given priority attention to education in its broadest sense in every context, with emergency situations presenting no exception. The following are some of the lessons learned:

- emergencies and prolonged conflicts pose the threat of children falling behind in their studies and thus the risk of great losses, socially and economically, for the individual and for society; the impact on school infrastructure and human resources can also be significant
- school can be a corrective measure for children in contexts characterized by trauma and violence
- access and quality of basic education and vocational training are essential to promoting self-sufficiency that is necessary to diminish the risk of creating dependency
- the role of educators is particularly important in conflict settings, and there is a need for teachers to be trained on the psycho-social elements of teaching children in these settings

Prolonged emergencies mean that the populations, and especially children, face a number of urgent problems which affect their overall well-being: lack of shelter, scarce food and non-food items, limited education, and social and psychosocial breakdown. AVSI's interventions in the education sector take a holistic approach that supports a child, the family and the community to improve the present and future well being of the children and society. AVSI has developed two sets of curricula for the training of teachers, administrators and social workers: *The Risk of Education* (general teaching methods, child-centred principles, role of educator) and training manuals for psychosocial support through education.

AVSI has collaborated with the International Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE) since 2004; two publications produced by AVSI's team in Uganda have been included in their Technical Kit on Learning for Education in Emergencies. The *Handbook for Teachers* and the *Training Manual for Teachers* draw upon the authors' years of experience working together with communities that have been displaced or otherwise impacted by regional violence in Northern Uganda since 1997, with support from USAID, and also in Rwanda following the genocide over the period of 1994-1997, in cooperation with UNICEF.

Northern Uganda

AVSI works in and around Kampala, as well as the districts of Kitgum, Gulu and Pader in the north. In the area of education, AVSI provides financial support (scholarships and learning materials) to 1,840 children under 5 years in day-care centers, 62 students in vocational training, and 7,431 OVC in primary and secondary school. In addition, 133 teachers were trained on psychosocial support and child-centered teaching methodologies in 2005. Eighteen classrooms were rehabilitated, and many of those received improvements to water and hygiene systems.

Democratic Republic of Congo

In DRC, AVSI's areas of intervention are the districts of North Kivu and South Kivu.

Considering the educational situation in the eastern part of DR Congo and the larger context of war and reconstruction, AVSI has undertaken complementary efforts to sustain and improve the provision of education to the region's children, and because of successful logistical arrangements has been able to reach an increasing number of schools, children and teachers over the past four

years. AVSI's work has included three components: Renovation and Rehabilitation of schools, Distribution of Teaching and Learning Material (UNICEF support with school kits), Student Sponsorship through local organizations. In 2005, in North Kivu, AVSI reached: 23 Schools, 5803 children and 131 teachers. In 2005 in South Kivu, AVSI reached: 439 Schools, 69,049 Children, and 1,614 Teachers.

Haiti

Severe poverty and political turmoil in Haiti have undermined the educational system considerably. AVSI partners with UNDP and the Organization of Small Schools in Cité Soleil (OPECS) to provide educational materials to children as well as teaching aids and training to teachers in 30 schools. In addition, AVSI works with local community organizations to provide student sponsorships to more than 600 children who receive tuition assistance, health care and psycho-social support through an individualized relationship with an adult at the local organization.