Achieving Humanitarian-Development Coherence in Education—Three Donor Perspectives (Highlighted Paper)

April 15 @ 10:00 am - 11:30 am

Group Submission Type: Highlighted Paper Session

Crisis and conflict contexts have become more complex, urbanized and protracted, and typically involve multiple, simultaneous stresses and shocks from climate-related hazards, conflict and criminal violence, forced displacement, and/or pandemics. These contexts also witness political and economic instability, and host governments challenged with governance deficits and corruption. As a consequence, humanitarian and development communities are increasingly challenged to be fit-for-purpose in these environments. Growing caseloads and timetables stretch the under-resourced humanitarian system. High-risk and volatile operating environments hamper effective development partner engagement and the ability to address underlying vulnerabilities and causes of conflict and crisis.

How to achieve more coherence and alignment between the humanitarian and development communities has long been debated. The issue recently reached the top of the global policy agenda at the World Humanitarian Summit (WHS) in 2016. A principal call was to shift the focus from delivering aid to ending need more effectively and sustainably by working collectively and coherently, so that humanitarian action reinforces development gains and development assistance addresses vulnerabilities and reaching those furthest left behind. This requires distinct ways of working at the levels of policy, practice, systems and tools:

- to act early and preventively without waiting for crises to occur; to reinforce rather than replace national and local systems;

- to strengthen coherence and collaboration among humanitarian, stabilization, peacebuilding, human rights and development actors on the basis of comparative advantage;
- to go beyond the notion of quick onset emergency work, and require longer-term actors to capably work in the absence of predictability, stability and robust institutional partners;
- to pursue context-specific approaches that reinforce local systems and build community resilience to shocks in a manner that transcends institutional boundaries, and;
- to underpin these efforts with flexible and innovative financing arrangements and partnerships.

The education sector is uniquely placed to advance coherence and alignment between humanitarian and development policy and practice. Education in emergencies, and its links to child protection, supports access to safe, relevant and quality education and the promotion of psychosocial wellbeing of learners and educators — which offers foundations for recovery, rehabilitation and development. Moreover, education serves to strengthen the resilience of children, families and communities affected by crisis and conflict. Investments into longer-term education programs play a vital role in helping all sectors of society understand disaster and climate risk, reduce vulnerabilities to natural hazards, and prepare for crises. Relevant and quality education can counter the underlying causes of violence and foster inclusion, tolerance, human rights awareness and conflict resolution – fostering the longer-term effort towards cohesive communities and peaceful societies.

Currently, several donors have recognized the need for better understanding of, and strategies for, humanitarian-development coherence in the education sector. This panel will share perspectives from USAID, Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) and European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO): both how they understand the issues, and how they are addressing the need for improved coherence.

Speakers: Ritesh Shah, Susan Nicolai, Judit Barna, Muriel Gshwend, Anjuli Shivshanker