



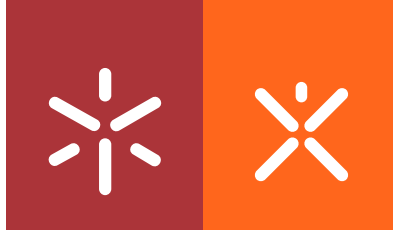
Universidade do Minho
Instituto de Educação

**Education in Emergencies: Coordination
Logics within the Education Cluster**

Mara Sofia Garcia Pinto

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Tese de Doutoramento
Doutoramento em Ciências da Educação
Especialidade em Sociologia da Educação e Política Educativa

Trabalho efetuado sob a orientação de
Professor Doutor Fernando Ilídio Ferreira
Professor Doutor Maingari Daouda
Professor Doutor Júlio Gonçalves dos Santos

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Acknowledgments

Writing a thesis is a challenging journey, filled with doubts and moments of disbelief, but the support of some very special people made it possible. I want to thank them here from the bottom of my heart.

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Lastly, I dedicate this thesis to each child affected by any crisis or emergency. As part of a larger assistance industry, it is ambiguous to spend years conducting research and earning a living around the vulnerability and suffering of others. I hope that this research may help to improve each affected child's access to quality, inclusive education, thereby promoting better opportunities for each child.

Without your contributions, this research would not have been possible — my deep and heartfelt thanks to all of you.

DECLARAÇÃO DE INTEGRIDADE

Declaro ter atuado com integridade na elaboração do presente trabalho académico e confirmo que não recorri à prática de plágio nem a qualquer forma de utilização indevida ou falsificação de informações ou resultados em nenhuma das etapas conducente à sua elaboração.

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Resumo

A questão da coordenação humanitária, incluindo o sector da Educação em Emergências, é cada vez mais reconhecida. A Coordenação do Cluster Educação (CCE) assume um papel fulcral neste contexto, enquanto fenómeno sociopolítico que molda e é moldado pelas dinâmicas de poder, confiança e criação de significados partilhados. Esta tese de doutoramento aborda a questão central da investigação: Como interagem as lógicas e as ações de coordenação da Abordagem de Cluster Educativo, e como são percecionadas no âmbito de dinâmicas multiníveis e multiatores, (a dimensão micro é representado pelo contexto do Noroeste e do Sudoeste dos Camarões)? O principal objetivo é explorar as diversas lógicas por detrás das ações e histórias dos participantes do CCE, bem como as dinâmicas complexas dentro do mecanismo de coordenação.

É utilizada uma abordagem metodológica qualitativa inspirada no quadro teórico da Nomadologia de Deleuze e Guattari e no Cosmopolitismo de Beck, permitindo a exploração da natureza fluida dos fenómenos sociais. O método de investigação inclui entrevistas, análise documental e a utilização da ferramenta SenseMaker® com micronarrativas, com ênfase na criação de sentido para captar as experiências dos atores envolvidos.

A tese começa por situar o estudo no quadro mais vasto dos riscos globais e da crescente complexidade das crises, apoiando-se na noção de “sociedade mundial de risco” apresentada por Beck e Giddens., que destaca a natureza transnacional dos riscos modernos. Além disso, também analisa os desafios de uma coordenação burocrática que pode dificultar a adaptabilidade necessária em situações de crise, propondo a adoção de ‘ecologias de conhecimento’, onde sistemas de conhecimento local e global colaboram para fornecer respostas mais relevantes.

Adicionalmente são discutidos aspetos políticos e éticos da CCE, em particular no que diz respeito às dinâmicas de poder estabelecidas. E, finalmente, a importância das redes informais e da componente não humana da CCE, também são destacadas.

Esta tese preenche uma lacuna na literatura académica ao trazer uma perspetiva centrada na dinâmica do poder, nas redes e na complexidade. Os conhecimentos da investigação podem ter implicações significativas para os decisores políticos, profissionais e académicos, indicando que é necessária uma abordagem mais sofisticada à CCE para enfrentar adequadamente as problemáticas contemporâneas humanitárias contemporâneas.

Palavras-chave: Abordagem Cluster, Coordenação, Educação em Emergência, Redes

Abstract

The issue of humanitarian coordination, including the Education in Emergencies (EiE) sector, is increasingly recognized. Education Cluster Coordination (ECC) plays a central role as a socio-political phenomenon that shapes and is shaped by the dynamics of power, trust, and the creation of shared meanings. This doctoral thesis addresses the central research question: How do the coordination logics and actions of the Education Cluster Approach interact, and how are they perceived in the context of multi-level and multi-actor dynamics (the context of Northwest and Southwest Cameroon represents the micro dimension)? The main objective is to explore the various underlying logic behind the actions and narratives of ECC participants, as well as the complex dynamics within the coordination mechanism.

A qualitative methodological approach inspired by the theoretical frameworks of Deleuze and Guattari's Nomadology and Beck's Cosmopolitanism is employed to explore the fluid nature of social phenomena. The research method includes interviews, documentary analysis, and the use of the SenseMaker® tool with micronarratives, with an emphasis on creating meaning to capture the experiences of the actors involved.

The thesis begins by situating the study within the broader framework of global risks and the growing complexity of crises, drawing on the notion of a “global risk society,” informed by Beck and Giddens, which highlights the transnational nature of modern risks. It also analyzes the challenges of bureaucratic coordination that can hinder the adaptability needed in crises, proposing the adoption of ‘ecologies of knowledge,’ where local and global knowledge systems collaborate to provide more relevant responses.

In addition, political and ethical aspects of ECC are discussed, particularly with regard to established power dynamics. Finally, the importance of informal networks and the non-human component of ECC are also highlighted.

This thesis addresses a gap in the academic literature by bringing a perspective centered on power dynamics, networks, and complexity. The insights from the research may have significant implications for policymakers, practitioners, and academics, indicating that a more sophisticated approach to ECC is essential to address contemporary humanitarian challenges.

Keywords: Cluster Approach, Coordination, Education in Emergencies, Networks

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List of abbreviations

ALNAP – Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance

ANT – Actor-network

CCC – Core Commitments for Children

CCPM – Cluster Coordination Performance Monitoring

CHS – Core Humanitarian Standard

CLA – Cluster Lead Agency

CLARE - Cluster Lead Agency Role in Humanitarian Action

CP – Child Protection

CPWG - Child Protection Working Group

CRC - Convention on the Rights of the Child

CRRF - Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework

CSOs - civil society organizations

CSP – Crisis-sensitive educational planning

DRR - Disaster Risk Reduction

ECC – Education Cluster Coordination

ECD - early childhood development

ECW – Education Cannot Wait

EFA – Education for All

EiE – Education in Emergencies

EiE-CP – Education in Emergencies – Child Protection

EiEWGs - Education in Emergencies Working Groups

ERA – Education Resilience Approach

ERC - UN Emergency Relief Coordinator

ERF - Emergency Response Fund

ERT - Emergency Response Teams

EU – European Union

EWG – Education Working Group

FER - First Emergency Response

GCPEA - Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack

GEC - Global Education Cluster

GEP - Global Partnership for Education

GPP - Global Partners Project

HC - Humanitarian Coordinator

HCT - Humanitarian Country Team

HPC – Humanitarian Programme Cycle

HPN - Humanitarian Practice Network

HRA - Humanitarian Reform Agenda

IAC - International Armed Conflict

IASC - Inter-Agency Standing Committee

ICRC - International Committee of the Red Cross

ICS - Incident Command System

ICVA International Council of Voluntary Agencies

IDPs - Internally displaced persons

IEP - Institute for Economics and Peace

IFRC - International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies American

IHL - International Humanitarian Law

INEE - Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies

INGO – International non-government organization

IOM - International Organization for Migration

ISEEC - Initiative to Strengthen Education in Emergencies Coordination

JEIE - Journal of Education in Emergencies

LEG – Local Education Group

LNGOs - local non-governmental organizations

MDG - Millennium Development Goals

MoE - Ministry of Education

MoU - Memorandum of Understanding

MS – Minimum Standards

MDG - Millenium Development Goals

MYRP – Multi-Year Resilience Programme

NEAR – Network for Empowered Aid Response

NFA - Network Functions Approach

NGO - Non-Governmental Organization

NHECP - National Humanitarian Education Coordination Platforms

NIAC - Non-International Armed Conflict

NIMS - National Incident Management System

NNGO – National non-governmental organization

NRC - Norwegian Refugee Council

NWoW - New Way of Working

NYU - New York University

OBS - Organizations Breakdown Structure

ODI - Overseas Development Institute

OECD - Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development

OECD DAC – OECD Development Assistance Committee

OHCHR - Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights Product

PARinAC - Partnership in Action

PHASC - Principled Humanitarian Action Steering Committee

PoLr - Provider of Last resort

PSS-SEL – Psychosocial Support and Social and Emotional Learning

RC - Resident Coordinator

SA - System Architecture

SAG – Strategy Advisor Group

SCHR - Steering Committee for Humanitarian Response System

SC – Steering Committee

SCI – Save the Children International

SDG - Sustainable Development Goals

SEEP - Small Enterprise, Education and Promotion Network

SM - SenseMaker®

SOHS - ‘The State of the Humanitarian System’ Stakeholder

SoPs - Standard Operating Procedures

SRSG CAAC - Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Children and Armed Conflict

TA - Transformative Agenda

ToR – Terms of Reference

TWG – Technical Working Groups

UCAD – Université Cheikh Anta Diop

UDHR - Universal Declaration of Human Rights

UN – United Nations

UNDP - UN Development Programme

UNESCO – United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

UNHCR - UN High Commissioner for Refugees UN

UNICEF - UN Children's Fund

UN OCHA - UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs U.S.

USAID - U.S. Agency for International Development

USG - Under-Secretary-General Work

WASH - Water, Sanitation, And Hygiene

WBS - Work Breakdown Structure

WEF - World Education Forum

WFP - World Food Program

WHO – World Health Organization

WHS – World Humanitarian Summit

WoS – Whole of Syria

WISE - World Innovation Summit for Education

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Prologue

The monocultural educational paradigm resembles a steamroller that crushes in its path local knowledge with multiple dimensions (technical, magical, religious, relational, rational...) that appear irrational or residual, whereas much of this knowledge plays a very important role in human and planetary sustainability (Damus, 2020).

A Glocal path: The place from where I speak.

The first stage in the construction of a research project should be made up of the researcher's own personal and professional experience, considering that "life experiences and knowledge of specific professional worlds should be mobilized for the work of identifying problems, prospecting, questioning clues, for research into organizational contexts where it may be developed." (Afonso, 2005: 48)

My academic and professional career has been greatly influenced by contrasting experiences of stability and crisis, from the classrooms of Europe to the hard educational conditions of Chad and Guinea Bissau. From each context, there are so many lessons to be learned and so much great potential, even with harsh differences in opportunities.

Acknowledging my background and privileges as a Western European woman, doing another study from the 'Northern Ivory Tower' (Ruth Wedgwood & Daniel Hammett, 2005), I approach this study with a keen awareness of my perspective's limitations. My European roots, education, and Portuguese citizenship shape my identity. I speak Portuguese, English, and French. I learned some Creole in Guinea Bissau, but I lost it already and didn't learn (and I'm not proud) other local languages from the places I passed. Despite striving for objectivity, my European experiences influence how I view the challenges faced by those in forced displacement. This self-awareness compels me to recognize my exclusive place in the Education in Emergencies (EiE) landscape. This acknowledgment enhances, not diminishes, and helps to ensure that insights are more nuanced and consider the complexities that my own experiences and viewpoints bring to the study.

At the heart of this research lies a confluence of personal experiences and a global concern: how education can persist amidst crises. Drawing inspiration from Damus (2020), who emphasizes the

importance of educational paradigms that value local and diverse knowledge as critical to human and planetary sustainability, this study explores the complexities of Education Cluster Coordination (ECC) approach. It explores environments where local wisdom intersects with global crises, embodying a 'glocal' perspective. Using a 'glocal' lens to examine these processes, this thesis aims to traverse the challenging field of EiE and especially the complexities of ECC by combining local insights with global knowledge.

This study revolves around the idea of Education, which I have developed from a variety of academic theories and personal experiences. Education has always been a profound fascination for me. I recall my days in the classroom as a student questioning the why and how of learning, seeking ways to make it more meaningful for myself and later for my fellow students, colleagues, parents, and communities. This curiosity drove me to my graduation in education, becoming a public-school elementary teacher in Portugal and, at the same time, engaging in short training across Europe and the Balkans through the ERASMUS European program and participating in summits and conferences across Africa – mostly done during holidays where I was enjoying travel and learning. Eventually, it led me to Guinea Bissau in 2015, where I worked on cooperation projects for three years with a Portuguese NGO, FEC – Fundação Fé e Cooperação (Portuguese ONGD), and finally to the humanitarian path that I started in Chad in 2018. From then, the PhD challenge popped up, and several short missions allowed me to continue to work with DRC (Democratic Republic of the Congo), Myanmar, South Sudan, Syria, and Mozambique.

During these encounters with diverse languages and cultures, I found myself becoming involved in educational projects in Chad, including being an Education Cluster member and later a co-facilitator. My initial encounters with the Cluster Approach were met with skepticism from some colleagues, who deemed these gatherings as 'useless meetings' or bureaucratic exercises – from my side, I saw so much potential in bringing all these knowledgeable and different people together. As I delved deeper into the Cluster Approach, participating as a coordinator in various countries like the Democratic Republic of Congo, South Sudan, Nigeria, and the Whole of Syria, my understanding became more and more complex. While the normative definition remained constant, the contextual realities varied significantly; the dynamics and understanding were very different – the perspectives were so different, as were the realities also! An Education Cluster Coordination could be a highly participating, engaging platform as it could be understood as boring, useless, and endless meetings. These experiences revealed the potential and limitations of the Cluster Approach, often seen by colleagues as bureaucratic yet holding immense potential for collaborative impact. This perspective has driven me to pursue a PhD to explore educational coordination practices and perspectives in crisis-affected regions.

Amid these experiences, I was driven to apply for a ‘Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia’ (FCT) scholarship and delve into complex educational coordination practices on a continent that had embraced me for a decade now. Despite my practical experiences, I consciously sought to position myself at an intellectual distance, blending theory with practice to attain a more critical and holistic understanding of reality. I firmly believe that theory can enrich practice and vice versa, and my grounding in practical experiences, even if it is biased, offers some insights into the field. At the same time, I made some incursions in the practice and was in contact with the practitioners. I became a moderator for the Community of Practice for INEE; I organized several Meetings with INEE (Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies), and, with some partners, we organized the first Symposium in Education in Emergencies – hosted by UCAD (Université Cheikh Anta Diop de Dakar) in 2023. This path is also the story of encounters, conversations, and sharing and several meetings with the NWSW Education Cluster coordinators.

In a professional trajectory marked by diverse experiences, I traversed different realities, zooming out from the local to the global, enriching my skills through this investigation. Over the four years of research, I alternated between practical engagements and theoretical reflections, engaging with stakeholders and authors to gain diverse perspectives and critical insights. In this sense, this story is not only academic; it is a personal attempt to make a significant contribution to the field of EiE. By fusing narratives, interviews, and case studies, this study attempts to illustrate the socio-political forces at work and investigate their implications for human development and educational policies.

Transitioning from personal reflections, this work also academically looks into the Education Cluster Coordination approach perspectives through stories and related publications. The stories of cluster coordinators, both locally and globally, and Education Cluster members and EiE specialists contribute to a multilayered narrative filled with resignation, enthusiasm, fascination, joy, frustrations, and victories. This thesis looks through three different dimensions – the Global Education Cluster, regional clusters in West and Central Africa, and local clusters in Cameroon's Northwest and Southwest regions – to make sense of different parties engaged in education coordination viewpoints.

Introduction

The Education Cluster Coordination approach is seen as simultaneously needed, important, and irrelevant. Each coordination dimension, team, and context are unique. The objective is not to create generalities but to illuminate questions and perspectives, which helps better understand the complex realities of this platform.

The object of analysis is Education Cluster Coordination. The study question was inspired by literature analysis and exploratory interviews with key actors in the field of Education in Emergencies (EiE). The research question was phrased as follows: How do Education Cluster Coordination logics and actions interact; how are they perceived within multi-level and multi-actor dynamics? This will be considered from the Education Cluster Coordination in NWSW Cameroon, zooming out to the Global Education Cluster.

The primary purpose of this research is to unveil and explore diverse logics of action and narratives of the ECC players and the complex dynamics of the mechanism. The secondary objectives include:

- Explore the diverse dynamics of scales/dimensions—global, regional, and local—to identify enablers, constraints, and tensions.
- Unveil contradictions, challenges, and potentials of the coordinator's role.
- Uncover tensions, convergences, and divergences in the ECC approach.

The research employs a qualitative approach to investigate the factors that influence educational practices in emergencies through micro-narratives, interviews, and network interpretations. To provide a comprehensive understanding of the difficulties and tactics involved in educational coordination during crises, the research focuses on obtaining perspectives from a variety of stakeholders, including Education Cluster coordinators, Education cluster members, and other EiE players.

This study contributes to the broader discourse on EiE coordination, addressing the gap in research that extends beyond agency documents and reports (Talbot, 2005; Kagawa, 2005) by increasing academic literature. analyzing the diverse perspectives of Education Cluster participants at global, national, and subnational levels (in a micro dimension related to Cameroon's NWSW regions), this research provides both empirical evidence and theoretical insights. The findings are intended to assist policymakers, practitioners, and scholars in developing the relevance of the ECC approach and, consequently, a more effective and sustainable EiE response. Additionally, this study offers an integrated personal narrative

that intertwines professional insights with a journey of academic and personal development, enriching the overall contribution to the field.

As the world changes, the number and difficulty of conflicts and global threats have grown. This concerning pattern confirms Donini's observation in 1996, when he noted, "the world is a much less safer place than ten years ago" a sentiment echoed by many since. Martin Griffiths (2024¹), Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, for example, expressed his frustration with poignant words: "I leave this job with a sense of work unfulfilled because the world is a worse place now than when I joined up in 2021," in his final briefing to journalists as UN Humanitarian and Emergency Relief Coordinator.

Building on this perspective, the concept of the '(world) risk society,' as discussed by sociologists like Ulrich Beck (1992) and Anthony Giddens (1991, 1999), emphasizes the transition of modern society into an era dominated by various global risks. These risks, ranging from natural disasters and climate change to pandemics and displacement crises, are characterized by complexity—invisible, unpredictable, and often uncontrollable. These risks are described as low-probability but high-consequence events.

As noted by scholars, one of the characteristic features of these risks is their 'de-bounded' nature. This means that the risks are not confined to any specific geographic region or national boundary. Instead, they are global, transcending traditional borders and affecting societies worldwide. The idea that these risks are 'de-bounded' reflects a shift in how societies understand and manage risks minding the complexity inherent. It moves away from localized or national frameworks – *locations* - towards recognizing the need for global approaches more related to places (considering the point of observation as a *place* instead of a location with boundaries). (Ferreira, 2003)

The frequency and intensity of these risks are increasing. This can be attributed to a variety of factors, including but not limited to conflict, environmental degradation, and the interconnectedness of global systems that can amplify the effects of crises. Moreover, the entangled nature of these risks means that they do not occur in isolation. For instance, climate change can exacerbate natural disasters, which in turn can lead to displacement crises, creating a complex web of challenges that are difficult to predict and manage. "Indeed, their full consequences may never be truly known"(Hameiri & Kühn, 2011, p. 276) due to the networking and reticular nature of the social phenomenon. (Ferreira, 2003)

¹ See more at : <https://news.un.org/en/story/2024/06/1150641> , last access 05/02/2023

Beck and Giddens argue that the rise of these global risks has significant implications on how societies are organized and governed. They call for new ways of thinking about security, prevention, and mitigation that go beyond traditional state-centric models: “Instead of the linear-rational notion of progress associated with earlier industrial modernity, new modes of reflexive thinking emerge that aim to continuously identify potential risk and intervene in time to avert disastrous consequences.” (Hameiri & Kühn, 2011, p. 276) It emphasizes the need for global cooperation and action and adaptive strategies that can respond to modern risks' dynamic and interconnected nature.

In essence, the 'risk society' concept is a critical lens through which sociologists analyze the vulnerabilities and challenges of contemporary life. It brings attention to the profound changes in the nature of risks facing modern societies and underscores the importance of rethinking social, political, and environmental strategies in a globally interconnected world.

Although the number of forcibly displaced people and their humanitarian needs have increased, they are often confronted with restrictive asylum policies, adverse public opinions, xenophobia, and the far right's rising popularity. (Freedman, 2015; Frelick, 2007; Khiabany, 2016) Since 2015, the subject has dominated divisive and intertwined public, media, and political agendas and discussions. (Hellman & Lerkkanen, 2019)

In today's complex political and social world, humanitarian actors have a key role to play, and the Education cluster Coordination role is also growing in responsibility and relevance. The humanitarian sector, focusing especially on EiE, is getting more professionalized, more structured, and more globalized. At the same time, localization and contextual responses in humanitarian disasters were referred to as today. The point is finding the balance to bring education Cluster Coordination actors to work together for a more anticipated risk society while being more prepared to find emergent ways to respond to old and new problems.

In academic literature, the actions of Education Cluster Coordination are not taken as objects of study. They have been explored in grey literature, but always from a functional perspective and less as a network, a power dynamic environment, and a transformative space. Acknowledging these gaps, this doctoral research aims to explore the Education Cluster Coordination approach from the perspectives of its actors.

Moreover, some concepts are increasingly being referred to, such as relationships being significant; unintentional repercussions of human actions can produce feedback loops that sustain good or negative

patterns in systems; earning and justice are two of the numerous emerging features of educational institutions; and policy, decision-making, and educational processes being complex and dynamic (Faul & Savage, 2023). These factors and the complexities of policy, decision-making, and educational procedures add layers of relevance to this research. This study aims to explore these elements, adding to our understanding of Education Cluster Coordination within the larger context of educational development and humanitarian response.

Structure of the thesis

The thesis is organized into three main sections: theoretical background, methodological path and context(s), and empirical inquiry, each of which addresses different facets of the research.

The first section lays the foundation by presenting the main literature and theoretical frameworks related to humanitarian EiE and Education Cluster Coordination. It comprises three chapters: it starts by providing a broad overview of the key concepts and theories from a multidisciplinary perspective, with a special focus on sociology, particularly those related to humanitarian work, EiE, 'Glocalization', and network, complexity, and coordination theories.

The theoretical framework incorporates perspectives from several scholars to tackle the complex nature and interdependence of EiE coordination. From sociology, Morin's (2005) complexity theory, Deleuze and Guattari's (1987) concept of the *rhizome* referring to a non-linear connected network, and Santos' (2009) decolonial approach all highlight the importance of flexible, inclusive, and non-hierarchical systems. Castells' (1999) Network Society and Latour's Actor-Network Theory (ANT) explore the dynamic power relationships and the roles of both *human and non-human actors*. Weick's (1976) *sensemaking* and loosely coupled systems show the importance of informal networks in emergency contexts. Thévenot (1993) centered on the problem of 'coordination of action,' complementing Derouet's (1992) idea that this coordination depends on an intertwining of networks.

From the humanitarian field, Gordon and Donini (2016) explore EiE from policy, coordination, and practices perspectives; Sommers (2000, 2004) and Hodgkin (2010) collectively emphasize the critical importance of quality EiE, the integration of protection and education, the role of community participation, and the need for innovative and context-specific approaches to overcome challenges in humanitarian settings. Burde (2011, 2017) and Saltarelli (2000) discuss the dual role of EiE, highlighting its potential to either exacerbate tensions or promote peace. Oddy's (2023) work on racial capitalism and critical race theory underscores the need for equity and inclusion in EiE.

Without ignoring the plurality of perspectives they develop, these scholars provide a comprehensive and multi-disciplinary foundation for understanding and addressing the challenges in EiE, advocating for integrated, context-sensitive, and equitable approaches to humanitarian efforts.

The second section outlines the research design and methods used to investigate the socio-political factors influencing coordination practices in emergencies. It describes the qualitative approach, applied through micro-narratives, interviews, and network interpretations. The methodology embraces cosmopolitanism (Beck & al., 2010) and nomadology (Deleuze and Guattari, 1986, 1987) as the main approach in order to do sensemaking (Weick, 1995) of the complex realities of educational coordination during crises.

This section also provides a brief journey through the empirical context, focusing on the three interconnected dimensions of Education Cluster Coordination: global (macro), national (meso), and local (micro).

The third part presents the findings from the empirical research, structured into two main chapters: the first analyzes four recent normative publications on Education Cluster Coordination, three of which are global documents and one specific to the NWSW regions of Cameroon. It explores how these documents influence educational practices and policies, considering the power dynamics and social structures involved. The second one focuses on interviews, sketches, and narratives from Education Cluster Coordinators and coordination-related actors. This chapter interprets the lived experiences and perspectives of stakeholders, revealing the practical challenges and strategies for coordinating education during crises.

The thesis finishes by carefully analyzing, summarizing, and reflecting on the process and results of the research, emphasizing its scientific, social, and political relevance, given its importance for the theoretical, practical, and political aspects of EiE, but also its limitations and how much it has contributed to the author's academic, personal and professional development.

Part I

Theoretical background

The theoretical foundation of this thesis lies at the disciplinary intersection of sociological theory, educational policies, EiE, complexity theory, and especially ECC in humanitarian interventions. This interdisciplinary approach is a deliberate effort to explore the EiE field and especially the ECC approach through a sociological lens while integrating insights from other disciplines. The aim is to provide a nuanced understanding of the complexities and collaborative efforts involved in EiE responding during emergencies. Through different theoretical perspectives, it's intended to explore the complex social networks within which Education Cluster Coordination (ECC) operates.

While EiE is drawn as an example of hope, offering a pathway to stability, peace, and development amid disruption, this thesis also acknowledges its complexities and challenges, especially from the coordination standpoint. Education serves not only as a fundamental human right and a mechanism for social cohesion and identity formation but also as a terrain where issues of protection, power, and coherence emerge. By engaging with the tensions and contradictions within EiE and especially in ECC, this theoretical part considers both its transformative potential and the obstacles that need to be considered to optimize its impact in crisis-affected contexts.

In addition to theoretical foundations, this review provides an overview of previous research and normative literature on Education, such as work from Novelli, Hodgkin, and Burde. The aim is to provide an overview of previous research and gray literature on the ECC.

1. The Architecture of the Humanitarian System and EiE Response

1.1 Risk, emergencies, and crises

A comprehensive comprehension of the concepts of risk, emergencies, and crises is important within the framework of Education in Emergencies (EiE). Although these phrases are sometimes used interchangeably, they have specific definitions and implications that influence the methods and frameworks employed in humanitarian operations. Having a strong understanding of this knowledge is essential when analyzing the role of this sector and the implications of the ECC approach in it.

As stated in the introduction, Donini's comment in 1996 that compared to ten years ago, the world is much less secure summarizing the more frequent and complex global crises that characterize our time.

This observation sets the stage for exploring the 'world risk society' concept, developed by sociologists like Ulrich Beck (1992) and Anthony Giddens (1991, 1999). Both thinkers emphasize the way in which these processes change social structures, impact policy decisions, and modify daily life, underscoring the need to understand concepts linked to risk, like emergencies, conflict, and crises, and their implications in our interconnected society. This chapter delves into the notions of these terms, refining our understanding of each. While these terms are sometimes used interchangeably, they each have specific meanings and fundamental characteristics (Al-Dahash & al., 2016).

Risk refers to the probability and potential impact of adverse events, with a wide range of possibilities, from natural disasters to human-made hazards. As the risk of 'de-bounded' crises grows, so too does the emphasis on 'anticipation' and Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) frameworks, projects, and preparedness. The greater goal of a DRR is to avoid the arrival of a disaster. The humanitarian sector, including EiE, is actively seeking to develop tools, strategies, and methodologies to improve the reducing risks practices.

Risk refers to possibilities, probabilities, and potential; on the other hand, 'emergency' is commonly defined as a sudden and unexpected event that demands an immediate reaction, such as natural calamities or human-induced crises like terrorism or violence. The immediacy of emergencies necessitates rapid coordination and response from various stakeholders, including governments, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and local communities (Head, 2022). Emergencies in the humanitarian field encompass various scenarios, including environmental disasters and man-made crises, including terrorism, violence, genocide, and natural disasters (Nicolai & al., 2020). These emergencies are often the result of interactions between natural hazards, armed conflicts, and human vulnerabilities, exacerbated by factors like poverty, inequality, population growth, urbanization, and climate change (UNHCR, 2018). Pigozzi (1999, cited by Kagawa, 2005) highlights the significance of 'silent/chronic emergencies' such as permanent poverty, street children numbers going up, and the HIV/AIDS pandemic. The humanitarian community also targets and has serious concerns about these circumstances. Shirazi (2020) highlights the narratives shared about crises or emergencies as sugaring that by viewing an emergency exclusively as a shocking moment or an unforeseen catastrophe, one fails to appreciate how seemingly ordinary circumstances can lead to impasses. A shared understanding does not define crises; rather, it involves the development of new temporalities and the framing of some questions and solutions as feasible while ruling out others.

In EiE, emergencies were traditionally viewed as unexpected, brief shocks. Recently, there has been a shift to recognize slow onset² emergencies, broadening our understanding of how these events arise and impact communities. Conflicts, a significant driver of humanitarian needs, often evolve in the methods by which populations are targeted and attacked. This is evidenced by the predominance of conflict-driven humanitarian response plans in recent years. In 2021, 27 of 30 humanitarian response plans were for countries with active conflicts, and eight were refugee response plans for those fleeing conflict (ALNAP, 2022). This happens partly because of an evolution in how populations are attacked and targeted throughout conflicts. Politically, armed conflict arises when the armed forces of one or more governments fight each other. A minimum of one thousand participants is needed to be considered an international conflict³.

Open, violent confrontations involving two or more centrally organized groups that continue from one conflict to the next for authority over territory and governance are usually referred to as armed conflicts. In international law, crises and armed conflicts are classified into two main categories: International Armed Conflict (IAC) and Non-International Armed Conflict (NIAC): IAC happens when armed forces from different countries engage in violent actions, even if one country does not officially declare war. This definition also covers situations where one country occupies another, whether there is resistance or not. NIAC is when a state's armed forces fight organized armed groups within its borders. Two main things define this type of conflict: the violence is ongoing and serious, and the parties involved are organized. This sets it apart from less severe situations like riots or unrest.

Acute emergencies are defined by intensity and not duration; they encompass sudden-onset crises that disrupt the normal functioning of communities, such as climate-related disasters, armed conflicts, epidemics, or mass displacements. The concept of an 'acute' emergency does not mean that the emergency is temporary since protracted crises can also include 'acute' situations (WHO, 2017); indeed, what begins as an acute emergency can persist, leading to long-term or protracted crises. The 'acute' nature of an emergency is characterized by the presence of one or more of the following conditions: sudden displacement of a significant part of the population; disruption or collapse of key administrative and management functions (ex, governance, law enforcement, and civil administration); Breakdown of essential public services (like healthcare or education); civilians experience limited access to basic necessities – ex: food, electricity (or the risk of losing access); new or escalation of armed

² emergency that develops gradually over time, frequently as a result of a combination of various events.

³ The word "conflict" is frequently used to characterize circumstances in which several parties (such as states, communities, political parties, or groups) use violence to express their differences and in which politically motivated violence occurs internally or globally (Abozaglo, 2012).

conflict, natural or industrial hazards, climate change-induced crises, and/or other extreme crises (INEE, 2023).

An emergency might escalate into a disaster, whereas a disaster is necessarily associated with an emergency. Also, research shows that efficient disaster management is mostly dependent on the actions of emergency groups (Quarantelli, 1986), and an unattended or mismanaged crisis can evolve into a disaster (Shaluf & al., 2003). Within the EiE field, the focus often lies on responding to immediate disasters or conflicts, which suggests that the temporal, spatial, and political dimensions of the crisis in EiE responses are narrowly defined (Shirazi, 2020). At the same time, there is a growing recognition of the need to engage with 'long-wave' events development partners and complex emergencies that extend beyond the scope of acute crises.

Crises are distinct from emergencies in that they represent a broader, more complex, and often prolonged state of instability and uncertainty. Crises can be economic, political, social, or environmental in nature and typically involve multifaceted problems that require comprehensive, long-term solutions. 'Disasters' refer to significant disruptions that can occur over a short or long period, impacting ecological, material, economic, and human resources and requiring external aid for recovery.

Bergman-Rosamond and al. (2022). made a case for an 'interdisciplinary' field of 'crisis studies.' He argues that crisis is employed within discourses and practices of hard (military, defense, terrorism) and soft (societal, environmental, economic, and human) expression of security to alert audiences to escalating conflict, large-scale events such as natural disasters, or humanitarian rights abuse. He references two major (sometimes overlapping) fields where the concept of crisis is important: security (Bergman-Rosamond, 2011); and climate, conflict, and migration (Ramasar, 2014; Hamza, 2015; Kinnvall & Anydstrom, 2019). Also, in a 2015 study, Walby links crisis to risk, disasters, and revolutions as overlapping concepts. At the same time, it complements these understandings of concepts. Bringing another layer to crisis understanding and questioning, Santos (2020) highlights that a crisis by nature should be short and caused by explicit factors. With a protracted and constant state of crisis, the factor to all problems is the crisis itself:

On the one hand, the idea of a permanent crisis is an oxymoron since, in the etymological sense, a crisis is, by nature, exceptional and temporary and is an opportunity to overcome and give rise to a better state of affairs. On the other hand, when a crisis is temporary, it must be explained by the factors that cause it. But when it

becomes permanent, the crisis becomes the cause that explains everything else.

(Santos, 2020)

Crises and disasters are 'inconceivable threats come true,' taxing our imagination and beyond available resources. (Boin & 'T Hart, 2010)

The concept of hysteresis⁴ as proposed by Bourdieu (2000), is highly pertinent for understanding the sociological aspects of crises. In periods of dislocation and disruption, such as significant crises, the established patterns and regulations of the field undergo profound transformations (Bourdieu, 2000). In periods of dislocation and disruption, such as substantial crises, the established patterns and rules of the field undergo profound transformations (Bourdieu, 2000). This misalignment results in individuals seeing a sense of temporal disconnection, where their previously unquestioned assumptions become more irrelevant. This phenomenon presents both potential risks and opportunities, as a disruption of traditional standards might result in novel methods of adaptation and resilience (Bourdieu, 2015; Fowler, 2020). Bourdieu's theoretical and empirical aim was centered on the creation of a political economy of practice that was intended to overcome the dualisms between objectivism and subjectivism, macrosociology and microsociology, compulsion and freedom, structure and agency, culture and nature, theory and research, and materialism and idealism that frequently underpin sociological thought (Wacquant & Bourdieu, 1989).

To summarize, the notions of risk, emergencies, and crises are closely linked but also distinct. Risk involves assessing the likelihood and potential consequences of adverse events, while emergencies are unexpected events requiring immediate intervention. Crises are characterized by extended periods of instability and complexity, frequently requiring extensive and long-term responses. Gaining a thorough comprehension of these concepts is essential for successful policies and strategies to address humanitarian interventions.

1.2 Humanitarian System: a brief overview

The integration of Education in Emergencies (EiE) within the broader humanitarian system has become increasingly essential in a world with frequent protracted crises. Generations of children have seen their opportunities to integrate into society lost in conflict or other emergencies. Academically, also, an agenda emerged within the field of international education and development.

⁴ Hysteresis occurs when there is a misalignment between *habitus* and the environment in which it operates, often experienced as a lag or disconnect amid changing circumstances.

Actually, EiE is part of the humanitarian system, which seeks to provide support and aid during crises alongside other sectors like WASH (Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene), shelter, food, or protection.

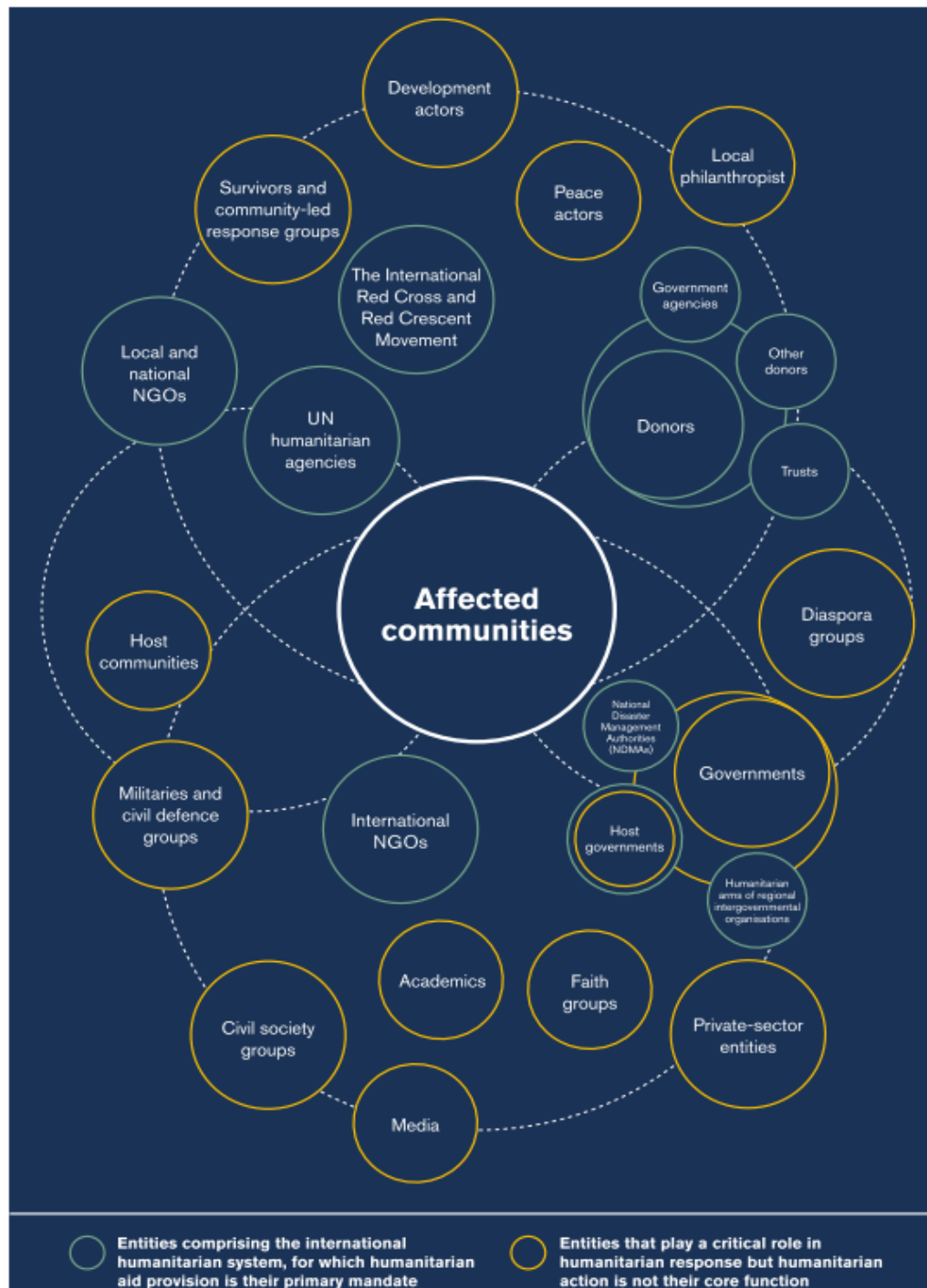


Figure 1 Inside and outside the international humanitarian system – the entities involved in humanitarian action (Source: ALNAP 2022)

Humanitarian action, driven by an ethical mandate, seeks to preserve human dignity, alleviate suffering, and save lives during crises caused by armed conflict, natural disasters, and other emergencies (ALNAP, 2016; IASC, 2015; Development Initiatives, 2020; ICRC, 1991).

Humanitarian action, underpinned by an ethical mandate, seeks to uphold human dignity, alleviate suffering, and save lives in times of crisis. This international community is guided by the principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality, and independence, as laid down in the General Assembly Resolution 46/182 of 19 December 1991, as articulated in the *Humanitarian Assistance* resolution. Humanitarian aid is expected to reach highest number of people and to prioritize reaching those most in need (ALNAP, 2022). This intervention focuses on providing immediate relief to those affected by war or disasters, distinct from 'development' assistance, which often involves long-term infrastructure and service interventions in conflict-affected countries (Burde, 2015).

The humanitarian system is an organic, complex construct composed of central actors interacting with each other and other actors around them to improve the conditions and quality of life of populations affected by emergencies. This formal network includes Local, national, and international NGOs, as outlined in the ALNAP 2022 SOHS report (2022); it comprises very different and complementary organizational entities (see Figure 1) for which humanitarian action is the primary activity. UN humanitarian agencies, the International Red Cross and Red Crescent, beneficiary government agencies with responsibility for crisis response, humanitarian departments in regional intergovernmental organizations, donor government agencies, and offices that provide funding and humanitarian coordination. Highly atomized, this system involves numerous actors with varying mandates, priorities, and philosophies, often competing for funds and media attention (Knox-Clarke, 2013). Additionally, armed forces, religious institutions, private sector entities, and the diaspora are groups that also often play critical roles in the humanitarian response (in some emergencies, they may work in parallel or in coordination with other members of the humanitarian system, but humanitarian action is not their primary function). Officially, the humanitarian intervention system exists to fill gaps. It can complement national capacity to respond to a disaster, intervene in an absent public sector, or moderate to protect and assist civilians caught between conflicting parties" (ALNAP, 2015).

Some Key actors within the humanitarian system include (Winthrop & Matsui, 2013):

- Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC): This is the primary mechanism for interagency policy setting and coordination of humanitarian assistance involving key UN and non-UN humanitarian partners;
- The United Nations Office of Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA) coordinates humanitarian actors to ensure a coherent emergency response. The head of UNOCHA chairs the IASC;
- Education Cluster: Operating under UNOCHA, UNICEF, and Save the Children, this cluster leads a network of education agencies coordinating Education in different countries. It promotes learning in the national and local clusters and advocates for EiE globally;
- Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR): Leading agency assisting refugees;
- World Food Program (WFP): The WFP is the UN's food assistance branch and the world's largest humanitarian organization addressing hunger. It provides food, on average, to 90 million people per year, 58 million of whom are children;
- INEE: The leading network in education and fragility, comprising more than 20,000 individual members affiliated with more than 4,000 organizations and institutions in 190 countries;
- GCPEA: Coalition with the main objective of stopping targeted attacks on education during armed conflict, including students, teachers, and schools;
- Watchlist: A network of international NGOs focused on protecting children in war zones by collecting and disseminating information on the grave violations of children's rights throughout the world.

These actors adhere to a set of legal norms that are specifically designed to protect the rights and dignity of the affected populations. Key documents include the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) functions as a guiding light, confirming the innate worth and the equal and non-negotiable entitlements of every individual within the human community; the Geneva Conventions of 1949 and their Additional Protocols establish the responsibilities of both states and non-state actors to safeguard individuals not involved in combat in times of armed conflict. The Hague and Geneva Conventions, in conjunction with the Regulations Concerning the Laws and Customs of War on Land, establish a legal framework that governs behavior during armed conflict. The Convention and 1967 Protocols about the Status of Refugees establish the legal position, entitlements, and safeguards granted to refugees, guiding the global community in its humanitarian efforts and assistance. To implement these legal protections, various codes of conduct and standards govern aid provision: the Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and NGOs in Disaster Relief Operations, and the

Sphere Project's Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Humanitarian Response, which guide the actions of humanitarian organizations. The Core Humanitarian Standard (CHS) emphasizes accountability to affected people, ensuring humanitarian actions are responsible and responsive to those in need.

Various organizations are in place in order to maintain these standards and guarantee their implementation, some of them are Assessment Capacities Project⁵ (ACAPS), the Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance in Aid (ALNAP), the Emergency Capacity Building Project (ECB), and Groupe URD's⁶ The Humanitarian Quality Assurance framework. These organizations offer methods, resources, and mechanisms to improve humanitarian initiatives' assessment, tracking, responsibility, and quality.

The humanitarian system has experienced substantial growth, both in terms of financial resources and workforce. Financially, in 2021, international humanitarian assistance (IHA) reached an estimated \$31.3 billion, almost double the amount of the precedent decade (ALNAP, 2022). Estimates suggest that the number of humanitarian staff working in crisis contexts has also risen by 40% since 2013. National staff make up more than 90% of this 632,000-strong workforce in emergency settings. (ALNAP, 2022). However, there are still ongoing challenges, such as inefficiencies in how resources are distributed and the difference in treatment between national and expatriate staff. The latter group experiences varying salary scales and levels of authority (ALNAP, 2022).

The system faces a paradox: Although there is an increasing number of people being reached, the demand for resources at a global level still exceeds the supply. (Konyndyk, J. 2018). The result is a burgeoning 'mismatch between aspirations and achievable results' (Bennett & al., 2016: 4, DuBois, 2018). In the meantime, in response to this loud need for change, numerous initiatives have been made to bring more lightness into a system that is becoming more tentacular, weighty, and hierarchical. While humanitarian action is agreed globally to be necessary in saving lives, aid delivery is often the source of intense debate. The humanitarian sector is undergoing a total metamorphosis due to complex poly-crises and escalating requirements.

⁵ The organization now known as ACAPS was originally called "The Assessment Capacities Project."

⁶ Independent think tank that specializes in analyzing practices and developing policies for the humanitarian sector

1.3 The *Zeitgeist* of Education in Emergencies⁷

“Education is the key to personal development and the future of societies. It unlocks opportunities and narrows inequalities. It is the bedrock of informed, tolerant societies and a primary driver of sustainable development.” (Antonio Guterres, ninth Secretary-General of the United Nations, 2020) As emphasized by Antonio Guterres in the quote, education is about the present and the future; it is about opening doors, closing gaps, and building enlightened and empowered communities. Therefore, exploring the *zeitgeist* of EiE means looking to the present, the current trends, the predominant approaches, and the challenges. But it also means looking to the past and the future. By exploring the historical foundations and picturing prospects, it's possible to gain a comprehensive understanding of how education has evolved and continues to shape responses to crises and emergencies.

Education is recognized as a fundamental human right, protected in numerous international treaties such as the Convention against Discrimination in Education (1960), the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966), and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) (1989; UNESCO, 2019).

These treaties obligate signatories to ensure access to free and compulsory primary education, availability of secondary education, and equitable access to higher education based on capacity. EiE is a critical sector within the humanitarian field that enables children and youth to access this right when the socio-political situation of a country or region offers no other viable means. It is a human right imperative. It is life-sustaining and lifesaving. These rights are not suspended in times of emergency, irrespective of the legal status (i.e., refugee, internally displaced, child combatant) (UN Secretary General, 2008).

Burde & al. argue that:

“Education in emergencies refers to a set of program interventions that are supported by international, bilateral, and multinational organizations worldwide to help children living in conflict-affected countries gain access to education. They comprise a subset of programs that overlap with and unite two global efforts: humanitarian response to alleviate suffering and Education for All (EFA) initiatives. Yet, for different reasons,

⁷ Education in Emergencies (EiE) is a sub-field of research and practice within 'International Education and Development'

neither one of these global initiatives has whole-heartedly embraced education in emergencies programs” (Burde, Kapit-Spitalny, Wahl, 2011, p.5).

Developed by the very first UN Special Rapporteur on the right to education, Katarina Tomasevski (2001), and adopted by the UN Committee on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights, the 4A scheme captures four key elements at the basis of the right to education. Combined with the obligation to respect and protect, the 4A are:

- i) availability: human, material and budgetary resources should be adequate to ensure education for all. Individuals should also be free to choose or seek out schools in accordance with their religious and moral convictions and with minimum standards set by the state;
- ii) accessibility: education systems should not discriminate on any ground, and positive steps should be taken to reach the most marginalized. It also includes physical and economic accessibility;
- iii) acceptability: the content of education and teaching methods should be relevant, culturally appropriate, and of quality. It also entails that the human rights of all those involved should be upheld in education;
- iv) adaptability: education should be flexible in responding to students' needs and abilities, meet the child's best interests, and adapt to different contexts and changing societies.

The landscape has changed dramatically over time due to a number of factors, including increased interest from governments in conflict zones following September 11, advocacy from the educational community using human rights documents as a foundational instrument, and the persistent demands of affected populations for their children's education (UNESCO, 2011). States considered to be *failed*, *failing*, or *fragile* became targets for Western intervention. These countries were no longer perceived to be a danger only to themselves; many Western governments suddenly perceived them as posing an imminent threat to the world at large and to the Western world in particular (Barnett, 2009). Education was identified as one way to mitigate these dangers. Within departments of state (e.g., the United States and the United Kingdom), the emphasis shifted from viewing support to education systems as important for distant children's well-being to viewing this support as important for preserving the security of the homeland.

Also, the “Global Education Cluster (GEC) and its partners have made considerable progress in increasing EiE’s profile as a humanitarian concern, including highlighting its life-saving nature and Education Cannot Wait (ECW⁸) has helped increase the visibility and need to give increased attention to EiE”. (Lilly & Thierry, 2022, p. 40) Together, these initiatives have given education in emergencies the weight that it has today. (Burde, Kapit-Spitalny, Wahl, 2011)

According to Burde and al. (2017), the 'Education in Emergencies' concept appeared around the 1990s, with humanitarian work evolving as a key element.

“In fact, it was implicitly chosen to solidify this link to humanitarian action and ensure the incorporation of support to education, among other forms of relief aid. The term was also compatible with an interest in outcomes related to improving the lives of beneficiaries, a central goal of aid work.

This approach to education outcomes gained ground in the midst of a confluence of global events that pressured humanitarian action to expand beyond its traditional activities. Humanitarianism came to include a concern not just with individuals’ basic needs but also with fulfilling their rights to a certain standard of life. International human rights instruments such as the CRC in 1989 and follow-up action meetings held by UN agencies expanded, strengthened, and institutionalized the recognition and protection of children’s rights, including the right to education”. (Burde & al. 2017, 621-622)

In 2000, an important turning point was reached at the World Education Forum in Dakar, with the Education for All (EFA) movement coming from Jomtien. The Education for All (EFA) movement was originally launched by UNESCO, UNICEF, the World Bank, the UN Development Programme, and the UN Population Fund in the 1990s. The unique cooperation by these five partners over the coming years paved the way for the EFA goals⁹ (UNESCO, 2022). Later, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) was established in 2015, with a particular emphasis on children impacted by crises, and education was emphasized as a fundamental human right. Furthermore, quality education, as the SDG4, is also a vehicle for achieving the other SDGs. Hence, disruption of EiE not only undermines the SDG4 milestones but also debilitates the possibility of achieving goals in other domains, such as poverty

⁸ ECW is the first dedicated global fund for education in emergencies, established in 2016.

⁹ See more at: https://www.right-to-education.org/sites/right-to-education.org/files/resource-attachments/Dakar_Framework_for_Action_2000_en.pdf, last access 05/02/2023

reduction, good health and well-being, gender equality, economic growth, and peace (Maglio & Pherali, 2020).

EiE is increasingly significant amidst a world where crises—be it from pandemics, socio-political unrest, wars, climate hazards, or the rapid evolution of technology such as artificial intelligence—profoundly change societal norms. These crises are growing in number and complexity. As the Global Peace Index (2023) indicates that, over the last 15 years, the world has become less peaceful, with the average country score deteriorating by five percent. The escalating global displacement figures, reaching a record 103 million (forcibly displaced people worldwide) in 2023 as per UN OCHA (2023), highlight the urgency of integrating education into emergency responses, especially for vulnerable children who risk losing learning opportunities during crises and for their future. Despite its essential role, education is frequently the least-addressed issue in disaster management (Halman & al., 2018). There has also been an increase in the intensity of internal conflict (IEP, 2023). Between 2008 and 2023, the average intensity of internal conflict indicator scores grew from 2.29 to 2.56%.

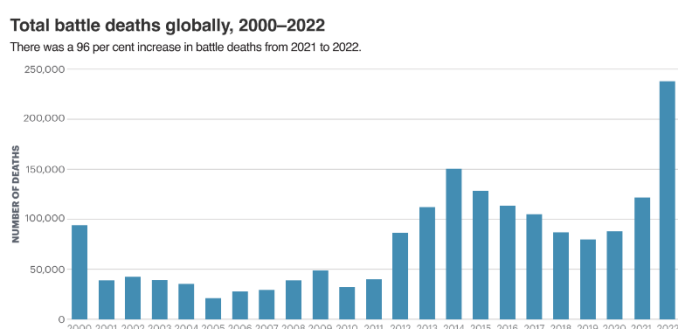


Figure 2: Total battle deaths globally, 2000-2022

Moreover, finally, between 2020 and 2021, there was a 45% rise in battle deaths, bringing the total number of deaths from 82,773 to 119,980. The primary cause of the sharp rise in deaths in 2021—which occurred before Russia invaded Ukraine—is the escalation of state-based violence in the

Asia-Pacific and sub-Saharan Africa areas.

Distressing statistics show the need for EiE: Out of 224 million crisis-affected school-age children, approximately 72 million are deprived of educational opportunities, with girls representing over half of this demographic (ECW, 2023). Many of these children are displaced, highlighting the critical need for effective EiE interventions. According to EDUCO (2022), Over the past decade, donor nations have significantly boosted their humanitarian funding for education. In 2013, education received 1.9% of total aid, whereas by 2022, this had increased to 2.9%. Specifically, spending grew from \$163 million to \$721 million, a more than fourfold increase, as reported by the Financial Tracking Service of UN OCHA. Despite this substantial rise in funding, it still falls short of matching the escalating demands. This

budget deficit impacts the infrastructure required for productive learning environments, the development of education professionals' capacity, and access to educational resources.

Challenges persist in ensuring that EiE reaches all children in need. These difficulties are mostly caused by poor coordination (Winthrop & Matsui, 2013; Burde & al., 2011), limited policy prioritization (Winthrop & Matsui, 2013), and insufficient funding and resources (Winthrop & Matsui, 2013; Burde, Kapit-Spitalny & Wahl, 2011; INEE, 2019) in comparison to the expanding needs and demands. At the same time, several commitments were established - including those related to coordination – particularly should be noted the strategic partnership between the Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE), the Global Education Cluster, and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). This partnership aims to “provide a blueprint for improved coordination in the sector and is conducting a comprehensive review of the coordination, planning, and response structures in the education in emergencies field” (INEE, 2019).

Also, the creation of organizations such as ECW and integrating education into the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) demonstrate an increasing understanding of the value of education in times of crisis and provide opportunities for more funding and cooperation.

The Critical Role of Education in Emergencies

Exactly because education is an empowering right, it is also given a very high value in emergencies (despite the tendency still present nowadays to consider economic, social, and cultural rights just as services that can be suspended in such situations) (Piasentin, 2015).

Over time, the concepts and definitions of EiE have changed, emphasizing the protection side of education, mental health, and the development of resilience and peace among impacted communities. With the creation of the INEE network, the EiE became “a category separate from development activities in order to incorporate education into traditional humanitarian assistance” (Burde & al., 2011, cited by Burde & al., 2017, p. 622). The INEE definition of EiE, published in 2010, holds significant influence and is the foundation for many definitions and understandings in the sector. INEE's definition covers a broad spectrum, including early childhood development, primary, secondary, non-formal, technical, vocational, higher, and adult education. It emphasizes the many protective features of emergency education, including physical, emotional, and cognitive characteristics that are critical for conserving and safeguarding lives. It entails most of the other definitions found during this study, highlighting other

features that, even if are not mentioned, are later referred to in the Minimum Standards (MS) as the importance of equitable and quality education.

Education in emergencies fulfills several crucial roles (Sinclair, 2007):

- Some reasons are linked to the school as a place of normalization, providing routine and structure;
- A protective site from traumas, abductions, and forced labor – with psychosocial support;
- Provide protection for marginalized groups – minorities, girls, children with disability, and out-of-school adolescents who are often at risk of exploitative or unsafe work, including prostitution or recruitment by militias;
- Contribution to the recovery and reconstruction of communities. Education is a crucial component of community recovery and reconstruction after a crisis. By providing education, communities affected by crises can rebuild and recover from the impact of disasters. Education also helps to build the capacity of communities to respond to future crises;
- Schools act as central hubs where additional services, such as health (ex., vaccinations), food, water, sanitation, and protection, can be accessed;
- Schools are valuable platforms for disseminating safety messages and life skills related to health, gender equity, responsible citizenship, and environmental awareness, which can reach families rapidly;
- Educational institutions serve as venues for meetings, socialization, and support among peers and professionals;
- Education fosters hope and provides children with the necessary skills to face life's challenges safely;
- Teachers, often the largest group of civilians not directly involved in conflicts, play a critical role in seeking peace;
- Even if unschooled youths enlist more often in militias or military groups than educated youths, there are still cases where educated young people are also recruited. However, educated youths are searched by the militias, as opposed to uneducated youths who go themselves to the armed groups. It's not possible to say that education directly promotes peace, but normally, educated young people do not seek to enlist in armed groups. In this sense, perhaps because they have more opportunities or because they are more inserted in society, they may have a less oriented vision in that sense;

- Education promotes social cohesion and peacebuilding. Education can help to build understanding and respect for diversity, which can reduce tensions and promote reconciliation.

Adding to that list and framing some recent preoccupations:

- “Education in all its forms (informal, non-formal, and formal) is crucial to ensure human dignity” (UNESCO, 2019, p. 31);
- “The aim is to empower children by developing their skills, learning and other capacities, human dignity, self-esteem, and self-confidence. ‘Education’ in this context goes far beyond formal schooling to embrace the wide range of life experiences and learning processes that enable children, individually and collectively, to develop their personalities, talents, and capabilities and to live a full and satisfactory life within society”¹⁰ (CRC, 2001);
- Education can also be oriented towards attaining certain objectives that contribute to the benefit of society as a whole. States can utilize education as a means to stimulate economic development by cultivating a knowledgeable and proficient workforce. Additionally, can contribute to the establishment of democratic and peaceful societies by developing values of tolerance, mutual respect, and human rights, as well as fostering active participation and inclusivity in decision-making. Furthermore, education can play a role in promoting a vibrant cultural environment and advancing social justice. It is also widely recognized as a powerful tool for reducing political, social, and economic exclusion and marginalization. (UNESCO, 2019);
- Education is key for achieving environmental rights, namely the right to a clean, healthy, and sustainable environment, which is essential for sustainable economic growth. Education and dissemination of knowledge regarding environmental issues are essential for increasing awareness and promoting action across all segments of society, including individuals, organizations, and decision-makers. (UNESCO, 2019);
- Based on 16 research conducted by eight organizations, which examined 17 distinct situations ranging from conflicts to protracted crises and disasters, and involved the opinions of 8,749 children, it was found that 99% of children in crisis consider education to be of a priority. (Save the Children, 2015);

¹⁰ CRC General Comment 1 para. 1. See more at : <https://www.refworld.org/legal/general/crc/2001/en/39221> , last access 04/02/2024

- “Education is a prime public good and an essential facilitator for the whole 2030 sustainable development agenda. The international community cannot afford to be agnostic about its supply, quality, and relevance”¹¹.

Its role extends beyond classrooms and textbooks; it is a catalyst for healing, resilience, and peace. In the web of humanitarian action, EiE stands as a testament to the commitment of the global community to preserve the fundamental right to education, even in the face of adversity. In general, conflict lowers access to education. According to Lai and Thyne (2007 as quoted in Burde & al., 2017, p. 628) in conflict-ridden contexts, access to education often diminishes, as evidenced by quantitative analyses of UNESCO data from 1980 to 1997. These analyses indicate a decline in enrollment during times of war, showing that war leads to a 1.6 to 3.2 percentage point decline in enrollment. However, contrary evidence suggests that children who experienced conflict when they were younger may face larger challenges to higher education.

In part, variations in baseline enrollment rates may explain these contrasting findings on whether conflict reduces, increases, or has no effect on educational attainment. Paulson and Shields (2015) found that countries with high preconflict enrollment tend to see a decline in enrollment during conflict. However, countries with low preconflict enrollment rates continue to see slow increases in enrollment during conflict. A variety of contextual factors as well as length and intensity of conflict mediate the impact of fighting on education. Although not examined in these studies, aid to education during conflict may also have a mediating effect (Lai & Thyne 2007 as quoted in Burde & al., 2017, p. 628).

Nevertheless, the humanitarian sector has increasingly recognized the importance of addressing education as part of a holistic approach to crisis response, bridging the gap between humanitarian and development efforts (nexus). One notable development in recent years is the growing emphasis on the participation of affected populations in planning, implementing, and evaluating responses, fostering a less hierarchical and more inclusive approach. Despite their vulnerability, displaced or refugee populations possess valuable skills that can contribute to the well-being of host communities.

¹¹ UN Secretary-General message on the International Day of Education [24 January 2022, <https://iraq.un.org/en/169128-un-secretary-general-message-international-day-education-24-january-2022>]

In conflict-affected regions, schools can face various challenges, including becoming targets for recruitment, kidnapping, extortion, and resource theft by armed groups. Female children face increased risks both while traveling to school and within the school environment. Education can also be influenced by or exert influence over the formal and hidden curriculum, impacting values and norms within schools (Burde & al., 2017).

Moreover, education can enhance state stability by strengthening governmental legitimacy, raising economic growth, reducing inequality, and promoting social cohesion (Burde & al., 2017, p. 626). However, the complex relationship between education and political dissatisfaction must be acknowledged. While some terrorists may have high levels of education, it doesn't imply that educated individuals are more prone to engage in terrorism. Instead, it may suggest that terrorist groups seek highly educated recruits rather than indicating a direct causal link between education and terrorism (Berrebi, 2007; Fair, 2007; Burde & al., 2017, p. 627).

Furthermore, social exclusion resulting from unequal access to education, whether real or perceived, is likely to fuel tensions (Colenso, 2005; Davies, 2005, 2011; Kirk, 2011). This tendency developed at the same time that interstate conflicts decreased. In their place, longer-lasting intrastate conflicts forced more people to leave their homes, including many children (Paris, 2004). It became clearer how important it is to support education during disasters, adding to the fact that direct discussions with affected populations routinely emphasize education as one of the most critical sectors during crises, frequently placing it second in priority, as indicated by reports such as the Restoring Humanity study. Another example was the intervention of Gordon Brown, who, in 2012, at a conference in New York, had recently been appointed as the UN Special Envoy for Global Education, recounted his recent experience in South Sudan. He noted that when speaking to [families] about what most wanted for their children, it was not a shelter, although they needed it; it was not security, although they needed it; it was not food, although they desperately wanted it; it was an education for their children (Talbot, 2013).

In 2010, the INEE Minimum Standards highlighted the importance of integrating education into humanitarian efforts, emphasizing that education helps mitigate the psychosocial effects of conflicts and disasters. It offers a sense of routine and stability, while also serving as a platform for teaching valuable skills and principles such as inclusivity, tolerance, conflict resolution, human rights, and disaster preparedness. (INEE, 2010).

The support for EiE remained rhetorical (Versmesse & al., 2017) for more than a decade, and the increase in funding is recent and very low. The World Humanitarian Summit (WHS) held in Istanbul in May 2016 marked a significant milestone for EiE. During the summit, the information that education accounted for only 2% of the Global Humanitarian Fund (UNESCO, 2019) was shocking for many. This event brought together governments, humanitarian organizations, civil society, and other stakeholders to address the challenges of crisis response, including the issue of education for children and youth affected by conflict and disasters. It also represented a significant step towards fulfilling the promise of Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG4), which aims to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all. The WHS and the launch of Education Cannot Wait (ECW) highlighted the growing consensus among the international community that education cannot be sidelined during emergencies. Instead, it must be a central part of humanitarian response efforts, essential for recovery, resilience, and the rebuilding of peaceful and prosperous societies.

Despite the myriad positive opportunities that education can bring, it possesses a dual potential: it can either exacerbate conflict and instability or promote peace and stability. This complexity is thoroughly explored in the works of Bush & Saltarelli (2000); Burde, Kapit-Spitalny, and Wahl (2011). These authors delve into the dual potential of EiE to either aggravate conflict and instability or promote peace and stability, reflecting its power as a tool for shaping societal norms and values. The negative and positive impacts of education are not mutually exclusive. Instead, they reflect different possible results that emerge from by whom and how education systems are designed and implemented. The authors delve into how education can lead to divergent paths of conflict or peace and instability or stability, highlighting specific factors:

The positive impacts: i) The state's education provision increases trust in the government. Building trust in governmental institutions can occur when the state shows that it is committed to the well-being of its population through good education provision. For the social compact to be reinforced and for citizens to feel as though their needs and rights are valued and safeguarded, trust is essential; ii) Empowerment through Knowledge: Education creates a population that can participate in democratic processes and efficient government by providing the knowledge and abilities needed for participation in civil society and governance; iii) Encouragement of a common identity and social cohesion via curriculum and an integrated system: A shared national identity is facilitated by an inclusive education system that values variety and fosters understanding amongst different social groups. Cultures that promote empathy, human rights awareness, and a shared understanding of values greatly enhance social cohesion. Also,

researchers agree that investing in education is a smart option for policymakers interested in promoting peace and stability. (Winthrop & Matsui, 2013)

The negative impacts: i) Unequal Segregation and Access when education systems that are biased or discriminatory have the power to reinforce social injustices and stereotypes. This kind of segregation might be based on socioeconomic class, gender, religion, ethnicity, etc. It marginalizes underprivileged people and raises the risk of civil instability; ii) Biased Curriculum: Education that propagates biased histories or ideas has the potential to strengthen negative stereotypes and incite intolerance. Teaching pupils a story that defames particular groups or exalts conflict can cause division and feed an aggressive and mistrustful loop; iii) Corruption and Misguided Interventions: inappropriate initiatives can fuel animosity and amplify grievances.

Some negative education initiatives are present and significantly impact conflict zones, such as attacks on schools, student abductions, the politicization of education, underfunding, and resource disparities. On the other hand, positive initiatives in general and EiE in particular are also in place, like Conflict-Sensitive Education, Global Citizenship Education, or Education for Sustainable Development.

Some global normative¹² documentation and policy-based sources identified as linked to EiE in conflict are: i) the Comprehensive School Safety Framework 2022-2030 (GADRRRES, 2022) developed by the Global Alliance for Disaster Risk Reduction and Resilience in the Education Sector is an important publication; ii) INEE guidance on Conflict Sensitive Education (INEE, 2013) iii) and Crisis-sensitive educational planning (CSP). The ICRC monitors violations of IHL – including those related to education, such as attacks on schools, students, or education personnel. Through its confidential bilateral dialogue, the ICRC reminds states, militaries, and weapon bearers of their obligations not to target civilian objects or persons. It also provides legal and technical advice on implementing International Humanitarian Law (IHL) rules related to access to education. Regarding the Safe Schools Declaration, the ICRC stands ready to offer its legal reading of the Guidelines and provide technical advice to all interested parties on best implementing them in specific contexts. (ICRC, 2019; Ihalainen, 2022)

Education in Emergencies: some highlights and some milestones of the sector

Given that education is both a fundamental human right and a vital component of social and economic recovery, EiE has grown as an undeniable element of humanitarian intervention. Over time, the field of

¹² Normative means the attempt to suggest certain order on situations and steer them in particular directions by ascribing identities to the actors (actants) involved so that they can take up allocated positions within the schemes in question

EiE has evolved significantly, shaped by the numerous crises and the collective efforts of various stakeholders, including governments, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), international agencies, and affected communities. The development of this sector highlights the importance of ensuring educational continuity and quality during conflict and natural disasters. Going through key milestones and transformative stages in the evolution of EiE, we may gain a deeper understanding of its current framework. This historical perspective provides valuable insights into how the field has grown and adapted, setting the stage for a deeper exploration of the core of the study, the Education Cluster Coordination logic.

According to Winthrop and Matsui (2013), the evolution of the EiE sector can be divided into three main stages of the development of the field of Education and Fragility¹³.

1st Proliferation (1948 to mid-1990s): During the midst of violence and refugee displacement, there was a proliferation of community education projects. Humanitarian efforts primarily focused on biological survival by implementing measures that were considered neutral and intended to relieve immediate suffering without having a direct impact on ongoing conflicts.

2nd Consolidation (middle of the 1990s to mid-2000s): During this time, a specialized sector of education emerged, characterized by internal initiatives to create common standards, notions, and instruments. Humanitarian action began to focus on the physical and mental health of children, and in the field of international development, a consensus developed that 'more education is better education.'

3rd Collaboration (mid-2000s to present)¹⁴, there has been a shift in attention towards external collaboration with other sectors. There has also been a greater acknowledgment of the transformative power of education and the political dimensions of humanitarian intervention. This shift includes an increasing recognition of cross-sectoral cooperation (visible especially to the effort between Child Protection (CP) and EiE in the Education Cluster identification of an expert to support local and national interventions and related publications from INEE, ECW (2022) and Education Cluster Coordination). Furthermore, there is a growing understanding of education's role in providing short-term aid, fostering long-term resilience, and contributing to peacebuilding efforts.

¹³ Fragility is here related to the state situation. Many assumptions exist regarding what the state is or is not and what it is or is not required to provide at a range of levels from 'strong' to 'fragile' or even 'failed'. Even if there are no consensus about the definition or clear typology of fragile states, the rationale that a state is unwilling or unable to protect the social and political rights of its citizens, for example, furnishes the mandate for intervention by outside actors for security or humanitarian reasons (Tebbe, 2015).

¹⁴ The document considered this stage to extend until the present, as it was written in 2013.

Further information can be obtained to improve the description by clarifying the traits of the third stage and relating them to current advancements and trends. It is reasonable to argue that actually, it still corresponds to the collaborative stage, with much effort going into intersectoral collaboration. Not referred to by the author but also as a collaboration mechanism, the nexus humanitarian-development-peace - Triple nexus (Lilly & Thierry, 2022; Educo, 2023; European Commission, 2022)- is an issue that can be highlighted in particular in a normative sense and related more academically, maybe with concepts of peacebuilding, sustaining peace, or stabilization (Selenica & Novelli, 2021). Besides, the COVID-19 epidemic may have brought about a paradigm change in that evidence, but COVID-19's long-term impact on EiE is still to be realized – The COVID-19 pandemic radically changed the scale and geography of humanitarian need – and the capacity of economies to support affected people in their own countries and elsewhere (ALNAP, 2022; GEC, 2022). In any case, it brought the pandemic issue to light (Selenica & Novelli, 2021), leading to more attention to anticipation and preparedness for the crisis. The possible 4th phase is not exactly here with the envisioned 'integration,' as the authors referred to it, but some trends and changes are clear in the system. Some global publications refer, for example, to the related safety measures (Educo, 2023; Selenica & Novelli, 2021) related to the attacks on education. Other trends are also getting noticed: the Climate change and environmental-related education initiatives continue to grow in the number of initiatives and publications (UNICEF & others, 2022; ECW, 2022a; GEC, 2022; Selenica & Novelli, 2021), especially after the activist Greta Thunberg 'effect'¹⁵ with her powerful words: "This ongoing irresponsible behavior will no doubt be remembered in history as one of the greatest failures of humankind," (The Guardian, 2019); localization is being a pointed out frequently, particularly after the IASC Transformative Agenda (TA) protocols and the Grand Bargain being published (European Commission, 2022; Educo, 2023; Education Cannot Wait, 2022; GEC, 2022) and in some ways links with decolonization are being made. Additionally, digital transformation, particularly digital learning and innovation, is also a very referred trend (OCHA, 2022; Selenica & Novelli, 2021) that is growing even more from the COVID-19 pandemic, and with Artificial Intelligence, many changes are probably coming. Accountability to the Affected Population (especially children) and participation (ECW, 2022) are also getting hits and getting more effort done in practice instead of a normative way as initially. Gender is a trend that remains high with some changes in the form but always actual (UNICEF & others, 2022; Education Cannot Wait, 2023); for example, the recent publication by Human Rights Watch (Human Rights Watch, 2023) about Afghanistan with focus on 'boys.' Holistic learning and quality education instead of just access (ECW, 2022; 2023).

¹⁵ The Guardian and other media named 'the Greta effect' referring to the power of her hearted discourse impact <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2019/apr/23/greta-thunberg>, accessed last time the 22/12/2023

The 1st stage, proliferation, begins with the foundational principles set by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948 and the subsequent UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) in 1989, which articulated the right to free and compulsory education for all children and emphasized participatory rights for children.

From the mid to late 1990s, humanitarian workers seized an opportunity to advocate for education as a crucial component of humanitarian assistance. A convergence of international events strengthened the educators' work and put pressure on humanitarian action to go beyond its conventional missions of providing food, shelter, and medicine (Burde & al., 2011). Another of the earliest milestones in the field of education in emergencies was the launch of the Education for All (EFA) global movement in 1990. EFA served as a platform for inclusive educational development and helped set the agenda for the realization of the right to education for every child. However, despite the various aims and goals of the EFA, the integral role of EiE is not reflected in most of the discussions and developments that took place under the movement. At the same time, nature and the way wars emerged and carried on changed. When World War ended, interstate conflicts declined, intrastate conflict increased, and the numbers of displaced or killed civilians surged (Burde, Kapit-Spitalny, Wahl, 2011). During Cold War conflicts, large-scale displacements emerged, and with them, grassroots refugee communities started to set up schooling in refugee camps. There were, however, no systematic policies on education in these situations, and there was little sharing of promising strategies or lessons learned across country contexts (Winthrop & Matsui, 2013). In this period, humanitarian action was centered on preserving life, a literal approach connected to the urgent biological needs considered in the context of the traditional interstate conflict in which soldiers made up half of the casualties (mostly adult males).

The second stage, consolidation, was marked by two key developments: increased awareness of child protection in humanitarian settings and the global campaign to guarantee universal school enrollment. Following Graça Machel's report, the children living in conflict zones gained much-needed attention to their situation. In this period, "conflict largely meant protracted fighting within countries between groups—for example, rebels and governments—and of particular importance, the vast majority of casualties were civilians, with women and children at the center"(Macrae, 2000 and William, 2005 quoted in Winthrop & Matsui, 2013, p. 17) and the adoption of The Dakar Framework for Action (UNESCO, 2000). The early 21st century brought further institutionalization of EiE, with the creation of the INEE in 2000 starting with the realization that the Education for All (EFA) and Millenium Development Goals (MDG) goals would not be met without a concerted effort. In 2004, after being left

out of the Humanitarian Standards process (for health or water, for example), they created the INEE Minimum Standards for Education and subsequent updates to address evolving challenges in EiE. These Standards were later updated in 2010, and a new update is being developed, as well as the new INEE Strategic Framework, 2024-2030. INEE was a mobilizing force to advocate for EiE and finally integrate Education in the Humanitarian sector, including the creation of the Education Cluster, in 2006.

In the third stage, collaboration, international aid began to receive increased scrutiny in the mid-2000s (Winthrop & Matsui, 2013). At the same time, Western governments began paying more attention to conflict-affected nations after the September 11th attacks. Western countries began to perceive 'fragile' states¹⁶ not merely as threats to their stability but starting to be impossible to continue ignoring and neglecting them. Education started to be seen as a preoccupation next to security. With the intervention growing, the need for Education support in affected areas started to be more recognized. Some dilemmas raising thought: Western-led development and military operations were first justified under the pretense of 'humanitarian intervention,' but as they have grown more entwined, they have raised difficult moral dilemmas for those of us who identify with this 'development community' (Novelli & Kutan, 2023). "Finally, and most importantly, local populations affected by conflict and disaster requested support for education from humanitarian aid donors. Educators, in turn, noted the gap in services provided to populations affected by crisis and advocated for increased support to education (Burde, 2005; Anderson & al., 2006)" (Burde & al., 2011, p. 6). In the meantime, the EiE discourse started to be drawn as support to reinforce and transform social norms, embodied in work form that of Dewey¹⁷ to Althusser¹⁸ to Freire¹⁹ (Winthrop & Matsui, 2013). The work of the education sector also started to be more focused on Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) and Climate change (GEC, 2022). The collaboration phase proposed by Winthrop and Matsui (2013) centered on the relationship between Development, humanitarian, Security, and DRR.

In summary, the evolution of the field of Education and Fragility reflects a progression from proliferation to consolidation and collaboration, with each stage adapting to new challenges and opportunities. The

¹⁶ The notion of a fragile state is essentially associated with three factors: authority, complete socioeconomic entitlements, and governance legitimacy. However, it is unusual for these three elements to be present simultaneously. (Centre for Research on Inequality, Human Security and Ethnicity [CRISE], 2010)

¹⁷ According to Dewey, learning should be experiential and participatory in order to train students to be engaged members of a democratic society and shape societal norms (Dewey, 2007).

¹⁸ Althusser highlighted that education as ideological state apparatuses (ISAs) can perpetuate the conditions for capitalism and class dominance, reinforcing existing social structures and norms, but it also has the potential to be a site of ideological challenge and transformation (Althusser, 1971).

¹⁹ Paulo Freire is well known for his advocacy of critical pedagogy, which is deeply transformative. In his view, education is a liberating practice that enables people to confront and overcome oppression and social injustice. Through discussion, raising awareness, and critical reflection, Freire's method helps students identify and change oppressive components in their own social situations (Freire, 1970).

ongoing trends and developments indicate a potential fourth phase characterized by greater integration and a focus on addressing interconnected global challenges.

This progression can be illustrated through a timeline of EiE milestones and related human rights advancements inspired by the framework drawn by Winthrop and Matsui (2013):

1948: UDHR (Universal Declaration of Human Rights) - Established the foundational principle of the right to education;

1951: Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees - Defined the rights of refugees, including access to education;

1959: CRC (Convention on the Rights of the Child) - Adopted the Declaration of the Rights of the Child, extending the 1924 declaration by the League of Nations;

1960: UNESCO Convention against Discrimination in Education - Aimed to combat discrimination and promote equality in education;

1989: UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) - Articulated the right to free and compulsory education for all children, emphasizing participatory rights for children in matters affecting them;

1990: African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child - Emphasized children's right to freely express their views;

1990: World Conference on Education for All (EFA) - Included a focus on education for refugees and war-affected children;

1996 – Graça Machel Report “The Impact of Armed Conflict on Children”: led to the adoption of the General Assembly’s Resolution 51/77, which created the mandate and recommended that the Secretary-General appoint a Special Representative on the impact of armed conflict on children²⁰;

2000: First Inter-agency Global Consultation on EiE and creation of the Network for EiE (later became INEE) 2003-2004;

2000: EU Charter of Fundamental Rights - Recognized children's right to freely express their views;

²⁰ See more at : <https://childrenandarmedconflict.un.org/1996/08/1996-graca-machel-report-impact-armed-conflict-children/>, last access 08/11/2021

2000: World Education Forum (WEF): Acknowledged the need to focus on educational access and quality globally, including children, youth, and adults in emergency and post-conflict. This came as a result of the adoption of the *World Education Forum Dakar Framework for Action* (UNESCO, 2000);

2002: Creation of the Global Partnership for Education (GEP), a global fund specific to Education;

2003: INEE was considered one of the six EFA flagship initiatives intended to assist countries to achieve the EFA goals;

2004: INEE Minimum Standards in Education: Preparedness, Response, and Recovery was launched to support advocacy and guide EiE initiatives;

2006: Education Cluster Established - Co-led by Save the Children and UNICEF, it emphasized education as a core component of humanitarian response;

2010: The World Innovation Summit for Education (WISE) with the title Global Education: Working Together for Sustainable Achievements;

2010: INEE Minimum Standards are updated and become a key reference in the EiE field;

2010: General Assembly Landmark Resolution adopted, calling on states to ensure right to education for affected populations in all phases of emergency²¹;

2011: The Busan partnership for effective Development Co-operation²²;

2011: the Global Partnership for Education extended its focus to include conflict-affected and fragile states (INEE, 2020);

2012: Education First initiative- Launched by the UN Secretary-General to improve global education efforts;

2014: Journal on Education in Emergencies (JEIE) was funded by INEE and housed at New York University's (NYU) International, focuses on EiE research and discourse;

²¹ See plus at : <https://press.un.org/en/2010/ga10964.doc.htm>

²² A global consensus was reached among governments, civil society organizations, and the private sector, leading to the publication of an agreement aimed at improving development cooperation. It emphasizes principles such as ownership by developing countries, focus on results, inclusive development partnerships, and transparency and accountability. (https://www.effectivecooperation.org/system/files/2020-06/OUTCOME_DOCUMENT_-_FINAL_EN2.pdf)

2014: Malala Yousafzai²³ was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize, which recognizes her advocacy for girls' education;

2015: Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction—The Sendai Framework emphasizes the importance of education in disaster risk reduction and the need for coordinated efforts to ensure education continuity during emergencies;

2015: Oslo Summit on Education for Development - Called for global action on education in emergencies;

2015: Agenda for Sustainable Development and Education 2030 Agenda - Highlighted the need to reach children in conflict or crisis, and the UN Human Rights Council adopted SDG4 on Education²⁴;

2016: World Humanitarian Summit - Saw the launch of Education Cannot Wait (ECW) and other initiatives for education in crises (example: NWoW initiative);

2016: Education in Emergency Forum in Brussels - The EU committed to increasing its funding for education in emergencies;

2016: Grand Bargain and New Ways of Working - A commitment by donors and aid providers to improve the efficiency of humanitarian aid, including funding for education and the importance of coordination;

2019: Abidjan Principles on the human rights obligations of States to provide public education and to regulate private involvement in education (referred to as the 'Abidjan Principles') - Outlined the human rights obligations of States regarding public education and private involvement;

2019 -2021: COVID-19 Pandemic - Highlighted the vulnerability of education systems to crises and the importance of EiE in ensuring continuity of learning;

2020: UNESCO form the Global Education Coalition a multi-sector coalition to protect the right to Education during COVID-19;

2020: UNGA Resolution proclaiming an international day to protect education from attack;

²³ Malala Yousafzai got international recognition at the age of eleven by actively describing her life under Taliban rule and advocating for the rights of children, especially girls, who were being denied an education due to the continuous violence in Pakistan's Swat Valley.

²⁴See plus at : https://uis.unesco.org/sites/default/files/documents/education-2030-incheon-framework-for-action-implementation-of-sdg4-2016-en_2.pdf

2021: The UN Human Rights Council adopts Resolution 47/6 on the right to education and Safe Schools, and the UN Security Council adopts Resolution 2601 condemning attacks against schools and urging them to safeguard the right to Education;

2021: Geneva Global Hub for Education in Emergencies²⁵ was officially presented, reinforcing the ‘join forces’ work to collectively make a difference²⁶.

2022: Transforming Education Summit²⁷ convened by the UN Secretary-General to address global education challenges in emergencies and protracted crises. Partnership for Transformative Actions in Crisis: UNESCO, UNHCR, UNICEF, ECW, and GPE. It is the inaugural global multi-stakeholder initiative aimed at fostering cross-country collaboration and scaling up actions to address urgent educational needs at national, regional, and global levels. 37 Member States signed and endorsed the Global Initiative.

2023: 1st International Education in Emergencies Summit — Collaborate towards sustainable change, organized within the scope of this research with the backing of various organizations and universities. The event was hosted by the Université Cheikh Anta Diop (UCAD), underlining the significance of its location in the Global South and its role as a strategic hub for numerous international bodies.

2024: Updated INEE Minimum Standards will be published, reflecting the ongoing commitment to adapting and responding to the evolving EiE²⁸.

This timeline represents the increasing awareness within the international community of the significance of guaranteeing the right to education, especially in emergencies. It also highlights the collaborative efforts made to address the complexities of emergencies. As the EiE continues to respond to needs, it is important to build on these milestones and ensure the sector innovates, adapts, and becomes increasingly sustainable. For this, the focus needs to be on collaborating, strengthening partnerships, and working very closely with communities.

²⁵ With Education Cannot Wait (ECW), the Global Education Cluster (GEC), the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), the Inter-agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE), UNICEF, the University of Geneva, UNESCO and UNHCR

²⁶ See more at : <https://vimeo.com/504762331/568649c512>, last access 10/02/2021

²⁷ See more at: <https://www.un.org/en/transforming-education-summit>, last access 04/01/2023

²⁸ It retains its core structure while enhancing accessibility and adaptability, focusing on integrating cross-cutting issues like protection, gender, and climate crisis across all domains. Key updates include a strengthened emphasis on engaging indigenous communities, enhancing the participation of local actors in coordination mechanisms, and fostering collaboration across the humanitarian-development-peacebuilding nexus.

1.4 Enhancing EiE through Coordination, Network Synergies, and Non-Human Actors

In EiE, the integration of non-human entities and the enhancement of network synergies have become pivotal in the provision of Education in Emergencies. This chapter explores the ways in which these factors contribute to a strong and adaptable educational infrastructure during times of crisis. This will lead to a discussion on the unique coordination mechanisms within the field of Education in Emergencies (EiE).

Currently, the EiE actors have a series of available mechanisms and tools that they access and interact with and can contribute to. There are some connections and collaborations in the EiE field that can be important to highlight. In addition to the INEE, other professional networks, such as the Child Protection in Crisis Network²⁹ (CPCN) and the Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack³⁰ (GCPEA) strongly support the provision of education in conflict zones with an emphasis on protection. These kinds of partnerships have the power to increase each stakeholder's effectiveness.

These non-human³¹ actors participate in and integrate the reality of Education Cluster teams; they play important roles, influencing the dynamics of coordination efforts and outcomes. These entities, like educational policies, digital platforms, funding data-related platforms, and more, serve as critical components within the Actor-Network Theory (ANT) framework. This section digs into the identification of some neighbor networks and mechanisms of the Education Cluster Coordination and these key non-human actors and explores their influence on the EiE coordination network.

Global Coordination Bodies:

Different collaborative efforts are involved when referring to the coordination of education, including EiE. They serve as collaborative platforms that bring together multiple stakeholders to address specific educational needs and challenges. Some of these platforms are more related and work also directly in EiE, like Education Cluster Coordination, such as UNHCR Education Coordination, and Education Working Groups (EWG), with the goal of improving educational outcomes and addressing the difficulties in delivering education in emergency contexts.

²⁹ CPC network webpage, www.cpcnetwork.org

³⁰ See more at: www.protectingeducation.org, last access 12/06/2023

³¹ Non-human actors, as conceptualized within Actor-Network Theory (ANT) developed by Bruno Latour and others, refer to entities that participate in networks and influence outcomes alongside human actors. These can include technology, tools, documents, policies, and even environmental factors.

Education Cluster Coordination: For humanitarian responses that address the needs of Internally displaced persons (IDPs), OCHA leads through the IASC humanitarian Cluster Approach, and the Education Cluster coordinates at the country level.

UNHCR Education coordination: for humanitarian responses that address the needs of refugees. The Refugee Coordination Model (RCM), updated in 2019, clarifies the UNHCR's approach to coordination³².

Education Working Group (EWG): for non-humanitarian situations where an emergency is not declared and OCHA is not leading. These groups may function within the broader framework of the Cluster Approach or as independent entities focusing on sectoral coordination to enhance the quality and reach of education initiatives.

These groups focus on sectoral coordination to enhance the quality and reach of educational initiatives. They can play a crucial role in connecting short-term emergency responses with long-term educational sector plans, ensuring a seamless transition from crisis response to sustainable development.

Funding Mechanisms linked to ECC:

INEE had and has a significant role in the financing landscape for EiE. Its function involves a dual strategy designed to improve the flow of capital to educational projects in times of crisis. First off, when it comes to lobbying and raising awareness efforts aimed at policymakers and donors, INEE has led the way. Second, by creating and distributing a variety of guiding notes and educational resources with a particular focus on financing for EiE, INEE has made a substantial contribution to the sector. The purpose of these resources is to empower professionals with the skills and information they need to negotiate the complicated world of financing opportunities successfully.

The orchestration of funding mechanisms is a critical component of humanitarian response. The function of humanitarian coordinators at the national level is crucial within the framework of the United Nations. The FLASH Appeals and Consolidated Appeal Process are two of the main options for obtaining emergency funding - Consolidated Appeal Process (CAP). These mechanisms are designed to mobilize resources immediately following sudden-onset emergencies or unexpected developments in ongoing crises. Additionally, the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) serves as a global emergency fund to enable more timely and reliable humanitarian assistance. Similarly, the Common Humanitarian Fund

³² See: https://emergency.unhcr.org/coordination-and-communication/refugee-coordination-model/refugee-coordination-model-rcm?lang=en_US, last access in 13/08/2023

(CHF) offers a pooled funding mechanism at the country level to support the most critical and underfunded humanitarian activities.

In the specific context of EiE, the Education Cannot Wait (ECW) fund emerges as a vital player. ECW introduces two key funding streams: the First Emergency Response (FER), designed for rapid deployment of funds in acute crises, and the Multi-Year Resilience Programme (MYRP), which supports longer-term educational responses in protracted crises.

Parallel to these efforts, the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) supports education in developing countries, including those victims of conflict and crises. GPE's commitment to funding and support goes beyond the immediate aftermath of emergencies.

The international community's dedication to a well-coordinated and financially supported humanitarian response is demonstrated by these mechanisms and partnerships. Parallel to this, the NGOs and other Education Cluster partners have their private funds from donations and grants that they can allocate towards EiE, supplementing the coordinated efforts of global funding mechanisms. These private funds can fill gaps that global mechanisms might not cover. Even if not exhaustive, the Financial Tracking Service (FTS) by OCHA (Website: <https://fts.unocha.org/>) works as a global, real-time database that tracks reported international humanitarian aid, including funding for specific countries and crises.

Main Policy Frameworks, Agreements, and Guidelines and linkages to the ECC:

A number of frameworks and rules act as the foundation for EiE. The INEE Minimum Standards is a crucial component that provides a set of agreed-upon standards for EiE, chronic crises, and early reconstruction contexts.

Simultaneously, the Sphere Standards offers guidance on minimum standards in humanitarian response across several sectors. They are widely recognized and provide benchmarks for quality and accountability in humanitarian response.

The Inter-Agency Standing Committee's Reference Module for Cluster Coordination at the Country Level (2015) serves as a comprehensive guide for implementing the cluster system, system as a reference for humanitarian practitioners.

The International Council of Voluntary Agencies (ICVA)'s Principles of Partnership: A Statement of Commitment webpage³³ is a hub of resources that elucidates the foundational principles guiding collaborations in the humanitarian sector. This includes translations of the Principles of Partnership main document.

With its ambitious aims, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were adopted at the United Nations Assembly in 2015, articulating a global vision to stimulate activity over fifteen years for 'humanity and the planet' (McCowan & Unterhalter, 2022). Particularly, SDG4 aims to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all. The 2030 Agenda emphasizes the importance of ensuring that no one is left behind, including those affected by emergencies. Nevertheless, "education is not seen as a priority for humanitarian aid" (INEE, 2019) The targets for SDG4 relate to all phases of education, and many other SDGs – such ending poverty (SDG1), improving health and well-being (SDG3), assuring gender equality and women's empowerment (SDG5) and providing decent work (SDG8) – have targets which refer to education. (McCowan & Unterhalter, 2022) In the same year of the publication of the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* and *The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)*, the *framework for action, Incheon Declaration for Education 2030* (2015) was adopted at the *World Education Forum* in Incheon, South Korea and outlines the global commitment to achieving inclusive and equitable quality education and promoting lifelong learning opportunities by 2030.

The *Safe Schools Declaration* and *Guidelines for Protecting Schools and Universities from Military Use during Armed Conflict* is a particular guide to countries on how to protect educational facilities, students and education actors during armed conflict.

These policies act as blueprints guiding the objectives, strategies, and standards of EiE initiatives. They represent the stakeholders on the priorities being effective in crisis contexts. For instance, policies mandating inclusive education ensure that EiE initiatives strive to reach marginalized and displaced populations. By setting frameworks for action, these policies shape the operational terrain for human actors, influencing decisions on resource allocation, program design, and partnerships. They are also advocacy frameworks and tools that allow negotiation with governments, donors, or communities.

³³ Access at: <https://www.icvanetwork.org/principles-partnership-statement-commitment>

Specific Guidelines and Tools for Education Clusters:

The Education Cluster Handbook offers operational guidance and resources for country-level Education Clusters to enhance coordination and response planning during emergencies. It covers integrating child protection with education responses to ensure a comprehensive approach to protecting children's rights and well-being in crises.

The Global Education Cluster Strategy outlines strategic objectives aimed at improving coordination, capacity, and accountability within the education cluster framework. The Education Cluster Core Competencies Framework specifies the essential skills and knowledge needed for effective coordination roles.

The EiE Coordination Handbook provides practical advice for coordinators and partners on navigating coordination processes and tools. Subsequent strategies focus on advancing coordination mechanisms, enhancing quality and accountability, and fostering stronger partnerships.

The Education Cluster Gender Toolkit offers guidance on incorporating gender equality into cluster responses. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the education cluster adapted to include virtual meetings, remote capacity building, and swift responses to new challenges.

The latest strategic note sets forth priorities and strategies for the coming years, aiming further to improve the effectiveness of education cluster coordination and responses.

Research and Advocacy:

Research and advocacy play foundational roles in the field of EiE, driving the evolution of policies, practices, and funding priorities. The INEE has been at the forefront of advocating for the recognition of education as a fundamental component of emergency response. Through its firm efforts, INEE has contributed significantly to the creation of the Education Cluster and brought attention to how important it is to maintain educational continuity in times of crisis. Also, INEE's dedication to incorporating education into the larger humanitarian standards community is demonstrated by its partnership with the Sphere Project under the Companionship Agreement³⁴.

³⁴ It formally recognizes the INEE Minimum Standards as Companion Standards to The Sphere Project, Humanitarian Charter, and Minimum Standards in Humanitarian Response. These were the first set of standards to become a companion to the Sphere Handbook, signed in 2008. As part of the Agreement, the INEE Secretariat and the Sphere Project office mainstreamed education in the Sphere Handbook 2011 edition as well as inter-sectoral linkages in the updated INEE Minimum Standards Handbook.

The Journal on Education in Emergencies (JEIE) is a publication dedicated exclusively to EiE. It serves as an important platform for disseminating research findings and theoretical and methodological insights.

Another initiative of INEE is the E-cubed (Evidence for EiE) financing project, which aims to promote high-quality research that strengthens the evidence base for EiE. This effort is part of the Inter-agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE) and seeks to address the crucial need for reliable, empirical data to inform EiE policy and practice.

The Education Cluster promotes a collaborative approach to initiate and support education advocacy initiatives by mainstreaming EiE among its key stakeholders, including foundational partners like UNICEF and Save the Children, cluster partners, other humanitarian clusters, and national and local authorities. In addition, the Education Cluster also advocates for EiE through HCT and appeals processes.

Collaborative Research Initiatives: Research on crises' impact on education and the effectiveness of EiE interventions is crucial for improving practice and policy.

Advocacy Campaigns: Global and local advocacy efforts to raise awareness about the importance of EiE and to secure the political and financial support necessary for its provision. The Education Cannot Wait and the Geneva Global Hub³⁵ for EiE have an important role in advocating and creating awareness for the needs and realities of the EiE.

Digital Platforms of support and exchange between EiE actors and Education Cluster Coordination specifically

The growth of digital technology possibilities has brought novel platforms for emergency education work. And with AI's rise, the landscape is changing even faster. Digital platforms allow different actors to coordinate, access educational information and resources, and engage in distant learning or exchange moments. Platforms like online learning management systems and mobile applications turn into a helping hand for educational coordination and technical development from the Education Cluster actors in war zones and during pandemics. Feedback and monitoring mechanisms, data collection tools and many other possibilities are as close as one touch in the smartphone. They represent non-human

³⁵ Geneva Global Hub for Education in Emergencies describes itself as an alliance of like-minded states and organizations to step up visibility, political and operational commitment, and funding for EiE. The GEC is a foundational member of the Hub (<https://eiehub.org/>).

players that augment human actors' capacities, allowing them to transcend temporal and spatial limitations. They also bring limitations and mostly moral reflections. I'll share some of the tools used by the Education Cluster Coordination teams:

CoP (Communities of Practice) INEE Slack³⁶

The INEE Slack channels serve as Communities of Practice (CoP) where EiE professionals (including teachers) can engage in real-time discussions, share resources, and collaborate on challenges and best practices in the field. These Slack channels offer a dynamic platform for thematic discussions, networking, and immediate exchange of information among members worldwide. The platform has several channels for different languages to improve accessibility and encourage interaction among speakers of the same language. In addition, as members recognize the need for expanded regional conversations and cooperation, channels tailored to individual countries are created.

INEE Working groups³⁷

INEE Working Groups (WG) are formalized network spaces that allow members to work collectively on specific focus areas, such as early childhood development (ECD), accelerated Education, Inclusive Education, Distance Education, Child Protection (CP), Teachers, Gender, data and evidence and Psychosocial Support and Social and Emotional Learning (PSS-SEL). WGs are composed of individual and institutional INEE members who advocate for their focus area and who collaboratively develop knowledge and resources to help INEE members provide inclusive, quality, and safe education for all affected by crises.

WhatsApp Groups by Countries (created by INEE and/or Education Cluster teams)

WhatsApp groups for specific countries or regions provide a quick and accessible means for EiE stakeholders to communicate, share updates, and coordinate activities on the ground. They enable rapid sharing of information, coordination of responses, and peer support among EiE actors working within the same geographical area.

³⁶ <https://inee.org/community-of-practice>

³⁷ <https://inee.org/network-spaces>

Global Skype Education Cluster Coordinators Team

Skype continues to be an essential tool for Education Cluster Coordinators, providing a versatile platform primarily used for sharing news and opportunities within the community. Although Skype offers a range of functionalities, its primary use in this context revolves around facilitating the exchange of updates and opportunities that are critical for the field. Additionally, members frequently utilize Skype to share resources or request materials from peers.

INEE Helpdesk³⁸

The INEE Helpdesk is a remote support service that provides technical assistance and resources to EiE practitioners. It offers guidance on EiE tools, methodologies, and standards, helping practitioners manage the complex landscape of EiE. The helpdesk responds to inquiries with tailored advice, resources, and referrals, supporting quality education interventions and policy development in emergencies.

Education Cluster Helpdesk³⁹

The Education Cluster Helpdesk, operational since 2018, provides specialized support to Education Cluster partners and coordinators. It assists with operational challenges, offers advice on coordination mechanisms, and provides resources for planning and implementing EiE responses. This service strengthens the capacity of Education Clusters at the country level, ensuring effective coordination and support for education responses in emergencies. Within the Education Cluster Coordination teams' network, these non-human actors dynamically interact with human actors rather than functioning in isolation.

GEC Data repository⁴⁰

The Data repository consolidates essential data points from national-level responses, encompassing metrics such as People in Need, People Targeted, People Reached, and funding levels. The Data Repository is a crucial resource for the sector, providing valuable information for decision-making, such as planning, response monitoring, advocacy, and resource mobilization.

³⁸ <https://inee.org/help-desk>

³⁹ <https://www.educationcluster.net/operational-support/helpdesk-and-remote-support>

⁴⁰ <https://www.educationcluster.net/data-repository>

Capacity Development

The Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE) and the Education Cluster both enhance the capacity-building of the Education Cluster actors (including members from all dimensions).

Since its inception, INEE has created and updated the MS EiE. These standards served as the backbone for numerous training programs delivered by the INEE Secretariat and its members, targeting a wide audience that includes non-governmental organizations (NGOs), United Nations (UN) agencies, government bodies, and even university students. As time went on, INEE created 14 training programs that were crafted to address the wide range of demands and situations that arise everywhere in the world.

In addition to these initiatives, the Education Cluster has concentrated on creating training curricula specifically for senior personnel in Ministries of Education (MoE) and frontline responders. The Education Cluster synchronizes its training materials with those of INEE to ensure coherent relevance and non-duplication. To address the unique demands that develop in diverse contexts, their training offerings additionally include extra country-level training and specialized cluster coordination programs.

In the ever-changing field of humanitarian education, online platforms have become indispensable resources for information exchange and capacity building. AGORA - UNICEF, Building Back Better, and the Humanitarian Leadership Academy are exemplary instances of how digital platforms may assist educational programs throughout disaster and recovery stages. Each of these tools plays a vital role in facilitating communication, coordination, and knowledge sharing within the EiE and education cluster systems. By leveraging these platforms, EiE stakeholders can enhance their response to educational needs in crisis and conflict-affected contexts. The Humanitarian Leadership Academy offers courses ranging from foundational to advanced levels with the goal of enhancing the operational knowledge and leadership abilities of humanitarian workers. Building Back Better promotes techniques that guarantee educational institutions are more resilient and sustainable after a disaster. UNICEF developed AGORA, an extensive learning environment that offers courses on a wide range of subjects pertaining to children's rights and welfare, including EiE, and specifically Education Cluster Coordination training.

The successful incorporation of technology, data systems, and coordinating efforts establishes a dynamic setting for EiE, in which both human and non-human entities assume key functions. The focus now shifts to the notion of coordination within the field of Education in Emergencies, emphasizing the

difficulties and achievements in establishing a unified approach across various and frequently complex emergencies.

1.5 Coordination in the Education in Emergencies

Coordination in the field of Education in Emergencies (EiE) refers to a variety of systems that are implemented to ensure a cohesive and coordinated response. This section covers the organization of coordinating efforts, the difficulties faced, and strategies used to maintain consistency and efficiency in different environments.

"If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together." This African proverb echoes profoundly within the education sector during emergencies, where the urge to act swiftly often conflicts with the need for sustainable, collaborative progress. At the same time, emergencies are sometimes a protracted reality, and in this sense, different lenses are needed to analyze each crisis.

As Linda Polman highlighted in her 2011 TED Talk, *What's Wrong with Humanitarian Aid? A Journalist's Journey*, humanitarian aid organizations don't often work together. She saw each organization working for itself, with its agendas and funding sources. And how much of the financial support ended up in the hands of corrupt and political elites. She even compares humanitarian aid to a competitive industry in which market laws work. Beneficiaries also behave like industries and markets, each trying to get as much as possible for each and as little as possible for competitors.

Often, humanitarian coordination is linked to avoid duplications and inefficiencies, but its scope is larger, and the challenges are complex. Coordination work is often referred to as remaining restricted to data gathering and reporting (e.g., ineffectiveness, Poor Coordination, and Corruption in Humanitarian Aid: The Syrian Refugee Crisis in Lebanon), not reaching its full potential. But what is coordination, and what can be 'reaching the full potential'?

The definitions of coordination vary in the scope of what is included and the components considered more important, from empowering and collaboration to control and evaluation (BouChabke & Haddad, 2021). In the humanitarian sector, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) describes coordination as 'bringing together humanitarian actors to ensure a coherent and principled response to emergencies and assist people when they most need relief and protection; it seeks to improve the effectiveness of humanitarian response by ensuring greater predictability, accountability and partnership' (OCHA, 2018) Its mandate is expanded to include the coordination of humanitarian

response, policy development, and humanitarian advocacy. OCHA⁴¹ carries out its coordination function primarily through the IASC, which the ERC chairs. Participants include all humanitarian partners, and it functions to guarantee inter-agency decision-making in the responses to complex emergencies. Despite its charge scope of operation, OCHA does not enjoy command and control authority over the many UN entities often engaged in humanitarian relief, let alone over the other organizations involved in these emergencies (Reindorp & Wiles, 2001), cited by Stephenson & Schnitzer, 2006). When analyzing the operational and strategic environment, Minear (2002, p. 20) highlights how multi-layered coordination involves managing relationships at headquarters and at the regional, national, and field levels. In addition, Minear says that coordination means reacting to situations with unexpected events that are life or death. According to him, the chaotic, dynamic, and ever-changing nature of crises that lead to humanitarian catastrophes shapes coordination as an unpredictable process.

The Education in Emergencies Coordination Harnessing Humanitarian and Development Architecture for Education 2030 (Nolan & al., 2020) refers to EiE Coordination as a strategic and systematic effort to bring together humanitarian actors, organizations, and entities involved in crisis response, with the primary goal of ensuring a cohesive and principled educational response for children and youth in crisis contexts. This definition also highlights the idea that this concept “transcends siloed approaches and emphasizes joint coordination to provide safe and quality education options, regardless of the population group or type of emergency.” (Nolan & al., 2020)

ECW defines the GEC as a global public good that provides critical field support, evidence and guidance, and advocacy and communication to education stakeholders around the world. ECW's grant has been a game changer for the delivery of quality, coordinated, and accountable responses to meet the deepening and complex needs of children and youth in EiE-CP.

Given the growing number and variety of actors involved in EiE, effective coordination is crucial to ensure coherent and complementary responses.(Nolan & al., 2020) Nevertheless, coordination is not bound by authoritative and controlling traits in the humanitarian sector. The main operational challenge is not to convince UN members or INGOs or NGOs to establish more centralized strategic-level coordination and control or to address the challenges of coordination through consensus. Instead, the challenge lies in creating humanitarian social networks that can effectively act without relying on central control or direction. For this, communication and trust are essential. (Stephenson, 2006)

⁴¹ See more at: <https://www.unocha.org/ocha>, last access 04/02/2024

The following figure illustrates the four types of coordination in the sector of education classified in the above-referred publication as well as in the ODI Strengthening Coordinated Education Planning and Response in Crises Synthesis Report that we will refer to. This entails different names of coordination groups active in crisis contexts that “might include Education Cluster, EiE Working Group, Refugee Education Working Group, Local Education Groups (LEGs), Education Sector Working Group, Development Partners Group and others.”(Nicolai & al., 2020)

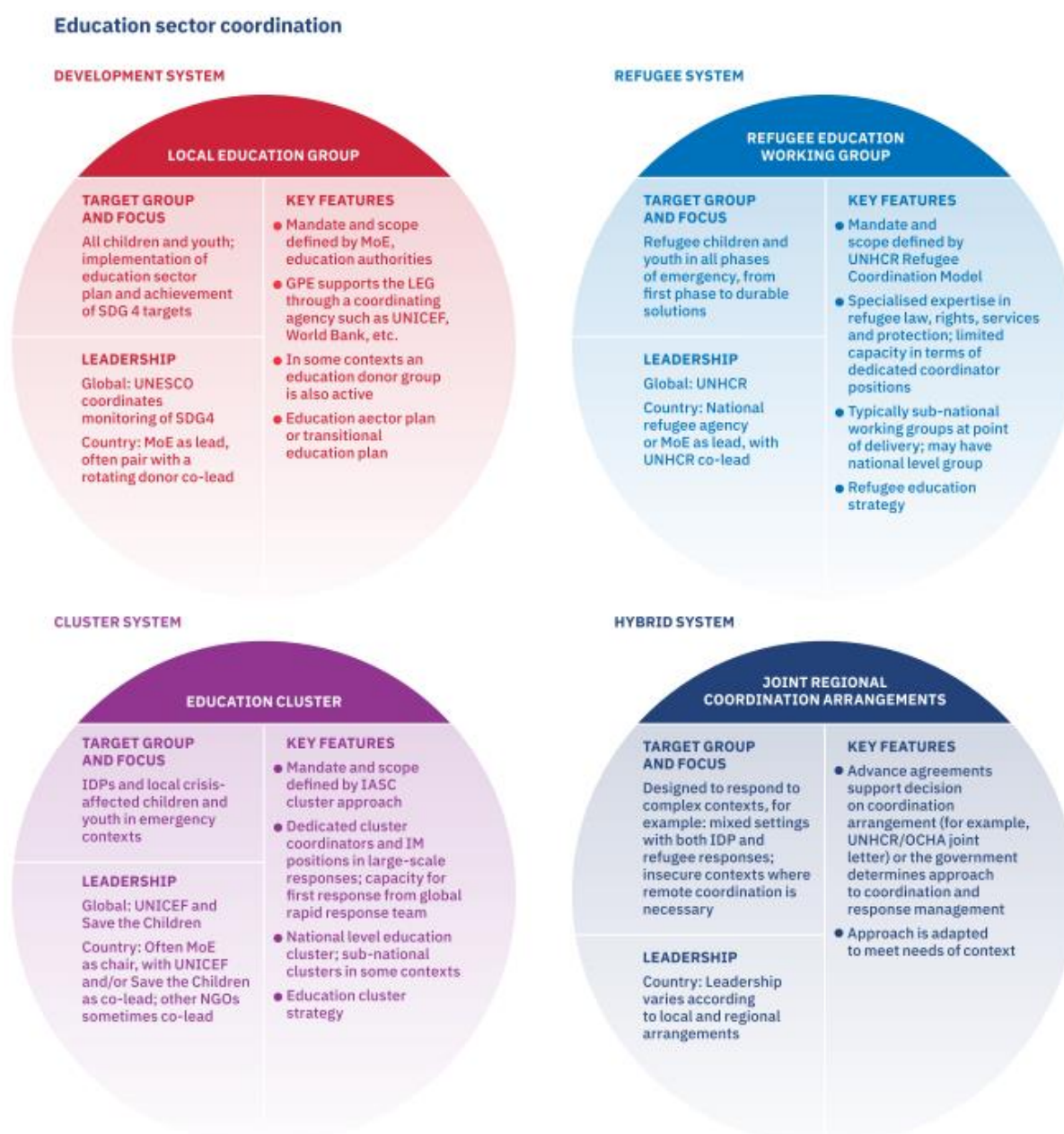


Figure 3 Education Sector Coordination Systems (source: Nolan & al., 2020)

Multiple actors with mandate, mission, structure, technical and geographic expertise are involved in supporting education in crisis contexts. Various formal coordination mechanisms are used to organize responses and support collaboration; however, issues such as which group works where and how they overlap often need to be clarified. Each of the coordination mechanisms has different and sometimes overlapped stakeholders at each of the different dimensions (Global, sometimes regional, sometimes country, and sometimes local dimensions). The table above presents a summary of the type of coordination mechanisms in the Education sector, the target, the leads, and the key features of each one.

From these types, the present study focusses on the Education Cluster Coordination that is part of the humanitarian cluster with the main target being the IDPs, and local crisis affected populations in emergency contexts, including sometimes the host population.

With the creation of a dedicated helpdesk and a strengthened Rapid Response Team, the GEC can now provide timelier and context-specific support to over 30 Education Clusters and Working Groups. A strengthened GEC also means smoother delivery of robust, evidence-based responses and Education Cluster strategies that serve as a foundation for ECW's FERs and MYRPs. (ECW, 2022a) The ECW has also been able to facilitate joint programming to strengthen the humanitarian-development nexus. ECWs have ongoing and explicit commitments to engage with Transitional Education Plans (TEPs) and Education Sector Plans and Analysis, as well as with broader national development plans. (Nicolai & al., 2020)

It is with the intent to have this mechanism with a more effective response that the humanitarian sector created the Cluster Coordination approach. In 1992, the United Nations' review of Humanitarianism during the Persian Gulf crisis marked a significant increase in reference to coordination importance in many reviews and thematic studies (Sommers, 2000). In 2005, a study commissioned by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Emergency Relief Coordinator identified gaps in humanitarian response, recommending initiatives such as adopting a clustered approach. These orientations led to a major transformation in humanitarian response and the establishment of the 'Cluster Approach' framework (Barresi, 2018).

Great debates have arisen after the response to the major catastrophe in Haiti in 2010, and, especially in the post-MDG (Millennium Development Goals) era in 2015, in terms of EiE. With the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), a transition occurred to a more global and holistic vision in terms of

education response: according to UNESCO's strategy, there is a focus on a humanistic vision based on human rights and dignity; social justice; inclusion; protection; ethnic, linguistic, and cultural diversity; and shared responsibilities and assessments. Even if, at this point, new debates and important points are again bringing the need to rethink the SDGs.

DuBois (2018) and other authors are asking to re-think the broadest vision of humanitarianism, naming it utopian, paternalistic, messianic, or grandiose, asking for a more realistic response for urgent needs and not systemic needs.

With the increase in the humanitarian crisis and with the professionalization of the sector, there is also a growing need for a collective capacity to respond efficiently to emergencies. This was the driving force behind the humanitarian reform process promoted by the UN Secretary-General in 2005. An Independent Review of Humanitarian Response was commissioned by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) and the United Nations Emergency Relief Coordinator to assess the humanitarian response capacities of the UN, NGOs, the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, and other key humanitarian actors, with the aim of identifying gaps and making recommendations to address them (Anderson & Hodgkin, 2010).

In addition to the notion of coordination defined within the EiE field itself, the sociologic literature works with theoretical approaches that can help us understand and problematize the concept from other perspectives. The definitions of Coordination vary widely in terms of scope and the components considered most important. Different authors' perspectives are mobilized below, including that of Thévenot (1993), who views coordination of actions as the configuration of intertwined networks in a complex system; Weick's (1976) notion of loose coupling in organizations; Bourdieu's (1984) concept of *habitus* as deeply ingrained habits; Friedberg and Crozier's (1964) contributions to the study of complex and informal relationships; Hollis's (2010) analysis of institutions as sets of norms and behaviors that guide and constrain individual actions; Foucault's (1978) critical viewpoint on biopolitics and power dynamics; and in a more general way, the complexity theory by Morin (2005), Snowden (2011), Urry (2005) and others.

Thévenot (1993) proposes an approach centered on the problem of 'coordination of action,' complementing Derouet's (1992) idea that this coordination depends on an intertwining of networks. This approach aims to analyze social action by considering not only intentionality, interest, and strategic aspects but also unpredictability, uncertainty, and subjectivity. Conviviality and altruism, along with the

regimes of 'familiarity' (Thévenot, 1994) and 'love' (Boltanski, 1993), are also integral to human interaction and are often overlooked by strategic approaches. As De Singly (1990, pg. 149) notes that, in reality, humanitarian and utilitarian reasons are not as clearly divided, even though the dual nature of humanity is rarely acknowledged in social sciences due to their division of labor. Ferreira (2005) points out that a highly rational discourse is sometimes merely an exercise in *a posteriori* rationalization, attempting to explain chance, justify routine, and improvise. Human action is, therefore, complex and entangled with various logics of action. As Derouet (1992) suggests, 'coordination of action' relies on the entanglement of networks—both hierarchical and horizontal—spanning local, national, and international levels. Different logic intersects here, including utilitarian action and humanitarian action. Utilitarian action (a more strategic perspective), motivated by self-interest and a focus on effectiveness, aims to maximize individual or collective advantages. On the other hand, humanitarian action is driven by altruism and the intention to help others, typically giving more importance to ethical factors rather than practical benefits.

The concept of *hysteresis* developed by Bourdieu (2000, referred to in the 1.1.1 section), and the notion of *habitus* (1984) are closely interconnected. In a crisis context, people and groups with internalized attitudes, preferences, and dispositions people develop due to socialization – *habitus* – react to sudden transformations in their social environment – possible *hysteresis*. Bourdieu's concept of '*habitus*'⁴² provides a framework for understanding how power relations are internalized and perpetuated within society, being the result of repeated patterns of social experience that are unique to one's social (class) position and manifest as dispositions of tastes, preferences, and perceptions. This internalized system of *habitus* influences behavior and thought patterns, creating a shared sense of conduct among people from similar social backgrounds. (Bourdieu, 1990) Consequently, even without consciousness, individuals can act in ways that seem well-considered and appropriate because their actions are guided by the internalized norms and expectations of their *habitus*. This character helps to understand why the Education Cluster is a unique mechanism in each context. Even if some harmonization has been made and many exchanges between country cluster teams are made, each context needs to be always seen as one – considering the *habitus* of each group – and each crisis needs different strategies and priorities.

⁴² The theory of dispositions, or *habitus*, suggests that individuals can make reasonable predictions or anticipations about their actions and outcomes without engaging in deliberate, rational calculations.

Hysteresis refers to the delay or difference that arises when individuals' or groups' behavior or attitudes do not adapt quickly enough to changes in the social environment (Bourdieu, 2000). This idea is especially applicable during times of significant social disruption or change when the existing attitudes and behaviors no longer align with the new realities of the social environment. During times of significant transformations in the social sphere, such as financial crises, instability in politics, or cultural changes, the attitudes and behaviors that were formerly considered normal and suitable may no longer be effective. The misalignment generates a feeling of bewilderment and delay as individuals and groups persist in their actions guided by older mindsets that are no longer suitable for the current situation. For instance, in the ongoing Anglophone crisis in Cameroon, the ingrained social and cultural behaviors of the English-speaking community, which their own legal and educational systems have influenced, are currently in conflict with the efforts of the central government to enforce French-speaking cultural standards. This dislocation is a result of hysteresis, which occurs when the Anglophone population feels a gap between their deeply ingrained tendencies and the evolving social environment. This disconnect leads to tensions and disputes.

Friedberg and Crozier (1964) add informal and complex dynamic interaction to the coordination definition. They characterize coordination as a complex management of interdependence among players within organizations. In their work *Actors and Systems: The Politics of Collective Action* (1980), Friedberg and Crozier argue that coordination extends beyond formal structures and rules, delving into strategic behavior, uncertainty, and informal networks. It is a dynamic process driven by the strategic actions of individuals and groups attempting to maximize their interests within the web of organizational interactions. People in an organization adopt strategies rather than behaving randomly or for personal gain. To attain their goals, they break both formal and hidden rules. This approach acknowledges the inherent complexity of organizational contexts, highlighting the importance of political dynamics and power conflicts in the coordination process.

For Weick (1976), elements in organizations are often tied together frequently and loosely, in contrast to the prevailing image that they are coupled through dense and tight linkages. Using educational organizations as a case in point, he argues that “the concept of loose coupling incorporates a surprising number of disparate observations about organizations, suggests novel functions, creates stubborn problems for methodologists, and generates intriguing questions for scholars” (Weick, 1976, p. 1). Although the ideas of lack of coordination, absence of regulations, highly connected networks, etc. appear negative, they actually allow us to see other facets of the organizations, such as the way they

persist through rapid environmental fluctuations, local adaptation capacity, and sensitivity to the environment, more self-determination by actors and the development of creative solutions, among others.

The Education Cluster is composed of organizations, and even if it's defined as neutral, it's relevant to highlight institutions' enduring collections of rules and practices derived from collective identities (Hollis, 2010). Instead of merely explaining the social world as a system of laws, for Hollis (2010), the focus is on understanding social structures as the 'fabric of meanings' that guide and constrain individual actions. Ellen (2016) highlights that it is linked to concepts about values, representation, agreed symbols, and normative expectations.

Despite established frameworks and increased awareness of the need for coordination, the "demand for improved coordination marks all contemporary discussions of humanitarian aid" (Heath & Benton, 2021, p. 241) and the education sector still faces significant challenges in emergency contexts linked to coordination action.

1.6 Cluster Approach in Humanitarian Aid: An Overview

The cluster approach is a fundamental component of coordinated humanitarian response, providing a structured yet flexible framework for managing complex emergencies. This overview provides the necessary background for studying the specific processes and actions associated with education cluster coordination, which is an essential part of the broader cluster approach.

An evaluation of the worldwide humanitarian system was commissioned in 2004 by Jan Egeland, the UN Emergency Response Coordinator (Bassiouni & al., 2005), this made way to a reform initiated by the Emergency Relief Coordinators together with IASC⁴³, in 2005, which included the Cluster Approach. The evaluation found significant gaps in a number of humanitarian response domains and coordination issues, particularly between the UN, the Red Cross Movement, and non-governmental organizations. In an effort to solve these issues, the cluster concept was introduced as part of the reform process. The Cluster Approach is a system under which UN agencies are designated as 'lead agencies' for all major areas of humanitarian response. The lead agencies have the responsibility of strengthening the overall preparedness and technical capacity of the system, while also guaranteeing consistent leadership, accountability, and collaboration. Lead agencies organize coordination meetings at both global and

⁴³ Established in June 1991, the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC), by United Nations General Assembly resolution 46/182, is responsible for worldwide coordination and humanitarian aid (<https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/the-inter-agency-standing-committee>).

country levels and are expected to serve as the final source of assistance when there are deficiencies in the response. (Steets & al., 2010)

The Cluster Approach refers to a humanitarian coordination system aimed at improving the effectiveness, predictability, and accountability of responses. The core functions that are implemented at the local, national, and international levels include building national capacity for preparedness and contingency planning, supporting robust advocacy, monitoring and evaluating performance, providing information to the humanitarian coordinator (HC) and/or humanitarian country team (HCT) regarding strategic decision-making, and implementing the minimum requirements to support service delivery. All of these activities should involve accountability to affected populations. Knox-Clarke (2013) argues that these various inter-agency structures are loosely described, generally, as having a coordination role. However, on closer examination, they are often expected to provide a vision and objectives, build consensus, and find ways to realize the vision collectively. The author notes also, in these cases, they are not merely fora for the exchange of information to facilitate parallel actions – they are expected to lead.

Clusters participate in an inter-cluster coordination group coordinated by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) in every humanitarian response. The group comprises leaders from OCHA and various operational United Nations agencies, as well as delegates from local, national, and international non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and the Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement. These stakeholders meet as part of the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) to plan humanitarian response strategies. The HCT, led by a Humanitarian Coordinator, acts as a forum for deliberating on response options. Cluster lead agencies have a crucial role in representing cluster-specific issues and difficulties within the HCT. These teams can include members from national governments and funders, expanding the range of topics discussed and allocation of resources. HCT can elevate issues brought up by national clusters to the global level for discussion at the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC). The committee, led by the Emergency Relief Coordinator, includes leaders from various United Nations agencies, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), and representatives from global NGO consortiums. In addition to cluster coordination, there are efforts focused on coordinating cross-sector humanitarian operations and services.

There are 12 minimum commitments that all partners (including CLAs), and that even not prescriptive and made for being adapted to the contexts are meant to be met, including i) commitment to

humanitarian principles⁴⁴; ii) to mainstream protection, iii) actively promote Accountability to Affected Population (AAP); iv) understanding of duties and responsibilities according to the IASC ToRs and guidance books; v) Active participation in the Clusters initiatives, activities, and decisions; vi) Contribute to the Cluster's response Plan and activities (including inter-cluster coordination); vii) mainstream cross-cutting issues; viii) Commitment by a relevant senior staff member to work consistently with the cluster to fulfill its mission; ix) work cooperatively with other cluster partners; x) Willingness to take on leadership responsibilities according to needs; xi) undertake advocacy and promote relevant messages to the other partners, other stakeholders, and affected and host communities; xii) Ensure language interpretation. (IASC 2015) The Cluster Approach cannot be operated under a strict command-and-control structure. Instead, decisions are made through consultation and participation. As a result, leadership is crucial in presenting ideas and plans, engaging partners in collaborative exchanges, and proposing meaningful shared or common directions. (HERE-Geneva, 2022)

A brief overview of recent debates on Cluster Approach

The Cluster Approach is a coordination system in which a lead organization, designated for priority areas of response, is responsible for organizing coordination at global and country levels, strengthening global preparedness, developing global guidance, and acting as a provider of last resort. (Steets & al., 2010) When existing coordination structures are either overwhelmed or limited to meet the identified humanitarian needs, the IASC clusters are formally activated⁴⁵. The Cluster Approach is not the exclusive means of coordination and can function in conjunction with other national or international frameworks for coordination that should be adapted to the unique needs of each operational environment.

In order to guarantee that educational demands are being met in times of crisis, the Education Cluster Approach has been shown to be an important framework for organizing education responses in crisis. The strategy has generated several discussions and evaluations since its launch in 2005 with the goal of enhancing its efficacy and resolving its flaws. The ability of the cluster to promote accountability, encourage cooperation amongst various stakeholders, and raise the overall standard and scope of educational interventions has been the main topic of discussion. Recent discussions have also emphasized the necessity of ongoing method adaptation to changing humanitarian circumstances, with a focus on strong leadership, successful collaborations, and long-term capacity building. Evaluations of

⁴⁴ Principles of Partnership - include the values of equality, transparency, a results-oriented approach, responsibility, and complementarity. See more at: www.globalhumanitarianplatform.org, last access 21/08/2021

⁴⁵ See the activation timeline at: <https://emergency.unhcr.org/coordination-and-communication/cluster-system/iasc-scale-activation#:~:text=Activation%20is%20for%20a%20time,humanitarian%20needs%20on%20the%20ground.>

the Education Cluster Approach have demonstrated both its strengths and areas for improvement, particularly in promoting resilient education systems during crises.

Two assessments were planned for the process and the results at the national level when the cluster concept was first introduced in 2005. The 2007 process evaluation described the early years of the Cluster Approach as a 'mixed and often difficult experience,' noting positive progress and tangible added value despite challenges in achieving accountability. Improvements were observed in partnership quality, surge capacity, leadership predictability, capacity building, and addressing response gaps. (Stoddard & al., 2007) Using a framework created by the authors of these two assessments, the country-level outcome evaluation conducted in 2010 identified improvements to the Cluster Approach, particularly in the areas of humanitarian needs coverage, needs assessment/gap analysis and targeting, humanitarian actor learning, leadership clarity, the partnership between the UN and other international agencies, humanitarian identity, and the caliber of funding appeal proposals. (Steets & al., 2010)

Cluster Approach evaluations have continued since 2010, with National Humanitarian Education Coordination Platforms (NHECP) assessed against the 6+1 Cluster core functions via Cluster Coordination Performance Monitoring (CCPM) (The Global Cluster Coordinator Group, 2014). However, feedback during the next years was that it was becoming a heavy process-driven mechanism and, in some situations, perceived to potentially undermine rather than facilitate delivery. In response to these concerns, the IASC Principals reevaluated the existing humanitarian response strategy. After the evaluation of the current barriers concerning coordination and leadership, the IASC Principals agreed on a set of actions intended to improve the current humanitarian response approach, leading to the creation of the Transformative Agenda in 2011. This agenda focuses on three key areas: leadership, coordination, and accountability. The Humanitarian Coordinator (HC), the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT), Country Clusters, and Cluster Lead agencies remain the prime actors supporting national response efforts, and the Transformative Agenda seeks to strengthen these actors further. (IASC, 2015)

The New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants (2016) highlighted the need to link development and humanitarian efforts. This reality reaffirmed the need for agencies, organizations, and institutions in crisis-affected countries to coordinate and communicate with one another.

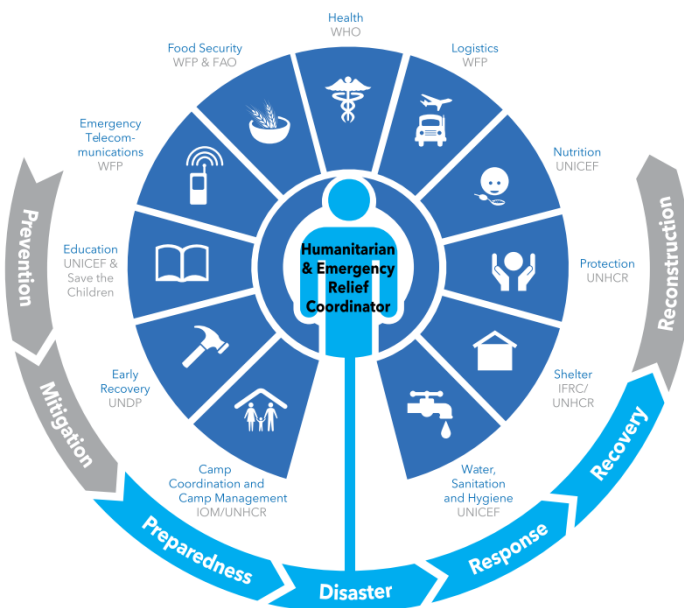


Figure 4: IASC Reference Module Cluster Coordinator at country level 2015 (source: IASC, 2015)

NGOs, United Nations agencies, the Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement, and government bodies involved in humanitarian response. The same clusters can be activated at a national level and sometimes at a subnational level in response to a particular emergency. Since its creation, the Cluster Approach worked in more than 60 countries to deliver humanitarian action.⁴⁶

Research and evaluations show that improved collaboration, advocacy, and information sharing occur when UN agencies, NGOs, IOs, and the Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement share leadership within Clusters. This technique fosters better coordination and more engagement. NGOs provide important technical competence, a variety of accountability strategies, long-term community involvement and knowledge, and the opportunity to take on leadership roles within the cluster framework. This is especially true for those NGOs operating in remote areas with a limited UN presence. (IASC, 2015) Operational humanitarian leadership, as defined by Knox-Clarke (2013) involves providing a clear vision and objectives to get strategic direction and focus, promoting consensus among diverse groups to promote cooperation, and coordinating efforts to effectively address the needs of affected communities, guaranteeing that humanitarian relief is provided in a timely, efficient, and contextually suitable manner.

The Global Education Cluster (GEC) is one of 11 clusters that can be activated in humanitarian response (see Figure 4). It is the only Global Cluster co-led by an Agency – UNICEF and an INGO – Save the Children. Frequently, the leadership in the country is reproduced with SCI and UNICEF staff as coordinators. The Clusters are voluntary groups of humanitarian organizations working in specific technical sectors of humanitarian action. Their members can include

⁴⁶ See at: <https://reliefweb.int/topics/cluster-coordination>, last accessed 23/05/2023.

1.8 Education Cluster Coordination

Education cluster coordination is a specific component of the wider cluster strategy, which concentrates on the distinct difficulties of ensuring uninterrupted education during emergencies. This section explores the organizational structures, collaborative procedures, and strategic efforts that define education cluster coordination, highlighting its significance in upholding the right to education during times of crisis.

Despite being recognized as a critical sector under the Terms of Reference, education was not included in the final evaluation of the overall Cluster development process in 2005. Save the Children, INEE, and UNICEF did lobby for inclusion, mobilizing arguments such as the physical, psychological, and cognitive safeguards that education may provide during catastrophes (Anderson & Hodgkin, 2010). As a result, the only UN-NGO co-led Global Education Cluster was formally recognized in 2006.

According to international law called the *Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement* (UNCHR, 1998) the primary responsibility for providing education in emergencies rests with the national authorities of the affected country. However, it is also highlighted that the national authorities may face practical difficulties, such as a lack of resources and effective coordination between different stakeholders. In such cases, the affected country may seek help from the international society. The Cluster Approach facilitates a leadership role for national governments while also strengthening national capacities in emergency response. In the context of EiE, the Cluster Approach has so far been established in 32 countries to date. (GEC, 2022)

The governance body of the GEC includes the GEC Steering Group⁴⁷, composed of representatives from the Cluster Lead Agencies (CLA) – UNICEF and Save the Children – and the Steering Advisory Group, which involves INGO and NNGO and one foundation, involving humanitarian and development partners. (GEC, 2022) The Strategic Advisory Group (SAG), which meets monthly, acts as an advisory body to the GEC and includes 20 members, seven of whom represent nationally based NGOs. In addition to the core governance structure, the GEC benefits from the insights and contributions of task teams⁴⁸ on field operations, capacity development, knowledge management, and thematic groups. These thematic

⁴⁷ See more at: <https://www.educationcluster.net/about-us/governance>, last access 04/02/2023

⁴⁸ Also called Technical Working Groups (TWG), they are small, task-oriented, and time-limited. They are created on a needs basis, for example, to agree on minimum standards and formulate appropriate technical practices, and should dissolve once they have completed their task. TWGs are coordinated by a focal point or technical adviser and are composed of relevant technical experts.

groups include Gender, Adolescents and Youth, Early Childhood, Disaster Risk Reduction and Protection, Prevention, Psychosocial Support, and Peacebuilding.

In 2019, the GEC launched the Global Partners Forum, which currently includes 58 member entities. This forum serves as a platform for NNGOs and INGOs, UN agencies, and other organizations to discuss priorities, advocacy, and thematic issues around EiE coordination. It facilitates information sharing, perspective exchange, and highlighting of various country-level priorities and experiences. The GEC Partners Forum meets virtually three times a year and at the GEC Annual Meeting (Global Education Cluster, 2022).

The GEC has also developed several key partnerships. Collaboration with the Child Protection Area of Responsibility led to the creation of Education in Emergencies - Child Protection Collaboration Framework; a multi-year partnership with INEE and UNHCR led to the establishment of Initiative for Strengthening Education in Emergencies Coordination.⁴⁹ (ISEEC) Other close relationships were also created with donors like ECW, ECHO, and BHA, who support its core initiatives and boost its ability to address coordination gaps and requirements. Strategic partnerships aimed at improving operational effectiveness (focus on partnership expertise and resources management efficacy) include collaboration with NORCAP⁵⁰ for setting standards and technical support, as well as addressing some challenges like attacks on education; partnerships with REACH⁵¹ Impact Initiatives and Translators Without Borders to improve data collection; needs prioritization; and accessibility for global tools and guidance. Future initiatives seem to include gender-responsive education and combating gender-based violence (GEC, 2022).

A. Global Education Cluster (GEC) Coordination

The main players in Cluster coordination in EiE are the global education cluster, led by one coordinator from Save the Children and one from UNICEF. The aim of the Cluster Approach at the global level is to strengthen system-wide preparedness and coordination of technical capacity to respond to humanitarian emergencies by ensuring predictable leadership and accountability (GEC, 2020). At the same time, it

⁴⁹ Other than the reports that are available, the results of this initiative are still unclear. From the current information, it is difficult to discern any significant structural changes. Even if the work plan seems to exist, the absence of adequate funding is also a challenge.

⁵⁰ Norwegian capacity to international operations - NORCAP is NRC's global provider of expertise to the humanitarian, development, and peace-building sectors. (<https://www.nrc.no/shorthand/norcap/norcap-global-provider-of-expertise/index.html>)

⁵¹ REACH is a joint initiative of IMPACT Initiatives, ACTED, and the United Nations Operational Satellite Applications Programme (UNOSAT), (<https://www.impact-initiatives.org/what-we-do/reach/>)

plays a leading role in setting agendas, advocating, and establishing guidelines for education clusters at national and local dimensions.

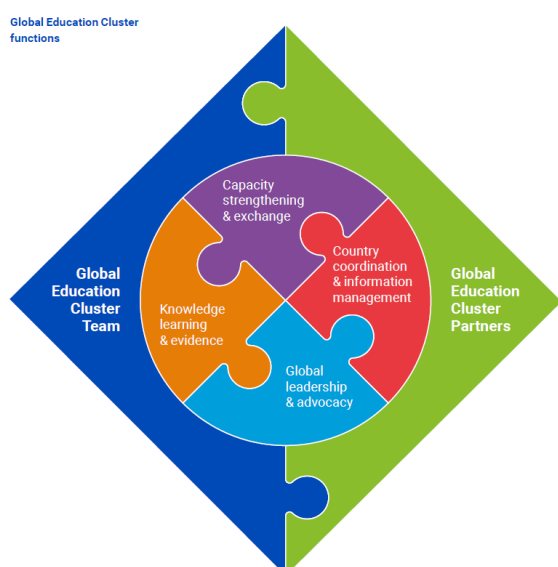


Figure 5: GEC functions (source: GEC strategy 2022-2025)

The GEC carries out four interrelated and interdependent functions to support Country Education Clusters, which all benefit from collaboration with and inputs from GEC partners: i) Capacity strengthening and exchange; ii) Knowledge, learning, and evidence building; iii) Country coordination and information management support; iv) Global leadership and advocacy.

The GEC supports Country Clusters and occasionally some Local Clusters – most issues related to implementation, monitoring, and strategic planning – and participates actively in some Global Humanitarian Platforms,

policymakers, and funding fora. The GEC Rapid Response Team (RRT) offers technical support to Country Education Cluster teams through the deployment of coordination experts and thematic advisors in areas such as needs assessment, information management, gender and GBV, cash and voucher assistance, MHPSS, child protection - EiE collaboration, and localization. The RRT supports global, regional, and national capacity building. “In 2021, the GEC’s Rapid Response Team (RRT) provided remote support to 27 contexts and deployed to 10. This support was mostly linked to HPC processes, with much of it targeted to needs assessment (People in Need (PIN) calculation, and Joint Emergency Needs Assessment) and strategic planning.” (GEC, 2022) The GEC has an important place in the Global and international dynamics, is influential in terms of agendas, and amplifies the voices of the country and local coordination as well as the voices of some NNGO and affected educational actors. At the same time, many gaps and challenges are clear as the coordination team still lacks financing, education is still not a priority, and Global partnerships are not always reflected at the country/local level (GEC, 2022). In August 2022, GEC supported 34 contexts: 27 activated Clusters, 3 Whole Siria hubs, and 4 EiE WGs.

B. Country Cluster Coordination

When the Education Cluster Coordination is activated at the country level, the governments play a crucial role in co-coordinating education responses to emergencies, working alongside international partners and local stakeholders. In some countries with internal conflict, the Education Cluster Coordination (ECC) may not be formally activated in order to respect the principles of neutrality and impartiality, as observed in NWSW Cameroon. “While the GEC has designated co-leads of UNICEF and Save the Children, in-country leads will vary. In many contexts – as in Chad – the national government leads with support from co-lead agencies and other cluster partners. In other cases, as in Iraq, Ethiopia, the DRC and the Whole of Syria (WoS) coordination model, UNICEF and Save the Children formally co-lead at the national level, sometimes together with another NGO.”(Nicolai & al., 2020)

A designated agency leads each cluster in agreement with major stakeholders and has a coordinating role in its specific area. Cluster coordination is meant to facilitate a decentralized approach, moving away from top-down hierarchical structures often seen in emergency responses. By promoting a culture of general engagement and through the establishment of networks of cooperation, the information quality, response effectiveness and flexibility, and situational awareness can be improved. Also, through standardizing overall activities and by defining the methods and protocols by which professional bodies can interact and share information, time delays and inter-information exchange can be reduced. So, the cluster coordination approach to emergency management has many key benefits for those who are involved in the actual hands-on running of the controls and providing intervention services. Most importantly, improvements to the approach and the development of best practices mean that the highest quality of response could be maintained and a level of care for those who are in situations that require emergency intervention.

In most cases, UNICEF and Save the Children co-lead the Education Cluster at the national level – mirroring the global arrangements. In situations where Save the Children is absent or has the necessary operational competence, other NGOs take on this leadership role. Sector/cluster leaders are chosen by the Humanitarian Country Team, guided by the Humanitarian Coordinator, based on available resources and local requirements. According to the Cluster Coordination Reference Module (IASC, 2015), shared leadership can strengthen cluster leadership but does not displace the core responsibilities and accountability of the designated in-country CLA, including its role as Provider of Last Resort⁵² (PoLr).

⁵² Provider of Last resort (PoLr) means that where necessary and depending on access, security, and funding availability, the cluster lead, as POLR, must be ready to ensure the provision of services required to fulfill crucial gaps identified by the cluster and reflected in the HC-led Humanitarian Response Plan.

Also, A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) is established to ensure that all parties have a shared understanding of their respective roles, responsibilities, and accountabilities. Cluster leaders are expected and required to interact and coordinate with other sector clusters to address cross-cutting issues.

At the national level, a cluster's six plus one⁵³ core functions (IASC, 2015), are as follows: i) assisting in the delivery of services by making sure that everything is in line with the Humanitarian Response Plan and eliminate duplications; ii) providing information to Humanitarian country team (HC/HCT) to support strategic decision-making through needs analyses, gap analyses, solution and cross-cutting issues identification, and priority setting on the basis of analysis; iii) Organizing and carrying out cluster strategies through the creation of sector-specific plans, adherence to guidelines, elucidation of financing needs, and participation in funding submissions for humanitarian projects; iv) Track and evaluate performance by the reporting of needs and activities, the comparison of development to the cluster plan, and the suggestion of remedial measures; v) enhancing the nation's capacity for emergency preparedness and contingency planning; vi) recognizing issues, providing important data and messaging to humanitarian coordinating organizations, and leading advocacy campaigns on behalf of the cluster and impacted communities.

C. Sub-national Cluster

The Subnational or local cluster, as it is also referred to, is the coordination level that ensures and supports the operational level, enabling locally based stakeholders to coordinate closely and discuss community-based challenges and coordination approaches.”(Nicolai & al., 2020)

The local coordinator often performs a dual role, being also the technical specialist (for a national or international organization and/or UN agency). He ensures the main direct and often first response to challenges and gaps felt by members or identified by data in the field. IMO, are responsible for collecting/sharing information and serving as the spokesperson to the country cluster regarding the problems and opportunities on the ground. This enables them to advocate on behalf of the local context and facilitate advocacy efforts by the GEC.

As part of the humanitarian system, the Cluster Lead Agencies (CLA) UNICEF and Save the Children have signed up to a broad set of policy commitments emerging from the 2016 World Humanitarian

⁵³ The “+1” refers to the fact that IASC has also added “accountability to affected populations” as a key area of work that clusters should focus on. (IASC, 2015)

Summit (WHS), known as the Grand Bargain⁵⁴. The Cluster Approach plays an important role in promoting and realizing these commitments. In addition, the Education Cluster contributes to achieving Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4: “Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.” (Global Education Cluster, 2022)

In the Strategy 2022- 2025 Global Education Cluster (GEC), three core principles are identified, describing the priority values guiding their intervention:

- equitable and principled partnership linked to undo unequal power dynamics and strengthening the inclusion of, and respect for, diverse voices. (Global Education Cluster, 2022)
- Accountability to and inclusion of affected people, where GEC compromises to promote the agency and participation of people whose needs and vulnerability are heightened by their age, gender, disability, social exclusion, and/or marginalization. (Global Education Cluster, 2022)
- A connected and holistic approach linked to an intersectoral approach enhances the Nexus between humanitarian and development actors and promotes more timely and efficient responses, working with UNHCR to better connect Country Education Clusters and refugee responses in mixed settings. (Global Education Cluster, 2022)

From the INEE Minimum Standards (MS), there are the following fundamental standards domains across the EiE:

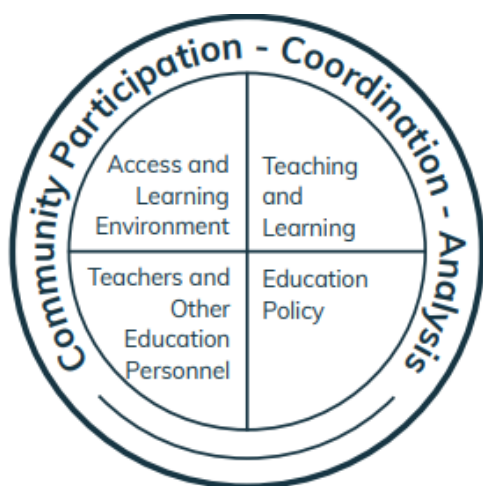


Figure 6: INEE MS EiE Domains
(source: INEE MS, 2024)

Domain 1: Foundational Standards,

Community Participation

Domain 2: Access and Learning Environment

Domain 3: Teaching and Learning

Domain 4: Teachers and Other Educational Personnel

⁵⁴ In 2021, the Grand Bargain was updated to promote humanitarian development coherence, locally driven response, equitable partnerships, increased use and coordination of cash and voucher assistance, and quality funding for humanitarian response.

The Geneva Global Hub for EiE, with the support of ECW, has a working space that hosts the nine members: Global Education Cluster, INEE, GPE, IFRC; UNESCO, World Vision, Education Cannot Wait, Geneva Global Hub for EiE, and Save the Children. Discussions, policy events, and more are held with a wide range of stakeholders either at the EiE Hub offices or close-by locations.

Humanitarian crises are characterized by their fluid and unpredictable nature. Humanitarian organizations must constantly adjust their operations due to the changing circumstances, unpredictable flow of information, and the development of decision-making procedures and coordination structures. (Comes & al., 2020, p. 1) Traditionally, uncertainty has been attributed to data gaps, but nowadays, the landscape is changing, and effective data is being used more and better. Meanwhile, technology, which includes readily available and swiftly advancing artificial intelligence (The New Humanitarian, 2024) is alarming, with some analysts saying that Generative AI may be the equivalent of the next big, mass-producible weapon (The New Humanitarian, 2023). Literature has developed normative approaches for complex decisions, with an emphasis on optimization models or simulation. Based on the rational decision-making paradigm, they advise representing uncertainty as probability distributions and adjusting to new information as it becomes available (Comes & al., 2020).

Despite their critical role, Education Clusters face several challenges, including limited resources, political and logistical constraints, and the complexity of coordinating among diverse actors with different mandates and priorities.

2. Humanitarian issues

2.1 The institutional Intersectorality and constructed intersectoral practices

Institutional intersectionality and the development of intersectoral practices are essential for ensuring relevant and holistic humanitarian intervention. This section analyzes how institutional intersectionality and constructed intersectionality, although different, both are needed to contribute to the implementation of a more holistic approach.

This chapter addresses the issue of intersectorality and shows the need for complementarity between the institutional and constructed ways of working. The needs of the affected population don't come separated by sectors, and often, these needs overlap – this can't be ignored. Giving a separate response to different stakeholders and coordination clusters can lead to inefficiencies and gaps in the overall response. For example, in the context of EiE, addressing the educational needs of children often

requires a comprehensive approach that integrates the health, protection, and water and sanitation sectors. By working together, these different sectors can ensure that children not only have access to education but also address the underlying factors that may hinder their ability to learn, such as health issues or lack of safe water and sanitation facilities.

Intersectorality is a critical concept in addressing the complex challenges presented by emergencies. In the context of EiE, intersectionality refers to the coordinated effort across various sectors and institutions to deliver comprehensive and effective educational responses. This coordination can be understood through two lenses: institutional intersectionality, which involves formal mechanisms and structures and constructed intersectionality, which emerges from collaborative practices and relationships among stakeholders. Both forms play essential roles in ensuring that EiE is responsive, inclusive, and sustainable.

Institutional intersectorality in EiE involves collaborating with other humanitarian (or development or government) sectors, such as health, child protection, and Wash, to create holistic and sustainable education policies. This concept extends beyond mere collaboration, advocating for integrated strategies that align the goals and actions of all sectors involved. For instance, integrating health and nutrition programs within schools can significantly improve educational outcomes by addressing students' physical and mental well-being and enhancing their learning capabilities. Despite its benefits, implementing intersectorality faces several challenges. Institutional inertia, sectoral silos, differing priorities, and resource allocation issues often hinder effective collaboration.

Institutional Intersectorality

Institutional intersectorality refers to the formalized frameworks, policies, and structures established by governments, international organizations, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to facilitate coordinated responses in education during emergencies. These institutional mechanisms are designed to ensure that all relevant sectors—such as health, protection and especially child protection, water and sanitation, and shelter—work together cohesively to address the needs of affected populations. For instance, In the ECC Strategy, Core Principle 3 refers to a connected and holistic approach, stating that GEC will continue to support intersectoral relations where possible and identify where other sectors can contribute to provide a holistic package of services for all learners. And highlighting, in the strategic objective 2, support the country's joint and collaborative approach with other sectors.

The first strategic objective in the Geneva Global Hub for Education in Emergencies strategy (2022) is to catalyze joint action with other sectors, enumerating four concrete actions: seek synergies, promote dialogue, support member initiatives, and amplify crisis-affected and displaced communities. Also, in the revised version 2024 INEE MS, one of the main changes is the deeper connections between education, protection, and other sectors.

Intersectorality is a very discussed subject in EiE and, as we saw, also a preoccupation in ECC. However, only EiE-CP has a clear framework for implementation and integration in practice. Other sectors are referred to but not explicitly framed in terms of policies and guidance but don't go deeper into mechanisms for the integration of objectives, administrative, and funding processes. For example, intercluster coordination is a great platform for sharing information, and actually, many activities are being done jointly but not always integrated and with innovative processes for response and adequation to reality. Many are done as some of the parts without being better integrated. Even so, this intersectorality is being strongly searched in the global humanitarian system, including EiE. The Education Cluster Coordination mechanisms are a favorable platform to create linkages and synergies between sectors, including through the intercluster meetings and initiatives that have already happened.

OCHA is the primary coordinating body in emergencies, facilitating inter-cluster coordination and promoting collaboration among different sectors. Inter-cluster coordination refers to the coordination and collaboration between different clusters or sectors in emergency response, such as education, health, water and sanitation, etc. Under the IASC Transformative Agenda, the IASC Principals decided that efforts would be undertaken to enhance general inter-cluster coordination that is critical to achieving greater objectives. (IASC, 2015).

The joint intersectoral analysis framework is already a chapter in the Humanitarian Cycle programs, and the reference to the intersectoral response is often written down in all documents like in the Global Humanitarian Overview (GHO) (UN OCHA, 2022), referring that the proposed response will be coordinated and intersectoral. But, in practice, even if some good examples are shared, especially between the Education and Protection sectors, still, a lot can still be done. Institutional intersectorality also involves collaborative funding mechanisms. Pooled funds, such as the Education Cannot Wait fund, are designed to support integrated responses, ensuring that financial resources are allocated efficiently across sectors to address the holistic needs of children and youth in emergencies.

Constructed Intersectoriality

Constructed intersectoriality, on the other hand, emerges from the collaborative practices, relationships, and informal networks that develop among actors on the ground. This form of intersectoriality is dynamic and often evolves in response to the specific context and needs of the emergency. In the GEC practices and actions, we see strong action between the EiE and some areas, such as the CP, MHPSS, and GBV sectors, including the fact of having dedicated specialists and related publications. At the country and local level, the intersectoriality will be drawn based on the teams' willingness and the specificity of the context.

Relationships and trust built among different actors play a crucial role in constructing intersectoriality. These informal networks facilitate the sharing of information, resources, and best practices, enabling a more flexible and responsive approach to emerging challenges. Practitioners often leverage these networks to coordinate activities and troubleshoot issues in real time.

Constructed intersectoriality is also evident in the involvement of local communities. Community members, including parents and local leaders, often participate in decision-making processes, contributing to the design and implementation of education programs. Their involvement ensures that interventions are culturally relevant and aligned with the needs and priorities of the affected population.

The effectiveness of EiE coordination depends on the interplay between institutional and constructed intersectoriality. While institutional frameworks provide the necessary structure and resources, constructed intersectoriality brings adaptability and context-specific solutions. Together, they create a comprehensive approach that can improve the resilience and sustainability of educational interventions.

Institutional mechanisms and constructed practices complement each other. Formal frameworks provide legitimacy and ensure accountability, while constructed intersectoriality allows for flexibility and innovation. For instance, while the Global Education Cluster may set overarching goals and standards, the on-the-ground collaboration among different sector practitioners ensures these are implemented effectively in diverse and changing contexts. The integration of institutional and constructed intersectoriality promotes the sustainability of educational interventions. By embedding intersectoral coordination in both formal structures and everyday practices, responses are more likely to be resilient and adaptive to future crises.

Intersectorality, both institutional and constructed, is essential for the effective coordination of EiE. Institutional intersectorality provides the necessary frameworks and resources to ensure comprehensive responses, while constructed intersectorality brings the flexibility and context-specific solutions needed on the ground. Together, they enhance the resilience, inclusivity, and sustainability of educational interventions in crisis contexts, ensuring that children and youth receive the support they need to continue their education despite the challenges they face. By improving collaboration across sectors and building on both formal and informal mechanisms, the global community can better address the complex needs of populations affected by emergencies.

Intersectorality, or the integration and coordinated action across different sectors, in humanitarian work, especially concerning EiE and cluster education coordination, involves integrating and cooperating with other sectors to achieve common goals. This approach addresses the multifaceted needs of the affected population and acknowledges the interconnectedness of various societal factors and institutional frameworks that impact educational outcomes.

There is a tension between the great technical specificity of the specialized response and the more coherent and realistic holistic intersectoral response. Some argue that a more segmented approach can allow for a more targeted and efficient response. This can prevent resources from being spread too thin and ensure that the specific needs of each sector are adequately met. The importance of institutional intersectionality and related practices in humanitarian response cannot be understated. Subsequently, the focus is directed towards the concerning pattern of deliberate assaults on educational institutions or through education-related actors in areas affected by conflict. This reality is also a point where intersectionality is essential, especially between Education and Child Protection.

2.2 Learning being the target – a growing scary reality

The intentional selection of educational institutions as targets in modern wars signifies a profoundly concerning pattern. This section examines the consequences of these attacks on education and their wider ramifications for communities and humanitarian efforts.

The protection of children in armed conflict is preserved in various international human rights laws and international humanitarian laws. The Convention on the Rights of the Child uniquely protects the mandate. The Convention is of utmost importance for protecting children in armed conflict and is a guiding source of core principles and standards. Of particular importance to the mandate is Article 38 of

the Convention, which stipulates that States parties need to respect and to ensure respect for rules of international humanitarian law applicable to them in armed conflicts which are relevant to the child. Under the Convention, the Committee on the Rights of the Child was established to examine progress made by States parties (art. 43). As will be described later in this study and of relevance to the mandate, to further protect children from recruitment and use by parties to conflict in hostilities, the General Assembly adopted in 2000 the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict. The Optional Protocol entered into force in 2002. It provides that States parties “shall take all feasible measures to ensure that members of their armed forces who have not attained the age of 18 years do not take a direct part in hostilities” (art. 1) and that state parties “shall ensure that persons who have not attained the age of 18 years are not compulsorily recruited into their armed forces” (art. 2). (Office Of The Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, 2021)

Further, the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, a relevant instrument, was adopted in 1990 by the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity (now the African Union) and entered into force in 1999. That Charter addresses contextual child rights issues and rights similar to those encapsulated in the Convention on the Rights of the Child. In its preamble, the Charter reaffirms “adherence to the principles of the rights and welfare of the child contained in the declaration, conventions and other instruments of the Organization of African Unity and in the United Nations and in particular the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child” Concerning the best interest of the child, the Charter provides that “in all actions concerning the child undertaken by any person or authority the best interests of the child shall be the primary consideration” (art. 4). (Human Rights Law in Africa, 2012)

In 1996, the Graça Machel report⁵⁵ on the impact of armed conflict on children was presented to the UN General Assembly. Up until that point, the significant and harmful consequences of war on children's well-being had mainly gone unrecognized. The unpleasant realities that children caught up in armed conflicts had to deal with were made clear by Machel's report. These included sexual assault, displacement, recruitment and exploitation by armed groups, and violation of their fundamental rights to family, life, health, and education. It summarized how children's rights are violated during conflicts, highlighting the necessity of protecting and nurturing their growth and well-being. Based on this, the report called governments, the UN, and civil society organizations to action and to recognize the severe

⁵⁵ Impact of armed conflict on children, Report of the Expert of the Secretary-General, Ms. Graça Machel, 1996 (A/51/306)

abuses that children in war situations face. “In 1997, the UN General Assembly established the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Children and Armed Conflict (SRSG CAAC).”(UNICEF, 2022)

In response to the rising emphasis on accountability, the Security Council established the Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism (MRM) with Resolution 1612 in 2005. The “United Nations has verified more than 266,000 grave violations against children across more than 30 conflict situations that have been included in the annual reports of the Secretary-General.” (Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, 2021) The MRM's mission is to systematically collect and provide timely, accurate, and reliable information on the recruitment and use of child soldiers, as well as other abuses against children in armed conflict, following international law. This system is intended to ensure the regular collection, verification, and reporting of data on such violations.

Concurrently, the Security Council formed the Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict. This organization meets regularly to discuss country-specific challenges involving children in violent conflicts. Based on the reports received, the Working Group develops conclusions and suggestions for conflict parties, governments, funders, UN bodies, and local and religious leaders. These guidelines aim to stop abuses against children and improve their protection in war zones.(Office of The Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, 2021)

UNESCO (2007) and other organizations have driven momentum for better protection of education in conflict zones Several publications and initiatives followed, and in 2009, the Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack (GCPEA)⁵⁶ - a collaboration led by Qatar's Education Above All, along with Human Rights Watch, UNICEF, Education International, and other partners - was created. The network has played an important role in advocating for and taking real actions with governments. For example, the Safe Schools Declaration⁵⁷ has been a notable campaign, with 119⁵⁸ states signing on. Cameroon endorsed it in 2018. States that sign this Declaration pledge to support, carry out, and include in their national laws the Guidelines for Protecting Schools and Universities from Being Used by the Military During Armed Conflict. They agree to a series of actions and regular meetings to assess how the Guidelines and the Declaration are being implemented. As a result, these documents provide the

⁵⁶ GCPEA is an umbrella organization that brings together diverse stakeholders, including United Nations agencies, non-governmental organizations, and academic institutions.

⁵⁷ Inter-governmental political agreement dedicated to protecting education in armed conflict. Collaboratively to address the issue of attacks on education, advocating for policy changes and promoting best practices to ensure the safety and continuity of education in conflict-affected areas (<https://protectingeducation.org/>).

⁵⁸ <https://ssd.protectingeducation.org/endorsement/>

supporting states with a solid base for collaboration, information sharing, and best practices exchange. These Guidelines, created between 2012 and 2014, are intended to keep schools from serving as legitimate military targets for strikes by keeping them off the front lines of conflict.

The Global Education Cluster (GEC) has also been instrumental in addressing attacks on education. Its core functions include “generating evidence to support strategic planning to respond to the impact of a crisis, including the consequences of attacks on education. These include supporting service delivery, informing strategic decision-making through assessment and analysis, and developing relevant strategies. In addition, attacks on education are part of the cluster’s advocacy efforts and should be considered in preparedness and contingency planning. (...) In the case of attacks on education, the voluntary nature of the Cluster Approach limits the ability of cluster coordination teams to establish and manage systematic case monitoring mechanisms by themselves. Subsequently, management of systematic monitoring and reporting should not be the aim of cluster coordination teams. Instead, clusters should contribute to existing dedicated mechanisms and advocate for their establishment where they are absent” (GEC, 2022, p. 7- 8).

The GEC has published several related resources, such as the 2012, Protecting Education in Conflict-Affected Countries Programme, undertaken by Save the Children on behalf of the Global Education Cluster, with the following thematic: i) Overview; ii) Legal Accountability and the Duty to Protect; iii) Community-based Protection and Prevention; iv) Education for Child Protection and Psychosocial Support; v) Education Policy and Planning for Protection, Recovery and Fair Access; vi) Education for Building Peace; vii) Monitoring and Reporting; viii) Advocacy – with the indication to be used alongside the Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE) Minimum Standards for Education: Preparedness, Response, Recovery. Later, in 2016, the GEC complemented the publications with an annotated reference guide to Monitoring, reporting, and responding to Attacks on Education with selected relevant resources to “address some of the issues, questions, and challenges raised by Education Cluster coordination staff.”(GEC, 2016) In 2022, GEC added to their publications a guidance note for Education clusters titled *Systematizing Approaches for Attacks in Education*.(Ihalainen, 2022; Office Of The Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, 2021)

The effects of armed conflict on children, specifically in relation to attacks on education, have been profound. The Study on the Evolution of the Children and Armed Conflict Mandate 1996-2021 (Office of The Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, 2021) shows (Figure 8) a significant increase in verified violations. Particularly in recent years, more than 20,000

overall violations have been verified annually. It is important to emphasize that the overall increase in verified violations recorded over the 16 years should be interpreted in light of the MRM's growing capacity to document and report these incidents. (Office of The Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, 2021)

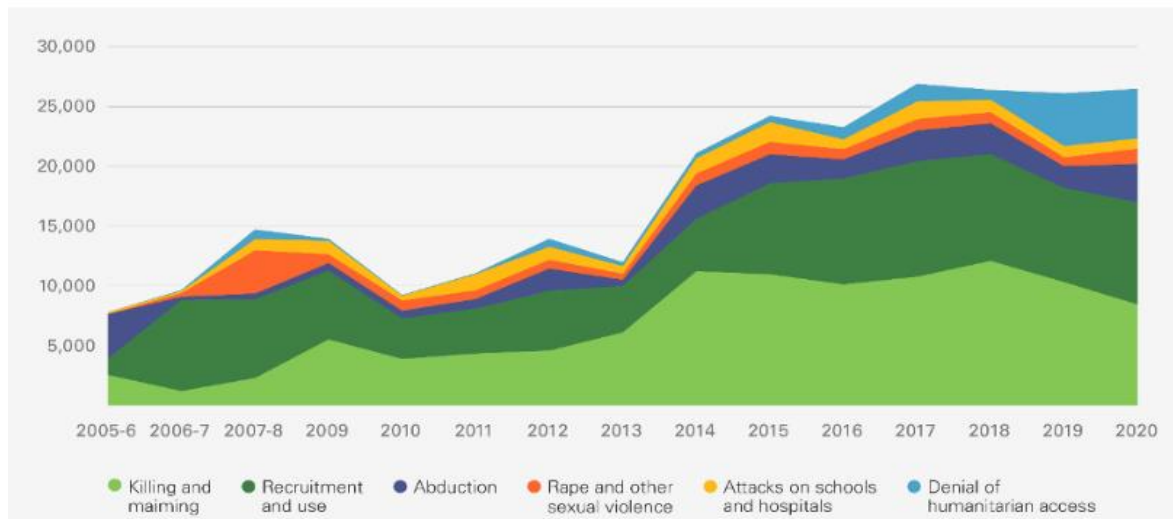


Figure 7: Number of grave violations against children verified by the UN, 2005-2020

The children are still impacted by conflict, and in many cases, education is being the object of attack:

Since 2005, the United Nations verified more than 13,900 incidents of attacks, including direct attacks or attacks where there has not been adequate distinction between civilian and military objectives, on educational and medical facilities and protected persons, including pupils and hospitalized children, and health and school personnel. This indicates an annual average of 873 attacks since 2005, including 1,032 in the last five years. Overall, 74% of attacks concerned educational facilities, personnel, and pupils. However, an increase in verified incidents of attacks against hospitals has been noted since 2014, with an annual average of 347 verified incidents (321 in 2020). (UNICEF, 2022)

In numerous conflict zones, education is vulnerable to ongoing attacks despite the existence of multiple international regulations and advocacy efforts. The widespread destruction resulting from specifically targeting education weakens the fundamental foundations of societal organizations, exacerbating vulnerabilities. In this scenario, let's focus on the crucial interaction between power dynamics and financial resources in influencing humanitarian responses.

2.3 The power and the weight of money

Financial resources have a crucial role in determining humanitarian responses. This section examines the intersection of power dynamics and financing in emergency education contexts and how these impact decision-making processes and the allocation of aid.

The interplay between power dynamics and financing is crucial in the complex field of humanitarian aid. Power dynamics in humanitarian contexts can be analyzed through various theoretical lenses, each offering insights into how power operates and influences decision-making processes and resource allocation. In humanitarian contexts, power dynamics significantly impact the distribution of financial resources, often determining which educational needs or regions receive attention and funding.

Power dynamics, as explored through various theoretical lenses, offer insights into how authority and influence operate in both societal structures and specific sectors such as EiE and, specifically, ECC. It can be understood by referencing several power theories, including Weber's (1978) concept of the capacity to exercise individual or organizational will despite resistance. Giddens (2001), for whom power is about the ability of a particular group to achieve their aims even when opposed by others. This means that power is not just about force but also the capacity to shape the capacity and desires of others. This notion aligns with Lukes' (2005) and Gramsci's (1971) concepts of hegemony and 'invisible power,' which show how power quietly infiltrates into social norms and ideals. In the humanitarian sector, this manifests in forming consensus or naturalizing specific policies and practices, which may prioritize some educational needs or regions over others without overt conflict.

Furthermore, power is relational and fluid, "it circulates and is never localized; it is not a commodity; it is deployed, not possessed. Individuals are mere vehicles of power. Power's strategy of segregation is mirrored in taxonomy and the structuring of knowledge into discrete disciplines (discourses) to attain finality as closed, self-contained systems. The coherence they offer emerges from and typifies the rise of rationality, science, modernism, and humanism". (Okihiro, 2016, p. 108) This perspective helps to understand the structuring of knowledge and the specialization of disciplines as a form of power control, framing rationality and modernist ideologies as dominant narratives that shape societal perceptions and actions.

The concept of power is crucial when considering aspects such as advocacy, member consultations, and other efforts in the Education Cluster. Foucault (1978) emphasizes the concept of power and how it

can operate in modern societies, regulating biological and social life at individual and population levels. In education, it can be observed when government authorities attempt to influence the curriculum, restrict certain narratives, and control activities in learning spaces. Foucault (1978) understands that subjectivity is inseparably linked to power dynamics in biopolitics and that any emerging truth depends on these relational dynamics. He focuses on the experience side of power, emphasizing 'how power is felt' rather than trying to describe it formally. His analysis digs into the methods and technology that enable the spread of power throughout society, refuting the concept that power is confined or held by specific individuals. Power may be held through networks, and people do more than circulate in them. Foucault argues that power is not limited to organizational structures; rather, it is self-generated, recurring, and widespread. Foucault (1978, p.93) argues that "Power is everywhere, not because it embraces everything, but it comes from everywhere." More importantly, he contends that power comes from below, rejecting the binary opposition between rulers and the ruled as the fundamental matrix of power relations. (Sarigöl, 2022)

The power dynamics indicated above significantly impact the distribution of financial resources for humanitarian aid, notably education. The development and funding of EiE are frequently dependent on the priorities established by influential donors and organizations whose interests influence where and how funds are spent.

Significant changes are taking place now in the global aid and development financing sector. According to a 2021 report by the Brookings Institution (Nishio & Tata, 2021), the global aid and development financing landscape is transforming significantly. A notable trend is the increased flow of capital to emerging countries, primarily from the private sector, which is experiencing an annual growth rate of about 10% in private finance. This shift highlights a broader diversification in funding sources, with non-traditional donors like China, India, and Saudi Arabia increasingly contributing to development efforts (Hares, Rossiter & Wu, 2023).

Simultaneously, there has been a noticeable shift in finance towards global products and emergency aid initiatives as the BRICS countries gain notoriety as major public financiers. The rising percentage of unallocated donor funds, enabling more adaptable solutions to worldwide needs, emphasizes this tendency. Concurrently, there is an increasing fragmentation of the development finance landscape. An increase in the number of organizations offering official financing and a decline in the average size of official grants or loans are indicators of this fragmentation. These modifications point to a shift in development finance structures toward more responsive and diversified ones. (Hares & al, 2023).

The gap between the growing humanitarian needs and the available funding is widening at an alarming rate, illustrating a pressing challenge for the global community. “In early 2022 the humanitarian system launched its largest ever appeal (US\$41 billion) to meet the needs of 183 million people across 63 countries. This is nearly double the amount requested in 2019. The number of people needing humanitarian assistance has increased by 250% since 2015” (GEC, 2022). By March 2023, the situation had further intensified, “the requirement of the global humanitarian response stood at US\$54.2 billion, an increase compared to 2022, to target 240 million people out of 339 million requiring assistance.” (IASC, 2023)

The interests of donor governments and organizations often influence power dynamics within humanitarian aid. These agendas may not always correspond with the urgent needs of the populations they want to assist. Funding and global attention are disproportionately focused on a few significant emergencies. The five greatest pleas accounted for 46% of all financial requirements, with approximately 40% of all humanitarian aid going to these appeals. This focus is not confined to specific pleas; across the study period, Yemen and Syria emerged as the top recipients, accounting for one-third to one-fifth of all humanitarian help each year. This unbalancing allocation illustrates an ongoing issue: a potential mismatch between donor interests and actual requirements on the ground.

The New Humanitarian article published on January 4th (2024) underscores the strain on aid policies, noting the prevailing concern among humanitarian players about “learning to do less with less.” The emphasis on collaboration, network, and Triple Nexus reflects the strategic shift to maximize limited resources. However, organizations have noted reticence to request sufficient funding for specific programs like gender initiatives or education, revealing a concerning trend of self-censorship driven by financial pressures.⁵⁹

Important policy reforms have resulted from the poor financing and need scenario for humanitarian efforts. In preparation for the 2016 World Humanitarian Summit, the High-Level Panel on Humanitarian Financing tackled the issue of insufficient funds for humanitarian aid. Their report proposed ways to reduce humanitarian needs, broaden the funding sources for humanitarian efforts, and enhance the efficiency of aid delivery. A key achievement was the Grand Bargain, an agreement among major donors and humanitarian organizations to ensure more aid directly reaches those in need and makes humanitarian actions more effective and efficient. With 67 signatories, including member states, NGOs,

⁵⁹ <https://www.thenewhumanitarian.org/newsletter/2023/12/06/inklings-gaza-effect-2024-budgets-obscure-acronyms>

UN agencies, and others, this collective is dedicated to fulfilling their commitments through coordinated efforts⁶⁰. Another concrete achievement was the establishment of the ECW Fund – the first and only global fund specifically for education in emergencies and protracted crises. (Nicolai & al., 2020)

These macro-financial developments are reflected in EiE, where donor participation and funding strategies change dynamically. In addition to established bilateral funders, new foundations and philanthropists in the business sector are supporting EiE projects. The emergence of Education Cannot Wait⁶¹ (ECW), the world's first global funding platform devoted to EiE, exemplifies this new collaborative approach, mobilizing partnerships between public and corporate entities. Furthermore, a strategic convergence with the broader trends in global development financing is seen in the growing involvement of education ministries in crisis education and the incorporation of EiE into national sector planning and strategy. (UNESCO, 2018)

However, despite these efforts, education remains a less recognized and chronically underfunded sector in humanitarian aid, receiving only 5.1% of all humanitarian funding globally. This underfunding is concerning given the persistent need for EiE, where a child's right to education does not cease even as crises begin.⁶² (International Parliamentary Network for Education & Geneva Global Hub for EiE, 2023)

Two milestones in the last decade that influenced how EiE gets financing are the global introduction of the Grand Bargain and the specific targeting of EiE funding by Education Cannot Wait (ECW). The Grand Bargain launched during the WHS in Istanbul, a “unique agreement between some of the largest donors and humanitarian organizations who have committed to get more means into the hands of people in need and to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of humanitarian action.” (ICVA, 2022) Five years after its inception, the Grand Bargain underwent a significant review in 2021, leading to the introduction of Grand Bargain 2.0. This revision aimed to adapt to the changing humanitarian landscape, promising a more flexible structure for better cooperation among signatories. In 2023, the agreement was further refined to enhance the collective engagement of all parties involved, ensuring a more responsive and agile approach to humanitarian needs.⁶³ ECW is the first global multilateral fund dedicated to EiE and protracted crises. This innovative fund will be used for temporary assistance that stops further deterioration and sets an immediate foundation for realizing medium-term development results; a

⁶⁰ See more at : <https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/grand-bargain>, last access 15/01/2023

⁶¹ "Education Cannot Wait" is a global fund designed to transform the delivery of education in emergencies and protracted crises. It aims to ensure that every crisis-affected child and young person is in school and learning.

⁶² See more at: <https://www.educationcluster.net/content-page/4-reasons-why-investing-education-emergencies-paramount>, last access 03/10/2023

⁶³ See more at: <https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/node/40190>, last access at 15/02/2023

catalytic intervention to unlock or support development results and transition to sustainable solutions; and population displacements, including refugees and migration movements. The First Emergency Response (FER) and Multi-Year Resilience Programme (MYRP), two of ECW's specialized funding mechanisms, demonstrate a strategic approach to financing that addresses short- and long-term educational difficulties in emergencies.

Within the field of humanitarian aid, most consider that the way aid is given is more often in line with what the donor governments and organizations want instead of the actual needs of the affected population. The manifestation of these will vary across different countries and regions, but when considering most of the biggest donors are Western countries, to have a more realistic approach, social power could play an essential role in determining the distribution of aid and the aid policy. In that sense, the humanitarian sector is appealing for more localized and contextualized work. Due to the competitive nature of funding, organizations or agencies hoping to become the primary fund-holding body in the industry must garner consistent, significant support throughout their existence.

Amidst this challenging landscape, the role of funding in shaping humanitarian responses is critical. The distribution of aid is frequently influenced by power relations, with large Western donors occasionally putting their interests ahead of the actual needs of impacted populations. Calls for more contextualized and localized humanitarian work have been inspired to combat this. The necessity for a balanced approach to funding and policymaking in humanitarian education is highlighted by the fact that, in the education sector, choices can be influenced by donors' influence at the table, even despite efforts to maintain neutrality. (Stephenson & Schnitzer, 2006) Even if coordination in EiE Cluster Approach is not led by a donor and even if the coordination unit focus is as neutral as possible, the fact is that donors are at the table in most of the Education Cluster groups. In most of them, the co-lead agency UNICEF (with a coordinator representing it) is also a donor, and sometimes the coordinator is double hatting, meaning that he is also responsible for other roles (non-cluster), often with decision-making in funding or accessing funds. If funding can operate as an organizationally exogenous or strategic-scale variable, the source of funding can also act as an organizational-level incentive that conditions whether institutions participate in coordination efforts.

The linked developments across multiple sectors and sources of financing reveal a complex and changing global aid landscape in which conventional distinctions between public and private, as well as emergency and developmental support, are becoming increasingly blurred. This transformation has vast consequences, potentially leading to more agile and responsive finance structures capable of addressing

global concerns. Power theories clarify the underlying dynamics that govern these processes, exposing how authority, influence, and financial resources interact to influence educational results in crises.

The significant impact of financial resources and power dynamics emphasizes the necessity for a balanced approach. In a context of power and influence, communication and trust are vital, and that will be the next section.

2.4 Trust and Communication

Trust is a pertinent and referred subject when analyzing organizations, coordination, and Cluster Approaches (Nootboom & Six, 2003; Ruesch & al., 2022; Stephenson, 2005; Stephenson & Schnitzer, 2006). According to Stephenson (2005, p. 343), "It seems likely that trust plays a vital role in establishing the conditions for effective coordination among otherwise separate organizations in the humanitarian relief environment." Academic work commonly agrees that trust is a concept interrelated with risk and dependence. It involves a relationship in which the trustee and the trustor depend on one another, with the trustor bearing the inherent risk that their expectations won't be fulfilled and that things won't turn out the way they had hoped. There is still a foundational expectation that things will work out well in spite of these concerns (Nootboom & Six, 2003).

The concept of trust has been extensively studied, with diverse interpretations and analyses conducted in a range of contexts. As Stephenson (2005), we will consider the definition of Zaheer and al. (1998), who provided a description that includes some of the essential components of trust. In accordance with their definition, trust is defined as the belief that an actor would behave predictably and act fairly—even in circumstances where opportunism may appear. This interpretation recognizes the possibility of betrayal that is inherent in trust and stresses the idea of expectancy rather than assurance. Furthermore, Zaheer and al. (1998) make a distinction between relational and dispositional trust. Dispositional trust focuses on interactions within specific dyads, while relational trust relates to an individual's overall opinions regarding the trustworthiness of others. Understanding network dynamics requires an understanding of this distinction, which emphasizes the significance of both an inclination toward trust and a readiness to extend trust beyond organizational boundaries. As a result, developing inter-organizational interactions depends heavily on various types of trust.

Given this perspective, a critical question arises: Can power or control techniques alone generate genuine trust? This covers a range of coercive techniques, including manipulation of incentives and

dependencies and legal and hierarchical measures. While the goal of these techniques is to guarantee trustee compliance and lower the trustor's perceived risk, they also call into question the nature and authenticity of trust that is based on such foundations.

Further exploration into the dynamics of trust reveals that it is not merely a matter of enforcing reliability through external pressures. Since genuine trust transcends these systems, it is possible that genuine trust cannot be developed via control and deterrence, even though they can impact behavior. Respect for one another, a shared set of values, and the growth of a relationship that transcends simple economic exchanges are just a few of the complex relationships that go into true trust. This complexity highlights the nature of trust, implying that although control and power might be useful in setting certain expectations in relationships, they are not the only basis on which trust is constructed. Rather, the depth and resilience of trust are influenced by a broader range of relational dynamics, such as emotional ties and ethical considerations.

In the context of humanitarian relief coordination, trust at the organizational level is fundamental. As referred to in *Interorganizational Trust, Boundary Spanning, and Humanitarian Relief Coordination*, according to Williams (2002), as referenced by Stephenson and Schnitzer (2006, p. 218):

At the organizational level, the main basis for trust, a sine qua non of willingness to work across organizational boundaries and therefore of coordination, appears to be a multifaceted view of reputation, based both on the standing and mission of the organization with which an individual is affiliated and on past personal and professional interaction with that person.

In a Coordination Cluster Approach, trust becomes essential as the members are volunteers at the coordination table, and decision-making is part of most activities. The continuity, power, and relevance of the Cluster system are very tied to the trust, values, and principles of the people leading in each dimension. Stephenson and Schnitzer (2006) further explain that organizational reputation and perceived professional competence are typically more important than personal relationships when there is no prior knowledge. Nevertheless, individual expertise, if present, can be critical in deciding to extend trust and cooperate across organizational lines. These interactions exhibit a self-reinforcing nature, where excellent reputations and favorable experiences in one situation enhance the probability of future coordination, leading to a self-fulfilling prophecy (Stephenson & Schnitzer, 2006).

Expanding upon this understanding of trust, it is essential to acknowledge the pivotal function of communication in developing and sustaining trust within networks. The centrality of communication in Castells' Network Society is echoed in the emphasis on trust and communication within the Education Cluster. The narratives describe a need for transparent information exchange, much like Castells' description of power in networks being tied to the ability to control and influence communication. As Castells elucidates, power within networks is inherently tied to the ability to control and influence communication flows (Castells, 2010). Transparent and effective communication channels facilitate trust by ensuring that all parties are informed, aligned, and capable of coordinating their actions.

Thus, the intersection of trust and communication not only highlights their importance within humanitarian coordination but also the broader implications for networked organizations. As the complexities of inter-organizational coordination in education and beyond will continue to be explored, recognizing the symbiotic relationship between trust and communication will be pivotal in driving forward successful and meaningful collaborative efforts. Once these principles are established, the attention turns to analyzing the paradoxes that hinder the effectiveness of humanitarian operations, specifically the conflict between bureaucracy and accountability.

2.5 The Performance Paradox: Bureaucracy and Accountability

Humanitarian organizations frequently struggle to balance bureaucratic demands and accountability measures. This section examines the contradictions and difficulties that arise in coordinating education.

Bureaucracy is a well-described form of management in sociological and organizational research. Such research operates under the help of Weber's (1966) six characteristics that define a bureaucratic model: (1) division of labor, (2) hierarchy of organization, (3) written rules and regulations, (4) impersonality, (5) employment based on technical qualifications, and (6) inalienable rights for management. These characteristics allow for a powerful, rule-based management system with clear responsibilities, expectations, and lines of authority. Weber (1966) conceptualized the organization as an industrial structured model that prioritizes rationality and seeks supreme efficiency. In his view, the bureaucratic system, with a clear hierarchy, is the perfect means to achieve that goal. In spite of certain downsides like dehumanization and rigidity, Weber (1966) maintained that such a system is necessary for managing complex organizations and attaining high levels of productivity and order.

The common perception of bureaucratic structure aligns with Crozier's observations (1964): (1) a tightly compartmentalized organization where each function is a cog in a machine (thus the frequent

association between bureaucracy and 'mechanistic organization'); (2) a strictly vertical organization that imitates the military hierarchy, consisting of a command, executors, and middle management; and (3) a procedural operation, replete with plans, regulations, and circulars governing the entity's normal course. Routines embedded in procedures are what bureaucracy produces most and best. Crozier's critique in 'Le phénomène bureaucratique' (The Bureaucratic Phenomenon), published in 1963, highlights a paradigm shift through a series of studies by highlighting the vicious cycle that characterizes these phenomena and its inability to accommodate unpredictability, a fundamental aspect of life and human action.

He approaches formal interactions more organically. According to Crozier, the members of an organization shape its environment through their power dynamics and thought processes. He suggested that in a bureaucratic organization, there might be a huge number of conflicts of interest among different staff, and they tend to generate a variety of informal practices. Because these become matters of power and negotiation, this viewpoint causes boundaries inside the organization to become blurred. As a result, organizations should be seen as fluid, dynamic systems in which power dynamics and human agency are crucial in determining the structures and results. This method places a strong emphasis on the value of adaptation, flexibility, and the understanding of human aspects in the management and design of organizations. Common consequences include lower innovation, decreased motivation, resource drain, and communication barriers, ultimately impeding organizational efficacy and adaptability.

In the humanitarian sector, bureaucracy is evident in systems such as the Cluster Coordination Performance Monitoring (CCPM) and the Humanitarian Program Cycle (HPC). There is growing critique of these foundational processes as country offices increasingly express frustration with the burdensome requirements of the HPC. While a thorough and precise needs analysis is essential, the existing processes are often seen as overly complex, time-consuming, and detracting from effective implementation. This concern was highlighted in the CLARE II evaluation, and GEC (2022) *Global Education Cluster Strategy 2022 – 2025 Background report*, which found that the HPC requirements have led to a more process-oriented and mechanical approach within clusters. However, these challenges are not confined to education actors alone. The broader humanitarian sector has also raised concerns with OCHA about the demanding and cumbersome nature of HPC processes, which deplete resources that could otherwise be used for programming and operations. These processes are designed to ensure efficient and effective coordination, accountability to affected populations, and adaptability to

changes. However, as critiques from various country offices and evaluations like CLARE II suggest, these processes can become laborious and resource-intensive, taking time away from real humanitarian work.

The balance is often difficult to find. Organizations generate vast amounts of information that, rather than providing comfort to people, tends to increase their sense of overwhelm and insecurity. When an organization does discover a naturally occurring, inventive accomplishment, it can overwhelm it with measurement and control.

The expression *Vicious Bureaucratic Circle* (Crozier, 1963) describes a self-sustaining cycle that worsens redundancy, inefficiency, and rigidity in bureaucratic systems, ultimately impeding the efficacy and flexibility of the organization. This idea emphasizes how bureaucratic procedures, which were once intended to increase accountability, justice, and organization, can eventually backfire and cause unnecessary paperwork, procedural obstacles, and a preference for form over function. Important traits and outcomes of a Vicious Bureaucratic Circle consist of:

- **Red tape and Over-Regulation:** Over time, bureaucracies tend to develop a collection of rules and procedures. What begins as a way to guarantee equity and uniformity can develop into a complex web of red tape that slows down and clogs procedures.
- **Loss of Flexibility:** As an organization's regulations grow, its members' capacity to use discretion or adjust to new situations is reduced. When a system becomes inflexible, it becomes harder to adapt effectively to fresh opportunities or difficulties.
- **Prioritize Process Over Outcome:** Strict adherence to procedures takes precedence over accomplishing the organization's objectives. This change has the potential to create circumstances in which the method becomes more significant than the outcome, frequently at the price of efficacy and innovation.
- **Decreased Motivation and Morale:** Workers who are limited by bureaucratic processes may lose motivation and feel that their initiative and creativity are being restricted. This morale decline may result in decreased involvement and productivity.
- **Resource Drain:** Navigating or adhering to bureaucratic procedures can take a lot of time, effort, and resources, which takes those resources away from the organization's primary goals and missions.
- **Communication Barrier:** Numerous levels of bureaucracy within an organization can create a barrier to effective and clear communication. This can result in misunderstandings, delays, and a lack of coordination between various departments or divisions.

- **Stifling Innovation:** Bureaucratic systems' risk aversion and reliance on adhering to set protocols may limit innovation and experimentation, leaving the organization behind in a fast-evolving environment.

Bureaucracy in a humanitarian context can, therefore, be appreciated as a type of administrative system that staff and cluster leads need to comply with. This can be a formal procedure, such as participating in the Humanitarian Program Cycle (HPC), regular team coordination meetings, or other routine tasks and procedures. Laws, regulations, and formal guidelines (as Minimum Standards from INEE) set forth the necessity of the Cluster Approach, and both good coordination and teamwork are emphasized as critical. On the flip side of the coin, should this be the heart and the strength of a Cluster Coordination System?

The Education Cluster Coordination system, under IASC Transformative Agenda, has a national and sub-national performance process designed as Cluster Coordination Performance Monitoring (CCPM) through:

1. Cluster Coordination Performance Monitoring (CCPM) is a self-assessment of cluster performance in terms of the six core cluster functions and accountability to affected people and,
2. A Cluster Coordination Architecture Review—an HC-led review, undertaken at minimum annually, that examines the continued appropriateness and relevance of cluster coordination structures (IASC, 2015).

According to their self-evaluation, GEC has also improved Country Education Cluster performance monitoring processes, establishing a proper feedback loop⁶⁴ to ensure clusters learn from the exercise, (GEC, 2022) through the Cluster Coordination Performance Monitoring (CCPM). Clusters evaluate their performance based on the six fundamental cluster functions and their responsibility towards affected individuals. The process is led by the country itself, with global support. Optimally, this process is executed simultaneously by all clusters/sectors. However, it can also be conducted upon request by particular clusters. A CCPM system is made to allow all members of a cluster and its coordinators to assess their strengths and shortcomings in performance and suggest strategies for improvement. A CCPM should preferably be executed within three to six months following the start or sudden increase of

⁶⁴ A feedback loop is a cyclical process in which an initial action or behavior triggers a response, which then impacts the following behavior of the originating agent. This process can have either a good effect, magnifying the initial behavior, or a negative effect, reducing the initial behavior. Luhmann highlights the importance of feedback in preserving the autopoiesis of social systems, where previous communications shape subsequent ones, enabling ongoing adjustment and development (Luhmann, 1984)

an emergency and then repeated on an annual basis. During prolonged crises, it is advised (IASC, 2015) to do a yearly basis CCPM.

According to Foucault, human activity can be read in terms of its contribution to human progress and development. Foucault's work is part of a more general shift from identifying the reason for activity in terms of the motivation of the acting subject to identifying the value of the activity in terms of what can be seen to come from it. This shift from an interest in motive to an interest in value is central to the idea of performativity: 'It is not what we do that is interesting, but what can be put to work.' performativity is not a fixed term. Instead, as individuals discover what is being measured and how to display it for maximum effect, the 'game' of being observed is open to a variety of strategies. Performativity emphasizes and encourages quantifiable results in terms of what works best in the education environment. This drives choices of humanitarian agencies at a strategic level. In cluster coordination, performativity would mean that a cluster coordinator would face strong pressure to produce certain types of results and work, maybe at the expense of other areas where an agency may have a relative advantage. Agencies will orientate their efforts towards work that is clearly intended to obtain a specific outcome, which will be recognized and rewarded. This can result in a narrowing of projects and possible strategies, decreasing the flexibility enjoyed by agencies and ultimately reducing the variety of education provision. Coupled with the globalization of humanitarian work and the drive towards results-based and accountable work for funders.

It is state-centric, concerned with maintaining order and security, and relies on structured authority as embodied in institutions and their bureaucracies.

2.6 Accountability and Ethical Frameworks in EiE

Ethical and accountability frameworks must coexist in the EiE sector. This intersection guarantees that educational programs adhere to principles of justice, equity, and human dignity while meeting urgent needs.

In an Accountability process, “actors have an obligation, based on a legal, political, social or moral justification, to provide an account of how they met clearly defined responsibilities” (UNESCO, 2017). In humanitarian intervention, accountability has several components, including accountability to affected populations, funders, and the larger international community. It also comprises a commitment to transparency about decision-making processes, resource optimization, and responding to input and

complaints from those served by humanitarian activities. Many tools, like reporting, feedback, and complaint mechanisms, are applied to assess and evaluate these standards, and capacity building is often available in organizations and institutions.

Scholte (2012) provides a profound explanation of accountability:

“Across the diverse conceptions, there is general agreement that accountability is a condition and process whereby an actor answers for its conduct to those whom it affects. In a word, if A takes an action that impacts upon B, then by the principle of accountability, A must answer to B for that action and its consequences. In elaborating on this starting point, different notions of accountability have contrasting ideas about who ‘B’ is, what kinds of impacts must be answered for, and how ‘A’ should answer for them. However, all approaches to accountability embrace the broad principle that actors should be answerable for their actions (and sometimes also inactions).”(Scholte, 2012, p.16).

This definition shows the essence of accountability: it is not merely a procedural requirement but a moral imperative that ensures humanitarian actors remain responsive and responsible to those they aim to assist. The principle of accountability insists on a relationship of responsiveness, where humanitarian actors must not only act but also ask, explain, and justify their actions to those affected. This relationship is essential for creating trust in humanitarian initiatives and, ultimately, preserving the dignity of the people served.

In 2014, the Core Humanitarian Standard (CHS) on Quality and Accountability was launched, updated in 2023, and set to be released in 2024. It outlines nine commitments to ensure that organizations support crisis-affected people and communities in ways that respect their rights and dignity while promoting their primary role in finding solutions to the crises they face. The Standard clarifies the agreed elements essential for working with crisis-affected communities in terms of accountability. It combines both what organizations need to put in place and how organizations should work respecting principles of accountability (Humanitarian Accountability Report, 2020). According to the CHS Alliance (2014), accountability to affected people is “the process of using power responsibly, taking account of, and being held accountable by different stakeholders, and primarily those who are affected by the exercise of such power.” Accountability towards affected people considers and renders account to the different actors, especially those who are affected by the exercise of such power.

In 2003, HPN published an edition of *Humanitarian Exchange* that focused on humanitarian accountability, examining what was then known as the 'accountability revolution.' In 2011, another issue was released highlighting ongoing challenges. In their article *Reflections on the Accountability Revolution*, Knox-Clarke and Mitchell (2011) identify several challenges in humanitarian accountability. They discuss the bureaucratic burden and complexity introduced by numerous accountability tools and methodologies, which result in increased paperwork and reporting requirements, overwhelming field-level staff. Another challenge is deciding which impacted groups to prioritize when they have conflicting demands and goals, and whether to prioritize accountability to funders or affected people. Additionally, there is a tension between the necessity of supporting the most vulnerable people and the requirement to maintain objectivity and neutrality. They also refer to the conflict over whether to respond to the state or the affected people (Knox-Clarke & Mitchell, 2011).

Donors are scrutinizing humanitarian organizations more closely due to the media's increasing reach and critical stance. This scrutiny emphasizes value for money, visible outcomes, and the economical and efficient use of funds. However, Knox-Clarke and Mitchell (2011) caution that an overemphasis on these factors could mask the fundamental moral obligation to protect human rights, dignity, and the welfare of impacted communities. For these authors, there is a lack of motivation for employees working in high-pressure and chaotic environments to demonstrate accountability, and numerous factors discourage them: the processes are time-consuming, perceived as limiting their actions, and make individuals feel judged. The humanitarian system may transform in order to integrate the various responsibilities demanded by contemporary situations.

In an article for the HPN issue, Featherstone (2011) discusses the role of the Cluster Approach in promoting accountability within the humanitarian sector. The cluster approach has enhanced the reliability of humanitarian interventions by selecting providers of last resort for each sector, thereby improving coordination and accountability. This method of coordinating sector-specific responses has strengthened collaborative and organized humanitarian efforts, guaranteeing a more methodical and dependable humanitarian response.

Accountability is essential for improving education systems, but it should be seen as a means to attain educational goals rather than an end in itself (UNESCO, 2017). This perspective guarantees that accountability mechanisms are created to assist and promote the broader objective of education, including enhancing student achievements, promoting fairness, and ensuring high-quality teaching and learning environments. As mentioned in UNESCO's (2017) key findings mention, accountability needs to

build more inclusive, equitable, good-quality education systems and practices instead of 'blaming individuals.'

Ethical considerations in EiE turn around principles of human rights, equity, and dignity. Ethical frameworks guide the conduct of actors involved in educational interventions, ensuring that their actions promote the well-being of affected populations, including children. EiE, as part of the Humanitarian sector is influenced by the four core humanitarian principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality, and independence, rooted in the history and work of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. These principles ensure that humanitarian action remains focused on alleviating suffering without discrimination, maintaining trust and access in conflict zones, and upholding the ethical standards that guide humanitarian efforts globally.

Humanitarian principles and accountability are mutually reinforced. By influencing narratives and perceptions, humanitarian actors not only address immediate needs but also shape broader societal understandings and responses to crises, reinforcing the moral imperatives of their work. These principles include:

- Humanity, often known as the 'humanitarian imperative,' implies the moral need to avoid and alleviate human suffering wherever it occurs.
- Impartiality requires that humanitarian action be performed entirely on the basis of need, prioritizing the most urgent cases of distress without regard for nationality, ethnicity, gender, religious belief, class, or political convictions.
- Neutrality implies not taking sides in conflict or engaging in political, racial, religious, or ideological debates. Humanitarian actors are supposed to be neutral.
- Operational independence refers to the ability to work autonomously, unaffected by political, economic, military, or other goals, ensuring freedom from other influences.

These principles uphold the integrity and ethical basis of humanitarian action, ensuring responsible and effective interventions.

Even if the humanitarian has the four base principles clear and shared broadly, each reality brings dilemmas and a more nuanced base of ethical and principled action. Humanitarian action is never fully principled and permitted to function as such in any given circumstance. Also, not all humanitarians

make an effort to keep their work free from advocacy, partisan politics, or displays of solidarity. (Hoffman and Weiss, 2006)

Weiss and al. (2014) and Burde (2015) highlight the dynamic nature of humanitarian ideals and their implementation. Established concepts have traditionally guided efforts to reach people in crisis and disaster scenarios. However, in light of modern problems, a more flexible and adaptable strategy is now needed. This entails examining the interaction between educational policies in areas of conflict, such as Afghanistan, and the wider discussion on the impartiality of humanitarian assistance.

Weiss and al. (2014) highlight that these traditional principles have guided humanitarian efforts to reach people under duress in inter-state conflicts and natural disasters, which is rooted in morality and principle, and the 'Good Samaritan' often comes to mind. He adds:

"Traditional principles helped guide humanitarians to reach people under duress in inter-state conflicts and natural disasters. If aid agencies are perceived by combatants as allied with the opposing side or having a vested interest in the outcome, they have difficulty getting access, or they may become targets. If principles are religiously respected, the argument goes, both aid workers and recipients benefit from a sanctuary. Operating according to these principles and being perceived as apolitical has been crucial during wars. In short, the culture of humanitarianism reflects the desire and ability to provide life-saving assistance while honoring neutrality, impartiality, and independence. But how pertinent is that tradition in today's war-torn societies?" (Weiss & al., 2014, p. 7)

These principles work as a moral code for humanitarian actors trying to ensure that the response is offered without discrimination and only in accordance with necessity. According to Calhoun (2009), the key features of the emergency concept can be categorized into two groups. Firstly, there are individuals who are concerned with the emergencies themselves. Emergencies are characterized as sudden, unforeseen, brief, or, at the very least, highly pressing situations that deviate from the usual order of things. The second set of elements pertains to humanitarian response, including the principles of neutrality, the concept of humanity as a collective of individuals with an equal entitlement to assistance, and a moral duty based on shared humanity rather than citizenship or any particular loyalty.

The way humanitarian actors practice or interpret the different principles is subjective. For example, ‘the term humanitarianism is perceived by southern states to be a moral cover for northern states and humanitarian agencies to secure their political and organizational interests’ (School, 2014, cited by DuBois, 2018). Recently, the New Humanitarian called out the ‘The Gaza effect,’ which highlights the questioning of some humanitarian thinking: “Like Ukraine before it, Gaza could spark new discussions on off-debated issues like interpreting humanitarian principles, double standards, and even funding.” (Loi, 2023).

Other studies show that humanitarian intervention regarding the Education sector in an emergency can be apolitical, as exemplified by Burde (2015) in the article describing the influential interplay of educational policies and decisions in Afghanistan, especially the importance of the curriculum that was offered, to children and youth before and during the war; and in general by Gordon and Donini (2016) in the ‘Romancing principles and human rights: Are humanitarian principles salvageable?’, a paper on a more dynamic and changing vision of the content of humanitarian action. This narrative describes a time defined as apolitical and neutral from the point of view of humanitarian intervention that is defined as traditionalist⁶⁵ (also referred to as minimalist) but was not effectively so.

‘Traditional humanitarians,’ on the one hand, often regard humanitarian space as politically neutral, demanding rigorous separation from potentially corrupting influences and their activities that may serve a more important purpose. (Burde, 2007) According to Burde’s (2015) definition, New Humanitarian actors (also referred to as maximalists) refer to those who, despite valuing the neutral and apolitical character of humanitarian intervention, embrace a broad humanitarian mandate consistent with the fundamental principles. They seek to work at the source of problems, providing more comprehensive support to people living in protracted crisis contexts. Eager to ensure that populations are no longer at risk after receiving aid, they also seek the transformation of social structures.

“Both the minimalist (traditionalist) and maximalist (New humanitarian) positions are in dialogue with a historical narrative of humanitarian aid from which aid to education has been largely excluded. Education has been part of humanitarian responses for decades, yet its continuing role has seldom been recognized beyond a small group of education-aid practitioners and activists. Thus, the importance of education as an element of humanitarian action has rarely been acknowledged in terms of either its effects on

⁶⁵ Minimalists or traditionalists are defined as humanitarians in line with the core principles outlined by the ICRC; providing for “relief and nothing but relief” from the effects of conflict (Barnett 2011)

beneficiary populations or the value recipients place on it. This inattention has prevented education aid from reaching its full potential for eliminating suffering during conflicts and accounts, partly for its underfunding relative to other forms of humanitarian aid.” (Burde, 2015, p. 27)

Some educators, as opposed to humanitarians, have similar views. Still, for them, neutrality takes on a slightly different meaning, one allowing for education to be included in humanitarian work: aid to education in countries affected by conflict should be delivered without regard to the conflict’s causes so as to avoid distraction from a focus on education. (Burde, 2015)

The 2015 IASC Cluster Coordination Reference Module is also not specific on the respective accountabilities of cluster co-leads in shared leadership arrangements at the country level, although it is very clear that “Under the IASC Transformative Agenda, Cluster Lead Agencies (CLA) were encouraged to consider developing a clearly defined, agreed and supported sharing of cluster leadership by NGOs wherever feasible.” It further describes that “the RC/HC, in consultation with the HCT, selects CLAs based on agencies’ coordination and response capacity, operational presence, and ability to scale up. The selection of CLAs ideally mirrors global arrangements, but this is not always possible, and sometimes other organizations are in a better position to lead.”

The concept of ‘collective outcomes’ was first presented in the New Way of Working and the UN Secretary-General’s Agenda for Humanity during the 2016 World Humanitarian Summit. Acknowledging the potential for greater collective impact when humanitarian and development actors collaborate rather than working independently. (GEC, 2022)

Humanitarian principles and accountability are the foundation of ethical humanitarian action. The humanitarian position has on the one hand, the main goal to alleviate the ‘suffering of others,’ but its position in the story linked to the ‘beneficiary discourse’ fosters recognition that our well-being is contingent on others’ suffering and impoverishment and that the world is connected by causal and so ethical relationships (Rothberg, 2019). This interconnectedness emphasizes the significant role of humanitarian and stabilization actors in shaping narratives about guilt, innocence, and victimhood. These actors are well positioned to influence the perception of who deserves recognition as a victim and who does not—and, therefore, who deserves protection and who does not (Parry, 2022).

Even though they were contested, these ideas have dominated the contemporary debate of humanitarianism. They have either been identified with reflections of a presumptively fundamental,

timeless, and universal set of humanitarian ideals (Gordon & Donini, 2016). Humanitarian principles and accountability are mutually reinforcing. Adhering to humanitarian principles ensures that aid is delivered ethically and effectively, while accountability measures verify that these principles are followed in practice.

2.7 The Triple Nexus – Humanitarian, Development, and Peace

Humanitarian action and development assistance are two distinct parts of the international system that are difficult to reconcile. The apolitical and needs-based approaches of humanitarianism, which rely on established humanitarian ideals, are fundamentally different from the long-term, political, and rights-based approaches of development. As they come into close contact as illustrated by Lie (2020) in the image of “rub shoulders—as tectonic plates—affecting, overlapping and challenging each other” - deliberately initiated by the central connection, they influence and challenge each other (Lie, 2020).

This interaction sets the stage for the Triple Nexus—Humanitarian, Development, and Peace (HDP)—which represents an integrated approach that aims to create interconnectedness between immediate humanitarian relief, long-term development goals, and sustainable peace-building efforts. The traditional separation of humanitarian aid, development assistance, and peace-building activities often results in fragmented solutions that fail to effectively address the underlying causes of crises, resulting in staying mostly abstract and theoretical (Südhoff, Hövelmann, & Steinke, 2020). One of the many challenges of this division is the possibility of creating gaps in areas considered ‘development zones for humanitarian support programs or humanitarian zones for the development sector,’ particularly during periods of transition, making it difficult to accurately categorize and address the needs of these regions.

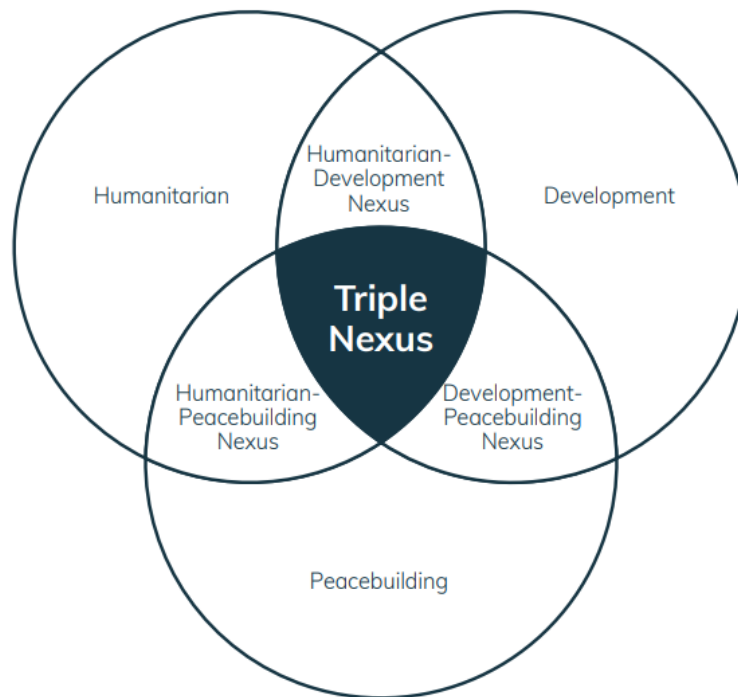


Figure 8: Representation of triple nexus. (Source: Stockholm International Peace Institute, (2019). Connecting the dots on the triple nexus quoted in INEE MS, 2024)

EiE is a critical component of the Triple Nexus. Education in crisis-affected communities and disaster-risk areas offers stability, protection, and usually better opportunities for the future of children and young people. Additionally, it plays a key role in creating social cohesiveness and peacebuilding through the cultivation of values. The ECC, in particular, can play an important role in aligning humanitarian, development, and peace-building efforts.

Between 2018 and 2021, the global humanitarian sector saw a significant shift in its strategy to deal with complex crises around the world. Historically, the problem has been meeting the interrelated needs of affected populations via a fragmented aid system. The groundbreaking agreement of the OECD DAC Recommendation on the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus in 2019 was a crucial milestone in this journey. This endorsement elevated the concept of the 'nexus' from mere industry jargon to an officially recognized framework (ALNAP, 2022).

The concept of the triple nexus aims to blend and integrate the guiding principles and elements of humanitarianism, development, and peace and come up with a holistic approach to help people in disasters. It emphasizes the design and implementation of initiatives and programs that provide long-term solutions and sustainable developments. It also tries to minimize the negative impacts of natural

and human-made disasters on people and places. In the last decade, a mass of policies, research, capacity buildings, and pilot projects focusing on the triple nexus have been launched, and to some extent, these initiatives have begun to construct the basis of a new model to guide aid workers and donors.

Responding to this shared belief, the Triple Nexus approach emphasizes the integration of EiE into both humanitarian and development work, facilitated by the peace outcomes that education is proven to lead to. The idea is not new; for over a decade, numerous theoretical approaches discussed the potential benefits of integrating humanitarian and development work. Nevertheless, it is the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) adopted by the United Nations in 2016, which emphasizes the interconnectivity of the relevant goals that started turning the concept into practice.

This approach implies collaborative and persistent work between the humanitarian and development actors in order to create sustainable strategies, plans, and initiatives with long-term educational development and peacebuilding efforts. Ideally, information is shared across humanitarian and development actors, and there are shared efforts in joint planning and response; however, commitment to collaboration is not standard, and ways of working together across the nexus are not very clear (Nicolai & al., 2020).

In situations with protracted crises, collaboration between humanitarian and development actors in the humanitarian and development sectors is essential for developing sustainable education strategies and initiatives: EiE intervenes in a broad spectrum of activities to address both short- and long-term needs. This kind of collaboration is essential for coordinating emergency education responses with national education policies and institutions, guaranteeing that interventions are not only timely but also support the long-term growth of the education sector (Lilly & Thierry, 2022).

In the Background paper Humanitarian-Development Coherence in Education Working (INEE, 2021) together in crisis contexts, the authors identified two actual frameworks that advocate and influence the Humanitarian-Development-Peace nexus. The New Way of Working (NWoW) (OCHA, 2012) framework used to explain the concept of coherence and the conceptual framework of norms, capacities, and operations, which is laid out in the USAID white paper, Education and Humanitarian-Development Coherence (USAID, 2019):

- The NWoW: Introduced by OCHA in 2012, it emphasizes the importance of collective outcomes, which are the results that multiple stakeholders agree to achieve together over 3-5 years to

reduce needs, risks, and vulnerabilities. NWoW advocates for stronger collaboration between humanitarian and development actors to ensure that immediate relief efforts contribute to long-term resilience and stability.

- The Conceptual Framework of Norms, Capacities, and Operations: Detailed in the USAID white paper *Education and Humanitarian-Development Coherence* (USAID, 2019), this framework emphasizes three core elements: norms, capacities, and operations. It focuses on establishing common principles and standards, building and strengthening capacities, and ensuring coordinated and effective operational implementation.

Both frameworks offer valuable insights and strategies for promoting coherence in education responses in crisis contexts. Despite their recognition and value, practical application often falls short of actual implementation. The nexus is just the latest effort, which started in the 1990s, to achieve a more joined-up approach to humanitarian and development intervention while recognizing their impact on peace.

GEC is developing a new guidance document titled *Practical Steps towards Bridging the Humanitarian Development Nexus* Draft version, as of July 2024, with a launch planned for September 2024, with a step-by-step possible path to support country teams in the collaborative work with government authorities, development partners, and local groups.

The Global Partners Project (GPP), a collaboration between the GEC, INEE, and UNHCR, found that humanitarian-development nexus approaches within the education sector are lacking. According to GEC (2022), Humanitarian and Development education coordination systems are not systematically connected, and as a result, crisis-affected children and youth may be invisible in national sector planning and processes. Under the Initiative to Strengthen Education in Emergencies (ISEEC), the new iteration of the GPP, GEC, and partners declare that they will support effective coordination in mixed settings and partnerships with local education groups. For that, they are developing new capacity development resources. (GEC, 2022)

The Triple Nexus strategy offers a complete framework for tackling the issues encountered during emergencies by merging humanitarian relief, development objectives, and peace-building efforts. EiE is a very important sector in this context, as it provides stability, protection, and prospects for future generations, while also promoting social solidarity and peacebuilding. Although there may be difficulties in putting them into practice, frameworks like the New Way of Working and the USAID conceptual framework offer valuable direction for fostering coherence in education responses.

2.8 Layer upon Layer: COVID-19 Pandemic exacerbating vulnerabilities in EiE

The COVID-19 pandemic, caused by the novel coronavirus SARS-CoV-2, appeared in late 2019 in Wuhan, China, and quickly spread globally, leading to unprecedented public health crises with far-reaching impacts across all society, work, and well-being. Education Cluster Coordination teams worldwide faced the challenge of rapidly adapting to these changes, transitioning to technology-reliant practices where possible, and addressing a growing type of need caused by the pandemic. This affected not only their professional lives but also significantly disrupted their personal lives.

As highlighted by Novelli (2021, p. 60), for the first time, the COVID 19 pandemic has spread across the whole world aspects of the type of impacts that children in conflict contexts have experienced regularly: school closures, disruptions, exam cancellations, learning loss etc. Since 2020, parents and kids everywhere - many of them having experienced a disruption in their education for the first time maybe more empathetic to those whose education and way of life are impacted by crises, wars, and other conflicts.

The students who were among the most affected made extraordinary efforts to continue their studies with the support of their parents and teachers. For instance, 17-year-old Mia Sulastri from Borneo, Indonesia, traveled 24 kilometers by motorbike four times a week to find a strong enough phone signal to receive WhatsApp messages from her teachers and email back her assignments (HRW, 2021).

For those involved in the Education Cluster, COVID-19 added a layer of complexity to the crises they were already managing. Many children, especially in crisis contexts, were not given the opportunity, tools, or access needed to continue their learning during the pandemic. As a result, a significant number of children became out of school (OOS) and never returned to school. This exacerbated pre-existing educational crises. On 6 August 2020, in a video message⁶⁶ to introduce the Policy Brief, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres stated, "We already faced a learning crisis before the pandemic. [...] We are currently facing a generational crisis that has the potential to squander enormous human potential, undo decades of advancement, and worsen ingrained inequality."

The global education crisis predates the COVID-19 pandemic, with UNESCO estimating that in 2019, 256 million children of primary and secondary school age (UNESCO Institute for Statistics data retrieved on 6 June 2022, cited by Lilly & Thierry, 2022) were out of school. Additionally, fifty percent of these

⁶⁶ See more at: <https://www.unesco.org/en/articles/un-secretary-general-warns-education-catastrophe-pointing-unesco-estimate-24-million-learners-risk-0>

children lived in countries that experienced war, natural disasters brought on by climate change, and other emergencies.

As referred to in the *Global Education Cluster Strategy* (2022), a recent report from Save the Children warns that the world is facing “the biggest global education emergency of our lifetime”, stating that the pandemic has had a devastating impact on access to education and learning worldwide. Despite many schools reopening in 2021, more than 870 million students still face disruptions to their education and the protection that it provides. Over 69 million children – 40% of all school-age children across Eastern and Southern Africa – were not in school in July 2021 due to pandemic-related closures. Remote learning was not an option for millions of children who couldn’t access internet from home. (GEC, 2022)

Despite warnings that the next pandemic was ‘a matter of when, not if’⁶⁷ COVID-19 caught the world unready. Many governments failed to apply the principles of early detection and strong response at the onset, resulting in high rates of transmission followed by lockdowns (ALNAP, 2022). This situation severely disrupted the education of millions of children worldwide, worsening an already precarious scenario. These disruptions have a considerable impact, and there are serious worries that many impacted children might never be able to return to school. (Lilly & Thierry, 2022) This predicament has highlighted the crucial need for resilient educational institutions that can tolerate a range of crises and guarantee that learning continues.

At the pandemic’s peak in 2020, school closures affected 1.6 billion students in 180 countries. This has resulted in education losses equivalent to about one-half of a school year in emerging markets and developing economies and disproportionately affects children from poorer and less-educated families (OCHA, 2022). In particular, in low-income, vulnerable, and conflict-ridden countries, the closure of schools and sluggish economic revival have exacerbated already poor education systems and reinforced systemic inequality and bias in educational opportunities. Preliminary assessments indicate that the impact of COVID-19 on learning outcomes is especially significant among the most economically disadvantaged people and those who already had educational gaps before the pandemic. These groups typically include children who have been touched by various disasters. The youngest and most underprivileged children, especially girls, are disproportionately impacted. (Global Campaign for Education Italy, 2023) Also, a point highlighted by several authors was the well-being and mental health effects of the pandemic (ECW, 2022).

⁶⁷ Jeremy Konyndyk, *Struggling with Scale: Ebola’s lessons for the next pandemic* (Center for Global Development, 2019) www.alnap.org/help-library/struggling-with-scale-ebola%E2%80%99s-lessons-for-the-next-pandemic-0

The shutdown of educational institutions owing to the pandemic has had a huge impact on the entire population, particularly in the most deprived countries. According to UNESCO (2020), numerous critical areas have been severely impacted:

- School closures violate children's right to an education and personal development. The longer access to education is restricted, the more severe the consequences.
- Food insecurity: Many children rely on free or low-cost school lunches, which have been cut off due to school closures.
- Challenges of distance learning: Many parents lack the necessary training or educational experience to support their children's learning at home, which disproportionately affects impoverished households.
- Digital divide: Limited access to information and communication technologies exacerbates educational disparities, making it impossible for some students to engage in online learning.
- Lack of childcare: Parents who must work outside the home have difficulty in finding alternatives to schooling, frequently leaving the children alone.
- Economic impact and increased unemployment: Parents who stay at home to care for small children lose income.
- Increased dropout rates: Prolonged school closures increase the likelihood that pupils will not return when classes resume.

These variables emphasize the severe and diverse implications of the pandemic's educational interruptions. In response to these challenges, the international community has increased its attention to EiE, creating frameworks and measures to protect children's right to an education in times of crisis. The creation of the Geneva Global Hub for Education in Emergencies and the Global Education Coalition, both founded by UNESCO, are examples of coordinated efforts to offer impacted children both short-term and long-term educational help. In addition, the UN Secretary-General's Transforming Education Summit in 2022 sought creative answers to tackle these global education issues and guarantee that all children, regardless of their circumstances, have access to high-quality education.

The humanitarian system's structured operations and prompt funding appeal activation were beneficial in regions where it had already been formed and had disaster response frameworks. Donors responded favorably to this prompt move, adding more money and providing more flexibility to address changing requirements. However, the inequities in the allocations of covid 19 EiE funding, were clear (Geneva HUB for EiE, 2022). Humanitarian efforts still faced logistical and political barriers that made it difficult

to reach those in need. Travel restrictions resulted in a diminution of the international humanitarian workforce, which made a more significant reliance on local individuals and resources necessary. However, the fundamental power dynamics between local actors and foreign organizations remained essentially unchanged as a result of this transformation.

Deliberate efforts were made to restrict communication with impacted populations in an attempt to stop the COVID-19 virus from spreading. But soon enough, the shortcomings of remote humanitarian operations were exposed, especially when it came to recognizing and managing the pandemic's secondary effects. For example, the implementation of lockdowns in Cox's Bazar refugee camps resulted in the cessation of services that were seen to be 'non-essential.' As a result, the number of protection-related incidents increased, and the inability of relief workers to monitor and adequately address these growing difficulties was evident. The in-depth report *Bangladesh Case Study: COVID-19 in Cox's Bazar*⁶⁸ offers a thorough analysis of these problems. (ALNAP, 2022)

The pandemic has definitely brought attention to the importance of strong educational frameworks, but it may have also contributed to the deprioritization of education. According to a study by the Geneva Global Hub for EiE (2022), the COVID-19 epidemic may have significantly decreased the priority of education.

3. Sociological lens

This chapter intends to bring some theoretical lens to the field understanding that allows critical questioning. Through the network configurations, the distinctions between localization and globalization, and the conflict between development and degrowth, the objective is to a group of perspectives to help understand the dynamics of humanitarian education. In addition, we will examine the process of (de)colonizing one's mindset and the utilization of complexity theory and sensemaking to address the complex problems involved in coordinating education during times of crisis.

3.1 Decolonizing Thinking

In this context, we introduce the imperative of decolonizing thought processes. The section critically evaluates the epistemological foundations of Western-centric knowledge and asks for a more inclusive and just approach to the understanding of global issues. Santos (2009) argues that all knowledge is connected to society and comes with its kind of ignorance. This sociologist discusses two main ideas:

⁶⁸ <https://sohs.alnap.org/sohs-2022-report/focus-on-covid-19#bangladesh-case-study-covid-19-in-coxs-bazar>

knowledge regulation (that controls) and knowledge emancipation (that frees). The first idea sees confusion as ignorance and clarity as knowledge, focusing on moving from confusion to clarity. The second idea aims to fight the ignorance caused by colonialism and promote unity. Santos argues that modern science often overlooks many types of knowledge. He is keen on recognizing and valuing these neglected knowledges.

To Santos's (2009) the concept of the 'abyssal line' is fundamental to his analysis of Western knowledge structure. Santos employs the metaphor of the 'abyssal line' in his writings, especially in his views on the *Epistemologies of the South* (Santos, 2018), Cliquez ou appuyez ici pour entrer du texte. in reference to the differences brought up by Western contemporary thought. These distinctions create systemic exclusions in society and knowledge by dividing the 'visible' from the 'invisible' and the 'valid' from what is not. Abyssal thinking is characterized by the inherent impossibility of having both sides of the line present simultaneously. This perspective only remains dominant to the extent that it fully explores the scope of pertinent reality. Furthermore, there exists only non-existence, invisibility, and non-dialectical absence. (Santos, 2009, pp 23-24)

Santos claims that the abyssal line separates two realities: the world of the 'non-existent,' or everything that lies beyond the abyssal line and is regarded as non-being, invalid, and therefore invisible and inaudible within the frameworks of Western recognition, and the world of those realities that are valued and recognized by Western systems of knowledge and power. This divide justifies the exclusion, exploitation, and marginalization of different peoples and knowledge, which makes it social and political in addition to epistemological (relating to how we know the world). Santos (2009) argues that abyssal lines remain a fundamental aspect of modern knowledge and legal frameworks. These lines shape political and cultural relationships and interactions between the West and the broader world system, highlighting ongoing structural influences within these domains.

The abyssal line is never static, and it is constantly redefined through social and political struggles. Through 'ecologies of knowledge,' Santos (2007) asks to acknowledge and value the multiplicity of knowledge outside of Western thought and asks for the transgression of this line.

Ndlovu-Gatsheni's work urges a decolonial approach that recognizes how colonial legacies continue to shape power relations and knowledge production, emphasizing the need to move beyond a Eurocentric worldview. This aligns with Santos's 'abyssal line.' He highlights not only the dependency framework, but he goes beyond saying that it was,

“limited by its Marxist outlook, which did not accommodate epistemological and ideological dependencies that contribute to underdevelopment in the Third World. Furthermore, the role that local elites play in perpetuating relations of dependency is brought up in the interviews with Rex McKenzie, Sabelo Ndlovu-Gatsheni, and Miguel Centeno. Both McKenzie and Ndlovu-Gatsheni draw on Franz Fanon when considering how colonial systems and mindsets are reproduced by local elites after formal independence.”(Kvangraven & al, 2017, p. 8)

For Ndlovu-Gatsheni, putting coloniality at the center is a key first step in defining and contesting the history and present configuration of the modern world within the framework of decoloniality. (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2013)

The INEE did take, in 2020, a big step in addressing social justice concerns within its sphere. The Antiracism and Racial Equity Statement was released, indicating a shared commitment to promoting inclusivity and combatting systemic racism within emergency education efforts. This statement is a remarkable step toward a possible shift of power. Jessica Davies even calls it a ‘seismic shift’ for the field presenting an admission of culpability in perpetuating a racially and hierarchical system and reinforcing colonial dynamics. (Oddy, 2023) Coming from INEE means coming from a network of different stakeholders, including the sector's ‘big fish’, so it’s undeniably a big step. This revelation was especially important considering the lack of academic focus on the impact of racial conceptions and racism on individuals' educational experiences in the EiE sector. (Oddy, 2023) In the meantime, four years after the statement and looking for the field, a clear change seems to not be very visible. Listening FreshEd podcast⁶⁹ Jessica Oddy presented another article in which she made the same point: in practice, a lot can change yet.

According to Jessica Oddy,

“Prevalent discourses that universalize groups of forcibly displaced people fail to grasp the complexities of the issues at hand and actively deflect attention away from how inequalities within education interlock and are co-constituted. As the evidence indicates, more broadly, EiE and humanitarian aid are fraught with power inequities. For EiE scholars, precisely, the I.N.E.E. statement and emerging critical EiE. scholarship should be read as a call to reflect on and address the reproduction of racial injustice and

⁶⁹ Access podcast as : <https://freshedpodcast.com/oddy/#tab-id-2>, last access 07/03/2024

substantively engage with the production and effects of marginalization and othering across research and policy. Reflectivity is key to promoting and informing accountability, trust, clarity, and ethics.”(Oddy, 2023, p. 113)

Understanding how education contributes to racial inequality draws attention to the complexity of the EiE field.

Contemporary Education in Emergencies (EiE) is deeply linked to Western humanitarian efforts. Its management largely depends on the political interests and financial support of governments from the Global North. Interestingly, these same governments are often reluctant to accept refugees, preferring instead to direct aid to recipients in the Global South. The unpredictable nature of these 'benevolent' imperial powers is clear when, for example, they suddenly withdraw funding commitments. (Oddy, 2023). In her work on 'border imperialism,' Walia (2013) explores the complex interplay of policies, practices, and ideologies that maintain and reinforce nation-state borders, not just as physical barriers but also as mechanisms of social, economic, and political control. To paraphrase Walia, State policies of detaining migrants and border imperialism generate enormous corporate profits.

“To speak of EiE, thus, is to speak of colonization and capitalism, bordering and othering, and institutions that reproduce inequities by excluding, devaluing, and silencing forcibly displaced populations.” (Oddy, 2023) Simultaneously, it can serve as a means to support opposition to it. EiE is deeply rooted in colonialism, and its influence remains evident in current practices. The Education Cluster also holds significant responsibility. With more studies emerging, the discussion must persist; voices advocating for change need to influence the system. As highlighted in the GEC Strategy 2020-2025, "equity, inclusion, and protection should be further mainstreamed in Education Cluster functions" (GEC, 2022). Additionally, the decolonization of the EiE system should be prioritized.

3.2 Network Configurations

In the humanitarian sector, the landscape of network interactions has seen significant transformations over the years. In 1993, John Borton highlighted that the humanitarian scenario involves a variety of players with diffuse authority who are unwilling to give up the controlling authority of organizational action to any other single network player for a variety of frequently compelling reasons, including fragmented missions, perceived national interests, competition for resources, and media salience. However, since then, a lot has changed in the humanitarian architecture and in the way the players

interact. The Cluster Approach was implemented and has grown since then. Also, a greater level of professionalism and a stronger focus on accountability and efficiency increased, next to the standardization of training and adherence to shared principles and practices. The potential benefits of network approaches, collaboration, and joint efforts are increasingly recognized, and these collaborative approaches are also being implemented more frequently.

Some work was done related to the humanitarian field associated with network approaches. For instance, in 2008, the Overseas Development Institute (ODI), in a background note (ODI, 2008), referred to the network functions approach (NFA) as a possible tool to analyze and strengthen humanitarian network initiatives. In 2013, OCHA published *Humanitarianism in the Network Age*, highlighting the importance of networks in humanitarian and in the changes in the world that make the subject more and more relevant, advocating for a holistic approach. In addition, Shrestha & al. (2014) emphasized the multiple(x) networks that comprise formal and informal policy actors to address collaboratively dilemmas or challenges. An article by Lai & al. (2019) related to the ‘bona fide’⁷⁰ network perspective with humanitarian collaborative networks made in a disaster context. More recently, NORRAG has a project with several activities, including the creation of a website with the Social Systems Map, arguing that members can map their existing connections, as well as find new connections based on common interests, geographic regions or thematic expertise.

The NFA approach brings us a more outcomes-related point of view, more focused on functionality. However, as with the Bona Fide viewpoint, our study will take a more relational and human-centric perspective. We will integrate Latour’s Actor-Network Theory (ANT) along with other perspectives to enrich the conversation. The ANT adopts an actor-centric view where non-humans also integrate into the network. This approach is a closer one in relation to the Education Cluster Coordination. Despite being a formal and structural network, it has a strong individual/personal component. Education cluster teams are supposed to be neutral and impartial in relation to their institutional or organizational ties and work with ‘volunteer’ members of other organizations. These publications advocate for a holistic approach to managing humanitarian efforts, emphasizing the shift towards a more interconnected and collaborative operational model.

Considering perspectives from Latour (1996), Castells (1999, 2001, 2011), and Weik on network society and network actors, they provide ways of seeing the modern world as based on complex,

⁷⁰ Bona fide: Meaning authentic relation

interconnecting networks rather than relying on any particular individual or institution. They offer framings of how power and action can be distributed and how change might occur through the shifting of relationships within these networks. In 2018, the Humanitarian Policy Group published a working paper titled *Network Humanitarianism*, which also builds upon Castells' (2001) Network Society theory. It considers that networks already exist within the humanitarian community but emphasizes the need for a more 'networked' (interconnected) way of working.

Actor-network theory (ANT), as proposed by Bruno Latour, provides a valuable lens for examining these developments. An ANT "may lack all the characteristics of a technical network – it may be local, it may have compulsory paths, no strategically positioned nodes." (Latour, 1996, p. 369) So, we can have a technical, formal network interacting and intersecting with other informal and formal networks.

The engineering and linear version of the network is a lot more technical or functional and can be linked to computers or mechanical networks. Instead, ANT is not just mechanical and has a more organic way of organizing itself:

"ANT claims that modern societies cannot be described without recognizing them as having a fibrous, thread-like, wiry, stringy, ropy, capillary character that is never captured by the notions of levels, layers, territories, spheres, categories, structures, systems." (Latour, 1996, p. 370)

In ANT theory (Latour, 1996), non-humans are also considered and are part of the network and the sociologic analysis. Technological gadgets are so intrinsically part of our lives that we are not the same without them. He argues that thinking about humans or nonhumans in isolation from one another is both impossible and inappropriate. The use of tools coexisted with the first impulses of human features in our ape ancestors. We have lived among and through our numerous objects for so long that it is impossible for us to truly comprehend who we are without considering them. Similarly, our instruments would be meaningless without us since they are so fully infused with our aspirations, objectives, and knowledge. Furthermore, they represent and embodied social ties in more ways than one. Building on this foundation, ANT offers a nuanced lens through which to understand the complementarity of both human and non-human actors in the field of EiE. For example, the use of technology in ECC emphasizes the importance of non-human actors in providing educational services. This study is especially relevant to consider in the coordination interactions, the policies, technologies, organizational structures, and human-actors influencing educational responses during crises.

To ANT these 'actants'⁷¹ are interconnected in networks that collectively shape results. The precarious nature of humanitarian environments, where instability and lack of resources are expected, further emphasizes the significance of these non-human actors. The ability of networks to adapt and incorporate both human and non-human components directly impacts their effectiveness in these settings. Within the framework of EiE, this method reveals how both tangible and intangible entities, such as educational regulations, digital platforms, governmental agencies, and NGOs, have agency and come together to either facilitate or challenge the coordination and work of education. Through their interactions, these actors are continually negotiating and redefining their roles and meanings, participating in the process of 'translation.' The identities and capacities of the actors in these networks are formed by their interactions with one another rather than being predetermined. ANT challenges the human-centric bias of classic social theory and promotes a more integrated strategy that recognizes the interdependence of human and non-human actors in the formation of emergency education decisions.

Harman (2009) pointed out key points that summarize the ANT as:

- i) the world is comprised of actants – humans and non-humans;
- ii) which are unique and consequently not “inherently reducible or irreducible to any other”;
- iii) entangled to each other by translation (continuously negotiated and refined), and;
- iv) their agency, or influence, in the network, is dynamic; it changes not because of fixed alliances but rather because of the relationships and exchanges they have with other actors.

Haman wrote Latour's' ANT summary, which focused on human and non-human dynamics. This sets the stage for Castells' global network dynamics, which are more related to strategic and networked organizations.

On the other hand, Latour's work focuses on the process that makes a network a network. He focuses on the actions and practices of individual actors. He argues that a network cannot be fully understood by looking at the organigram of an organization or the map of actors, connections, and nodes. Instead, we must understand the practices and processes through which the network is created and maintained over time. In this sense, we can understand better that in each country, the national Cluster Coordination formal network is very different and can change over time and depending on the actors

⁷¹ An actant can be essentially anything that exerts influence or performs actions within a network – not limited to humans, can be a non-human, non-individual element. Actants are involved in continuous processes of negotiation, translation, and transformation as they interact with other elements within the network. Their identity, influence, and role are dynamically constituted through these interactions.

that compose it. This allows for a focus on the actions of the individual actors within the network, as well as the way in which different actors and links shape the network as a whole.

This is in part in the same line of thought as Deleuze and Guattari's concept of 'rhizome,' a term they borrowed from botany and repurposed in their philosophical explorations. Rhizome serves as a metaphor for structures that are non-hierarchical, decentralized, and operate through connection and heterogeneity. In a 'rhizomatic'(Deleuze & Guattari, 1987) network, every point can potentially connect to any other without a central authority or predetermined pathway, mirroring ANT's approach to understanding social phenomena. Here, the importance is not on the nodes or individual elements but on the connections and interactions. This understanding shifts the focus from rigid structures to fluid processes, from predetermined results to emergent possibilities.

Castells brings the concept of a 'Network Society' (Castells, 1999) in the beginning of the XXI century, where the power dynamics become topologically different. He presents a compelling analysis of the role of power relationships in shaping our institutions and norms. According to Castells, in his 2011 publication in the International Journal of Communication,

"Power relationships are the foundation of society, as institutions and norms are constructed to fulfill the interests and values of those in power. However, wherever there is power, there is counterpower, enacting the interests and values of those in subordinate positions in the social organization. The shape of the institutions and organizations that construct human action depend on the specific interaction between power and counterpower. Power is multidimensional, and it is constructed around multidimensional networks programmed in each domain of human activity according to the interests and values of empowered actors." (Castells, 2011, p. 773)

His perspective on power dynamics within networks identifies four different forms of power: i) Networking Power: the influence that actors and organizations operating in international networks have over people and groups operating outside of these networks. In essence, membership in international networks confers substantial advantages and power that are only available to included individuals. This form of power operates by exclusion/inclusion; ii) Network Power: the power that comes from standards and guidelines that control network participation. It's not about keeping people out; instead, it's about managing inclusion by establishing procedures for interaction within these networks; iii) Networked Power: the influence individuals within a network have over one another. Depending on the unique

dynamics and topologies of each network, power is used differently in these situations; iv) Network-making Power: includes the capacity to create links between various networks for strategic aims and to shape networks in accordance with the programmers' interests and values. It involves building networks in a specific way as well as switching to different networks following the strategic alliances between the dominant actors of various networks.

In a network society, managing the points of interaction between different strategic networks is significant. Key people, referred to as 'switchers,' oversee the edges that connect different networks. These interfaces go beyond the formal appearances of institutions and organizations, articulating the actual mechanics of societal functioning. Actor networks facilitate communication and synergy between these networks, reducing conflicts through switching processes.

Social power in the network society is mainly derived from the way people generate meaning in their minds through communication activities. This is especially true in the local and global contexts of mass communication networks and multimedia, such as the Internet and digital platforms, that allow for widespread self-communication. Meaning making is closely linked to cultural settings, both local and global, marked by significant diversity. Information movement and content within these networks are managed by 'programmers,' or people in charge of power. These programmers are not isolated individuals; instead, they are arranged in a hierarchy inside each network, which shapes the network's overall functioning. In essence, they create a decision-making network through their interactions with other network programmers and with each other.

Castells (2005) argues that the actual networks have a higher possibility to deal with complexity problems or big-size problems, thanks to their digital component:

Networks throughout history had a major advantage and a major problem vis-a-vis other forms of social organization. On the one hand, they are the most adaptable and flexible organizational forms, so following very efficiently the evolutionary path of human social arrangements. On the other hand, in the past they could not master and coordinate the resources needed to accomplish a given task or fulfill a project beyond a certain size and complexity of the organization required to perform the task (Castells, 2005, p. 4).

Castells (2005) presents the shift from hierarchical organizational forms to global networks as a rational step for efficiency in the modern world. He characterizes the network as 'a spatially and temporally

flexible structure,' where the emphasis on flexibility and adaptability is seen as necessary to survive and grow in the network. This framing of actors and systems in network theory has clear parallels with internationally coordinated efforts in the humanitarian and development sectors, such as in the case of EiE coordination. Castells focuses on the shift from a 'society of the place' to a 'society of flows' due to the information technology revolution, characterizing network society as arranged around and dependent on the 'network enterprise'. He argues that the network enterprise is the organizational form best adapted to the globalizing, decentralizing, and accelerating features of the modern world. This is because networks allow for both flexibility and stability: as the network can reconfigure itself rapidly and organically, when necessary, it can adapt to the fast changes of the global economy, while still providing a stable and sustainable form of organization.

Building on the application of ANT and Castells Network Society in analyzing EiE coordination, it is also insightful to consider Weick's theories, particularly his concept of loosely coupled systems.

3.3 Complex GLocal-ization

Following our exploration of network configurations, we shift our focus to the complex balance between localization and globalization. This chapter deals with the theoretical consensus on localization in humanitarian action and the practical challenges it faces, particularly from local actors.

As Baguios rightly put, in 2017 article called *The future of aid is the end of it*, aid is already 'localized' – power within the aid sector is not." Even if the WHS 2016 had a call out for localization, ALNAP's 2015 report indicated that 80% of the 4,278 registered NGOs worldwide are national organizations, and 87% of the 249,000 aid workers are local or national. However, the Global Humanitarian Assistance report (2016) revealed that in 2016, local actors only directly received 0.3% of the USD 27.3 billion global aid budget despite being the most effective and quickest responders in crises.

The localization agenda remains a recurrent, and often emphasized subject in the humanitarian circles. While it is theoretically a unanimous subject, it is a hard path to take in practice. (Campbell, 2018; Krueger & al., 2016; Knox Clarke and Campbell, 2015; STAIT, 2015; Polastro & al., 2011b; Diagne and Solberg, 2008;). Nonetheless, even if the effort and the relevance are there, reality shows that not enough was done, especially in direct financing and decision-power.

Since the early 1990s, there has been a global movement to increase the capacities of local players, give them access to resources and knowledge, and include local non-governmental organizations

(LNGOs) as crucial collaborators in the process of making strategic decisions. However, localization initiatives have accelerated significantly since the *World Humanitarian Summit* in 2016, coinciding with pledges made by other international platforms, including the *Global Compact on Refugees*⁷² (2018), the *Grand Bargain* (IASC, 2016), and the *Charter for Change* (Development, 2015). The COVID-19 pandemic's development brought even more attention to the crucial role that local players play in disaster response and emphasized the necessity of strong local capacities in overseeing humanitarian activities. The international community is working to apply localization concepts in various places, and there is increasing discussion about the challenges and essential elements that make these efforts successful.

Concerns about the risks and difficulties that come with implementing localization principles globally have been raised in the middle of these growing initiatives. It is crucial to investigate the potential benefits of localization as well as any potential roadblocks to its implementation. Gaining an understanding of these dynamics is essential to improving the sustainability of humanitarian efforts and making them more responsive to the needs and capabilities of local populations.

Localization is also expected to be a collaborative effort. The program seeks to accomplish four main goals: i) Financial Autonomy for Local Actors: This entails making LNGOs less dependent on foreign money, increasing the amount of direct, multi-year, or pooled support that is given to them directly, promoting their sustainability and financial independence; ii) Building Capacity and Fair relationships: Here, the emphasis is on creating more equitable relationships between local and international organizations and strengthening local capacities through institutional development. This involves making sure local actors' opinions are heard and respected at every stage of the decision-making process by increasing their involvement and effect; iii) Promotion of Local Ownership: This goal aims to strengthen the influence that local and refugee communities have on the formulation and application of humanitarian laws and programs. It highlights how crucial it is to hire locals to fill in the gaps in the humanitarian workforce, appreciating and incorporating local expertise and viewpoints into humanitarian efforts; iv) sustain Local Networks and Human Capital: The ultimate objective emphasizes how crucial it is to fund and sustain current local networks and human resources. This includes refining and recognizing the skills that local performers already possess in addition to improving educational options and skill development for them.

⁷² <https://www.unhcr.org/sites/default/files/legacy-pdf/5c658aed4.pdf>

The ECC and globally EiE, in general, are making a clear effort on the subject, as stated in GEC (2022) Strategy Background Report arguing that the sector has an intrinsic need for integration, unlike food assistance or housing, as it is a basic social service. However, achieving a high level of integration and inclusion to meet the needs of communities can be challenging. From the GEC support team, an expert works full-time to advocate, promote and improve localization practices at all dimensions of the ECC; also, there is a webpage⁷³ dedicated to the sector where it explores the meaning of localization for coordination in each dimension, where the following table (Figure 10) is represented:

Dimension	What this means for coordination
Governance and Decision-Making	Local actors should have equitable opportunities to play leadership and co-leadership roles at national and sub-national levels; and have a seat at the table when strategic decisions are made (for example, in Strategic Advisory Groups or Steering Committees).
Participation and Influence	Even if not taking the decisions, local actors should have the opportunity to influence these decisions. To do this, they need equitable access to information and analysis on coverage, results etc; and the opportunity and skills to effectively and credibly convey their thoughts and ideas.
Partnerships	Coordinators should be promoting a culture of principled partnership both in the way it interacts with its members; and the way in which members interact with each other. In some cases, this requires transitions from sub-contracting to more equitable and transparent partnerships, including recognising the value of non-monetary contributions by local actors (networks, knowledge).
Funding	Local actors should receive a greater share of the humanitarian resources, including pooled funds. Where they have the institutional capacity to manage these funds, local actors should be able to access funds directly.
Institutional Capacity	Whilst technical capacity strengthening is important, coordination groups should also actively encourage more systematic and coordinated opportunities to receive support to strengthen operational functions, as part of the overall sector strategy to scale up services.

Figure 9: Localization conceptual framework (source: CP AoR)

In insights of major global normative and policy documents related to localization within the EiE sector, including Education Cluster Coordination, we identified several key resources: i) *Charter for Change* (2015): Establishes harmonizing principles for localization to ensure that local actors are at the forefront of humanitarian action; ii) *IASC Grand Bargain* (2016): A commitment among humanitarian actors to improve efficiency through greater localization, among other objectives; iii) World Humanitarian Summit (2016): Highlighted commitments to localization, recognizing the essential role of local actors in humanitarian responses; iv) *Global Compact on Refugees* (2018): A framework for more predictable and equitable responsibility-sharing, emphasizing the importance of local capacities in addressing

⁷³ See more at : <https://www.educationcluster.net/content-page/localization>, last access 07/02/2023

refugee situations; v) *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals (SDG)*: Although broader in scope, the SDGs underscore the importance of localized efforts in achieving sustainable development worldwide; vi) *Inter-Agency Toolkit on Localisation in Humanitarian Coordination (2022)*: A comprehensive guide designed to enhance local engagement in humanitarian efforts; vii) *Strengthening Participation, Representation, and Leadership of Local and National Actors* in IASC Humanitarian Coordination Mechanisms (2021): a document aimed at boosting the roles of local and national entities within the International Association for Suicide Prevention (IASC) coordination frameworks; viii) *Localization in Practice: Emerging Indicators and Practical Recommendations* (2018): Offers concrete indicators and recommendations for implementing localization effectively; ix) *How to Engage in a Core Support Partnership with Civil Society Organizations and Networks*, by Save the Children (2023): This guide provides strategies for forming meaningful partnerships with civil society organizations to support localization; x) *As Local as Possible, As International as Necessary* (2018): Understanding Capacity and Complementarity in Humanitarian Action: Explores the balance between local action and international support to optimize humanitarian responses. All these publications show the effort from the international community to strengthen local capacities and improve cooperation between International Non-Governmental Organizations (INGOs) and Local Non-Governmental Organizations (LNGOs).

In 2020, a statement by the Network for Empowered Aid Response (NEAR), a movement of civil society organizations from the Global South, points out that despite an apparent need to shift to local and national organizations since the closing of borders due to COVID 19. However, funding for national and local NNGO remains at a mere 0.1% of total EIE funding. In 2023, not a lot of change happened visibly, yet, and their first sentence from the *Centering Local Leadership in Humanitarian Coordination* report "as international as possible, as local as necessary," is allegedly closer to the reality than the official slogan "as local as possible, as international as necessary." (Indonesian Development and Humanitarian Alliance; & al., 2021)

In this sense, the dynamics between localization and globalization represent a real discussion about balancing local needs and global standards within humanitarian aid, a topic Edgar Morin insightfully addresses. Challenges the simplicity of the widely accepted mantra to 'think globally and act locally' and argue for a more nuanced version,

“One believed to be able to assume the two truths of the global and of the local with axioms of the style: “think globally and act locally”. In reality, one is, I believe,

constrained in our global age to think jointly locally and globally and to try to act at the same time locally and globally.”(Morin, 2007, p. 11)

The other spectrum of localization is globalization, and we can see it expanded over the years with the higher professionalization in the sector and the augmenting number of international policies and guidelines.

The term ‘globalization,’ which Rupert (2005) characterized as particularly elusive and wide-ranging, has since become a well-anchored term within the social sciences. It captures the complex and dynamic dynamics that are causing people, places, and organizations—across political, cultural, and economic domains—to become more interconnected and dependent on one another. This complex web of ties crosses national and physical borders, promoting an international network of contacts and exchanges. In addition, a global private market (Robertson & al. 2002) for educational services has emerged as a result of globalization, operating either alongside or in opposition to existing national education systems.

While notoriously slippery and expansive (Rupert 2005), today, globalization is a very well-established term in the social sciences. It can be broadly defined as a constitutive process of increasing interdependence between people, territories, and organizations in the economic, political, and cultural domains. This change reflects not only how education is being provided but also how globalization is affecting societal processes and institutions more broadly. In order to keep educational policies and practices current and effective in a world that is becoming more interconnected by the day, it is imperative that they be critically examined and modified in light of these global trends. “Globalization, as a process of market acceleration and responsible for the integration of spaces at a global level, in terms of the goods and services circulation, has also been responsible for the marked discrepancy, in terms of promoting inequalities, between consumer and non-consumer spaces.”(Siqueira & al., 2019, p. 105)

Robertson (1995), a renowned researcher on globalization, has highlighted the ways in which global brands adjust their marketing, messaging, and product offerings to resonate with local cultures and preferences. This adaptive approach allows brands to create meaningful connections with diverse audiences while maintaining a coherent global identity. For instance, multinational fast-food chains like McDonald's adapt their menus to cater to local tastes, incorporating region-specific flavors and ingredients. Such strategies reflect a keen awareness of the importance of understanding and respecting local nuances. In the realm of humanitarian education, a similar principle of adaptation is

happening with an adaptation of global standards and politics as well as the adaptation of external models of other countries.

Robertson's (1995) perspectives on the flexibility of international companies provide an insightful perspective on humanitarian education programs. By adopting the idea of contextual adaptation during emergencies, the humanitarian community may support more efficient, culturally aware, and long-lasting education initiatives. In addition to respecting the agency of communities impacted by crises, the move from global intervention to local empowerment increases the overall impact of education during difficult times.

Giddens (1994) expands the discussion on globalization that goes beyond economic factors. He makes the case that, in addition to changing location and time, globalization also intensifies distant contacts because of developments in mass transit and international communication. This phenomenon alters social experiences on both a local and personal level in addition to producing large-scale systems.

Glocalization is a concept developed by Robertson (1995) to capture the dynamic interplay between Local and Global forces. It challenges the binary view of global versus local and highlights the intertwined nature of contemporary interactions where local events can have global repercussions and vice versa. He refers to the mosaic of cultural expressions around the world created by the balance between cultural homogenization (the spread of similar cultural practices) and heterogenization (the preservation and adaptation of local traditions). Actually, by developing localization practices, the humanitarian looks to find this balance. Glocal coordination in EiE involves the collaboration between these global and local actors to ensure a coherent and effective response to the crisis. For example, international organizations and donor agencies may provide funding and resources, while local actors may provide contextual knowledge and expertise. At the same time, glocal coordination also involves adapting global policies and practices to the local context to ensure their relevance and effectiveness. This can involve working with local communities and officials to ensure that interventions are culturally appropriate and sensitive to local needs.

3.4 Development - Degrowing tension

As we continue to explore the complexities of humanitarian coordination, we address the tension between development and degrowth. This section focuses on understanding global economic justice

from different perspectives to come closer to a nuanced understanding of economic growth and sustainability in the humanitarian field.

A central subject in contemporary discourse is the conflict between degrowth and development, which reflects different perspectives on the way to achieve global economic justice and stability. This conflict is not just theoretical; it is a practical dilemma that affects all facets of human life, from social justice to environmental sustainability. The tension between Development and Degrowth presents a critical dialogue in understanding global economic dynamics. Despite critiques, the dominant narrative of development remained closely tied to economic growth, often sidelining qualitative aspects and the broader social, cultural, political, and environmental dimensions of development. As Ferreira (2005) points out, the focus has remained on productive activities and the production of goods and services associated with progress, neglecting the holistic understanding of development.

Martha Finnemor (1996) further elaborates on the Western paradigm of progress and justice, defined materially and in terms of equality, respectively. These goals are pursued through bureaucracies and markets, justified by claims of efficiency and legitimized by the promise of equality in access and opportunity:

“Progress and justice are the two ends toward which Western societies structure their rational action. Through historical experience these two goals have come to be defined in particular ways. Progress or "success" is defined materially, which for individuals usually means increasing wealth and for states means increasing gross national product. Justice is usually defined in terms of equality. Rational means to both these goals, in the Western cultural framework, are bureaucracies and markets. Claims of efficiency in contributing to increased wealth and progress legitimize both. Both locate authority in impersonal rules that can be legitimated in terms of equality-equal access, equal opportunity.”(Finnemor, 1996, 331)

As noted by Turolla (2004), in contrast to the population concentration of the least developed countries, only one-sixth of the world's population was concentrated in the countries with the highest per capita income at the beginning of the twenty-first century, indicating that the movement of wealth and capital has not promoted homogeneous development at a global level. Economic growth didn't have a homogenous development, with a significant disparity between the least developed countries and those with the highest per capita income.

In contrast, the concept of Degrowth emerges as a critique of the sustainability of continuous economic growth. It challenges this narrative by questioning perpetual growth's sustainability and ethical implications. It is rooted in ecological and post-materialist philosophies that emphasize living within planetary boundaries, redistributing wealth more equitably, and prioritizing well-being over material wealth. Degrowth advocates argue that the relentless pursuit of economic growth is incompatible with the finite nature of Earth's ecosystems and leads to environmental degradation, resource depletion, and social inequalities.

This approach aligns with UNESCO's definition of education for sustainable development (ESD), which covers a broad range of issues from natural resources to poverty reduction. ESD advocates for a holistic and tangible understanding of sustainability, reflecting the complexity and interconnectedness of global challenges:

“UNESCO defines education for sustainable development (ESD) as covering a broad range of issues from natural resources and HIV/AIDS to poverty reduction. ESD thus becomes a term that must be subtle yet clear, holistic yet tangible. One option for ESD, in dealing with this complexity, is to simplify its content and narrow the issues it addresses. Another more viable option for ESD is to retain a broad range of issues and related domains of knowledge while unifying the range of epistemologies it employs” (Hanley, 2005, p. 1).

The pursuit of sustainable development leaves no aspect of life untouched, just as development that is increasingly sustainable will impact every part of life. Complexity and interconnectedness mean that ESD must convey subtle yet clear messages, holistic yet tangible, and multi-dimensional yet direct (UNESCO, 2004, p. 13).

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) represent a comprehensive framework established by the United Nations to guide global efforts toward achieving a balance among economic growth, social inclusion, and environmental sustainability. While the SDGs themselves do not specifically adopt Degrowth principles, their emphasis on sustainable practices, equitable resource distribution, and environmental protection resonates with the essence of Degrowth, particularly in promoting a holistic approach.

Within the humanitarian sector, there is an increasing emphasis on developing responses that are not only sustainable but also resilient, aiming to harmonize the ideals of Development and Degrowth. This involves the strategic incorporation of 'climate resilience,' 'sustainability,' and 'local empowerment' into humanitarian programming. The role of the Education Cluster Coordination is crucial in this context. By advocating for and implementing actions that align with these principles, the Education Cluster can significantly influence the achievement of a nuanced balance between development aspirations and Degrowth values. Such efforts are vital in ensuring that humanitarian interventions contribute effectively to the broader objectives of the SDGs, facilitating a transition towards more sustainable and equitable global development pathways.

3.5 Complexity Theory and Sensemaking

This section delves into complexity theory and the concept of sensemaking, providing theoretical tools to understand and deal with the unpredictable and interconnected nature of humanitarian crises. It synthesizes the preceding discussions and problematizes the subject in the field of EiE.

Complexity theory, as articulated by theorists such as Morin (2005), Cilliers (2000), Urry (2005), Juarrero (1999), and Snowden (2003), provides a paradigm for understanding systems characterized by interconnections, nonlinear dynamics, and emergent properties. Morin (2005) emphasizes the need to embrace the complexity of phenomena by considering the interactions and reciprocal influences. Urry (2005) extends this perspective to social systems, asserting that complex webs of relationships and interdependencies characterize societal structures. Juarrero (1999) explores the roles of emergence, self-organization, and unpredictability in dynamic systems, whereas Snowden (2021) introduces the Cynefin framework, which classifies situations according to their complexity in order to guide decision-making possibilities based on a sensemaking approach and gives great importance to the qualitative data. Cilliers' work on complexity theory explores the attributes of complex systems, highlighting their non-linear nature, self-organizing behavior, and emergent properties. He argues that complex systems are not comprehensible simply through reductionist approaches, as they manifest behaviors that are more than the sum of their parts.

The concept of complexity “comes from the Latin *complexus*, which means what is woven together.”(Morin, 2007, p. 2). The inherent nature of this discipline is characterized by its interdisciplinarity, which is essential to both its origin and its meaning. It cannot exist or be fully

understood without engaging with other disciplines. This interdisciplinarity is not only crucial to grasping the concept itself but also to the study of the subject matter at hand.

Emerging from the physical sciences, complexity theory, appeared in the second half of the twentieth century, and with it, “dogmas or paradigms of classical science began to be disputed” (Morin, 2007). From the discipline of determinism, reductionism, and disjunction – principles that “led to extremely brilliant, important, and positive developments of scientific knowledge” (Morin, 2007). The discovery of the quantum properties of energy and matter in the 1930s and mounting evidence about the nature of the physical universe provided a new understanding of the physical world. Complexity is not a methodology or a set of tools (although it does provide both). Certainly, it is not a ‘management fad’. The theories of complexity provide a conceptual framework, a way of thinking, and a way of seeing the world (Mitleton-Kelly, 2003).

Recent global crises have further complicated the already challenging landscape of humanitarian coordination, making the consideration of complexity theory all the more critical. Contemporary innovations in economics, information technology, and globalization, among other things, have made the world even more complex in some ways. Even though we are just now beginning to notice these complex dimensions, we are still very far from comprehending them. Complexity is characterized by having numerous components that are intertwined and dependent on one another. The entanglement in complexity is high, with everything being connected to everything else, and “you can’t actually take it apart and put it back together again”⁷⁴.

Humanitarian emergencies are inherently life-threatening situations that require rapid action, often in conditions of poor security and restricted access to the affected areas. This urgency places significant pressure on decision-makers, further intensified by close external scrutiny. Although there may be a considerable amount of information available to guide decisions, it is typically incomplete, with many critical details missing. Frequently, the situation is so novel or unique – emergent – that there are no reliable existing best practices to follow. The overarching goals and priorities for action are often ambiguous, leading to potential conflicts between immediate and long-term objectives or between the demands of response, political considerations, and human rights. Additionally, resources are usually insufficient to meet the objectives fully (Knox-Clarke, 2013).

⁷⁴ See video at : YouTube, how to create flow in complex environments, Dave Snowden, <https://youtu.be/twYp1dNN1E>

The complexity of the Humanitarian coordination contexts increased and became more nuanced also due to the Covid-19 pandemic, climate change, the growing number of attacks on education, and unexpected and surprising wars continuing to arise next to other different factors. This complex environment puts ECC especially at the country and local level, under increasing pressure. They are frequently in need of negotiating integrated coordination models in environments where populations of internally displaced people (IDPs) and refugees coexist in order to handle the different needs effectively. Adding to this, “upholding humanitarian principles and maintaining neutrality while working with national authorities is also a complex area for coordinators working in contexts where government policies run counter to a rights-based approach.”(GEC, 2022) The complexity theory, as advocated by theorists such as Morin (2005), Hollis (2010), Deleuze and Guattari (1987), Weick (1976), Urry (2005), Juarrero (1999), and Snowden (2003, 2002, 2021), offers a lens through which to view these challenges characterized by interconnections, non-linear dynamics, and emergent properties.

Morin (2005) emphasized the need to embrace the complexity of phenomena by considering the interactions between different elements and their reciprocal influences. Urry (2005) extends this perspective to social systems, asserting that complex webs of relationships and interdependencies characterize societal structures. Juarrero (1999) delves into the philosophical aspects of complexity and explores the roles of emergence, self-organization, and unpredictability in dynamic systems. Snowden, also a prominent figure in the field of complexity science, introduced the Cynefin framework, which categorizes problems into different domains based on their complexity and guides decision-making strategies. He also discusses the importance of informal networks, sensemaking, and the way complex situations can be scalable – by decomposition and recombination instead of aggregation.⁷⁵

The Cynefin Framework and the SenseMaker® tool used in this research were developed by Snowden (Kurtz & Snowden, 2003; Snowden, 2011). Although his primary focus is on knowledge management and decision-making rather than sociological network theories per se, his insights into complexity theory are relevant and intersect with the broad field of network theories in sociology. Also, Snowden's interdisciplinary path has links to sociological concepts. The Cynefin Framework provides a dynamic and evolving model for understanding situations according to their complexity levels. Continuously adapted and refined over time, this framework classifies systems into five distinct domains: Disorder, Simple, Complicated, Complex, and Chaotic. This approach is not the point of this study but can be complementary to it and interesting to the ECC approach.

⁷⁵ See more at : How to create flow in complex environments <https://youtu.be/tvYp1dNN1E>, last access 13/04/2023

Furthermore, Karl Weick's theories on sensemaking and loosely coupled systems highlight the importance of flexibility and the capacity to adapt to changes in complex environments. These competencies highlight the importance of agency and the capacity of Education Cluster members to negotiate unpredictable crisis contexts. His theories predate the concept of 'sensemaking,' a neologism, or newly created word, intended to express the idea that the term is so inclusive that it merits being recognized as a novel application of a novel concept. He uses it to explain how humans perceive and react to their surroundings. Unlike Dave Snowden's 'sense-making,' this idea places more emphasis on action - highlighting the fact that with the hyphen, the word becomes a verb and, in that sense, refers to an action.

Snowden's more conventional term seeks to employ story theory to analyze the complexity of organizational environments and to describe a full range of processes (Browning & Boudes, 2005). Despite their divergent views on complexity and sensemaking, Browning and Boudes (2005) notes that "there is considerable overlap on the substance of their thinking." Their shared focus on diagnosing and responding to complexity contributes to the broader understanding of complexity and narrative. According to Stephenson (2005) Weick's idea of collaborative sensemaking might offer precisely the qualities needed to support the capacity for organization to ensure coordination in a changing and frequently 'headless' environment.

Weick (1993) has described contextual rationality as actions motivated by the desire to establish and preserve traditions and institutions that protect common values and strengthen bonds between people. This idea emphasizes how crucial it is to develop normative frameworks that have meaning and bind actors:

"Action motivated to create and maintain institutions and traditions that express some conceptions of right behavior and a good life with others. Contextual rationality is sensitive to the fact that social actors need to create and maintain intersubjectively binding normative structures that sustain and enrich their relationships." (Weick, 1993, p. 634–635)

Weick (1976) also created the possibility of understanding in different ways the issues of coordination, distancing himself from a static organizational concept, which is mostly concerned with structure, hierarchy, and the division of tasks and responsibilities (Langenberg & Wesseling, 2016). For Weick (1976), elements in organizations are often tied together frequently and loosely, in contrast to the

prevailing image that they are coupled through dense and tight linkages. The concept of 'loosely coupled systems' versus 'tightly coupled systems' is a critical theoretical framework in organizational theory.

In a 'Loosely Coupled System,' the components of an organization or system that are loosely tied are connected, yet they still have a great deal of agency (autonomy and independence). Weick defined loose coupling as a situation in which elements are responsive but retain evidence and separateness identity. Later, he wrote that loose coupling is evident when elements affect each other "suddenly (rather than continuously), occasionally (rather than constantly), negligibly (rather than significantly), indirectly (rather than directly), and eventually (rather than immediately)" (Orton & Weick, 1990 paraphrasing Weick, 1976 and 1982). There is no need for extensive systemic change because of the adaptability and reactivity to changes made possible by the links between these components. Because of this 'loose coupling', individual parts can react to changes in the environment or disruptions locally without necessarily affecting the system as a whole. These organizations or networks are characterized as having high adaptability, preservation of diversity, and decentralized decision-making. Contrarily, a 'Tightly Coupled System' components of an organization or system that are tightly tied have a high degree of interdependence and minimal autonomy. Modifications or interruptions in one area of the system may have an instantaneous and extensive impact on other areas of the system. This is characterized as having high efficiency, uniformity and centralized control. Karl Weick's distinction between systems that are loosely and tightly coupled offers important insights into managing and designing organizations. It implies that an organization's context, objectives, and operating environment may all affect the ideal degree of connection. For example, strongly connected systems could be useful in stable conditions when efficiency is crucial. On the other hand, the adaptability and flexibility of loosely linked systems could be more advantageous in dynamic or uncertain contexts. This idea is especially pertinent in the context of complex environments like the Education Cluster, where the degree of interdependence between constituents (in the multi-level, multi-actor, and intersection plan) has a big impact on how well the network works, how flexible it can be, and how well it can adapt to change. Furthermore, at the same time, the agency of the education Cluster Coordination is very important to deal with complexity.

Other pertinent theoretical approaches could be referred to; nevertheless, just one more is added to our theoretical background, based on Hollis, 2010 (Olsen, 2007), in so far as it underlines an understanding of institutions as enduring collections of rules and practices derived from collective

identities. Instead of merely explaining the social world as a system of laws similar to the natural world, the focus is on understanding social structures as the 'fabric of meanings' (Hollis, 2010). In this sense, the sensemaking narrative and discussion(s) explore interrelated connections and tensions in the coordination actors' perspectives, working closer to methodological nomadism, inspired by Deleuze and Guattari (1987).

Finally, one of today's most influential complexity theorists, Edgar Morin⁷⁶ (Montuori, 2013; Morin, 2005), describes complexity as a reality made up of various interconnected and constantly changing aspects, which cannot be understood in isolation but only in connection with each other. Edgar Morin reminds us that although we understand phenomena as complex and look at reality in a multidimensional way, it is not intended to incorporate completeness or eliminate the simplicity of reality. The identification or recognition of the presence of unpredictable, uncertain, and non-linear occurrences characterizes complex phenomena.

"At first glance, complexity is a fabric (complexus: that which is woven together) of inseparably associated heterogeneous constituents: it poses the paradox of the one and the multiple. In a second moment, complexity is effectively the fabric of events, actions, interactions, retroactions, determinations, happenings that make up our phenomenal world. But then complexity presents itself with the disturbing traits of entanglement, inextricability, disorder, ambiguity, uncertainty...."(Morin, 2005, p. 13))

Edgar Morin's profound insights into complexity lay a strong foundation for understanding the particularities of our world. For him, complexity defies reductionism, demanding a holistic perspective that embraces the interconnectedness of diverse elements.

Collectively, these theorists contribute to a nuanced understanding of how systems, including those involved in EiE, exhibit elaborate patterns of connectivity and behavior and simultaneously disconnection, disarticulation, and ambiguity. Therefore, the analysis of coordination policies and practices cannot be reduced to simple cause-and-effect relationships. ECC is inherently complex due to several factors: the presence of numerous stakeholders, the voluntary type of link with them, members with different mandates, goals, missions, and also agendas, and unpredictable variables inherent in emergency contexts and constantly changing conditions. It's important to recognize that the mobilization, reception, and delivery of humanitarian aid within a specific country are often shaped by a

⁷⁶ See more at : <https://youtu.be/6UT57Jm371w>, last access 08/02/2024

complex interplay between international and national strategies involving stakeholders at both policy and operational levels. Emergent features in the context of EiE could show up as unexpected results of educational interventions driven by the dynamic interaction between the crisis environment, cultural settings, and community needs.

Acknowledging these emergent features helps coordinators of EiE to be adaptable and sensitive to the changing environment, customizing interventions to fit the specific and changing requirements of impacted communities. Emergent properties are qualities and properties that emerge once the organization of a living system is constituted, and that do not exist when they are presented in isolation. (Morin, 2007) They are unexpected consequences that arise from the relationships between different elements of a system, resulting from the interactions of a system. (Faul & Savage, 2021)

In light of these emergent features, the assemblage concept provides a valuable framework for understanding the broader perspective needed to coordinate educational efforts during emergencies. The assemblage concept emphasizes considering emergency education from a broad perspective. This covers all parties engaged, including communities, non-profits, governments, international organizations, and students and teachers. Understanding how these pieces fit together is key to coordinating education efforts in emergencies and recognizing the importance of various social, economic, and environmental impacts on education. Affordances for the emergency coordination function in education highlight how coordinators can support and improve educational activities by identifying and utilizing opportunities and resources that are only available in crises to improve educational initiatives. Stressing agency in EiE shows how important it is to give everyone, especially affected communities, the means they need to be involved in the learning process. This method builds resilience, ensures that solutions are appropriate for the situation, and helps create long-lasting learning environments that meet the needs and goals of people who have been affected by crises.

Part II

Methodological Path

This section outlines the methodological framework used to analyze the complexities of Education Cluster Coordination (ECC) in humanitarian settings. It provides a detailed account of the qualitative methodology and approaches employed, and the considerations taken to ensure the study's validity and ethical integrity.

The qualitative approach was considered the most appropriate for handling the complex and dynamic nature of ECC, which functions across multiple levels and environments. The study framework was guided by the principles of cosmopolitanism and methodological nomadism, which highlight the interdependence and flexibility between global and local contexts. Cosmopolitanism, as articulated by Beck and others (2010), recognizes the complex nature of worldwide connections, as this viewpoint is essential for examining the global dynamics of ECC and their specific occurrences at the local level. It ensures a comprehensive study that respects and appreciates the nuanced nature of these relationships. The concept of 'nomad space,' as suggested by Deleuze and Guattari, highlights the significance of traversing different theoretical and disciplinary viewpoints. This study's versatility enables it to tackle the complex issues and opportunities posed by ECC.

The study utilizes a blend of data sources, such as interviews, micro-stories, and normative documents. This selection aims to offer an understanding of the power dynamics and social structures that form the ECC. The choice of these methodologies demonstrates a commitment to collecting the actual experiences and viewpoints of a wide variety of ECC players. This ensures that the research findings are based on the actual circumstances of those directly active in the field.

The analytical approach combined interpretativism and narrative analysis to explore the subjective experiences and meanings constructed by Education Cluster Coordination (ECC) players through their narratives, network sketches, or self-interpretation unsurvey. Interpretativism offers a theoretical framework for comprehending how individuals interpret and make sense of their roles, connections, and behaviors within the complex frameworks of ECC. This viewpoint recognizes that the nature of reality is shaped by society and highlights the significance of the circumstances, culture, and personal perspectives in influencing human actions. Narrative analysis supplemented this approach by focusing on the stories and narratives recounted by participants, which are important in revealing the fundamental themes and patterns in their experiences. This approach facilitated a more thorough investigation of how individuals comprehend their experiences, the difficulties they encounter, and the

tactics they utilize in their jobs within ECC. It specifically focused on highlighting the emotional and cognitive aspects of their experiences.

Throughout the research process, careful consideration was given to guarantee the accuracy and consistency of the findings. This involved addressing potential biases and implementing strategies to improve the reliability of the study. The ethical aspects were followed with respect to norms regarding informed consent, confidentiality, and data protection. These ethical guidelines guaranteed that the rights and well-being of all participants were respected.

To summarize, Part II presents a comprehensive account of the methodological approach employed in this research. It emphasizes the significance of being flexible and adaptable when researching ECC. The use of qualitative methodologies, which are backed by robust theoretical frameworks and ethical standards, offered a strong groundwork for the following empirical investigations.

1. Context, Path and Options

The previous chapter completed a broad contextualization, providing background information for the developments covered in this section. It centers on a study carried out in the Cameroon NWSW Cluster, some Country Education Clusters, and the Global Education Cluster.

This study has as its ‘home location’ the context of coordination dynamics within the NWSW Cameroon. Even if the context of the study does not preconize a center or borders where the action takes place, it aligns with the concept described by Deleuze and Guattari in 1986, “the nomad, nomad space, is localized and not delimited.” Deleuze and Guattari (1986) further explain,

“What is both limited and limiting is striated space, the relative global: it is limited in its parts, which are assigned constant directions, are oriented in relation to one another, divisible by boundaries, and can interlink; what is limiting (limes or wall, and no longer boundary) is this aggregate in relation to the smooth spaces it ‘contains,’ whose growth it slows or prevents, and which it restricts or places outside. Even when the nomad sustains its effects, he does not belong to this relative global, where one passes from one point to another, from one region to another. Rather, he is in a local absolute an absolute that is manifested locally and engendered in a series of local operations of varying orientations: desert, steppe, ice, sea.” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1986, p. 46)

I will oscillate between the local NSW Cameroon ecosystems and the vast national and Global realities, navigating between scales and dimensions using critical reticular thinking (Ferreira, 2005). This approach allows a nuanced understanding of the coordination dynamics, acknowledging the interconnected and interrelated nature of social settings, a perspective supported by Denscombe (2010, p. 53): “Relationships and processes within social settings tend to be interconnected and interrelated. To understand one thing, it is necessary to understand many others and, crucially, how the various parts are linked. The study approach works well here because it offers more chance than the survey approach of going into sufficient detail to unravel the complexities of a given situation.”

The NSW Cameroon Education Cluster and, simultaneously, Country and Global perspectives from Education Cluster Coordination serve as an illuminating microcosm, providing invaluable insights into the challenges, transformations, and adaptive strategies within the humanitarian sector. My interest lies in understanding the interplay of human and systemic actors and their roles in shaping the educational landscape amidst the challenges faced by the region.

This study focuses not on the system or mechanism of the Education Cluster Coordination but on the network dynamics and the understanding of the participants working in their three dimensions (micro, meso, and macro). So, rather than defining the object of study as the Education Cluster, this study brings personal narratives, perceptions, and the way they are linked.

The case of the NSW Cameroon Education Cluster is considered unique in its context, in which coordination perspectives were considered at an international, global level, and national level to be studied with the necessary depth. For this, the study of this investigation covers multiple ‘situations’ when it ‘leaves’ the particular context of the geographically delimited region to hear other coordinators from other clusters, from the Global Cluster, or related stakeholders. In this sense, it is intended to enrich the study with cross-case data without being intended to create comparisons or draw conclusions but rather unveiling perspectives and interconnecting them.

The method selected seeks to envelop the phenomenon (observation), to recognize the forces within it (praxis), to provoke it at strategic points (intervention), to penetrate it by individual contact (interview), and to question action, speech, and things. Each of these methods poses a fundamental methodological problem: the relationship between the research worker and the subject. It is not merely a subject-object relationship. The ‘object’ of the inquiry is both object and subject, and one cannot escape the intersubjective character of relations between men. We believe the optimal relationship requires, on the

one hand, detachment and objectivity in relation to the object as an object and, on the other, participation and sympathy in relation to the object as a subject. (Morin, 1970)

As in conversations with other educational actors, the perspective of a member, coordinator, or support for coordination from the researcher's perspective became increasingly intriguing with so different justification logics and ways of action. Therefore, it's important to consider that the research was also influenced by personal feelings and thoughts, from its design to the conclusions. Nonetheless, there was a constant pursuit of engaging in a significant exercise of openness to academic theories and continuously refining ideas resulting in a multidimensional exploration that is both enlightening and reflective.

In essence, this research is not simply an academic pursuit but also an intimate journey of self-discovery, where individual experiences and perspectives have become essential to the creation of knowledge.

For almost a decade, the researcher's reality was also that of a cooperation and humanitarian actor; being a member of the Cluster, a Cluster facilitator, and later an Education Cluster Coordinator (in direct contact with the affected populations in national offices where experiences of the country are mixed in a multicultural environment, face-to-face and distance cluster meetings...). All these roles contributed, in different ways, to this research work. This feeling of belonging, of easily empathizing with those who were/would be co-workers and who are here with participants, makes this work have a touch of subjectivity and partiality. However, this characteristic enables it to evolve into an exploration grounded in authenticity, delving into the realm of the real and its diverse realities.

Throughout the research path, the object of analysis was not a predetermined choice but rather a construction that unfolded organically through the process of inquiry. Initially, the focus was a broad area of interest – coordination in EiE. However, deeper immersion in literature and data collection gradually refined the analysis, ultimately concentrating on the specificities of the - Education Cluster Coordination. This process of sculpting the object of study was grounded in literature, data collected, actuality, and sensemaking approach. By remaining open to the insights and perspectives that emerged during the research process, a more nuanced understanding of the phenomenon under investigation was possible.

The study question was inspired by a literature analysis and exploratory interviews with key actors in the field of Education in Emergencies (EiE). This process improved understanding and identified a specific

subject that needed additional investigation. The inconsistent and complex reactions to Education Cluster Coordination made it clear that further research on this topic would be useful. Therefore, the study question was phrased in the following manner: How do the Education Cluster Approach coordination logics and actions interact; how are they perceived within multi-level and multi-actor dynamics? This will be considered from the Education Cluster Coordination in NWSW Cameroon, zooming out to the Global Education Cluster.

The qualitative approach choice is persistent in Sociological research and is increasingly important in the humanitarian sector in the realms of research, monitoring, and evaluation. As Flick (2009) outlined, qualitative approaches to research seek to explore and describe social meanings and perceptions of phenomena. An epistemological starting point has implications for the theoretical positioning, data gathering, and criteria sets for data validity. Unlike a formal structure with 'hard facts' as early research used to look like (Scott, 2001). A qualitative methodology, coupled with interpretative analysis, stems from a deliberate contemplation of these factors. It is rooted in the inherent nature and complexity of the data and issues being addressed. Given the deeply human and subjective essence of the subject, coupled with the specific nature of the data (sketches, unstructured narratives in semi-structured interviews, and micro-narratives), this qualitative pathway's adoption appeared relevant.

The core of this study is based on interviews, narratives, and field experiences. Some experiences were crucial for the way the study unfolded: participating in the mission to develop the Education Cluster Strategy for NWSW Cameroon allowed for direct involvement with Cluster coordination members at both the national and field levels; participating in a Regional Education Cluster Training and organizing an EIE Symposium in Dakar provided the opportunity for direct contact with national coordinators and ECC members from different countries; INEE meet-ups allowed to enriching exchanges between EIE members; and participating in different academic and humanitarian events allow to more questioning and learning. Consequently, the study seeks to enhance our understanding by examining and analyzing lived experiences and the ones gathered through interviews and SM micro-narratives.

This research combines two perspectives (not to compare or contrast but to dialogue and probe exploration): one from within the sector, which includes humanitarian literature and the voices of Education Cluster actors or related coordination actors, and another from an external viewpoint, which uses academic literature from sociology and educational policy disciplines, and occasionally refers to complexity theory. This will be the foundation for a description of the qualitative methodology utilized in the following chapter.

2. Qualitative Approach

This chapter outlines the qualitative methodology employed in this PhD thesis to explore the coordination practices within EiE, focusing on the Education Cluster Approach. Given the complex interplay of multi-level and multi-actor dynamics in Education Cluster Coordination settings, a qualitative approach is crucial. It offers the nuanced exploration needed to understand the subjective experiences, perceptions, and operational realities of the various stakeholders involved, justifying its use in this study.

Qualitative research methodologies, deeply rooted in the social sciences, are uniquely suited to unraveling complex phenomena. They excel in exploring a wide range of factors that are difficult to quantify, such as perceptions or understandings from interviews and narratives. Unlike quantitative methods that rely on statistical analysis and numerical data to evaluate hypotheses, qualitative approaches seek to obtain deeper knowledge and insight into people's experiences, attitudes, and behaviors. This is particularly relevant in the current century of complexity,¹ as predicted by Stephen Hawking (2000), where global challenges demand an exploration beyond numbers. These conditions underscore the limitations of purely quantitative approaches as they fail to capture the emergent and interconnected nature of such complex systems. As Cilliers (2016, p.3) emphasizes, the challenges with models of complexity extend even deeper: "The underlying problem with models of complexity is, however, even more serious. No matter how we construct the model, it will be flawed, and what is more, we do not know in which way it is flawed." Qualitative research is the primary method in the field of EiE because it strives to understand human experiences and conditions. As Denzin and Lincoln (2018) noted, qualitative research investigates phenomena in their natural settings, interpreting them through the meanings that people assign to them.

Qualitative research is often misunderstood, and various myths exist about qualitative research, with a grounded worry: is qualitative research a science or not? Often, the division comes down to whether to give importance to numbers (quantitative) or words (qualitative). However, qualitative researchers do count in reality, and quantitative researchers interpret their data also (Yanow, 2007). Another common division is that quantitative research is seen as objective, whereas qualitative is subjective. However, it has been argued that both methodologies, in their essence, follow the same interpretation model (Ercikan & Roth, 2006), as both require an interpretation of social reality. Although qualitative research has been criticized for not generating 'hard evidence,' "it is an essential research form for examining the field of education (Wright, 2012); the aim, in this case, is to gain an understanding of complex social

phenomena and explore the subjective experiences and perspectives of individuals. In addition, from the complex nature of the emergency contexts.

This study aligns with Cresswell's (2013) characteristics of qualitative research rooted in the natural setting of the NWSW Cameroon Cluster. Within this framework, the researcher assumes the role of the main tool for gathering data, utilizing various techniques such as scrutinizing documents, conducting interviews with participants, and directly observing the situation to facilitate a comprehensive understanding. This design facilitates the comprehension of symbols and interpretations (Geertz, 1973) and guarantees the presence of explicit evidence and knowledge. Also, complex reasoning through inductive and deductive logic was done, building from emerging categories 'bottom-up' – from the data collected during the interviews - and using deductive thinking to build themes that are being checked against the data. "The inductive-deductive logic process means that the qualitative researcher uses complex reasoning skills throughout the process of research." (Cresswell, 2013, p. 45). Engaging in self-reflection, which involves considering personal experiences and background, was crucial in formulating questions, interpretations, and research directions. This process facilitated the recognition of emerging paradigms (Santos, 2000). The process of *floating* between the interviews and micro-narratives allowed for the emersion of several categories, which were subsequently utilized to express different viewpoints, resulting in a comprehensive comprehension of the investigating subject.

This study is placed in the neo-institutionalist tradition, as an institution being a set of rules and organized practices derived from organizations rooted in structures of meaning and resources (Olsen, 2007). Consequently, instead of merely explaining the social world as a system of laws similar to the natural world, the focus is on understanding social structures as the 'fabric of meanings' (Hollis, 2010). Thus, the aim is to make sense of meanings and perspectives using an interpretative and qualitative approach 'to capture' participants 'in their own terms' (Lofland, 1971). This is achieved through a 'thick description' (Geertz, 1973, 2008) of ECC - the phenomenon under investigation. Additionally, network viewpoints are depicted through sketches of self-network during the interviews.

Throughout this research, a state of empathetic neutrality is preserved, with the aim of comprehending the perspectives of participants without any judgment. This approach guarantees transparency, consciousness, and receptiveness, all of which are essential for upholding the integrity of the research process and the genuineness of the obtained data.

In the transition to the next chapter, the attention turns from the specific methodologies and viewpoints used in the research to the theoretical frameworks that support the qualitative approach applied in the study. This chapter will explore how the frameworks of sensemaking and complexity offer a perspective for comprehending the complex dynamics of Education Cluster coordination.

2.1 Onto-Epistemological Background of Sensemaking and Complexity Approaches

Sensemaking is a useful tool for examining EiE coordination because the Education cluster is a complex mechanism acting mostly in complex contexts. Weick's (1995) seminal work explores sensemaking and how members of an organization operate, engage, and make sense of policies, issues, and problems. According to Weick (1995), the basic idea of sensemaking is that reality is an ongoing accomplishment that emerges from efforts to create order and make retrospective meaning of what happens. His broad definition has been expanded and is more generally understood by scholars as the social process of meaning production and reconstruction that managers understand, interpret, and create sense for themselves and others in their ever-changing organizational environments. (Rouleau & Balogun, 2011, p. 954) Sensemaking is continuous, although it can be heightened during times of surprise, change, crisis, or confusion (Dutton & Dukerich, 1991; Gioia & Thomas, 1996). Ferreira (2005) recalls the importance of retrospective understanding in sensemaking, meaning people interpret current situations based on past experiences and events. The retrospective understanding is crucial in the context of ECC, as actors rely on historical data and established norms to understand the dynamic, complex scenarios they face. In an environment characterized by a high interconnectedness, the ECC across different dimensions and between them is a favorable terrain to display emergent behaviors where individual actions lead to unforeseen collective patterns. Policies and coordination dynamics reveal non-linear patterns, necessitating adaptative competencies. Also, the interconnected and interrelated nature of social settings, which aligns with complexity theory's focus on interdependencies within social systems, is a point to refer to (Denscombe, 2010). This approach recognizes the fluid and dynamic nature of clusters, where sensemaking becomes a pivotal tool for moving between relationships and processes.

2.2 Cosmopolitism and Nomad and inspired methodology

The theoretical framework of nomadology and cosmopolitism, while distinct, are combined here to inspire the research methodology. These concepts find their roots in the works of influential scholars such as Beck (2016), Gilles Deleuze and Guattari (1986, 1987), Rosi Braidotti (1994), Donna Haraway (1991), and Bruno Latour (1993).

In contrast to previous social theorists such as Marx, Weber, or Durkheim, who analyze the internal contradictions of society to comprehend the larger forces at play and predict its potential collapse, radical transformation, or political control, Beck holds a more optimistic view. His imagination is captivated by the overwhelming prosperity of industrial civilization rather than conflicts, violent clashes, class struggles, or systematic institutional failure. In his writings on cosmopolitanisation, Beck examined four important aspects: the internalization of global financial systems, the expansion of communication technologies, the variety of forms and functions in transnational migration, and the development of 'transnational policy regimes' (Beck & Grande, 2010; Beck, 2016). He later adds 'cosmopolitan communities of climate risk' (Beck & al., 2013) to this list.

Beck introduced this idea to highlight the necessity of a sociological approach that transcends national boundaries (de-bounded) and recognizes contemporary societies' global interdependence. He argued that to understand social phenomena in a globalized world fully, it is essential to adopt a cosmopolitan perspective that considers the complexity of global interactions. Beck's theory emphasizes that traditional sociological methods, which often focus on single nations or local contexts, are insufficient for analyzing the interconnected nature of modern social issues. By advocating for a cosmopolitan approach, Beck underscored the importance of considering how global economic, political, cultural, and environmental factors are entwined and how they impact societies across the world. He pointed out that phenomena such as climate change, financial crises, migration, and transnational terrorism cannot be comprehensively understood or addressed without acknowledging the web of global interdependencies. This perspective calls for a shift in sociological thinking and methodology, encouraging researchers to look beyond national borders and to incorporate a more holistic and inter-scalar view of social dynamics. In essence, Beck's work challenges sociologists to rethink the scope and scale of their analyses, promoting a more inclusive and globally-minded approach that can better capture the realities of an interconnected world.

Reflexive modernization (Beck, 1994) complements this by emphasizing the necessity of critically engaging with the complexities and risks of modernity, thereby integrating a more dynamic and responsive sociological framework into the study of global social phenomena. Deleuze and Guattari use the metaphor of the 'nomad' to describe agents or elements that move freely and unpredictably across pre-established boundaries, thereby disrupting and reconfiguring space and knowledge. This approach can be particularly valuable in PhD research within sociology, where exploring the fluid and interconnected aspects of societies is crucial.

While the author's roots lie in a very Western background, through his work and travel, the study values the complex views of non-linear methodology in research as it can emphasize the movement and fluidity of reality instead of the more static methodologies of traditional research usually with a fixed set of assumptions, categories, and hierarchies. Methodological nomadism, derived from postmodern and poststructuralist perspectives and initially termed by Deleuze and Guattari (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987), denotes a research approach characterized by the fluid navigation between various theoretical frameworks, methods, and disciplines. This approach embraces the dynamic qualities of movement, multiplicity, and continual transformation to understand and interpret social phenomena. Defying traditional disciplinary boundaries aims to achieve a deeper understanding of complex research questions, as Deleuze, Braidotti, Haraway, and Latour spotted.

Braidotti, Haraway, and Latour approach similar themes from different perspectives. Braidotti explores nomadism in *Nomadic Subjects* (1994), focusing on diversity and hybridity, especially in gender and identity. Haraway, in *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women* (1991), emphasizes situated knowledge and blurs human-nonhuman boundaries, advocating for 'cyborg feminism.' In *We Have Never Been Modern* (1993), Latour highlights the interplay between human and non-human actors.

Instead of searching for the epistemological, ontological, and methodological elements that distinguish each of these variations, the attempt was to identify the traits that unite them and that guide the work further. Ontology is a discipline of philosophy that studies the nature and structure of objects, properties, events, processes, and relationships in all areas of reality. (Smith, 2004, p. 155) Ontological positionality refers to the researcher's definition of the phenomena and its context. Throughout this study, my perspective is presented on the social environment. A complex system is made up of smaller, similarly complex systems. These systems exhibit non-linear development, characterized by uncertainty, ambiguity, adaptability, self-organization, and emergent behavior in response to internal and external changes.

Rosi Braidotti (1994) explores the idea of the nomadic subject as a figure who is constantly moving, evolving, and adapting to new contexts. She argues that this approach can be applied to research and suggests that researchers should be willing to move between different disciplines and methodologies in order to understand complex phenomena better. Donna Haraway (1991) has written about the importance of situating knowledge within a broader context of political and social struggles and considering the entanglement of technology, biology, and culture in the interpretation of social phenomena.

Bruno Latour's ANT further enriches this approach by examining the relationships among diverse actors—both human and non-human. ANT challenges the conventional separations between society and nature, proposing a unified system where various actors contribute to social and scientific realities instead. Latour argues that both people and non-humans (such as technology or natural elements) can shape social situations. He argues that these players are all interrelated in networks and that analyzing these networks allows us to understand how social and scientific realities emerge. This viewpoint is consistent with Nomadology, a notion that values constant change and movement. ANT supports this viewpoint by emphasizing the complex, dynamic relationships that cause social change inside networks. By recognizing the roles of various players and the fluidity of their interactions.

The nomad methodological approach is complemented by neo-institutionalist perspectives, which view institutions as enduring collections of rules and practices embedded in complex networks of meaning (Olsen, 2007; Hollis, 2010). Instead of merely explaining the social world as a system of laws similar to the natural world, the focus is on understanding social structures as the 'fabric of meanings' (Hollis, 2010).

The concept of 'nomad space,' as articulated by Deleuze and Guattari, provides not just a practical framework for understanding the fluid, boundary-crossing dynamics of education cluster coordination, but also aligns with a philosophical approach. It enables a deeper conceptualization of the sociopolitical landscape of the NWSW Cameroon and the non-linear interactions and decentralized decision-making that characterize emergency education settings. This theoretical framework informs methodological design, advocating for a flexible and adaptable research strategy capable of mapping and navigating the unpredictable world of humanitarian education. This method aims to engage with both human and non-human subjects, ideas, and environments while acknowledging their inherent volatility and connection to the main issue.

2.3 Design Flexibility and Research Mobility

Despite having prior experience in study design and initial ideas, the effort resulted in a continuous process of redefining and transforming the original thesis proposal. This continuous re-design has been affected by significant events such as: in 2020, a comprehensive report, *In Emergencies Development Architecture: Harnessing Humanitarian and Coordination for Education 2030* (Zoe Turnere Giordano & al., 2020) came out, and in 2022, a UNICEF evaluation report was published titled Evaluation of the UNICEF Role as Cluster Lead (Co-Lead) Agency (CLARE II) (HERE-Geneva, 2022), following the CLARE study in 2014 (Lead & al., 2014). These are just examples of research in the sector about the same

subject as my research focused on. Some hybrid humanitarian-academic initiatives have also emerged as being relevant, focusing on research, policy, and practice to address the educational needs of children and youth affected by conflicts, disasters, and other emergencies. Here are some key initiatives: some events like EiE Data Summit (2020)⁷⁷, where researchers, practitioners, and policymakers discuss the collection, analysis, and use of data in EiE. The aim was to improve data-driven decision-making in crisis contexts. High-level Conference on Education in Emergencies (2023)⁷⁸, and some publications such as Globalization, Societies, and Education (2023).

Furthermore, the emergence of hybrid humanitarian-academic initiatives, which address the educational needs of children and youth affected by conflicts, disasters, and other emergencies, have become increasingly relevant. Key initiatives include the EiE Data Summit (2020), where researchers, practitioners, and policymakers discussed the collection, analysis, and utilization of data in EiE to enhance data-driven decision-making in crisis contexts. Additionally, the High-level Conference on Education in Emergencies (2023) and scholarly publications such as Globalization, Societies, and Education (2023) have further contributed to shaping the research landscape in this field.

The Global coordination system was subject to a strategic change (Global Education Cluster, 2022) and different makeovers; the National and NWSW Cameroon coordination leaders changed four times during the study, and the members were constantly coming in and out. A new NWSW Education Cluster Strategy (Cameroon Education Cluster, 2023) was also published in 2023. This publication started with a workshop in Douala focused on the design and work through the strategy for the next three years of the NWSW ECC. Participants included members of the NWSW ECC, representatives of the affected population in the person of a teacher, representatives of the Child-protection sub-cluster, and other relevant actors for the coordination. The collaborative environment of the workshop allowed for in-depth discussions and the exchange of diverse perspectives, which were critical in shaping the strategic plan. The inclusion of representatives from the affected populations ensured that the strategies developed were grounded in the real needs and experiences of those directly impacted. Contributions from the Child-Protection Sub-Cluster and other key actors provided a holistic approach to addressing the complex issues faced by the community. The resulting draft was created in a very participative and relevant way. Nevertheless, the publication was sorted just in 2023. In addition to the research context's evolving landscape, the country's broader socio-political scenario was undergoing constant

⁷⁷ See more at <https://eiehub.org/events/eie-data-evidence-summit>, last access 08/02/2024

⁷⁸ See more at: https://civil-protection-humanitarian-aid.ec.europa.eu/news-stories/events/high-level-conference-education-emergencies-2023-03-22_en , last access 08/04/2023

transformations. Changes were observed in the population, educational institutions, and operational methodologies. Significant events, such as the emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic, played a pivotal role in rethinking the Humanitarian system, specifically in the EiE sector, including the coordination mechanism.

As Patton (1987, p. 44) described design flexibility “stems from the open-ended nature of naturalistic inquiry as well as pragmatic considerations. Being open and pragmatic requires a high tolerance for ambiguity and uncertainty as well as trust in the ultimate value of what inductive analysis will yield.” Simultaneously, the process of creating questions and leading with interactions was deliberately designed, avoiding too detailed inquiries. This strategy aims to empower respondents, allowing them to control the conversation based on what they consider important and to emphasize what is actually meaningful to them.

Creating a conducive environment for open dialogue was crucial, ensuring that participants felt completely comfortable and free from any fear of criticism or misunderstanding. The dichotomy of right or wrong does not constrain the narrative they present; instead, the crucial aspect is the authenticity of their lived experiences and personal perceptions. The interviewer's or the SM participant's responsibility is not to shape the narrative but rather to create an environment where respondents can freely express their stories using their own words. This qualitative interviewing approach, which emphasizes openness, non-directivity, and respect for the respondent's narrative sovereignty, improves the accuracy of the collected data by ensuring that it reflects the authentic voices and complex realities of those who share their stories.

Coordination itself is a complex organic mechanism made of people with different intentions, values, and interpretations of reality. From the beginning, it was intended to approach the research as an enthusiastic cook: taste the food as it cooks, feel the ingredients as they combine, season, and heat up, and then display it in a pleasing manner rather than rigidly following a predefined recipe.

3. Access

During the research, there was an important part of travel conducted for both academic and personal reasons. The researcher collaborated with supervisors in Braga and Porto (Portugal), collected data and participated in the development of the NWSW Cameroon Education Cluster Strategy in Yaoundé and

Douala (Cameroon), resided in Paris (France) during the COVID-19 confinement period, and visited Dakar (Senegal) for personal reasons and to organize the EiE Symposium 2023.

In order to obtain entry to the coordinating cluster in the NWSW regions of Cameroon, a partnership was formed with the Global Education Cluster to assist local ECC in the 'in loco' development of the Cluster Strategy. As a researcher in the emergency response sector, strong collaboration with local partners, face-to-face meetings, and clear communication of the study project's aims were imperative. The Global Education Cluster utilized its resources and experience, along with the local knowledge of partners and the extensive expertise of all Education Cluster members, to assist in the creation of the Cluster Strategy. In addition, interviews were carried out with prominent international organizations in Yaoundé.

This joint initiative employed a diverse strategy, which included engaging directly with stakeholders in the region and organizing a workshop in Douala to gather input from all Cluster members. The engagement method had a vital role in developing connections and building trust among community members, which was necessary for both the process itself and the direction of the research.

After completing the engagement process, a workshop lasting one week was scheduled in Douala, a commercial city in Cameroon, to collaborate with all members of the cluster and create the initial version of the Education Cluster Strategy. The workshop convened delegates from diverse organizations engaged in EiE response in the NWSW region to collectively formulate a comprehensive and integrated strategy for delivering EiE-pertinent responses in the area.

The session utilized active participation, which led to the creation of a preliminary Cluster Strategy that accurately represented the contributions and viewpoints of all parties involved. The adoption of an active participation approach in the development of the Cluster Strategy was crucial in addressing the constraints posed by restricted access, limited resources, and cultural sensitivity in the NWSW region of Cameroon. Additionally, it gave crucial access to the educational community for coordination, enhancing the research, and adding to the overall success of the project.

4. Methods and Procedures

The entry into the field (considering the NWSW Cameroon ECC) was carefully planned to ensure respect and sensitivity to the local context. Initial contact was made through the Education Cluster coordinator, and for the strategy-building activity, it was through the new Education Cluster Coordinator who

facilitated introductions to all Education Cluster members – being later invited to participate in the research more actively through the SenseMaker® *unsurvey*⁹.

Fieldwork began with a series of informal gatherings and online discussions with the NSW Cameroon Education Cluster Coordinator. These interactions helped build a trusting relationship and provided a deeper understanding of the local environment. The field was the primary ‘source of inspiration’ for the research. Consequently, the NSW Cameroon context got much importance. This included prioritizing interviews with each successive Education Cluster local Coordinator to capture evolving perceptions, participating in the INEE WhatsApp group of Cameroon, and employing different strategies to motivate their participation in the SenseMaker® *unsurvey* and, at the same time, to give back. Efforts were made to get their perceptions and participation. Still, also resources were shared, questions answered, and a mutual exchange was possible, ultimately aiming to support the children and youth of NSW Cameroon.

The study methodology employed a qualitative lens, exploring contextual factors that shape the coordination processes. Through interviews, document exploration, and SenseMaker® collected micro-narratives, the research aimed to capture the lived experiences and perspectives of those involved in different dimensions of ECC, especially in the NSW Cameroon ECC. This immersive approach enabled to uncover of subtle dynamics that may not be apparent through quantitative measures alone. At the same time, it was given a ‘command function’ to theory, meaning that the interpretation and justifications were based on and inspired by theoretical scientific frameworks.

Semi-Structured Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were conducted to collect detailed information from key stakeholders linked to the Education Cluster Coordination system, including coordinators, Education Cluster members, and other linked actors. These interviews were guided by a set of predetermined questions (see appendix F), mostly asking for stories or anecdotes yet allowing enough flexibility for participants to express their thoughts freely and for the interviewer to probe deeper into certain topics. This method enabled the collection of rich, qualitative data and insights into the personal experiences and perceptions that define

⁹ An *unsurvey* is an approach to gathering data that uses narratives and complexity theory to collect qualitative insights. Instead of requesting respondents to provide answers to predetermined questions, an *unsurvey* encourages participants to share personal anecdotes or experiences relating to a certain subject. Subsequently, the respondents interpret these tales themselves by employing predetermined signifiers or tags, which provide contextual significance without imposing the researcher's biases.

the educational landscape in GEC, some countries at the national dimension, and NWSW Cameroon ECC.

Micro-Narratives

Micro-narratives were collected to capture short, personal stories from participants. These narratives provide insight into different dimensions of ECC especially the micro-level interactions and experiences of individuals within the broader education cluster system. They are particularly useful for understanding the subtle nuances and everyday realities that might not be captured through more structured research methods; although narrative narratives typically offer a subjective interpretation of society, objective social structures can be revealed by analyzing the *habitus* constituents and life trajectories (Grenfell and James, 1998, p. 173). Micro-narratives were gathered through informal conversations and as part of the SM software, allowing participants to share their experiences in a storytelling format.

Document Insights

A document interpretation was conducted to examine existing reports, guidance, and policy documents relevant to the ECC at different levels. This analysis helped in understanding the historical context, policy environment, and institutional frameworks that shape ECC practices and outcomes. It also provided a macro-level view of the coordination in EiE strategies and initiatives implemented by various governmental and non-governmental organizations.

***Unsurvey* from SenseMaker®**

The *unsurvey* technique, implemented through SenseMaker®, involved collecting fragmented data from especially field participants to identify patterns and trends. This method is particularly useful in complex environments like NWSW Cameroon, where traditional survey methods may not capture the fluid and dynamic nature of social interactions and educational practices. SenseMaker® allowed for the aggregation of data points into a coherent narrative framework, enabling the sensemaking narrative of complex phenomena from multiple perspectives.

While this study did not involve the researcher acting as a participant-observer in the field, it aimed to prioritize fieldwork (Costa, 1986), valuing the voices of local participants from the micro-dimension who took part in the workshop in Douala. The researcher did maintained contact with these participants and subsequently invited them to participate through instant messaging.

5. Data corpus

Data was collected from a variety of different sources to gain a deeper understanding of the topic. This required conducting semi-structured interviews with actors involved in coordinating efforts across both country (meso) and Global (macro) dimensions, as well as exploratory semi-structured interviews with two key informants before the process. SenseMaker® was used to gather micro-stories to gain local (micro) insights. The primary data was complemented with secondary data analysis and media monitoring from both domestic and foreign sources.

In this chapter, a comprehensive overview of the data corpus will be presented and the methodology employed in this research. The data corpus includes semi-structured interviews, micro-stories collected through SenseMaker®, and secondary data analysis. Each source was selected to address different aspects of the research question, ensuring a holistic approach to data collection and analysis. The methodology was executed in multiple phases to capture a wide range of perspectives. Initial exploratory interviews with EiE specialists provided foundational insights, guiding the subsequent literature review and active participation in the development of the NSW Cameroon Education Cluster Strategy. Micro-stories collected using SenseMaker® offered rich, localized insights, while key informant interviews and network design expanded the scope of the research. Through this multifaceted approach, the study aims to uncover the complexities and challenges of EiE coordination, providing a nuanced perspective across different dimensions.

5.1 Data Corpus Selection

Multiple data sources were gathered and analyzed to make sense of perspectives and viewpoints—sources of qualitative information: interviews (including visual networking representations), documents, and micro-narratives. The data was collected using these sources based on open-ended questions without much structure nor observing and collecting documents without a strict agenda or timeline. They are analyzed carefully, masking the respondents' names and creating correlations, patterns, and meanings to make sense of the data.

The research combines professional and academic perspectives to provide a comprehensive analysis of the problem. Extensive searches of bibliographic databases, academic journals, reports, guidelines, and other documents from organizations and consultations with academic and professional experts were carried out to obtain a comprehensive database of quantitative and qualitative literature on interpersonal relationships, power issues, accountability, and coordination of EiE.

The following are the main types of written sources for this research. The sources utilized in the development of this work include:

- Comprehensive Reports and Evaluations (e.g. HERE; SCI; ODI; ALNAP);
- Organizational Publications and Documents such as official 'Inter-Agency Network in Education in Emergency' (INEE) guides, tools, policies, and documents approved by the INEE and used or adopted by the humanitarian community;
- Books, Published Journals and Research, Opinion Articles (and Public Speaking Remarks), and other related scholarly work;
- Works and instruments by other professional and humanitarian organizations (e.g., works by the humanitarian community of practice, such as the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, non-governmental organizations, donors, etc.);
- Material published by the United Nations (e.g., documents and information about the agencies or secretariats, General Assembly Resolutions, organizational documents, etc.);
- Podcasts from international agencies and organizations, from external entities of humanitarian work, and others related to the subject of study.

The methodology for the study was based on the following structure of data collection activities:

Phase	Timing	Description
Phase i. Exploratory interviews	During all the process	Conducted initial interviews with key EiE specialists.
Phase ii. Literature review	During the process	Reviewed academic and grey literature data on NWSW Cameroon programs and policies, building on previous understanding of the Cameroon crisis, EiE coordination, and Cluster Approach about the subject, identified through snowballing.
Phase iii. NWSW Education Cluster Coordination strategy	15/07/2021 to 25/08/2022	Facilitated the writing of the NWSW Cameroon Education Cluster Strategy - Observing and creating a local network.
Phase iii. Micro-stories collection	11/10/2021 to 05/12/2022	Self-interpreted micro-stories collection.
Phase iv. Key informant's interviews and network design (Global EiE	2020 to 2022	Applied a snowball approach to gradually expand interviewee and network designs from Jan 2020 to Dec 2022.

specialists and GEC and National Coordinators of West and Center Africa)		
Phase v. Mapping emerging themes	Since the first data gathered	Interview data was analyzed, connecting issues and categories.
Phase vi. Written Empirical Material Critique	2020 to 2	Analyzed recent global publications related to the Education Cluster, focusing also on NSW Education Cluster.
Phase vii. Deeper dive	2021 to 2024	Identified emerging themes/classifications through further interviews, data insights, and literature review.
Phase viii. Revision of themes	2022 to 2024	Triangulated different data sources. Revisiting themes/classifications.
Phase ix. 1 st International EiE Symposium	2022 to 2023	Coordinated and hosted, in collaboration with UCAD (Cheikh Anta Diop University), the 1st International Education in Emergencies Symposium, providing a platform for global dialogue and knowledge exchange about Collaborating towards sustainable change.
Phase x. Writing process	During the process	Logic testing during writing, including final update interviews.

In Phase I, exploratory interviews were conducted with key specialists in EiE. These interviews, together with preliminary literature, served as the core, providing a foundational understanding that would guide the subsequent phases of the research.

Phase II involved an extensive literature review, examining both academic and grey literature data. This comprehensive review focused on NSW Cameroon programs and policies, building upon existing knowledge of the Cameroon crisis and the global academic and grey literature of EiE, EiE coordination, and the ECC approach. The snowballing methodology identified key sources that deepened the understanding of the subject matter.

In Phase III, there was notable progress while the researcher actively engaged in the NSW Cameroon Education Cluster Strategy workshop. This phase included the facilitation, monitoring, and contributing to the writing process, as well as establishing a local network for future data gathering. At the same time, the SenseMaker tool was acknowledged, and the training started.

In Phase IV, the attention switched towards conducting preliminary key informant interviews and developing a personal network. From January 2020 to December 2022, the number of interviewees and network designs gradually increased using a snowball technique. The research was enhanced by engaging with worldwide experts in Education in Emergencies (EiE) and National Coordinators from West and Central Africa. Additionally, interviews were conducted with three Education Cluster coordinators from the NWSW regions who were active during the study period.

During Phase V, the analytical process was centered on the task of mapping emerging themes through the analysis of coded interview data. This phase encouraged a continuous exchange of ideas across identified problems and categories, offering valuable insights into the complex dynamics of the research area.

Phase VI involved creating a SenseMaker framework to later collect micro-stories from the research context, actively engaging participants and allowing them to interpret their own experiences. This phase allowed for gathering an interesting amount of data.

Phase VII involved analyzing the current of recent ECC-related global publications, one of them less global, with a specific emphasis on NWSW Cameroon. This analysis provided a deeper understanding of the worldwide discussion around the topic that was complementary to the insights of this study and, in some cases, aligned with particular conclusions.

Phase VIII encompassed a more profound degree of interpretation, where emergent categories were identified in interviews and a full assessment of existing literature. This phase had a crucial role in identifying convergences, divergencies, and complementarities.

A revision of themes characterizes phase IX. Triangulating different data sources, both international and domestic, created dialogs and unveiled deeper understandings, ensuring the richness of findings.

Transitioning into Phase X, the research culminated in the organization and hosting, in collaboration with UCAD, of the 1st International Education in Emergencies Symposium. This symposium provided a unique platform for global dialogue and knowledge exchange, fostering collaborative efforts towards sustainable change in the field. Several strategic partners participated in the organization, including the University of Minho, Ecole Normale Supérieure Yaoundé I, and the Global Education Cluster. With other collaborators for cultural and financial ends.

The final phase, Phase X, embodied the writing process. Logic testing was undertaken during the writing stage, ensuring the coherence and integrity of the narrative. This process included final update interviews conducted over an extended period, providing a comprehensive and refined outlook to conclude this sociological research endeavor.

The interpretivist turns in social sciences are often linked to the idea that social scientists are a part of the same world they are researching. Thus, they actively construct knowledge by creating tools and instruments to collect and produce data and formulate concepts to make interpretations of the data. This research displays a method that combines personal views with academic discourse to produce a comprehensive exploration that is both enlightening and reflective.

5.2 Assessment sample

To conduct this study, a sample of the population was selected, as the criteria were set to target the variety and complementarity of EiE coordination actors from the three dimensions studied: micro (referring to the local cluster coordination of NWSW Cameroon), meso (related to the country-level cluster), and macro (related to Global Education Cluster).

Participants were selected for interviews (Macro and meso dimensions) in light of their experience and ability to provide diverse perspectives, including international from generalized coordination to specialized cross-thematic, national from different central and West African countries, and local (NWSW coordination teams and members) views. The sample of experts was not intended to be a comprehensive representation of all possible perspectives but rather an overview of the main issues that arise at the relational, leadership, power dimension, collaboration, and networking levels. Overall, key informants demonstrated openness and willingness to share information. The participants' responses reflect their own opinions and not those of any institution they may be affiliated with.

In total, 16 interviews were conducted at the macro and meso dimensions, most from the leading organizations of the Global Education Cluster UNICEF and SCI. Some respondents changed positions, and some represented the same position, following one after another.

Eight key stakeholders from the Global Education Cluster, three at the national level, and three from the local NWSW Cameroon Education Cluster were interviewed. The three coordinators from the NWSW Cameroon Education Cluster who were interviewed included the coordinator before the study began, as well as the two coordinators who followed during the research period.

Additionally, twenty-one stakeholders, mostly from the local dimension, participated by sharing their self-interpreted micronarratives. For the Local Education Cluster, SenseMaker® was the primary data collection tool. Based on its initial implementation, this instrument seems to have a lot of potential for understanding the perspectives of NWSW Cameroon Education Cluster members and, at the same time, facilitating access to the field. This NWSW Cameroon Education Cluster Coordination has 32 implementing partners, all were invited to fill up the data collector tool; 11 did it. Also, the tool was made available in the Skype group of Education Cluster to any other interested participant to have access to.

Signifiers, questions, and formats were designed for the participants' micronarratives and self-interpretation. SenseMaker®, both a tool and method, facilitates collective inquiry into attitudes, perceptions, and experiences. “Conceptually, SenseMaker® is grounded in insights gleaned from complex adaptive systems and cognitive sciences, applied to the analysis of social systems. It links micronarratives with human sensemaking to create advanced decision support, research, and monitoring capabilities.” (Van der Merwe & al., 2019, p. 3). It can be used as a mixed qualitative and quantitative approach, but the choice was to use it mostly for qualitative data analysis. In addition to the 11 local partners' micro-stories, 10 other participants from the Country or Global Cluster filled in the SenseMaker® ‘*unsurvey*’ and shared micro-stories about or related to the Education Cluster. In total 21 respondents were filling the SM tool. From this group, 12 participants were Cameroonian, and 13 were residing in Cameroon. The male gender was more notably represented, with 13 male respondents compared to 7 female respondents. One participant chose not to disclose their gender. The group of age most representative was 26 to 35 years old with 9 respondents, and very close to it, 8 respondents aged 36 to 45 years old.

With the Global Education Cluster, in 2021, the researcher had the opportunity to facilitate a strategy design workshop with NWSW Education Cluster Coordination in Cameroon. She traveled for ten days to Cameroon and encountered some of the Education representatives of the main organizations responsible for education in Cameroon at Yaoundé, such as UNICEF, DRC, and NRC. After that, the researcher traveled to Douala, where she met the NWSW Education Cluster Coordination members and facilitated the workshop to create a strategy for the next three years⁸⁰. The First draft was handed to the NWSW ECC, but the strategy was reviewed twice after that and published two years later (Cameroon

⁸⁰ The Strategy was published later on in 2023-2025.

Education Cluster, 2023). This activity allowed her to meet the Cameroon NSW Education Cluster coordination members and some national EiE key actors.

5.3 Assessment tools and techniques

The research activities and tools were initially designed and continuously improved. These improvements were based on the evolving feedback and responses from the participants, capitalizing on the most enriching elements and refining those that were less effective.

The study design is summarized in the table below:

Sensemaking and complexity approaches – onto-epistemological background		
Nomadology as a methodological approach		
Phase: Data collection	Methods and techniques	Tools
Phase i. Exploratory interviews	Semi-structured interviews	- Roadmap with semi-structured interview questions about EiE and Coordination with open-ended questions to encourage narrative responses - Consent declaration - Invitation email - Recording
Phase ii. Literature review	- Argument chart matrix – tagging and cross-referencing key arguments - Citation management	- Argument chart matrix was done to collect main citations and tag key words through the reading process. - Citation management tools - Mendeley
Phase iii. NSW Education Cluster Coordination Study	Note-taking, self-interpretation through '<i>unsurvey</i>,' participant observation, and document interpretation	- Notes taking points. - SenseMaker® '<i>unsurvey</i>' to collect self-interpreted micro-stories - PPT presentation on how to fill the SenseMaker® '<i>unsurvey</i>.'

		• Strategy design with NWSW Cameroon Education Cluster – participant observation with note-takings • Document interpretation tools: Templates for systematically analyzing documents and reports.
Phase iv. Key informant's interviews and network design (Global EiE specialists and GEC and National Coordinators of West and Center Africa)	• Semi-structured interviews • Social network interpretation	• Roadmap with semi-structured questions mostly about Coordination and network • Consent declaration email • Invitation email • Social network interpretation tools
Phase v. Mapping emerging themes	• Tagging and categorization	• Data coding software - Taguette
Phase vi. Written Empirical Material interpretation	• Content analysis, discourse analysis, and document interpretation	• Coding frameworks for content interpretation • Discourse analysis tools • Document interpretation tools
Phase vii. Deeper analysis	• Thematic insights	• Thematic analysis tools
Phase viii. Revision of themes	• Reflexive interpretation	• Reflexive analysis tools
Phase ix. Writing process	• Writing support and review	• Writing support software used: Grammarly
• Main theories for theoretical background - Coordination of actions (Thévenot, 1993) - Complexity (Morin, 2005) - Sensemaking (Weick, 1976) - Network theories (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987; Castells, 1999; Latour). - Decolonial Approach (Santos, 2009; Oddy, 2023 ; Mbembe, 2001) - Theory of Practice (Bourdieu, 1991)		

- Practical dimensions of the research process:
 - Critical reticular thinking (Ferreira, 2005)
 - Critical Discourse Analysis (Fairclough, 2003)
 - Interpretativism (Geertz, 1973)
 - Ethical considerations
- Research dissemination:
 - Global Education Cluster presentation
 - Cameroon NSW Education Cluster presentation
 - Peer-reviewed research chapter book and possible research articles
 - Doctoral thesis - RepositoriUM

The literature review drew on published global evidence syntheses and literature that focused on coordination mechanisms, complexity, networks, systems, and country assessments about Cameroon (especially the Anglophone crisis). It considered documents written in English, French, and Portuguese.

5.3.1 Interviews

I conducted non-structured interviews intended as ‘conversations’ (Burgess, 1997) with a subset of participants to gain deeper insights into their coordination experiences, interpretations, and viewpoints. Specific themes are explored, such as power dynamics, coordination in action communication, and values, through open-ended discussions.

Preparatory work involved interviewing, planning, and reading preparation as suggested by Qu and Dumay (2011). This preparation involved several key steps, which allowed for a solid foundation for collecting high-quality qualitative data capturing the complex phenomena of ECC.

All the interviews took place online as planned due to the distance between experts or for necessity, given the COVID-19 pandemic situation. The interviews were carried out on the Zoom-Colibri platform with the tool’s support from the University of Minho and recorded on video with the interviewees’ consent.

PHASE OF PARTICIPATION	TYPE OF CONSULTATION	TYPE OF INTERVIEW	TOTAL OF PARTICIPANTS	YEAR OF PARTICIPATION
Exploratory interviews	Individual consultations with global-level key EiE specialists	3 themes and 12 open-ended questions	2	2020
Micro dimension interviews	Individual consultations with the Education Cluster Coordinator at NWSW Cameroon	17 open-ended questions	3	first half of 2021
Extra interview at the micro dimension about the ECC at NWSW Cameroon related to the COVID-19 response	Individual consultation with the Education Cluster Coordinator at NWSW Cameroon	Informal open conversation and discussion	1	2020
Meso dimension interviews	Individual consultations with the Education Cluster Coordinators at the Country level	17 open-ended questions	14	first half of 2021
Macro dimension interviews	Individual consultations with Global Education Cluster Coordination	17 open-ended questions	7	second semester of 2021

Two types of interviews were conducted: two exploratory (3 themes and 12 open-ended questions) and 14 main semi-structured interviews (17 open-ended questions). The questions were about people's experiences, perceptions, opinions, feelings, and knowledge. Many questions asked for examples or brought participants to an imaginary scenario and invited them to respond to how they would act in a determinate situation.

Interviews can be distinguished between lay people, specialists, experts, and the elite (Littig, 2009). The amount of knowledge and power the respondents have distinguished these various types of interviews. An expert interview is with a person who has a specific and high level of expertise in a particular topic. This also has implications for the interview process – rather than being fully standardized, an expert interview would open for new themes from the respondents (Dexter, 2006). In this line of thought, most expert interviews were done in the initial moments of the research to help define the questions, deep

dive into the subject, and enrich the line of coming interviews. Some more expert people were interviewed later for various reasons: schedule adaptation is the most common.

The interviews were based on a semi-structured questionnaire. The aim was to conduct conversational, fluid interviews in which the interviewee was comfortable sharing thoughts and personal experiences. To achieve this, a descriptive letter about ethics, intentions, and objectives was sent by email in the form of consent before the interview. All participants were also contacted before by Skype to present the research informally and answer any questions.

The interview starts with broad questions to provide comfort and trust in the relationship and collect some broad ideas about what would be important to research in EiE Coordination and how they feel about the present situation. Afterward, some more personal and opinionated questions arise, and the interview ends with the production of visual data by the interviewee (when possible, due to time or availability constraints). The latter is invited to make a network of contacts sketch (in 5 minutes) which the participant is invited to describe and share thoughts. A final request is made for a new network of contacts to be presented a week later, which will be done more thoughtfully and explained in writing or on an online call. This second part was accomplished only by one participant here named Mia Collins (maybe due to a lack of time or maybe a lack of understanding of the objective). The interview ends with two open-ended questions about points that may not have been addressed or any point that could be further explored if that is the interviewee's intention.

Carrying out and recording the interviews on video allowed an almost face-to-face interaction in which non-verbal language added to understanding, dynamics, and trust between everyone. This dynamic allowed a more personalized interaction with the interviewee and the interviewer/observer, who made himself more known to allow a more horizontal interaction and interactive commitment.

The Ph.D. supervisors proposed to participate as observers during the interviews. In each interview, one of the supervisors was present as an observer and participated as an observer, occasionally commenting when pertinent to add something or, in the end, to summarize/explicit or analyze some concept. This dynamic enriched the interviews, which thus became more interactive, and, at times, questions from other perspectives emerged.

While the purpose is to gain as neutral knowledge as possible, it is clear that in any interview, the actor's perceptions will nevertheless form a basis for their account of the processes. Furthermore, while actors

have personal opinions, in most cases, they do not act on their behalf – thus, their own perceptions get diffused with organizational tasks and preferences (Scharpf, 1997).

Exploratory interviews

These exploratory interviews helped to guide the overall study framework and gather preliminary data. Conducted via Zoom, these interviews involved two key stakeholders in the field of Education in Emergency (EiE), aiming to delve into the EiE field and specifically the coordination. Each interview, lasting two hours, was instrumental in clarifying the study's design draft and crystallizing the primary subject of inquiry.

The primary goal was to acquire an understanding of a broader theme, specifically the dynamics of coordination in EiE environments. At the same time, it allowed me to broaden and clarify my reading horizons, open up possibilities for reflection, and help me to become aware of aspects and dimensions of a given problem. It was not to verify hypotheses or collect or analyze specific data. This focus was predetermined at the study's inception, ensuring that the discussions were both focused and expansive, offering valuable insights into the operational dynamics and challenges of EiE coordination. This foundational dialogue enabled the drafting of subsequent, more targeted interviews.

Exploratory interviews aimed to shape the research framework by gathering broad insights into the EiE field, while main interviews, tailored to each dimension, sought to delve into specific coordination of lived experiences and perceptions.

Main interviews: Macro dimension, meso, and micro dimension landscapes

The main interviews had a common roadmap, and just 2 or 3 questions were adapted when something more specific in terms of position or expertise. Fourteen interviews were conducted in total for the three dimensions of coordination: Global, Country, and local. 8 to the Global Education Cluster, 3 to country cluster coordinators of Tchad and Congo, and 3 to the local NWSW Cameroon Education Cluster. The Cameroon national coordinator was also invited, but the invitation was not accepted.

The macro, meso, and micro dimensions show the linkages between geography zones and relationship connections rather than leadership strength or knowledge. The macro dimension is related to the Global and international role of Cluster Coordination, and the meso dimension considers the national or country sphere of action.

For the study, Macro dimension experts are considered to be specific actors who contribute their expertise to the Global Cluster coordination process or an EiE Key informant expert with some link to the national or Global Cluster coordination. The meso dimension expert is the National Cluster Coordinator or co-coordinator in the specific country. The local dimension expert is the coordinator of the NSW Education Cluster.

From a methodological point of view, all the interviews conducted can be seen as expert interviews, as they involve actors with a high degree of expert knowledge about the topic (Littig, 2009). They have had opportunities to influence the process.

The respondents were all initially contacted via Skype and later email, with information about the project, the main purpose of the research, and the consent declaration. This was followed with a reminder after a few days or weeks. All the contacted interviewees were available. The first set of possible respondents was identified through my person related to the position in an organization or expert group. Upon starting the interviews, this was followed up with a snowball sampling, as inquiries were made about other possible relevant actors that should be contacted. When specific names were repeatedly suggested, they were also contacted for interviews. The interviews generally lasted 60-90 minutes, and all were conducted via Colibri ZOOM or Skype and recorded for later transcription. The interviews were conducted in a semi-structured manner, with an interview guide prepared beforehand.

The interview guide (see appendix F) was tailored to the individual respondent's nature and role in the process. However, the key focus was on the actor's role in the process, their reflections on the content, origins, and scope of EiE and Cluster coordination, the nature of actor involvement in the process, coordination with other sectors, and comments about implementation and future outlooks. Follow-up questions were asked throughout to specify and further explore the information provided.

Also, in the case of experts, one cannot avoid the question of objective versus subjective information. It is important to remember that "the statements an informant makes to an interviewer can vary from purely subjective statements [...] to almost completely objective statements," whereas many fall in between (Dexter, 2006, p. 100). According to Dexter, there are two central questions when evaluating the objective/subjective dimension: What light does a statement throw on the subjective sentiments of the informant? How much do the statements correspond to objective reality? Assuming that it is possible to obtain an intersubjective explanation of reality, there is a particular need to consider the respondent's subjectivity. The four major factors suggested by Dexter (2006) were considered in the interviewing

process: personal motives, spontaneous restrictions, desire to please, and other idiosyncratic factors (mood, connotations, etc.). While some actors were interested in some thematic points due to their position, spontaneous restrictions and desire to please were not identified in the interview process.

The nature of the interview urges the respondent to give examples or share opinions about an imaginary scenario or continuity to a story/situation. This approach to the questions helped them focus on their deeper opinions instead of a standardized answer or a trendy opinion.

Taguette⁸¹ was used for coding and systematizing interview data. The method used for interpreting interview data was similar to an artisanal method, comparable to producing a patchwork. This technique entailed delicately integrating diverse perspectives, theoretical frameworks, and a sensemaking methodology. This artisanal technique involved a thorough and deliberate analysis of the data, ensuring that every piece of information was reviewed and when pertinent incorporated into the larger story. The interpretation process synthesized many perspectives and theoretical frameworks, resulting in a comprehensive comprehension of the interview material that effectively captured its complex and multifaceted nature. This method not only respected the distinct contributions of each coordination player interviewed but also enabled a more profound understanding of the fundamental themes.

The interview transcripts were first read, and the codes were identified from the interviewee's voices. Then, the interviews were coded in Taguette open-source qualitative research tool. The data was read across the various interviews according to the coding made, and the code was adapted and reorganized when needed. Then, the interviews were re-read to ensure that the meaning of the interviews was condensed into a satisfactory sensemaking narrative.

The coordination of the education cluster involves the interaction of people, information management, ideas, and decision-making. It is essential management for collaborative work among the humanitarian community for an effective and efficient response. "The existence of pre-disaster relationships between actors can strengthen the speed with which coordination occurs in a disaster setting, making relationship building before a disaster an important element of preparedness. As such, understanding the relationships between stakeholders working to advance disaster resilience and response is a crucial first step to support institutional strengthening and capacity building" (HHI & Root Change, 2020, p. 7).

⁸¹ Taguette: The open-source qualitative research tool. Access at: <https://www.taguette.org>.

In the study *Inter-organizational coordination dynamics during the crisis* (Hossain & al., 2011), the authors, following an egocentric approach to analyzing the inter-network of organizational collaboration for emergency organizations, indicate that (i) having more organizational influence over other organizations (i.e., ego-betweenness), (ii) having an organizational relationship with more organizations (i.e., degree centrality), and (iii) having stronger inter-organizational relationships (i.e., bond strength) are effective for an individual organization to be more prepared for any crisis. In this sense, the proposed study emerges as a way of understanding the relationships in the Education Cluster by the actors themselves.

Visual network representations – Sketch

The sketching done by some key informants was done in the final moments of the interview so there is the background of what was said and the emotions that were implied. This was done in order to bring a personal network sketch instead of an organizational organigram. The personal view and the culmination of an informal approach in interviewing were done to bring the most personal and intuitive thinking to the sketch. Also, the time was strict at 5 minutes, and after, the participant was invited to describe and talk about this visual network representation. The timing proposed was short in order to get the most instinctive results.

The purpose of the study is not to count relational links or to label relationships between the different members of the cluster. Above all, it hopes to unveil perspectives on how people understand them. It is not intended to generalize but, on the contrary, to reveal the uniqueness and importance of the cluster coordinator and the cluster coordination.

5.3.2 SenseMaker® tool - Micro-narratives: local dimension priority

The narrative way to share knowledge and understand reality comes from far, as Dave Snowden explains,

Czarniawska (1997) attributes the phrase *homo narrans* to Fisher (1984). Nilsson (1999) offers a more elaborate working of the idea that humans are fundamentally shaped by and shape the narrative structures of their existence. We know that the ability to pass knowledge between humans through stories was a distinguishing feature of human evolution. No longer dependent on genetic change and imitation of parents, abstract knowledge and practical wisdom could be distributed, mutated, and blended to speed

learning and adaption. Narrative remains the principle mechanism of learning and knowledge transfer within an organization. (Dave Snowden, 2007⁸²)

The danger of a single vision or a look only in one direction is to miss an immensity of possibilities. In the TED talk *The danger of a single story*⁸³, novelist Chimamanda Adichie shows us how a limiting version of a story told many times in the same way and from a single perspective can, in the long run, have limited or even disabling consequences.

Narratives, as defined by Clandinin (2006), are "These lived and told stories and talk about those stories are ways we create meaning in our lives as well as ways we enlist each other's help in building our lives and communities." They provide a rich, contextualized understanding of social reality that numbers alone cannot convey. In collecting narratives, researchers gather stories that reflect the lived experiences of individuals, capturing the nuances of their social world. As the researcher, I'll also be creating narratives, interpreting and constructing meanings. According to Chase (2005), narrative production allows researchers to synthesize disparate experiences into a cohesive story, offering deeper insights into social dynamics and individual agency. As Polkinghorne (1988) asserts, narrative research bridges the gap between abstract theory and the living reality of social actors.

In qualitative research, narratives serve both as a method of data collection and as a form of analysis. This dual role highlights the importance of narrative in capturing the complexity of human experiences and the meanings individuals attach to their actions. Narratives, or stories about personal experiences, provide rich, comprehensive insights that quantitative data cannot. This method does not seek statistical precision but rather challenges common sense and dives into the meanings that people assign to their behaviors.

The micro-narratives were collected through the SenseMaker® tool to obtain meaningful stories about lived experiences or elements of the coordination in EiE and elements that interact with this coordination.

The sense-maker tool allowed the participant to tell a story and self-interpret, giving meaning to their own story - according to a series of 'signifiers' (small interpretation and analysis exercises), avoiding only an external reading of the stories. The SenseMaker® data collection was conducted from October 11th,

⁸² See more at : <https://thecynefin.co/homo-narrans/>, last access 04/02/2023

⁸³ See more at : https://www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda_ngozi_adichie_the_danger_of_a_single_story?utm_campaign=tedspread&utm_medium=referral&utm_source=tedcomshare, last access 04/02/2023

2021, to December 07th, 2022. The respondents shared a micro-story and filled an '*unsurvey*' with a series of visual prompts and multi-choice questions to analyze their stories (not all understand the correct way to do it, so some of the '*unsurveys*' corresponded to the coordination large vision instead of directly related to the story) and they share demographic information in the end. SenseMaker® facilitated capturing micro-narratives, allowing participants to self-interpret their stories, thus enriching the qualitative depth of analysis.

The framework was prepared during a training course at the Cynefin Center, obtaining the team's support to carry it out through the software's operation. Later, the design of the instrument was revised by the supervisors, restructured, and incorporated into the tool. Then, a pilot test was carried out by 10 participants, helping to redefine the tool in a more friendly and adapted version. Finally, after being reviewed and restructured, the implementation was proposed in the Skype group of the Cluster Coordination teams of all active clusters and members of the Global Cluster. It was also presented to the NWSW Cameroon sub-cluster and the Cameroon National Cluster in a monthly Cluster meeting. For the most part, the tool was used in the form of an APP and suggested to a large number of users. The tool was made available in English and French – the languages more used in the international sphere of the humanitarian sector and in the African continent where the study was taking part. The major objective was to gather most local actors' perspectives and stories.

The thoughtfully created narrative prompts, which attempted to inspire participants to share micro-stories describing their experiences and opinions about education cluster coordination, were essential to this design. Because these questions were purposefully left open-ended, pertinent topics, including involvement, power relationships, and moral values, could be explored.

THE PROCESS OF SHARING IN A SENSEMAKER "UNSURVEY"

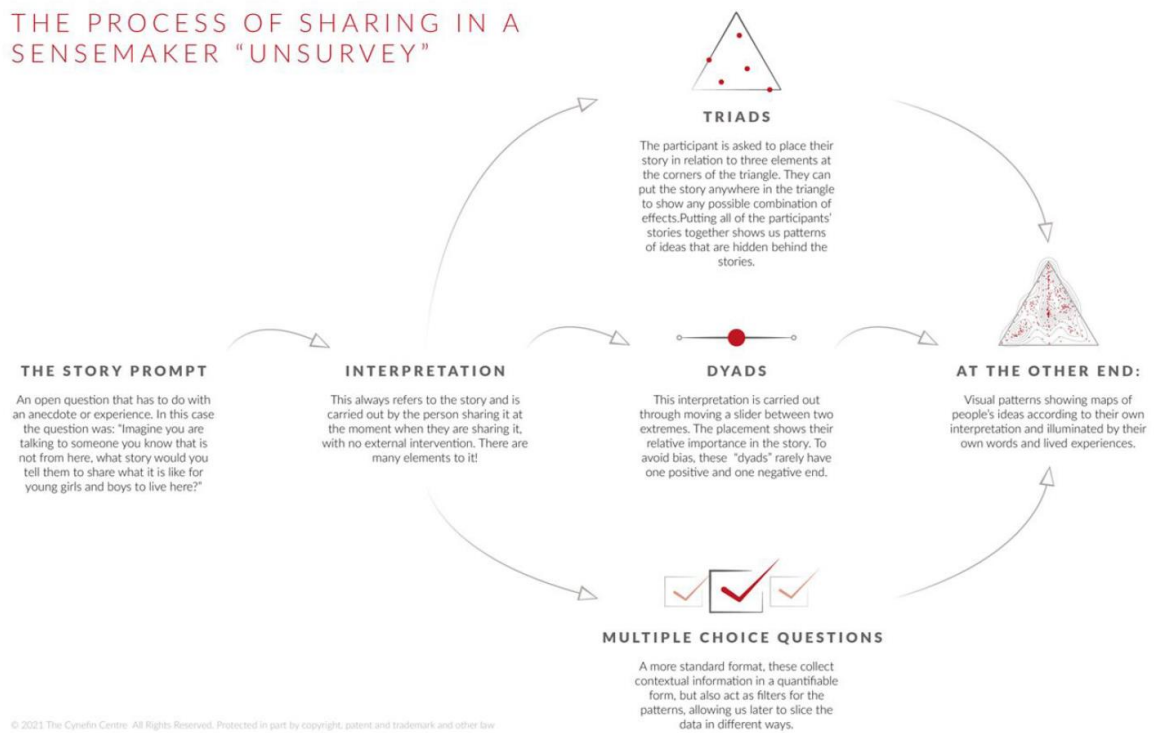


Figure 10: SenseMaker® unsurvey process representation

A mix of triadic, dyadic, and scalar interpretive questions thoughtfully designed to accompany each story complemented the narrative prompts. These interpretative questions provided participants with frameworks to self-interpret their stories, encouraging deeper reflection. This technique produced a dataset that offered a nuanced perspective on their experiences.

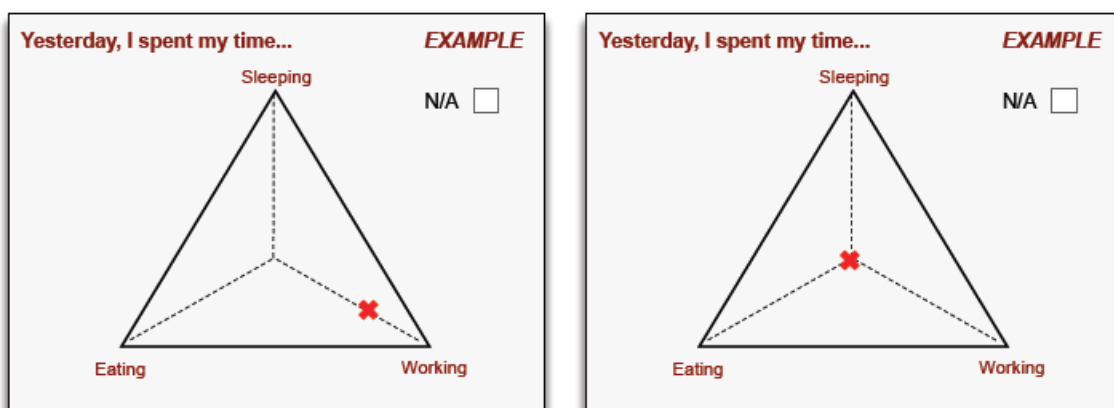


Figure 11: Triad representation

H3. In this story...

Girls are treated too harshly ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☒ ☐

Girls are spoiled and treated too softly

N/A ☐

Figure 12: Dyad representation

The primary purpose of the unsurvey is to deepen the understanding of how EiE coordination is perceived and operates and gather personal stories and experiences related to EiE coordination.

The unsurvey is segmented into multiple sections, each designed to extract specific types of information using a blend of narrative and reflective inquiries, supported by triadic, dyadic, and scalar interpretative questions. Below is a comprehensive breakdown of each set of questions:

1. Personal Story Sharing:

In the first question, participants are asked to share a story related to EiE coordination. This can be based on personal experiences, observations, or second-hand accounts. The story should highlight something that either worked well or did not meet expectations.

They are invited to give a title or hashtag to their story and, in the next questions, complement and interpret the story told, giving some insights about their feelings and understandings about the coordination in EiE.

The participants' narratives and contemplations are anonymized to safeguard their privacy, guaranteeing that they can freely express their perspectives without fear of judgment or consequences. The collected data is utilized to construct an illustration of the various perceptions and perspectives engaged in the coordination of EiE.

2. Hypothetical Changes:

In the second group of questions, the participants are invited to envision the changes they would make to humanitarian EiE coordination if they had limitless authority and resources.

Type of interpretative questions:

- Triadic questions encourage participants to situate their experiences within a triangular framework of three interconnected notions, allowing for a detailed comprehension of the dynamic interaction among these aspects in their narrative;
- Dyadic questions refer to the correlation between two things, encouraging participants to contemplate the equilibrium or conflict between them;
- Scalar questions are used to gather quantifiable data by asking participants to score their experiences or perceptions on a scale. This data complements the qualitative narratives provided by the participants.

The unsurvey seeks to capture both the current status and potential future improvements in EiE coordination by emphasizing real-world experiences, hypothetical scenarios, and self-reflective interpretative questions.

3. Additional Reflections:

Participants are provided with the chance to express any unexpected findings or further reflections they may have regarding the *unsurvey* or the subject of EiE coordination.

4. Demographic data:

To offer context for the responses, participants are asked to submit demographic information such as their country of residence, nationality, gender, and age group.

5.3.3 Written normative documents

To gain a comprehensive understanding of coordination practices and principles, various normative documents related to the field of EiE are analyzed. From them, three important publications relevant to the EiE field specific to the education cluster coordination were considered to do a more detailed interpretation, focusing on the core themes and implications without comparative evaluation. The three important papers were carefully chosen with the goal of addressing a wide range of contemporary problems and advancements in EiE coordination. Each document was selected in light of its possible influence on future coordination in the education sector, as well as its applicability to current international talks.

Challenges, recommendations, strategies, trends, and ways to were identified and analyzed. At the same time, a more deep analysis of each publication was also carried out.

Based on my journey through the research, some documents linked to the study object were published, bringing some new perspectives to the table. Initially, a table (refer to the Empirical Material Analysis chapter) was crafted, focusing on the main EiE coordination publications to catalog and categorize the main publications related to the study object. This process led to a brief selection of publications within the timeframe of 2019 to 2023, strategically chosen to capture the most recent and pertinent contributions from the field.

Below is the table featuring the selected publications, setting the stage for the detailed analysis.

	TYPE OF DOCUMENT	ANALYSIS OF THE FOLLOW REPORTS/GUIDANCE
Global	Report published by GEC; UNHCR and INEE, 2020	EiE coordination Harnessing humanitarian and development architecture for Education 2030
Global	HERE-Geneva, 2022	Evaluation of the UNICEF Role as Cluster Lead (Co-Lead) Agency (CLARE II)
Global	GEC, 2022	Global Education Cluster Strategy 2022–2025 Strengthening collective action for coordinated EiE preparedness and response
NWSW Cameroon	Cameroon Education Cluster, 2023	Education Cluster Strategy 2023 - 2025 NWSW Cameroon

The selection focused on the most recent publications from 2019 to 2023, highlighting their significance in the sector of EiE coordination. The initial two documents offer in-depth analyses specific to EiE coordination. The first examines the leadership roles of UNICEF and Save the Children International as Global Cluster leaders, while the second provides a broader analysis of EiE coordination mechanisms beyond just the EiE Cluster. The third document outlines the strategy for local Education Cluster coordination in the Northwest and Southwest (NWSW) regions of Cameroon. This strategy was developed through a workshop conducted in Douala, which brought together cluster members, representatives from other clusters, and a teacher representing the affected community. Additionally, this process included consultations with children, the insights from which contributed to the fifth document that is also analyzed here.

6. Data Analysis and Interpretation

As a methodology approach, a hermeneutic approach was adopted because “unlike natural science, deals with a pre-interpreted world where the creation and reproduction of meaning-frames is a very condition of that which it seeks to analyze, namely human social conduct: this is why there is a double hermeneutics in the social sciences...” (Giddens, 1976), incorporating discourse analysis and interpretation. Through this framework, the aim is to delve deeper into the nature of the subject matter, uncovering underlying meanings. Drawing upon the principles of hermeneutics, the process of interpretation is engaged in recognizing the inherent complexity of the data and its contextual significance.

This study utilizes a multifaced post-structuralist approach that combines sensemaking (Bean & Hamilton, 2006; Leiter, 1980; Stein, 2004; Weick & al., 2005, and Kurtz and Snowden, 2003), methodological nomadism (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987), critical reticular thinking (Ferreira, 2005), interpretivism (Weber, 1978; Ferreira, 2005; Geertz, 1973), and Critical Discourse Analysis (Foucault, 1972, 1980) to explore the viewpoints of Education Cluster members in the NWSW region of Cameroon. Sensemaking is a theoretical framework that helps to generate meaning from complex and ambiguous information and experiences, capturing the essence of interpretation and meaning creation (Brown & al., 2008). This technique is enhanced by methodological nomadism, influenced by Deleuze and Guattari (1987), which highlights the importance of flexibility, mobility, and adaptability in the research process. Methodological nomadism enables researchers to explore many viewpoints and identify relationships between different variables, making it especially suitable for studying complex environments like Education during catastrophes. Despite the differences and non-uniformities between them, these methodologies work together to enable a nuanced and dynamic comprehension of the ever-changing nature of the ECC approach.

Critical reticular thinking (Ferreira, 2005) offers a non-linear and interconnected perspective that is combined with interpretivism. Interpretivism focuses on understanding the subjective viewpoints of Cluster Coordination members, revealing the cultural framework within which social behaviors take place (Geertz, 2008). This approach guarantees an analysis of the coordination mechanisms and their impact on EiE, emphasizing the need to focus on the viewpoints and real-life experiences of the players involved in EiE coordination.

This theoretical-methodological approach allows researchers to analyze the multifaceted aspects of storytelling, including themes such as fictionalism, plurivocity, reflexivity, temporality, intertextuality, and voice, all of which link to power (Brown & al., 2009). This also highlights the contextual nature of these experiences, recognizing that they may not universally reflect those of coordination-related actors from the Global South or minority practitioners in the Global North. However, these coordination-related narratives are brought to the forefront to emphasize the value of centering on the perspectives and lived experiences of EiE coordination actors.

Examining data to discern contradictions, connections, and overarching themes involved a systematic exploration of textual elements to unveil layers of meaning and shed light on the subject's nuances. Utilizing a hermeneutic lens highlights the importance of understanding and interpreting these complexities, acknowledging the role of language and discourse in shaping our understanding of reality.

This study contributes to the existing body of knowledge by reflexively and critically examining the data, fostering a deeper appreciation for the interplay between language, discourse, and interpretation.

6.1 Interpretative Paradigm

In the approach to data analysis, an interpretive paradigm was adopted, grounding the research in the understanding that reality is not an objective entity but a collection of socially constructed meanings attributed to events by individuals. Therefore, closed conclusions are avoided; the interpretive paradigm emphasizes the importance of studying the subjective experiences and interpretations of individuals rather than just the observable behaviors or societal structures. The aim is to understand and know more and not to prove, demonstrate, judge, or evaluate.

To interpret reality, various reality constructions or meanings created by social actors are highlighted. This approach facilitates a more nuanced and complex understanding of social phenomena. Moreover, the interaction between myself as a researcher and the participants can be used to create structures that are more informed, complex, and consensual. This paradigm, in contrast to the positivist approach, prioritizes the exploration of subjective experiences and interpretations of individuals over objective observation and measurement.

Edgar Morin's (2005) methodology, emphasizing the inseparable nature of the subject and object of inquiry, aligns with this approach. These envelopes the phenomenon, questioning actions, speech, and things to unravel the complexities and interconnectedness of the subject and its environment. At the

same time, a critical approach is taken from an emancipatory perspective. Critique, inherently embedded within the power relations it addresses, requires an internal process of self-reflection and, ultimately, self-rejection. As framed by Foucault (1982), critique is "not to discover what we are but to refuse what we are," emphasizing the transformative potential of questioning and resisting established norms and identities.

Additionally, the *thick description* (Geertz, 2008) was an invaluable tool in conducting interpretative analysis of data. Thick description involves providing a rich, detailed description of social phenomena, including the context in which they occur and their meaning for those involved. This approach allows for a deeper understanding of the complexities of human behavior and social interactions, and it helps to ensure that my analysis is grounded in a nuanced understanding of the data.

Also, Ferreira's (2005) concept of 'reticular' critical thinking in analyzing the data collected during research. By connecting pieces of information from different scales and dimensions, this method has made it easier to recognize links that might not be immediately apparent. It enables me to develop a more thorough and complex understanding of the material. This method also allows the challenge of preconceived beliefs and raises doubts about assumptions.

In summary, the interpretive paradigm approach to data analysis incorporates insights from Morin (2005), Geertz (2008), Foucault (1982), and Ferreira (2005). It weaves a theoretical foundation that acknowledges the complexity, subjectivity, and cultural context inherent in the social phenomena being studied.

6.2 Content Analysis

This study is centered around discourse analysis, which is based on the theoretical ideas of Foucault (1972), Bourdieu (1972, 1979, 1991, 1980), Mbembe (2001, 2007), and Fairclough (1995, 2001, 2003). The study identifies certain discursive strategies used in coordination messages, policy texts, and interviews, including repeating metaphors, phrases, and thematic structures that emphasize prevailing narratives, as well as alternative discourses that question the status quo.

The central focus of this discourse analysis is the profound influence of Foucault (1972), whose work has left an indelible mark on our understanding of power, knowledge, and the complexities of societal structures. Foucault's (1972) exploration of discursive formations provides a lens through which the analysis examines how language constructs and shapes our understanding of reality. His theories

elucidate the process by which specific discourses gain dominance and are perpetuated by powerful institutions. He argues that discourse is not only language but a system that organizes knowledge and establishes systems of truth that shape how individuals and groups behave. This analysis utilizes Foucault's ideas to investigate how education cluster actors and cluster-related actors understand coordination policies and humanitarian discourses. The analysis aims to reveal how language shapes our perception of reality, emphasizing the narratives that are given more importance and those that are given less importance in cluster coordination.

Additionally, the works of Bourdieu (1972, 1979, 1991, 1980) contribute significantly to narrative analysis with concepts of *habitus* and *symbolic violence*, offering a nuanced understanding of how discourse operates within social fields and unveiling power structures embedded in language and communication. *Habitus*, defined as people's established habits, skills, and dispositions, operates in the realms of education and humanitarianism. *Symbolic violence* expresses itself in the subtle ways dominant beliefs impact discourse, influencing who handles power, sometimes the humanitarian sector, coordination mechanisms, or the EiE system, and whose voices are underrepresented. By evaluating the language used in regulations and reports, this research demonstrates how implicit norms and values can sometimes sustain power dynamics.

The works of Mbembe (2001, 2007), a renowned Cameroonian philosopher and political theorist, enrich the content analysis with his exploration of post-colonialism, necropolitics, and the politics of enmity, providing a unique perspective on the intersections between discourse, power, and identity, particularly in the African context. His insights are particularly relevant in examining education cluster coordination stories from the NWSW region. Mbembe's (2019) critique of colonial legacies helps identify remnants of colonial discourse influencing coordination policies. This analysis also uncovers how narratives around aid and development may reinforce existing inequalities and exclusion.

This approach places narratives within the region's unique political, historical, and social circumstances. This contextual approach reveals the specific power structures and sociopolitical ties that influence how coordination methods are viewed and interpreted. Perception has a considerable impact on the quality of humanitarian operations, as well as on the sustainability and implications on the future of many affected people. According to Donini (2012),

«such perceptions are the result of both context-independent factors (the organization's activities in other parts of the world, its reputation, its visibility on the international

stage, the consistency of its principles and activities); context-dependent factors (the way the organization implements its operations in the country, the relevance of its activities to the needs of the local population, its communication strategy, its position in relation to national political issues, or even its management of local human resources or its integration into the pre-existing social fabric); and characteristics linked directly to the environment in which it is operating, such as political context (history of colonization, previous military or humanitarian interventions, number and types of foreign actors present, the role of religious, political, economic, and military authorities.» (Donini, 2012)

These perceptions influence and are influenced by communication, highlighting the importance of inclusive and contextually aware methods in humanitarian efforts. A flexible discourse that is sensitive to local narratives, values, and power dynamics is more effective than a rigid mandate-based approach in addressing reality on the ground.

6.3 Interviews and Visual Data Interpretations (Sketches from the interviews)

Interviews: Interpreting and doing a critique of interviews imply recognizing the *Verstehen* (Weber, 1978)—the importance of subjective meanings that individuals attach to their actions. Through the utilization of *Verstehen*, the aim is to transcend basic description and progress towards an empathetic comprehension of the actual experiences encountered by their subjects. Adding to the empathetic comprehension is also important to consider the phenomenon as an inseparable web of actions, speech, and contexts (Morin, 2005), acknowledging that the participants are both shaped by and shape their environments. By integrating these perspectives, the goal is to produce a rich analysis unveiling enablers and constraints that can unlock and mobilize relevant changes to the ECC approach.

Visual Data Interpretation and Sensemaking - The sketches sub-chapter emerges as a canvas where visual and textual elements converge, echoing the interconnected perspectives suggested by Sarah Pink's (2003) insightful approach. She advocates for the creation of linkages within data, emphasizing the interconnectedness of visual and textual elements. By merging visual and textual data analyses, the study aims to unravel the unique layers of knowledge embedded in sketches and descriptions, understanding them in relation to one another. These different media represent different types of knowledge and ways of knowing that may be understood in relation to one another. (Pink 2013)

The network interpretation unveils the underlying connections and patterns within the sketches, illustrating how visual components link to and complement textual narratives.

Drawing inspiration from Taussig's (2011, p. 20) assertion that visual representations possess a unique power is recognized "Far from being erased or erasing the reality it represents, the picture-puzzle emits power as image because it suggests secrets and, on occasion, unusual insights into the human condition." By considering the power dynamics of visuals, the aim is to decipher the layers of meaning embedded in the visual narratives, complementing the textural richness.

6.4 SenseMaker® understandings

In the context of this research, SenseMaker®, a narrative-based research tool, is employed to capture and analyze micro-stories from participants, especially the micro-dimension insights of the Cameroon NWSW Education Cluster.

The first step in the analytic process was to review all the stories that SenseMaker® had collected. With the aid of its analytical tools, such as the SenseMaker® dashboard or the Workbench, recurrent themes surfaced, providing a comprehensive picture of the participants' perspectives. This procedure made it easier to identify the main themes guiding their storylines. Workbench provides a framework for analyzing the gathered narratives in greater detail and methodically. This approach facilitates an in-depth exploration of how participants perceive and interpret their coordination experiences within the education clusters.

Thematic insights were then employed to investigate these themes further. The language used in the stories was carefully examined to reveal power relationships, implicit presumptions, and values impacting coordination actions. This fine-grained analysis exposed subtle patterns hidden in every story, illuminating the complex interactions influencing coordinating experiences.

SenseMaker® findings were cross-referenced with formal data sources, such as government, humanitarian, and media publications, to contextualize further and authenticate the tales. This triangulation procedure guaranteed the analysis's dependability and robustness.

Finally, this methodical approach offers an elaborate reading of the discourse related to education cluster coordination. Using narrative-based inquiry and participants' interpretations, it delineates the complex network of viewpoints and dynamics that impact the coordination process.

6.5 Written Normative Documents Discussion

This approach will explore the connections between the thematic focus of the selected publications and the themes central to our study. The examination process may reveal additional noteworthy points, enriching the depth of our understanding. As articulated by Zang (2009, p. 11), “Through careful data preparation, coding, and interpretation, the results of qualitative content analysis can support the development of new theories and models, as well as validating existing theories and providing thick descriptions of particular settings or phenomena.”

This study is grounded in a critical understanding of policy and is in the field of critical educational policy studies. The critical perspective of policy differs from traditional policy analysis in important ways. First, whereas a traditional conception typically views policy as authoritative decisions written in documents (Rizvi & Lingard, 2010), a critical perspective understands policy as much more than these texts; it also includes individuals, groups, practices, events, ideas, power, struggles, and compromises (Ball, 1994; Blackmore, 1995; Bowe & al. 1992). Policy, from a critical perspective, is understood as complex, inherently political, and infused with values (Bowe & al. 1992). This view differs from traditional conceptions of policymaking as a rational and linear process. Policy problems, like the social world, are viewed from a policy critical perspective not as objective problems but as social constructions, with language playing a central role in producing and promoting these constructions (Edelman, 1988). Finally, critical education policy research aims to challenge inequalities by understanding the role policies play in perpetuating them.

6.6 Computer-based Transcription and Decoding of Narratives

User-friendly tools that provided invaluable support throughout the process were used to coding, interpretation, and analysis. To transcribe interviews, the Otter.ai tool was used for English and Amberscript.com for French and Portuguese interviews. These transcription tools were instrumental in ensuring efficient conversion of audio data into written text.

Coding the interviews marked the inception of this digital exploration. With a focus on all dimensions—macro, meso, and micro—representing the global, national, and subnational education clusters, data was systematically categorized. This initial step laid the foundation for a comprehensive understanding of overarching themes and patterns within the interviews.

Taguette, a free online software, was used as support to work through data from macro and meso dimensions. This tool structures and organizes the information derived from the interviews by highlighting and tagging the documents uploaded. Its user-friendly interface facilitated a systematic coding process, allowing to distill key insights from the global and national perspectives embedded in the interviews.

Moving further into the digital landscape, the micro-narratives were collected from the field through the SenseMaker® tool, a resource made accessible through a scholarship with Cynefin.co. SenseMaker® is renowned for its capacity to untangle complex personal narratives and became a guiding companion in unveiling the nuances of the micro dimension studied. Additionally, for micro-level exploration, Workbench emerged as a valuable ally. Workbench's capabilities in handling micro-level data provided a granular understanding, ensuring that no subtlety in the narratives was overlooked.

In this digital expedition, the encounter of practical coding skills and the seamless integration of user-friendly software played a pivotal role. The synergy between the macro, meso, and micro dimensions, facilitated by Taguette, Sense Maker, and Workbench, contributed to a holistic analysis that embraced the varied data scales.

7. Validity and Ethical Considerations

7.1 Validity concerns

Validity in sociological research is the degree to which the results, deductions, and assertions derived from the study are true and accurate. It includes a variety of types, such as: i) Internal validity refers to how well study conditions affected the findings' accuracy; ii) External validity is related to the findings' capacity to be applied outside the study's specific setting; iii) A test's construct validity evaluates how well it measures the construct it purports to measure. Construct validity is, in principle, the process through which we can make claims about “what we have seen to what we call what we have seen” (Kleven, 2008, p. 223). To put it simply, ‘what we call what we have seen’ is the act of naming the observations we have made in order to understand better and discuss them. ‘What we have seen’ is, therefore, just our real observations or experiences.

In this study, two strategies were used, including the use of multiple sources of data and establishing a ‘chain of evidence.’ No key actor was selected to review the study because multiple actors in this process had various views about the process, and giving priority to one view could introduce a bias to

the analysis (Silverman, 2010, p. 278). However, the 3 supervisors' feedback and the fact of accomplishing the process, including participating as observers in some of the interviews, gave a support and validity sense to the study. Also, the SenseMaker® self-interpreting tool allows us to bring to light not only the micro-stories but a lot more. For the use of this tool, the Cynefin Center allowed me to do training and gave me support along the way by email and, when needed, also by video call.

To ensure a 'chain of evidence' for the study on the Education Cluster Coordination dimensions, a document review was first conducted on the EiE main documents, followed by Global Cluster publications, Education Cluster Cameroon, and specific NWSW Cameroon Ed Cluster publications. This was followed by a more comprehensive search for documents related to the geographical context of the Cameroon NWSW crisis, the humanitarian and development sectors, sociology-related thematic, and Education politics and other disciplines when relevant, such as Complexity theory.

Another aspect that should be mentioned as impacting validity is the role of language. All documents were adapted and translated into the three languages spoken by the respondents or participating actors – Portuguese, French, and English. This ensured that all documents were reviewed and the interpretation of meaning was not dependent on additional translation.

7.2 Ethical Considerations

Ethical principles for research on human subjects were initially outlined in the Nuremberg Code (1947), followed by the *Declaration of Helsinki* (World Medical Association, 1964) and the *Belmont Report*, which was commissioned by the US Department of Health and Human Services in 1979. However, there are other examples of clinical research addressing the ethics of their projects that hark back to the 1800s (Benedek, 2005). These principles were intended to protect human subjects of medical research and are currently used by Institutional Review Boards to regulate a broader spectrum of research in different disciplines. Three core principles underpin the ethical standards: 1. respect for persons, requiring the researcher to protect participants with diminished autonomy; 2. beneficence, requiring the researcher to protect research subjects from harm as well as maximize the possible benefits of the investigation to participants; and 3. justice, referring to the equal distribution of the benefits and burdens of the research (Beauchamp and Childress, 2001). The three key areas of application in this respect were the assessment of risks and benefits, informed consent, and selection of subjects. According to the *British Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) Framework for Research Ethics* (2015: 43), the term research ethics 'refers to the moral principles guiding research, from its inception

through to completion and publication of results and beyond [...] and impact activities after the research has been published'. Formal ethical guidance is intended to define minimum standards in social research by raising concerns and providing adequate methods to address these dilemmas. The British Education Research Association (BERA) Guidelines represent the tenets of rigorous ethical practice in educational research. BERA Guidelines recognize the importance of respect for all those who engage in it, including researchers and participants, academics, practitioners, and commissioning institutions (BERA, 2018). There are also other important guidelines, such as those put out by CIOMS (2016) and UNESCO (2019) establishing additional principles that are applicable to humanitarian settings. A common rationale for education in conflict and emergencies is that each crisis is different, and it must be approached sensitively in line with local practices and dynamics. While ethical research should adapt to local contexts, some principles and practices matter in every context, namely justice, respect, and solidarity (Lukes, 2008). Hence, there is a need for internationally accepted principles, guidelines and minimum standards that could be applied while conducting research with child participants in crisis settings (Maglio & Pherali, 2020).

In contrast to morality, which is based on socially accepted values and norms, ethics is reflective. It begins when moral concepts are questioned and considered. Throughout the research process, ethical principles were carefully considered in accordance with the University of Minho guidelines. Additionally, it was considered that protection and data privacy are paramount, and the humanitarian principle of doing *no harm* should underpin all work.

The ethical imperative of humanitarian – to *do no harm* – is extremely important in conflict zones where the research environment is politically polarized, armed actors may be present, and the local population involves vulnerable groups (Thomson, 2008). Also, in qualitative research, ethical dilemmas might emerge during the research process or even during the actual interview situation, thus forcing the researcher to make decisions on the spot. While it is impossible to think of all potential ethical dilemmas that can emerge, this nevertheless means that it is even more important to think through the potential ethical dilemmas.

In order to address the sensitive nature of some of the discussions held, particularly since the data collection was carried out remotely, special confidentiality and information security measures were put in place to ensure the trust of the respondents in the interview and '*unsurvey*' process.

One of the points to consider is that the researcher engaged in the Coordination system not only before starting the study but also during the research process. Having the possibility to be involved in a short moment (1 month) directly linked to the coordination in the NWSW of Cameroon allowed the researcher to have direct contact with the EiE main actors, especially the local ones, and then get more easily their participation and their true views. For this reason, specific care was put when writing up the analysis to ensure the bias was not present.

Since the study began, all ethical principles of scientific research have been applied, especially regarding the participants who are likely to be affected by it. The recommendations of the University of Minho Despacho VRT-LL - 07/2020 were followed. Additionally, the Code of Conduct was respected, which implies respect for the people's dignity, protecting participants, developing trust with them, promoting research integrity, guarding against misconduct and impropriety that might reflect on their organizations or institutions, and coping with new, challenging problems (Israel & Hay, 2006). The potential risks from the research were considered, ensuring that the research's benefit was greater than the potential risks.

Recognizing my Western and Eurocentric origins, there was delivered effort to engage with post-abysal ethics (Cremin & al, 2021) principles, keeping the research agenda open and flexible in designing. The SM framework was adapted after the initial encounter with local participants from the NWSW Cameroon, giving room to review ethics and risk throughout the research process. Also, debating decisions with supervisors and being available easily through WhatsApp and email to participants and supervisors was very important, including giving space to emotion. This research does have direct contact with local NGOs from NWSW Cameroon that are also part of the population affected and relate to the crisis/conflict situation directly. The other participants also have direct contact, more or less close to conflict and crisis, and this was considered during the whole process. There was work done to ensure the openness to the epistemologies of the South and post-colonial perspectives when choosing the tools and defining the processes and methodology. The context was studied; the researcher lived for more than 1 year in Cameroon and tried to be aware of the ongoing population struggles.

Regarding interviews in general, Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) stress the power asymmetry when the researcher has a specific competence and guides the interview. In the case of expert interviews used in this project, the power asymmetry may be in the opposite direction, where the expert has specific high-level knowledge and expertise on the topic and often has substantial experience with being interviewed. Such experts are usually experienced in giving interviews, making them experts in communication.

The referencing of sources used in the production was rigorous. Copyright laws and recognition of other contributors and collaborators were respected. This approach not only maintains ethical norms but also cultivates an environment of integrity among the academic community and all participants.

The subjectivity inherent in the researcher's perspective is acknowledged, with the powerful position held in selecting the study's focus, methodology, and analytical lens (Creswell, 2013). It is also recognized that the participants are the true owners of the information collected and need to have access to the outcomes of the research. It will be ensured that the study is disseminated on a large scale so that all participants can benefit from its findings.

7.3 Informed Consent

A comprehensive protocol was developed to uphold ethical standards and safeguard the well-being and confidentiality of all participants who shared their insights. It began with a thoughtful introduction via email, which transparently communicated the purpose of the investigation and the role of the investigator. This initial digital engagement set the stage for a collaborative exploration, inviting participants into the narrative of the research. A crucial point in the ethical framework was the distribution of a detailed informed consent form via email and in the intro of the SM tool. This document, symbolizing voluntary participation, outlined participants' freedom to express opinions without fear of repercussions. Complete anonymity, a primary consideration, was prioritized in all interactions, allowing participants the comfort of sharing their narratives. Additionally, the document outlined rights such as freedom of speech, breaks (if needed), and other considerations to adopt a safe and respectful space. In the same communication, participants received a written guide outlining interview procedures and, importantly, affirming their right to withdraw until the publication of results.

Participants actively responded to the email to confirm their commitment, signifying their agreement with the informed consent form. This interactive step further strengthened the mutual understanding between the participants and the researcher, establishing a collaborative commitment to ethical research practices. As the interviews unfolded, a respectful request was made before starting – the willingness of participants to permit recording and transcription for research purposes. This step, a commitment to transparency and methodological rigor, aimed to capture the nuances of their expressions accurately.

Crucially, the interview concluded with a moment of reciprocity. At the interview's end, time was intentionally allocated for questions from the participants.

7.4 Confidentiality and Data Protection

Confidentiality, privacy, and data protection were well thought out and considered to ensure the dignity of the study participants following the UM Code of Conduct (2020) and the UM Despacho VRT-LL - 07/2020:

- Any personal information gathered during the investigation was considered confidential and overseen by the rules (UM Code of Conduct, 2020);
- Real names were masked, as well as other data that allows the identification of people and entities, ensuring data confidentiality and personal and institutional anonymity (UM Despacho VRT-LL - 07/2020);
- Coding, aggregation, and presentation strategies were adopted for research and personal data. (UM Despacho VRT-LL - 07/2020);
- Photographs, audio, or videos were not used unless for the notes taking and coding phases and with the express authorization of the person that was recorded during the video interview (UM Despacho VRT-LL - 07/2020).

The data was submitted using electronic questionnaires (Sense Maker) and stored online in a private Sense Maker account. It does not include any sensitive information that may threaten those participating in the study at all levels (starting with the respondent and even the level of the central teams).

Ultimately, this research carefully adhered to ethical considerations throughout the entire investigation. The assessment was created to guarantee that participants were not exposed to any harm, safeguarding their well-being at each phase. The data collection was conducted with dedication to the best ethical principles, placing the highest importance on treating all participants with complete dignity and respect. This strategy not only followed the basic principles of ethical research but also promoted an atmosphere of trust and integrity, which is crucial for the accuracy and credibility of the study.

The need to articulate data, theoretical frameworks, and research methods while considering the necessity for flexibility and adaptation to evolving contexts and realities justifies the use of varied research methods.

7.5 Research Constraints

I face a number of obstacles as a researcher, especially studying emergency response in NW Cameroon, which may restrict the scope and efficiency of my work and were stronger due to the COVID-19 pandemic with travel restrictions and disruptions. Here are a few illustrations:

- **Cultural Sensitivity:** An inherent limitation of this research stems from my position as an outsider to both Ambazonian and broader Cameroonian cultures. Despite residing in Africa since 2014/15, my exposure has been primarily academic/professional and in Cameroon limited to Yaoundé. Living in a country does not necessarily guarantee a comprehensive understanding of its diverse cultures. Recognizing this, it becomes evident that my knowledge of Ambazonian culture, particularly, is confined to what is available in literature and articles. This limitation extends to a broader understanding of Cameroonian culture. Cultural sensitivity becomes paramount in navigating the complexities of the research issue. Lacking an intimate knowledge of local customs, values, and beliefs, establishing trust with local communities is vital. However, the distance created by my outsider status may necessitate additional efforts and resources. This limitation underscores the need for caution and respect in interpreting and contextualizing the narratives collected, as the nuances of cultural dynamics may not be fully grasped from an outsider's perspective. Efforts to bridge this gap and enhance cultural sensitivity will be an ongoing and iterative process throughout the research journey.
- **Safety Concerns:** Given the ongoing conflict in the NWSW regions of Cameroon, safety considerations played a pivotal role in shaping the methodology of this research. Recognizing the volatile situation on the ground, the researcher made a deliberate decision not to physically visit the NWSW area for security reasons. Instead, the strategy workshop for the NWSW Cameroon Education Cluster was held in Douala, where cluster members convened, providing an opportune setting for engagement. The constraints posed by safety considerations extended to the methodology of data collection. Sensemaker®, a tool enabling the collection of stories and insights, proved to be very useful. It facilitated the collection of narratives from cluster members the researcher met at the workshop in Douala, offering a unique perspective despite the physical distance. Additionally, the researcher conducted online interviews with various NWSW cluster coordinators, leveraging the virtual space to bridge the gap created by safety concerns. It is important to note that safety concerns were anticipated from the outset of the research, considering the emergency context being studied. Despite these limitations, the innovative use of online platforms and Sensemaker® allowed

for meaningful engagement with participants, ensuring the safety of both the researcher and the contributors.

- **Language Limitations:** A significant constraint in this research lies in language limitations. Despite my proficiency in English, the official language in the studied zone of Cameroon, the NWSW region, including Pidgin English, boasts a diverse array of languages. This linguistic diversity poses a potential barrier, as the participants wrote their narratives in English, maybe not their native language potentially impacting the depth and accuracy of the collected data.
- **Temporal Constraints:** Temporal constraints introduce another layer of limitation to this research. Rapid changes and evolving situations characterize emergency contexts and, at the moment, also the humanitarian architecture in general and the EiE/Education Cluster in particular. In relation to the Local context, the provided snapshot may fall short of fully capturing the fluid and dynamic nature of the situation on the ground. Including, the turnover of Cluster coordinators - changing three times - underscored the temporal limitations. The limited time with each coordinator during interviews highlighted the challenge of comprehensively understanding the in-depth dynamics and challenges of the field.
- **Limited Participant Perspectives:** The research heavily relies on the perspectives of cluster members and coordinators who participated in the workshop and completed subsequent Sensemaker® narratives. However, this reliance may introduce a selection bias, as those who sent narratives may have unique perspectives distinct from those who did not participate. The absence of certain voices may curtail the diversity of viewpoints, potentially influencing the overall representation of coordination dynamics within the NWSW Cameroon Education Cluster.
- **Ethical Considerations:** Ethical considerations also contribute to a limitation in this research. The sensitive nature of the research topic may have inhibited participants' willingness to disclose certain information fully. Concerns about confidentiality may have induced self-censorship among participants, potentially influencing the depth and authenticity of the collected data.

One major challenge is also the power dynamic that exists between me as the researcher and the communities the researcher was studying. Even if the Education Cluster is composed of different nationalities, the affected population is Cameroonians, who have the most profound knowledge of local reality. My Western background and education give me a level of privilege and authority that may influence the research process, leading to biased data and misinterpretations. Therefore, the researcher strived to be self-reflective and remain open to feedback from the communities she worked with, ensuring their perspectives and voices were heard and valued.

- **Technological Limitations:** While technology has been instrumental in facilitating remote engagement through tools like Sensemaker®, it introduces limitations rooted in digital competencies and access challenges among participants. The Sensemaker® tool, requiring the creation of written narratives followed by interpretation, demands a certain level of digital literacy. This process is time-consuming and may pose challenges for those less familiar with digital platforms, potentially impacting the ease and quality of their participation. Moreover, the task involves a degree of resilience as participants cover the process of crafting and interpreting narratives within a digital context. Recognizing these technological challenges from the outset, the researcher strategically decided to prioritize quality over quantity in data collection. This decision aimed to ensure a depth of insights from those who engaged, even if the overall participation numbers were lower. This approach aligns with the qualitative nature of the research, emphasizing the richness and depth of data collected over sheer quantity.

Each of these limitations stresses the complexity of conducting research in an emergency context, emphasizing the need for transparency in acknowledging constraints that may impact the study's scope and depth.

Part III

Empirical Context and Justifications in the ECC

The Part III delves into the empirical exploration of Education Cluster Coordination (ECC) across three distinct contextual dimensions: global (macro), national (meso), and local (micro). This section primarily focuses on these dimensions, with a brief description of what's considered in each. Throughout this part, empirical insights are drawn from various data sources, emphasizing both the advantages and constraints of the existing ECC approach and related issues highlighted by the participants.

The empirical results lead to a discussion on the various aspects of ECC, including the conflict between normative goals and actual experiences. This talk rigorously analyzes the twin function of ECC as both a promoter of educational opportunity and a multifaceted, frequently disputed domain of power and influence.

It is considered that this section of the thesis grows our understanding of the practical and theoretical consequences of ECC in humanitarian contexts through an empirical investigation. This publication provides essential perspectives for policymakers, practitioners, and scholars interested in enhancing ECC and the delivery of EiE, ultimately aiming to enhance the resilience and well-being of crisis-affected populations.

1. Context and Justifications

Understanding the context of ECC is crucial for applying the ideas used in this analysis. This analysis focuses on three contextual dimensions: an analysis of local dimension perspectives of the NWSW Cameroon ECC, considered a micro-dimension; a national dimension based on three countries in West and Central Africa; and the Global Education Cluster (GEC) as the macro-dimension.

A literature review was conducted to contextualize the study's dimensions—micro, meso, and macro—and to inform the research and instrument design. The review focused on academic and grey literature. Due to the study's scope, this review is not exhaustive, but it provides a comprehensive exploration of relevant literature, especially in the context of the NWSW Cameroon case. Notably absent from this review are books and articles that are not freely accessible, as this research is not supported by funding.

The Cluster Approach was established by the UN in 2005, and Education integrated this system in 2006. The main goal of this approach is to enhance responses to affected populations. This qualitative study focuses on the Education Cluster, considering the entanglements of a complex environment and a multi-level 'institution.'

Through the analysis, three interconnected contexts will be considered. Prioritizing the local context of NWSW Cameroon, where the context will be analyzed more deeply. Different perspectives will appear from the same position—the education Cluster Coordinator, the different ones in this micro dimension. Additionally, there will be SM micro-stories of some of the other members of the Cluster. In the other dimensions – macro and meso – the data was collected through interviews. In the Country Education Cluster, the participants were the main Education Cluster Coordinators. In the macro dimension, different roles and positions from GEC are represented, from the highest responsible members in decision-making to other more operational ones.

The option for analyzing not only one dimension but all three is to allow the fluctuation and interpretation between scales, their communication, and the paths created through them. The study focuses on the Education Cluster coordination circulating between the GEC, the Country Education Cluster, and the NWSW Education Cluster.

1.1 The Macro Dimension – Global Education Cluster

Events such as the COVID-19 pandemic, the murder of George Floyd, wars in Ukraine and Gaza, climate hazards, and the increase in inequality, poverty, and precarity have profoundly influenced how people think and act, both in everyday life and in seeking solutions in an uncertain world. These crises have highlighted the importance of Coordination in various sectors, including humanitarian aid and emergency response. As referred to by Nicolai and al. (2020), Coordination appears to contribute to coherence between the education sector and other sectors. They argue that effective Coordination can bring coherence to humanitarian efforts, ensuring adequate coverage of education services and facilitating collaborative strategic actions, such as agreeing on prioritization, improving the governance of the education system, strengthening advocacy, and enhancing information sharing between education and non-education actors, leading to more accurate data and better responses; foster connectedness and networking through formal and informal interactions, promoting partnerships. Coordination seems to have led to coherence, particularly between the education sector and other sectors (Nicolai & al., 2020); however, coordinating efforts, including the Education Cluster mechanism, are also being impacted by these ongoing crises and challenges.

Today, children face aggravated vulnerability and a loss of essential learning opportunities. According to Educo (2023), 41% of the displaced population are children and adolescents, who represent 30% of the world's population. In 2022, a report published by Education Cannot Wait based on the needs of children in Education: the numbers are alarming: 222 million children need educational support, with

approximately 78.2 million (54% females, 17% with functional difficulties, 16% forcibly displaced) out of school (ECW, 2022). This figure has risen exponentially from 75 million in 2016, an increase of 196% in just six years. Despite growing recognition (ODI, 2016), EiE remains one of the least-addressed issues in disaster management (Halman & al., 2018).

The global and international perspective is referred to as the 'macro dimension.' This terminology was deliberately chosen to avoid any implications of superiority or hierarchy that might be suggested by terms such as 'level.' The macro dimension pertains to the coordination efforts of the Global Education Cluster (GEC).

One of the focuses of this study is the Global, international dimension of Education Cluster Coordination where the focus will be on the global organization GEC and their team. Some interviews and SM micro-stories were collected from the GEC team, and this is where the sensemaking narrative will *drink*. The overall dimensions of the GEC are considered according to the main subjects highlighted in the stories and anecdotes in setting policy, standards, and guidelines; building response capacity; providing operational support; and ensuring synergies with other (global) clusters and inter-cluster collaboration through the global cluster coordination group.

The participants from the Global dimension have different roles and responsibilities in the Global Education Cluster, encompassing leadership, advocacy, capacity building, and strategic planning. They come from a variety of backgrounds, including public health, civil society, and development sectors. Their journeys into the field of EiE are often motivated by a desire to address immediate educational needs while laying the groundwork for sustainable development and peacebuilding. Their description will not be done individually due to the size of the team and possible loss of anonymity.

In August 2022, GEC supported 34 contexts: 27 activated Clusters, 3 Whole Siria hubs, and 4 EiE WGs.



Figure 13: Countries with ECC activated and supported by GEC, in 2022. (source: GEC, 2023)

1.2 The Meso dimension – Country Education Cluster

Regarding the meso dimension, it refers to the national or country level and the Education Country Cluster Coordination that is frequently associated with it. The National Education Cluster Coordination (ECC) in Cameroon was invited to contribute with their perspective, but no response was received. Although the specific study of the ECC in the NSW region is not significantly affected, it would still be beneficial to provide the national viewpoint. Thus, the focus was getting perspectives from 2 countries considering the region's geographical proximity and shared challenges - in West and Central Africa - Chad, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). At the Country level, only the main national or local coordinators were interviewed (not the ECC members nor the IMO team). The interviews of Luke Bennett, Olivia Hart, Mia Collins, Dylan Hunter offered a vivid testament to the logics of coordination.

At the country level, and taking a particular look at the four countries – Chad, DRC and Cameroon, the overall dimensions of the Country Cluster Coordination were considered responsibilities to support service delivery, informing the Humanitarian Coordinator and/or the HCT of strategic decision-making, planning, and implementation of cluster strategies; monitoring and evaluation of performance; contingency planning and robust advocacy – the highlight was given to the SM micro-stories and interviews results.

While the RDC, Chad, and Cameroon do not share a direct crisis, the broader regional context and movement of people and resources are interconnected and primarily driven by conflict, displacement, and environmental challenges.

RDC has the largest number of people in need of humanitarian assistance in any country globally in 2024, with a total of 25.4 people.⁸⁴ The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) has been experiencing a protracted complex emergency for over two decades. Frequent population displacement occurs, often including people who experience several displacements. This is mostly caused by armed conflicts involving national and international armed forces, non-state armed groups, and self-defense groups. Displacement is also caused by inter-communal conflict and environmental hazards (floods and Mount Nyiragongo eruption, for example). Since March 2022, 3.3 million individuals have been displaced in the provinces of Ituri, North Kivu, and South Kivu. A significant number of displaced populations are unable to return to their homes due to ongoing violence, while the quality of their living situations in the places where they have settled voluntarily continues to decline.⁸⁵

The Lake Chad region is under significant security challenges, principally from Boko Haram and the Islamic State – West Africa Province. These concerns, along with military operations to combat these groups, have resulted in the displacement of populations and the disruption of local livelihoods. Moreover, the occurrence of inter-community conflict related to resources in the southern regions has worsened the relocation of populations. Since 2014, the persistent lack of security has caused Nigerian refugees to flee to Chad, adding to a complicated problem of displacement in the islands and coasts of Lake Chad.

Chad accommodates substantial and enduring refugee populations from the Central African Republic, Cameroon, and Sudan, who are confronted with significant humanitarian need. The ongoing hostilities in Sudan, which commenced in April 2023, have led to more than 554,000 individuals fleeing their homes and seeking asylum, largely in the eastern regions of Chad. The newly arrived individuals are joining the current population of internally displaced persons (IDPs) and refugees from neighboring countries such as Cameroon, the Central African Republic, and Nigeria. The impacted populations face challenges in obtaining sufficient access to employment opportunities and necessary services.⁸⁶

Together, the interviews represent the EiE Cluster coordinators' visions of different components of the Education Cluster mechanism. These coordinators engage continuously with a broad spectrum of

⁸⁴ See more at : <https://www.rescue.org/inside-2024-emergency-watchlist>.

⁸⁵ See more at : <https://www.acaps.org/en/countries/drc#>

⁸⁶ See more at : <https://www.acaps.org/en/countries/chad#>, last access 04/02/2023

stakeholders, including government entities, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), international NGOs (INGOs), donors, UN agencies, and local communities. Their identity is characterized by their resilience, leadership, and unwavering dedication to advocating for the right to Education in crisis.

1.3 The Micro dimension – Local Education Cluster

Lastly, the micro dimension delves into the specific circumstances of the NIAC of the NWSW regions of Cameroon, considering the perspectives of the Local Education Cluster Coordination.

Several factors influenced my decision to focus my study on the NWSW regions of Cameroon (for the more sub-national dimension of the research):

- **Overlooked Populations:** While some countries with large numbers of refugees or internally displaced persons (IDPs) receive considerable attention, IDPs and economic migrants often remain underrepresented in research. Kelcey and al. (2022) emphasize this oversight, referring that IDPs and economic migrants are often overlooked, even though they are more numerous than refugees. They further advocate for a broader focus, "It is essential to bring other migrants into view in order to bridge the gap between refugee studies and broader social scientific theories of social transformation and human mobility" (Bakewell, 2008, p. 432, cited by Kelcey & al., 2022, p. 51).
- **Data Accessibility:** The accessibility of data about the context and crisis allowed for a sensemaking narrative of educational coordination in the area, while the active involvement of local communities in coordination efforts provided fertile ground for follow-up research.
- **Specificity of Educational Crisis and Complexity of Polycrises Context:** The unique nature of the Cameroonian crisis, combined with three distinct crises classified as 'neglected' by the NRC in 2018/2019 (NRC, 2019), emphasized the urgency of the study.
- **Increased Attacks on Education:** The report 'Education Under Attack 2020' by the Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack (GCPEA, 2020) indicates a disturbing trend: Between 2015 and 2019, reported incidents of attacks on education increased in countries such as Afghanistan, Cameroon, and DRC, and emerged in other countries, as compared with the period covered in Education under Attack 2018. Furthermore, it highlights that direct and targeted attacks in Afghanistan, Cameroon, Palestine, and the Philippines most frequently harmed students and educators. Specifically in Cameroon, there has been a notable rise in the reported number of abductions and killings of school and university students and personnel, primarily attributed to suspected separatists in the NWSW regions. (GCPEA, 2020)

- Highlighting Educational Needs: The reference to the 1.2 million individuals deprived of education, as reported by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) in 2019, underscores the scale of the educational crisis. This statistic illustrates the extent of the issue and serves as a critical data point that justifies the need for focused research and intervention.
- and the enduring link between the crisis and education in the NWSW geographical region.

In sum, factors such as the visibility of IDPs, the unique nature of the Cameroonian crisis, and the increased incidents of attacks on education underscore the urgency and importance of this study.

The complexity inherent in the NWSW Cameroon context, characterized by multiple variables of interest, necessitates a participant engagement for a more intimate engagement. Drawing inspiration from Flick (2009), the approach involved participation in events and parallel conversations with individuals in the field. However, due to security considerations in the conflict-ridden NWSW Cameroon, the presence ‘in loco’ with the Education Cluster members was limited to a two-week brief period in Yaoundé and Douala cities to prepare the NWSW Education Cluster Strategy.

The NWSW EC Coordinators during the four years were interviewed, and micro-stories were collected through SM from Education Cluster members, who were mostly representatives of INGO.

Later, the choice also counted Mozambique, although geographically distinct, was included to provide a broader perspective from the lusophone context within the region and to gather a Portuguese-speaking perspective. The inclusion of Mozambique allows for a complementary analysis of ECC perspectives in different linguistic and cultural settings, offering valuable insights into the adaptability and resilience of national ECCs.

Historical context

To understand the current educational challenges in Cameroon, it is also essential to consider the historical and socio-political backdrop that is shaping the region. After World War I, Cameroon was divided between Britain and France, with Britain controlling one-fifth of the territory and France taking four-fifths as mandated by the League of Nations. Separate administrations led to cultural, legal, and socio-political differences, later contributing to regional conflicts. (Crawford & al., 2022). One of these key differences lies in the implementation of legal and educational systems influenced by British practices in Anglophone areas and French models in Francophone regions. Also, differences in language and administrative practices have resulted in tensions regarding educational programs, distribution of resources, and political representation. The divergences have worsened the feelings of marginalization

and intensified ongoing conflicts. Fast forward to 2016, the conflict began with “lawyers and teachers in the two English-speaking Northwest and Southwest regions embarked on peaceful demonstrations to denounce the disparities within the country’s judicial and educational systems” (Crawford & al., 2022, p.7). The situation quickly transformed from peaceful protests into a full-scale armed conflict characterized by clear secessionist and criminal elements (The World Bank Group 2021) in 2016 and mutated into conflict at the end of 2017 (International Crisis Group, 2019). In the development of this crisis, education was in the eye of the hurricane, and the consequences for the children were increasingly severe.

People from NWSW Cameroon perceive the government strategy as an attempt to assimilate the Anglophone population into the majority Francophone population. (Crawford & al., 2022; The World Bank Group, 2021; Ndille, 2018). This perception remains despite the country's formal multilingual status, which acknowledges both languages. Anglophone teachers in NWSW Cameroon had long-standing complaints against the presence of francophone teachers in primary and secondary schools and Anglo-Saxon colleges, which had been communicated in writing to the national government ministries (Pommerolle & Heungoup, 2017). The repercussions of this dissatisfaction were profound, leading to human rights violations, the closure of schools, widespread displacement, and the destruction of educational institutions (OCHA, 2020). Since then, the NWSW regions of Cameroon have faced severe challenges in providing education to displaced children, with only nine percent of internally displaced children attending school in 2022 and an estimated total number of 1.4 million school-aged children in need of education (UN - OCHA, 2023). At the same time, the country has been enduring three major humanitarian crises for an extended period: the NWSW Anglophone crisis, the Central African Republic (CAR) refugees’ and Nigerian refugees’ influx, and, for some time, the global COVID-19 pandemic.

President Paul Biya convened a national dialogue in September 2019 to address the conflict, but it was ‘flawed from the beginning’ (Hendricks & Kiven, 2019), even if it resulted in some proposals that addressed Anglophone concerns.

The education scene in NWSW Cameroon has become a socio-political complex situation. The ongoing conflict in the region has led to the weaponization of education, transforming schools into battlegrounds. The imposition of certain curricula, for instance, and the targeting of schools by various armed groups has disrupted normal academic life, creating an environment of fear and uncertainty. Prior to the conflict, the English-speaking region had a *habitus* (Bourdieu, 1984) that included superior access to

high-quality education, consequently facilitating public job opportunities. Nevertheless, the existing *hysteresis* (Bourdieu, 2000) phenomenon, in which these deeply rooted educational norms are no longer in harmony with the disruptive conflicts, intensifies the community's confusion and limits their capacity to maintain educational standards and opportunities during the period of crisis.

The NW/SW Education Cluster Coordination was activated in 2018 and actively supports both formal and informal learning in these regions. Since 2023, two important publications have been released after a considerable period without developments: the Education Cluster NWSW Strategy 2023 – 2025 (Cameroon Education Cluster, 2023), which was initially drafted in 2021 and underwent several revisions in the following years before its final release, and the Joint Education Needs Assessment (JENA) (Cameroon Education Cluster, 2024). During the crisis period since 2016, one helpful strategy implemented by the ONG's has been the establishment of community learning centers, which provide non-formal Education to children in conflict zones. Despite these efforts, challenges remain, such as the absence of educators, coupled with instances of violence, intimidation, and assaults on educational institutions, along with population displacement and the limited ability of school systems and communities to accommodate additional populations. (OCHA, 2024).

UNICEF and Plan International are the two cluster leads for the NW/SW Education cluster. The main objectives of the NWSW ECC are: i) to facilitate coordination of partners, information exchange, capacity building, and partner mobilization and strengthening to guarantee a successful Education in Emergency (EiE) response; ii) to establish and preserve relationships with relevant education players on a local, national, and international levels well as with humanitarian actors; iii) promote the scale-up and long-term viability of the humanitarian emergency response; iv) increase the ability of local partners to take ownership of and carry out EiE projects in a quality manner (Cameroon Education Cluster, 2024).

The Education Cluster Coordination in NWSW Cameroon has recently resumed its relationship with the government, resulting in a lack of government engagement for several years. Nonetheless, the NWSW Cameroon EiE Cluster members worked with the population and managed interactions with separatist groups, the community, and, when possible, with the government. Often, this imposed the implementation of non-formal education and other measures in order to give children access to learning.

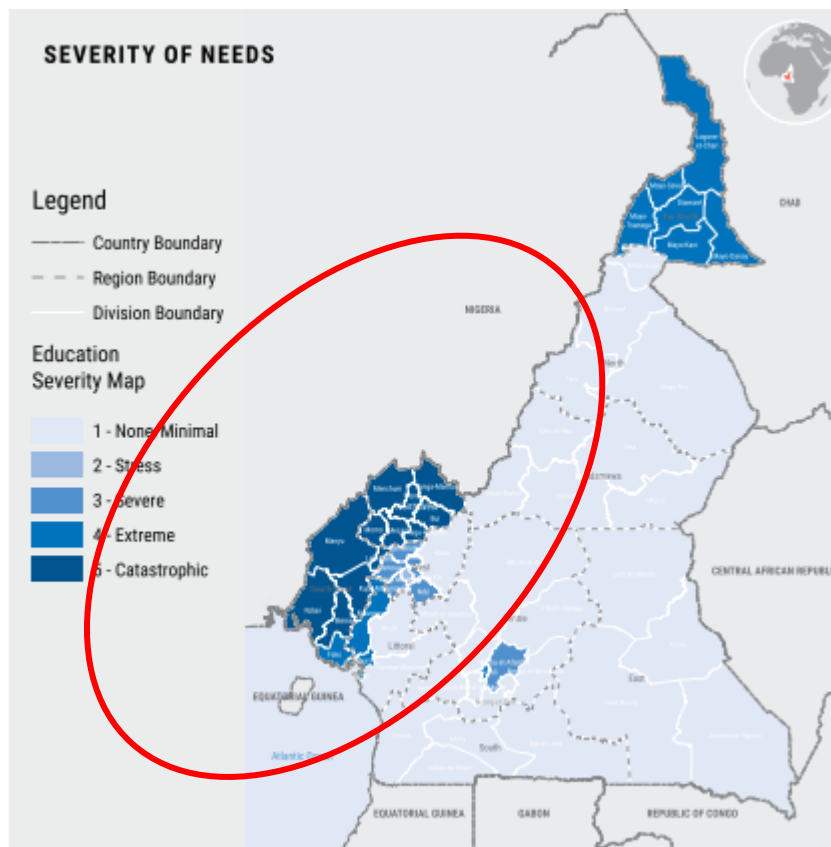


Figure 14: Severity needs map in NWSW Cameroon

In the severity needs Education map it's clear the educational crisis in the NWSW region of Cameroon. Data from the latest HNO (OCHA, 2022) showed that almost 1.5 million school-aged children need some form of education support in Cameroon due to violence, attacks, threats against education, population displacement, and the limited capacity of the regular school system to absorb extra students. (OCHA, 2022) From these numbers, 91% are children, and 52% are girls. The insecurity related to educational actors and students is very high:

“Going to school remains dangerous for children, as well as for teachers, as evidenced by the continuous chain of violent attacks on education since 2017. Certain areas have also become more prone to kidnapping for ransom, with school children particularly at risk of being abducted. Most of the reported kidnapping incidents of teachers or students were targeted, while some of the incidents may be unrelated to the provision of education, taking place in an overall environment of kidnapping of civilians for ransom in certain areas of the NWSW regions.” (OCHA, 2022)

Moreover, disruptions to education due to the conflict have negatively impacted the well-being of students and educators. This situation was aggravated by the additional challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic between 2019 and 2021.

As pertinently put by Sommers (2004), a crisis has the power not only to destroy an education system but also to confront local, national, and international educators with new complexities and challenges, making the operation of a school system especially difficult. The complex interplay between conflict and the pandemic in NWSW Cameroon exemplifies the non-linearity of events and clearly demonstrates the resilience of the population and the education actors, including the coordination leading team and its members.

The country's actual crises context

The administrative regions of Cameroon are home to the country's anglophone regions, which have a combined population of roughly 25 million people (IndexMundi, 2018). The South-West area is located on the eastern banks of the Niger Delta, where a significant portion of Cameroon's oil deposits are found (Cameroon Post, 2017), and the North-West region's capital, Bamenda, is the third-largest city in the nation.

The crisis in Cameroon has been undervalued for many years and is worsened daily by the powerlessness of international organizations and the country's government. Not being among the poorest countries in Africa and having an engaged and innovative youth, the crisis in this country is often devalued or downplayed.

According to the latest HNO, Cameroon nine out of ten regions of Cameroon continue to be impacted by three complexes protracted humanitarian crises caused by continuous violence in the Lake Chad basin and the NWSW regions and the presence of over 325,000 refugees from the Central African Republic (CAR) in the eastern regions (East, Adamawa, and North). (OCHA, 2022)

In a nutshell, the country is immersed in three humanitarian crises in three different regions, with approximately 3.9 million people in need of humanitarian assistance (OCHA, 2022) with the consequences of the global pandemic also adding to the situation.

1. The far North region, already characterized by extreme poverty, has suffered attacks by Boko Haram since 2014. This area is particularly vulnerable because of its proximity to Nigeria and the tremendous poverty that the region experiences, both of which are targets for the extremist group Boko Haram, which is based in Nigeria.

2. Since 2013, violence in the Central African Republic has resulted in a massive influx of refugees in Cameroon's East region, already chronically vulnerable. There are currently around 353,000 Central African refugees in Cameroon. Most of them live in local communities, adding pressure to access to basic services and local resources. (ECHO, 2023) The armed conflict in western CAR continues to trigger movements of populations across the border, even if sporadic. (OCHA, 2022) The influx has put a strain on water, health, and education systems. The local population, which already experiences ongoing vulnerabilities, now competes with refugees for limited resources.

3. The third crisis, in the Northwest and Southwest, and the one being the context of this study, is characterized as having the fastest movement of people in Africa in 2018. Approximately 437,000 people are estimated to have left their homes and lives in search of a safer and less violent area. This crisis began with peaceful demonstrations in the English zone that evolved into frightening insecurity and violence. Especially in these regions, where NSAGs target State symbols and representatives, the role of the administration and traditional authorities has been significantly affected by insecurity. Furthermore, the implication of some customary leaders in national politics has likewise undermined their authority and acceptance by communities. (OCHA, 2022)

In addition to this complex situation that is spreading throughout the national territory but with different causes and, therefore, different needs, there is the associated poverty, especially in these areas, cholera, and food insecurity.

Education is undoubtedly an area affected by the lack of government financial means and the origin of the crises themselves: the attacks on schools with Boko Haram in the north and looting or destruction of schools by non-governmental armed groups in the northwest and southwest.

2. Empirical Insights, and Discussion(s)

This chapter builds upon the theoretical foundation and methodological path outlined in the previous sections and delves into the empirical insights and discussion. The primary focus is to explore the dynamics of Education Cluster Coordination within the context of humanitarian emergencies.

The aim is to unravel some of the ECC approach complexities, guided by interviews (with sketches) and micro-narratives. To ensure a detailed understanding that considers the complex realities of those working, the organizational frameworks guiding their actions, and the broad policy environments that shape their possibilities, each thematic unit within this exploration will integrate insights from different dimensions, ensuring an understanding that acknowledges the entangled realities of those working on

the ground (micro), the ones working in national environments (meso) and the Global practitioners from Education Cluster Coordination (macro).

Participants were not asked about their theoretical understanding of coordination; rather, the focus was on comprehending the coordination of actions, logics and experiences through their narratives. By utilizing the diverse interviews and stories, the goal is to condense the core of their experiences, viewpoints, and feelings into a sensemaking narrative that not only captures the complexities of their roles but also emphasizes some universal challenges that may be shared with other coordinators in general. There is not a search for a unified narrative but rather a tapestry of perspectives that reveals the complex social fabric of the Cluster Approach. Whether talking about the importance of localization, the complexities of the coordinator role, or the fine line between intersectoral and sector-specific coordination, the narrative will move across these various actions, different scales, and dimensions with critical reticular thinking (Ferreira, 2005).

The narratives of the interviewees and SenseMaker® indicated some relevant factors and some tensions regarding the reality of Education Cluster Coordination. Funding, bureaucracy, institutional and constructed intersectionality, continuity in coordination staffing, and the unfolding of events on the ground profoundly impact coordination. It's important to recognize that every actor within a particular 'place'—be that a national education sector, a classroom, a network of teachers, or the global aid architecture—will have different and plural definitions, logics, and ways of action in coordinating the EiE. The objective is not the perfect definition or finding a 'recipe'; rather is collecting understandings and interpretations to enrich the already pre-existing knowledge about the object.

The participants taking part in these conversations have a diverse range of experiences and roles in the Education Cluster Coordination system. Some are experts in some thematic area and are supporting at the global level; others in a more general role coordinating at the different levels, while others are members or having supporting roles. While knowing each participant's unique context and background could enhance the story, maintaining participant anonymity is our priority in order to extract the most powerful and representative tales. This strategy is especially relevant when requesting intimate and genuine experiences, which supports maintaining anonymity.

Most of the participants work for National NGOs (Non-Governmental Organizations), Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), United Nations Agencies (UN), or International Non-Governmental Organizations (INGOs). Many came from non-educational fields and did not start in this field of study. They frequently attribute their transition to education to the real benefits of their work in communities, highlighting a

common desire to improve the lives of the people they assist. This broad collection of professionals made education their primary focus because they saw measurable results in the development and support of the community as a result of their work.

2.1 Representation and storytelling strategies:

Some of the micro-narratives collected with the SenseMaker® try to define Coordination instead of what is suggested, 'describing a practical experience or story lived during a coordination moment.' In her micro-story, Mireille Nkem talked about her memories of the *first meetings* of the Cluster Coordination mechanism, emphasizing the debates over its definition. The fact that Nkem agreed with the definition that was covered in the sessions highlights the recognition of coordination's normative aspects. However, Nkem seems to be in line with the definitions developed during these sessions; her story lacks specific instances or concrete examples that would demonstrate the practical application of coordination action. This omission highlights a potential difference between the theoretical understanding of coordination and its practical use in real-life situations. Indeed, narratives that portray ordinary activities offer valuable insights into the nuances and challenges of teamwork in specific contexts, revealing how the *habitus* of actors influences their actions and interactions and how *hysteresis* occurs when these ingrained behaviors and expectations lag in adapting to new coordination demands. These narratives bring light on the challenges and day-to-day experiences that people have when juggling coordinating efforts. Instead, normative definitions provide an understanding of coordination principles, but they might fail to capture the nuances for example, associated with applying them in different contexts. However, because her account lacks examples and facts, it provides room for judgment regarding how these ideas are actually applied.

Jørgensen and Phillips (2002) define discourse as the framework that people use to interpret and express what they perceive about the world. This framework serves as a basic foundation for organizing social existence (Wodak & Meyer, 2016) and is a synthesis of concepts, images, and behaviors communicated through language (Machin & Mayr, 2012). These discourses have an inherent connection to the dynamics of power; they are neither merely contemplative nor descriptive. As a result, they can either reinforce or undermine the prevailing social structure, acting as a check on the status quo or as instruments for achieving change (Bloor and Bloor, 2013). The relationship between discourse and power demonstrates how important discourses are in forming societal norms, values, and hierarchies.

This theoretical-methodological approach enables an examination of the multifaceted aspects of storytelling, including themes such as fictionality, reflexivity, temporality, intertextuality, and voice, all of

which are linked to power. As Brown and al. (2009) refer to, sensemaking is a meta-cognitive framework for understanding the complex external environment and its susceptibility to numerous interpretations.

2.2 Interpreting Normative Documents Linked to Education Cluster Coordination

Humanitarian policies, legal frameworks, and normative guidelines function as pivotal guides and advocacy tools for the daily operations of organizations, institutions, and civil society actors. As Niño-Zarazúa (2016, p. 7) says, “The globalization process, coupled with the revolution in information technology, has facilitated the replicability of policy innovations across different contexts.” This access increases both the relevance and impact of these policies, emphasizing their instrumental significance in human capital formation and individual agency, as highlighted by Schultz (1960).

This chapter goes beyond economic reasoning to examine wider social issues based on the belief that effective policies are crucial for countries' economic growth and development (Barro, 1991; Rebelo, 1991; Barro & Sala-i-Martin, 1998).

It looks at how education policies not only promote empowerment or technological and scientific advancements but also impact social hierarchy, shape cultural standards, and mediate personal and group identities. It also seeks to analyze the four recent normative publications that evaluate, guide, or analyze Education Cluster Coordination. These four documents have been published during the process of this thesis. Three of them are international, global normative documents, and the last one is local, corresponding to the geographical NWSW Cameroon. It explores the normative, institutional, and legal aspects of education and recognizes that education can be both a means of empowerment and a source of conflict.

Cluster dimension	TYPE OF DOCUMENT	INSIGHTS OF THE FOLLOW REPORTS/GUIDANCE
Global Doc	Report published by GEC; UNHCR and INEE, 2020	EiE coordination Harnessing humanitarian and development architecture for Education 2030
Global Doc	Evaluation HERE-Geneva, 2022	Evaluation of the UNICEF Role as Cluster Lead (Co-Lead) Agency (CLARE II)
Global Doc	Strategy GEC, 2022	Global Education Cluster Strategy 2022–2025 Strengthening collective action for coordinated EiE preparedness and response

NWSW Cameroon	Strategy Cameroon Education Cluster, 2023	Education Cluster Strategy 2023 - 2025 NWSW Cameroon
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The selection focuses on some of the most recent publications from 2019 to 2023, highlighting their significance in the sector of EiE coordination. The first document offers specific analyses to EiE coordination, serving as the final output of extensive research, including case studies and other complementary publications. The 2020 study, released by GEC, UNHCR, and INEE, aims to strengthen the humanitarian and developmental infrastructure to solidify the education sector's 2030 readiness.

The 2022 evaluation by HERE-Geneva critically evaluates the operational processes of EiE coordination in a distinct yet complementary manner. It assesses the leadership structure of the education cluster in terms of efficacy and efficiency, considering UNICEF's role and its implications for the global emergency response in education.

The third document, the GEC strategy from 2022, lays out a plan for expanding group efforts to improve the effectiveness of emergency preparedness and response education.

Focusing on the Cameroon NWSW context, the fourth document details a strategic approach for the local ECC approach. The researcher conducted a facilitation workshop in 2021 to develop this strategy. The workshop brought together cluster members, representatives from other clusters, and a teacher representing the affected community. The definitive version being analyzed was published later in 2023 after being revised and worked out by the Education Cluster at the local and national levels.

The documents are being analyzed not with an evaluation lens or looking for the 'impact' in the sense of what is being implemented or what kind of activities are being made but more in a what is it that policy enables and/or constraints; what it means for how to practice education; This approach aims to comprehend the implications of these policies on the implementation of education and the circumstances in which education can be conceptualized. The aim is not to perform a verification of content using a checklist method; instead, it is to interpret the content more openly and flexibly, allowing questions and interpretations to open it to new possibilities.

This approach aligns with Bourdieu's theory of practice (1977, 1990); the sensemaking narrative contemplates the influence of power dynamics within the education cluster and their effect on established and emerging social structures, collaboration policies, networks, and dialogue at different levels. Bourdieu's paradigm discusses how global education policies can mirror and sustain existing

power structures, favoring specific educational approaches, knowledge frameworks, and stakeholders while marginalizing others.

The sensemaking narrative seeks to enhance understanding of how global education policies influence educational environments and impact the lives of educators, students, and communities by carefully looking at these factors. It supports methods that encourage the involvement of all individuals, value local knowledge systems, and provide fair educational results in many situations. The overall objective is to identify how these collaborative policies could significantly change the educational environment, much like how urban cycling rules have changed the way society can move in places like Paris. It's a study of the 'doings' of policy, not only in the sense of activities performed but also in the development of novel possibilities in education. This highlights the significance of considering specific local circumstances and promoting broader educational approaches that are more inclusive on a global scale.

2.2.1 Key publications (and non-comparative) insights

The three first publications have very different purposes and objectives. They were very recently published and, at their core, can influence the future of education sector coordination.

The first one, EiE coordination harnessing humanitarian and development architecture for education 2030, is an important mark of collaboration and joint work from EiE Global actors. It takes it a step further with a promising action plan and an analysis from the inside out, considering the external ODI study done before.

On the other hand, CLARE II is an external study trying to give continuity to the previews of CLARE I, focused on the work of one global GEC co-lead. Even if the study is specific to the UN co-lead and not to both GEC co-leads, it can give us an idea of the main points to consider. This study focuses heavily on the leadership position of Education Cluster Coordination and UNICEF as the co-lead agency.

	Education in emergencies Coordination harnessing humanitarian and development Architecture for Education 2030 And ODI strengthening coordinated education planning and response in crises synthesis report	Evaluation of the UNICEF role as cluster lead (co-lead) agency (CLARE ii)	Global education cluster strategy 2022–2025 strengthening collective action for coordinated EiE preparedness and response
CHALLENGES OF COORDINATION	- Leadership challenges in hybrid coordination environments. - Excessive focus on mandate clarity can undermine practical response effectiveness. - Compartmentalized coordination systems - Systemic disconnection between the three main education coordination systems (Education Cluster, REWG and LEG) - Humanitarian and development education coordination systems are not systematically connected.	- Staffing inconsistencies hinder effective coordination. - Dual role as donor and coordinator impacts partner relationships and power dynamics. - Need for better alignment of internal systems with cluster responsibilities. - Bureaucracies and a rather mechanical way of working in which processes and tools (templates, dashboards, humanitarian planning cycle, etc.) dominate cluster work. - Valorization and prioritization of the CLA role are not adequate - The underlying tenets of the Cluster Approach – accountability, predictability, and	- Navigating complex, blurred operational contexts - Ensuring continuity and quality of education amid crises - Coordination with overlapping needs - Limited resources - High turnover among coordinators, affecting effectiveness

	Education in emergencies Coordination harnessing humanitarian and development Architecture for Education 2030 And ODI strengthening coordinated education planning and response in crises synthesis report	Evaluation of the UNICEF role as cluster lead (co-lead) agency (CLARE ii)	Global education cluster strategy 2022–2025 strengthening collective action for coordinated EiE preparedness and response
		partnership – are inconsistently understood and applied. - Some are concerned about the power dynamics between UNICEF and national/local NGOs and their negative repercussions on partnerships.	
RECOMMENDATIONS	- Establish roles and responsibilities early through Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) and other agreements. - Promote understanding and acceptance of diverse coordination systems among partners. - Enhance coordination mechanisms to ensure effectiveness across different operational environments.	- Integrate cluster coordination roles into core staffing and budgeting. - Enhance transparency and reduce perceived conflicts of interest through clearer separation of donor and coordination roles. Further, perceptions of uneven power dynamics should be addressed by reducing/limiting the frequency of double-hatted CC positions.	- Strengthen inter-sectoral collaboration and prioritize education within humanitarian agendas. - Develop systems that allow for rapid adaptation to changing crisis conditions. - Advocate for increased and sustained funding dedicated to education in emergencies.

	Education in emergencies Coordination harnessing humanitarian and development Architecture for Education 2030 And ODI strengthening coordinated education planning and response in crises synthesis report	Evaluation of the UNICEF role as cluster lead (co-lead) agency (CLARE ii)	Global education cluster strategy 2022–2025 strengthening collective action for coordinated EiE preparedness and response
	- Build shared understanding and acceptance of different EiE coordination systems and ways of working. - Join up coordination at the preparedness stage and from the very start of a response - Invest in communication, exchange, and capacity building between global, national, and sub-national EiE coordination systems	- Prioritize investment in national capacities for coordination. - support the notion of the ‘inter-sectorality’ of the humanitarian response. - promote strategic advisory groups (SAGs) as platforms of collective leadership - provide clear directions on how the cluster leads should implement and prioritize the four policy commitments (centrality of protection, AAP, HD nexus, and localization). - UNICEF should ensure CLA accountability is systematically addressed as mandated by the CCCs;	

	Education in emergencies Coordination harnessing humanitarian and development Architecture for Education 2030 And ODI strengthening coordinated education planning and response in crises synthesis report	Evaluation of the UNICEF role as cluster lead (co-lead) agency (CLARE ii)	Global education cluster strategy 2022–2025 strengthening collective action for coordinated EiE preparedness and response
STRATEGIES , TRENDS AND WAYS TO GO	- Focus on preparedness to boost response effectiveness. - Invest in building capacities for joint coordination, emphasizing communication and collaborative strategies. - Develop and implement strategies that integrate various coordination models to address the specific challenges of mixed mandate settings. - concerted effort to support ministries of education to lead the coordination of EiE responses and deliver on their responsibility to ensure access to education.	- Develop a talent management strategy to build a skilled pool of coordinators. - Streamline and update cluster coordination processes to improve effectiveness. - Build and reinforce national and local capacities to manage and lead coordination efforts effectively.	- Build and support resilient education systems capable of withstanding crises. - Enhance capacity building for coordinators to improve cluster leadership. - Mobilize partners to act collectively in prioritizing education and influencing humanitarian policies. - Build and support resilient education systems capable of withstanding crises. - Enhance capacity building for coordinators to improve cluster leadership. - Mobilize partners to act collectively in prioritizing education and influencing humanitarian policies.

Some of the most common coordination challenges across many EiE contexts include a lack of coordination leadership capacity, duplication of assessments, planning, and appeals processes, weakness in data collection and management, and unpredictable funding (Nicolai & al. 2020, p.34) ODI

synthesis report. These gaps have been recognized, and various efforts are in play to address them (Nolan & al., 2020). Also, the ODI synthesis report highlights the need for cross-sectoral connectedness and coherence, such as between education and protection or shelter (Nicolai & al. 2020b, p.36).

A. Education in Emergencies coordination Harnessing humanitarian and development architecture for Education 2030

The report *Education in Emergencies Coordination: Harnessing Humanitarian and Development Architecture for Education 2030* comprehensively reviews the present and potential futures of EiE. With the financing of ECW, the Global Education Cluster (GEC), the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR), and the Inter-agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE) have established a partnership: The Initiative for Strengthening Education in Emergencies Coordination (ISEEC).

The participation of large organizations in the creation and design of this document underscores the power dynamics inherent in international development. Sonia Gomez authored the report in collaboration with the Global Partners team, comprising representatives from prominent organizations engaged in EiE. The UNESCO and GEP representation in the enumeration of expert and review colleagues can mean a preoccupation with the humanitarian-development coherence. Even if this joint work aims to project a collaborative and inclusive outcome representing the EiE international stakeholders, and if there were study cases from the field, for the document, it was the participation of institutions such as UN agencies, international NGOs, and important donors that were considered what consolidates authority within a restricted group. The document proposes governance systems that concentrate decision-making authority and resource control among various groups, reflecting a centralization of power. While large organizations bring abundant resources and have global influence, local actors offer invaluable perspectives on particular issues and opportunities inside their areas. Establishing systems for authentic collaboration and equitable power distribution can diminish the 'abyssal lines' (Santos, 2007) and enhance the effectiveness and fairness of educational activities.

With the emphasis on increased funding and resource mobilization, a wide range of donors, from traditional bilateral donors to new private sector foundations and philanthropists, are engaging in EiE. ECW, the first global funding platform dedicated to EiE, is mobilizing new combinations of private and public partners that can help support educational interventions in crisis. The emphasis on multi-year flexible funding includes referring to the ECW as a significant development in addressing the chronic funding shortfall for education in crisis contexts corresponds to the need for prolonged emergencies, considering education as a long-term goal facilitating the implementation of more sustainable and

adaptable educational initiatives. Nonetheless, it's relevant to highlight that the proposed solutions, such as privatization and public-private partnerships—new private-sector foundations and philanthropists—may worsen disparities and limit underprivileged people's access to education.

The language is geared towards stakeholders in international development, including donors, NGOs, and government agencies, reflecting a top-down approach to educational governance. The text frequently references 'stakeholders,' 'partnerships,' and 'co-ordination,' suggesting a collaborative effort highlighting a focus on optimizing processes and maximizing impact. Nevertheless, the fundamental power dynamics suggest that Western funders and foreign institutions have a prevailing influence over local actors. Power is often embedded into networks that shape society rather than being confined solely within institutions (Castells, 2004). In the context of this document, the power resides within the global networks of donors and agencies, not including the local actors who are supposed to have better contextual knowledge and understanding better the real needs of the affected populations.

To conclude, the document presents a vision for integrating humanitarian and development efforts to achieve educational goals. However, a critical lens reveals that the proposed solutions prioritize market mechanisms over social justice and local empowerment. While global networks and increased funding can enable educational interventions, centralized control, and power imbalances present significant constraints.

B. Evaluation of the UNICEF Role as Cluster Lead (Co-Lead) Agency (CLARE II)

The report offers a critical perspective of UNICEF's coordination and leadership role within the Cluster Approach. Conducted nearly a decade after the initial CLARE I evaluation, this report underscores both the progress and the persistent challenges faced by UNICEF in fulfilling its Cluster Lead Agency (CLA) responsibilities.

The CLARE II report acknowledges the complex humanitarian landscapes in which UNICEF operates but fails to thoroughly analyze how these complexities impact the effectiveness of global frameworks. It notes that "Country-based clusters have become 'conduits for process' and are overwhelmed by cumbersome tasks that jeopardize strategic thinking and vision" (p. 6). This observation aligns with Crozier (1964) argument that bureaucracies often prioritize procedural conformity over adaptive responsiveness, leading to inefficiencies between organizational goals and operational realities. Similarly, within the framework of global humanitarian efforts, the emphasis on bureaucratic processes within country-based clusters can weaken the agility needed to navigate complex crises effectively.

Although the methods and objectives of CLARE II and this research are different, some points cross between them, including some findings. For example, the valorization of the ECC-related roles or the heavy bureaucracy system is also analyzed in this study. This made the present study experience some small changes in direction focalizing and also in some points complementary to CLARE II.

The report acknowledges the predominance of process-oriented tasks but could provide more detailed examples of how this affects local contexts. While the report highlights some efforts to include local voices, it often treats community needs and cultural contexts as secondary to procedural tasks. The report notes, "The evaluation also flags the lack of clear direction given by UNICEF at country level on how to implement commitments such as accountability to affected populations, localization, the humanitarian-development nexus, and the centrality of protection" (p. 7). These issues indicate that local actors often face confusion due to the dominant roles played by the leading international organizations. Enhancing cultural sensitivity, promoting genuine participation, and developing equitable evaluative practices are crucial steps toward achieving more effective and inclusive humanitarian interventions.

The report's evaluation of how global strategies affect local communities is somewhat superficial. It mentions that local actors may not feel valued but does not delve into the mechanisms through which this marginalization occurs. The report could draw on Foucault's (1980) notion of power/knowledge to explore how knowledge production within UNICEF's clusters might marginalize local perspectives and prioritize certain voices over others. This suggests a gap between the global frameworks and their local implementation. The report touches on how evaluative practices might reinforce existing power structures but does not fully explore this issue. It states, "Evaluative criteria often marginalize local knowledge and practices" (p. 8).

The assertion that "UNICEF grants insufficient support and recognition to cluster coordinators, leading individuals covering this role to be the ultimate drivers of CLA performance" (p. 6) suggests a reliance on individual agency rather than systemic support. This reflects a broader issue in development work, where local agency is often undercut by global priorities and structures (Escobar, 1995). The report could propose strategies to strengthen systemic support for local actors, ensuring their meaningful participation and ownership.

The report could benefit from incorporating a more robust framework for cultural sensitivity. It mentions that procedural dominance compromises strategic thinking and adaptation to local needs (p. 6) but does not provide detailed examples or solutions. Drawing on Said's (1978) critique of Orientalism, the

report could analyze whether UNICEF's frameworks impose a Western-centric view that overlooks local epistemologies and practices.

The report raises important questions about participation and ownership but lacks depth in its analysis. It notes, "The evaluation reveals the power dynamics stemming from UNICEF's dual role as CLA and 'donor,' which affect partner perceptions of UNICEF and its performance as CLA" (p. 7). This observation is crucial but could be expanded by examining how these power dynamics shape participation. Arnstein's (1969) ladder of citizen participation could be used to assess the levels of participation achieved and identify barriers to genuine engagement.

The CLARE II report recognizes the role of Save the Children as a co-lead in the Global Education Cluster and various country contexts. The report highlights that co-leadership can enhance collective action and resource sharing but also brings to the fore significant power dynamics. It states, "The evaluation reveals the power dynamics stemming from UNICEF's dual role as CLA and 'donor,' which affect partner perceptions of UNICEF and its performance as CLA" (p. 7). This dual role is compounded in the co-leadership scenario, where the balance of power, resources, and decision-making authority between UNICEF and Save the Children can significantly impact cluster effectiveness.

The partnership between UNICEF and Save the Children is designed to leverage the strengths of both organizations. However, the CLARE II report indicates that this relationship is not always balanced. Drawing on the concept of inter-organizational power dynamics (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978), it becomes evident that differences in organizational resources, influence, and agendas can lead to tensions. The report notes, "While the evaluation presents a few promising examples of leadership, the leadership responsibilities of the CLA are less well defined and fulfilled" (p. 6), suggesting that the roles and contributions of each organization might not be equally valued or recognized.

UNICEF, with its substantial funding and broader mandate, often holds more sway in decision-making processes. This dynamic is reflected in the report's findings that "UNICEF has generally worked to ensure that clusters have dedicated capacity and tools for information management; collectively produce and circulate policies and other guidance materials; provide technical support to cluster participants" (p. 12). However, these efforts are primarily driven by UNICEF, potentially marginalizing the contributions and influence of Save the Children.

The power dynamics between UNICEF and Save the Children also extend to their interactions with local stakeholders. The report states, "The lack of a career path for cluster coordinators, still too-frequent

instances of double-hatting, unclear/inconsistent internal reporting lines for cluster coordinators, lack of clarity around the concept of provider of last resort and weak cross-cluster coordination are some of these outstanding issues" (p. 7). These issues indicate that local actors often face confusion and marginalization due to the dominant roles played by the leading international organizations.

The report's recommendations for more inclusive approaches are valuable but could be more specific. It mentions enhancing local participation and revising indicators (p. 8) but does not provide detailed strategies.

C. Global Education Cluster Strategy 2022–2025 Strengthening collective action for coordinated EiE preparedness and response

The strategy outlines a comprehensive framework for enhancing the coordination and quality of EiE across the globe. Headed by Jessica Alexander and Sonia Gomez, in close collaboration with the Global Education Cluster (GEC) coordinators and team, the strategy emphasizes the importance of collective action to address the educational needs of children and youth in crises. It leverages the expertise and resources of various stakeholders, including UNICEF, Save the Children, and various national and international partners, to ensure a relevant strategy. At the same time, this reflects existing power structures within the global humanitarian ecosystem, showcasing how authority and resources are distributed and exercised. It emphasizes the role of these entities in mobilizing resources, influencing policy, and setting priorities for EiE worldwide. The absence of representatives of national and local NGOs can be a relevant point to reflect in future elaboration of documentation. The implementation of the strategy involves a collaborative effort among the GEC, Country Education Clusters, strategic advisory groups, and various partners – many of them local and national less powerful and influential organizations.

The *Global Education Cluster Strategy 2022-2025* represents an important step in coordinating and improving education responses in emergency contexts. Focusing on collective action, capacity building, quality improvement, system resilience, and advocacy, the strategy aims to ensure that children and youth affected by crises can continue their education, which is crucial for their development, well-being, and future opportunities.

The strategy's focus on equitable, inclusive, and quality education addresses systemic inequalities exacerbated in crises. This underscores the intersectionality of vulnerability—how factors such as gender, disability, and displacement intersect to create intensified barriers to education for affected populations.

It points to the need for targeted interventions to ensure that education systems are responsive to the diverse needs of all children and youth.

By advocating for protective, inclusive, and culturally relevant education, the strategy implicitly acknowledges the importance of understanding and integrating local cultural norms and practices into education responses. This highlights the value of contextual knowledge in designing and implementing interventions that are not only effective but also respectful and empowering for communities in crisis.

These strategies articulate a vision for enhancing EiE through improved coordination, quality, and advocacy. They reveal an understanding of education as a humanitarian response and a foundational element of societal stability and development. The strategies focus on inclusivity, resilience, and system strengthening points towards a holistic view of education's role in addressing structural vulnerabilities and enhancing social cohesion. However, the strategies also highlight the tension between aspirational goals and operational challenges, including funding constraints, political complexities, and the need for more effective inter-agency collaboration.

The problems with limited resources and high coordinator turnover indicate larger financial limitations and problems with the labor market in the humanitarian sector. Lack of opportunity for professional development, the stressful nature of the work, and occasionally the psychological effects of working in crisis, as well as career choices, are all reasons for high turnover. These elements impact education coordination continuity and quality, but they also may speak to more significant social issues, including workers' rights, employment security, and the psychological effects of humanitarian work.

D. Education Cluster Strategy 2023 - 2025 NWSW Cameroon

The strategy provides a targeted approach for coordinating EiE within the context of the NWSW regions of Cameroon. This strategy was designed to address the unique challenges children and youth face in these areas, ensuring their right to education is supported despite ongoing crises. The document likely outlines specific objectives, principles, and action plans tailored to the needs of the affected populations in Cameroon, focusing on delivering equitable, inclusive, and quality education.

The NWSW regions of Cameroon have been experiencing significant humanitarian challenges, including conflict, displacement, and disruptions to basic services, which have severely impacted access to education.

Similar to the Global Education Cluster Strategy, the Cameroon-specific strategy outline several strategic objectives to enhance education delivery in emergencies. These include: i) Strengthening the capacity for coordinating education responses within the NWSW context; ii) Improving the quality and accessibility of education for all affected children and youth, with particular attention to the most vulnerable groups; iii) Contributing to the development of resilient education systems that can withstand ongoing and future crises; iv) Advocating for increased prioritization and funding for EiE within Cameroon.

The strategy emphasizes collaboration among various stakeholders, including government authorities, local and international NGOs, UN agencies, community groups, and the affected populations. It may detail partnership models, coordination mechanisms, and resource mobilization plans to implement the strategy effectively.

The document adopts core principles similar to those in the Global Strategy, such as equitable and principled partnership, accountability to and inclusion of affected populations, and a holistic approach to EiE. These principles should guide all actions and interventions under the strategy, ensuring they are ethically grounded and contextually appropriate.

An integral component of the strategy might be its focus on monitoring and evaluation (M&E) to assess progress, identify challenges, and adapt approaches as necessary. This section outlines specific indicators, data collection methods, and reporting mechanisms to track the effectiveness of education interventions in the NWSW regions.

This tailored strategy for Cameroon reflects a concerted effort from the different humanitarian stakeholders to address the educational needs of children and youth affected by crises in the NWSW regions.

Focusing on the specific needs and challenges of the NWSW regions of Cameroon, this document brings the importance of local community dynamics in shaping education responses. It reflects an understanding of how local social structures, relationships, and power dynamics influence both the challenges and opportunities for EiE. The strategy suggests a move towards more localized and participatory approaches to humanitarian response, which can empower communities and build on local capacities.

The Cameroon strategy is situated within a context of conflict and social disruption, highlighting how sociopolitical factors contribute to educational crises. Conflict impacts social institutions, especially

schools, and its effects are passed down to communities, influencing cultural identity, social cohesiveness, and the prospects of future generations.

2.3 Education Cluster Coordination in the Glocal context: voices and actions

2.3.1 SenseMaker® Results Overview

This section provides a concise summary of the SM datasets. Due to the unique nature of the tools, the data are provided separately. Only select data is presented in each part, and only key findings are highlighted.

The *unsurvey* allows both quantitative and qualitative data collection. However, in this study, the focus is on the qualitative approach and interpretation, even if some numbers or quantities can be referred to. This decision was made because the qualitative data, which integrated demographic information, experiences in the field, and perceptions of the education cluster's understanding during crises, provides a more comprehensive understanding of the subject.

The unsurvey participants comprise a total of 20 respondents' heterogeneous group, with 9 (45%) working in the field of EiE in Cameroon and 12 respondents (57%) who were Cameroonian nationals.

The gender distribution among respondents was 65% male (13 individuals) and 35% female (7 individuals). From a geographical perspective, a significant 62% of the participants are in Cameroon, a key location for our study. This demographic analysis, resulting from a focused but not closed invitation to participants from the field in NWSW Cameroon, offers vital insights into the makeup and viewpoints of the respondents in the poll.

Three participants did not answer some of the questions (not all questions had mandatory responses). Importantly, the survey was designed to avoid questions that could make participants feel unsafe, ensuring a secure environment for candid responses.

While the stories told were not always directly related to the coordination Cluster itself, this does not imply that the Education cluster lacks implications for NGO actions or activities. Rather, it reflects the fact that everyday challenges often take precedence over the coordination mechanism. Therefore, the need for sharing stories related to more relevant issues is deemed more important.

A recurring theme was the issue of coordination and governance's lack of transparency in decision-making processes. This was particularly evident in the selection of candidates for task forces and

funding calls, such as those related to Education Cannot Wait initiatives or related to the government's apparent prioritization of Francophone regions. Also, many respondents felt unprepared and unsupported in their roles, particularly in contexts where language barriers existed. Respondents described experiences where decision-makers failed to maintain accountability, and the power dynamics imbalance seemed a reality.

Local coordinators shared poignant stories of personal risk and perseverance. For instance, one coordinator recounted being apprehended three times by non-state armed groups, only to be released due to community intervention recognizing the importance of education. Despite these challenges, the dedication to promoting education in conflict-hit areas remained persistent, highlighting the resilience of the communities.

When examining the values and principles guiding humanitarian action in education, respondents who chose resignation highlighted equity and humanity as their top priorities. Conversely, impartiality and independence were less prioritized, possibly reflecting the complex nature of the conflict and the pragmatic needs on the ground in the NWSW regions of Cameroon, where most of the respondents were living.

Taking an overview of the global responses, interestingly, in most of the triads, 2 focuses appear often, except for the 5th triad, where there is a clear predominance of 1 pool. The triads were preceded with an animated GIF example, allowing the respondents to understand the possibilities they had. In this sense and considering that most of the participants understood how triads worked, it was surprising to see the focuses appearing within the borders of 2 points.

2.3.2 Actors' views on the contextual challenges – from the micro dimension

Understanding the contextual challenges faced by actors in the field is crucial to unveiling the multifaceted nature of Education Cluster Coordination. Participants' narratives provide a window, especially into the micro-dimension of coordination, revealing the day-to-day realities, struggles, and triumphs of those on the ground.

Mireille Nkem, aged 26-35, shared her perception of Cluster coordination based on the 'first meetings' information. She also showed worries about the Attacks on Education and shared some of her experience in the Strategy Review process.

“I understood from introductory meetings that this was a coordination mechanism put in place to ensure coordination of education responses through the cluster, for strengthening system-wide preparedness (after identifying gaps in response), and for avoiding duplication of efforts.

Since the establishment of this coordination mechanism, education actors within the NSW regions and especially within the cluster have built the capacity they need to respond according to set national and international standards for EiE; the quality of the response is better, there is transparency and accountability in the responses, responses are more predictable and timelier which reduces waste and duplication of efforts. The cluster has also played a major role in supporting robust advocacy and monitoring and evaluating the performance of the interventions carried out.”

She also shared her knowledge about coordination and highlighted the transformation brought by the mechanism, referring to the strategy review:

“Together with the cluster members, there was a cluster strategy review that was effectively and efficiently done to ensure a coordinated and effective response. Thanks to the knowledge gained, we are able to work closely with other sectors and their clusters (such as Protection including Child Protection, Gender, Health, Nutrition, Livelihood etc.) to address cross-cutting issues such as gender inequality, inclusion, child safeguarding and child protection, child participation, as well as other problems that have come up in the course of the crisis such as COVID-19, Cholera and the issue of hunger and attacks on schools that prevent children from learning in schools.”

In conflict situations, coordination is crucial, all the more so as it highlights the fact that education is being used as a ‘weapon of war,’ severely affecting the most vulnerable groups, such as children:

“Before the technical capacities of education actors were built, there used to be a lot of confusion, duplication of efforts, and low/inadequate quality interventions between the education actors, which led to more problems in a context where education was already being used as a weapon of war.”

“Children have a right to learn and thanks to the coordination mechanism of the Education cluster, decisions are made in a coordinated/orderly manner with a proper mechanism set for accountability to the affected population. Furthermore, thanks to activities such as the Education cluster strategy review, there is a reliable document that can be used to advocate for funding required to ensure that more conflict-affected children have an opportunity to access safe, quality, and inclusive education within their current host communities.”

Ekema Ngoe (36–45 years old) draws attention to the poor quality or nonexistence of educational resources and observes that traveling to school can be dangerous. However, she also notes that these difficulties don't stop children from going to school, highlighting how their courage and interest surpass their fear.

"We are in Cameroon precisely in the NWSW Region where children were not allowed to go to school so in that regards we find children forced to use a normal bag which is not a school bag and also going to school with a normal dress which is not a school uniform reason being that you don't know who you will meet on your way to school and back home. Children lost their both on their way to school or when coming back. But courageous enough it has never stopped children from going to school."

Teboh Njoya (36–45 years old) feels the need to participate more actively in the Cluster and asks for more support and consistency. He also highlights the lack of continuity in the Education Cluster coordinators and IMOs (Information Manager Officer) posts.

“I'm a member of the education cluster and I'm always participating in the meetings and so. I think the cluster helps us a lot. The meetings are always very interesting, but the people are always changing and many times there are no coordinator or no IMO. So, the cluster is always learning our names and posts...”

Teboh added the issue of the frequent changes in people within the cluster. This constant change in an already complex context impacts the development of relationships and, consequently, coordination dynamics.

Clarisse Bih (26-35 years old), in her story, **#participatingalone**, as she named it, stressed the need for collaboration and follow-up from cluster coordination. She mentioned that during the child consultancy process, there was initial participation, but in the end, she felt isolated.

“During the participation of a process with the members for the child consultancy, everyone was participating, but in the report phase, I felt alone participating... also from the cluster, I got little support, and I think all could be better. And also, after the report, we did not have support to work with that...”

Simone Fonkoua (26-35 years old), in her story auto-titled ***poor allocation of financial resources*** highlighted the financial support for Education in Emergency (EiE) disproportionately favoring the French-speaking regions, leaving a significant number of internally displaced children in English-speaking regions without adequate resources:

“The EiE coordination in Cameroon has some lapses in terms of finance allocation in the country. The majority of the funds to support EiE in the country are always allocated to the 8 French-speaking parts of the country. Meanwhile, there are a lot of internally displaced persons (IDP) children in the English-speaking part of the country in need of education and study materials”.

Similarly, Moussa Djibril, 36-45 years old, in the story ***neglect of conflict affected children in the NWSW regions of Cameroon***, as he named, emphasized the politicization⁸⁷ of education in the Anglophone crisis, where ‘community learning centers’ in the NWSW regions have been neglected in the next phase of the EiE project. The allocation of resources primarily to French-speaking regions, despite the majority of conflict-affected children residing in English-speaking regions, highlights the politicized nature of educational interventions.

"Community learning centers run during the first phase of the EiE in NWSW Cameroon has been largely abandoned to themselves as far as the next phase of the EiE in Cameroon is concerned! Worse still, most municipalities selected to benefit from the next phase of the project are largely located in the French-speaking regions of Cameroon! Even when the majority of children affected by the conflict were based in

⁸⁷ politicization broadly means moving previously unpolitical matters into the political arena.

the northwest and southwest regions of Cameroon! This to us is politicizing⁸⁸ education in the emergency!"

Later in the '*unsurvey*,' Moussa Djibril felt the need to reinforce the moral need for equity and the conviction of unfairness. To the question, "There is anything you were surprised that I did not ask? What? Anything you want to add?" he stated:

"Government influence on EiE selected areas to benefit in upcoming phases of the EiE despite the government being one of the belligerents in the conflict and politicizing education in conflict-affected areas of NWSW Cameroon!"

Therese Ndongo, aged 35-45, shared her **#educationforall** experience, noting the disruption of education for children, the kidnapping and killing of teachers, and an alarming rise in teenage pregnancies due to the lack of access to schools:

"I have watched children chased away from school as a result of the Anglophone crisis. I also live in a context where children are kidnapped or killed simply because they want to go to school. Children staying for more than five years without access to education. Teachers kidnapped, killed, hands cut off simply because they want to teach. In addition, there is an increase in teenage pregnancy because of no access to schools."

The act of attending school, intended to be a secure space for learning, tragically becomes dangerous and, at times, fatal. Some accounts spanning media platforms, humanitarian reports, and podcasts (HRW 2023) highlight the severity of this crisis, emphasizing the urgent need for international attention and intervention.

Nkunda Ngala, aged 26-35, gives educational resistance in the NWSW region of Cameroon as the title to the story where he describes his problems as a local coordinator for the Community Humanitarian Emergency Board (CHEB) in the Radio Education Program (REP). Even though non-state armed groups, community leaders, and even some parents are against Ngala's work, he does it with great passion, believing in the transformative power of education:

"Surviving Education in NW/SW region of Cameroon.

For some time now, let's say 5-6 years, the NW/SW region of Cameroon has experienced great resistance to education. As an aid worker and local coordinator of COHEB (Community Humanitarian Emergency Board) in the ongoing REP (Radio Education Program) in the SW region of Cameroon, I have experienced lots of resistance in carrying out my fieldwork from the non-state armed group and some community leaders as well.

Children themselves have cold feet toward education but love it, though some parents act as serious barriers to their children's education. Inspired by all this, I still see the need and love of education in some of the conflict-hit areas. The edge to lean is there but the fear of the unknown keeps hunting them. As a local coordinator, I was apprehended three times by the non-state armed men who interrogated me. But, due to the timely intervention of some community leaders who saw the need for education, I was released. Inspired of all this, I still had my way with education in some of these communities and hope to press on till the goal is fully achieved, which am seeing so in the nearest future with the help my organization COHEB with order international organizations."

In this story, the ongoing education crisis and the strategic adaptations made by educational actors demonstrate the dual themes of disruption and continuity. While the conflict has severely disrupted formal education structures, informal and alternative education mechanisms continue to emerge, showcasing the human agency (Giddens, 1984) through the resilience of communities in adapting and making to and surviving through conflict.

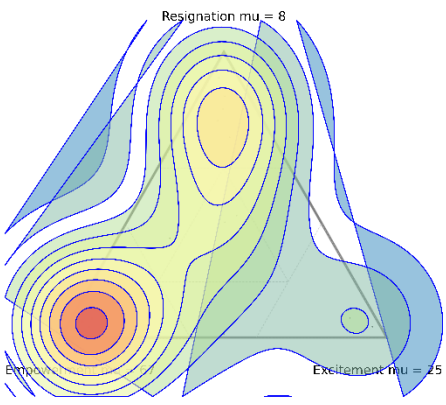
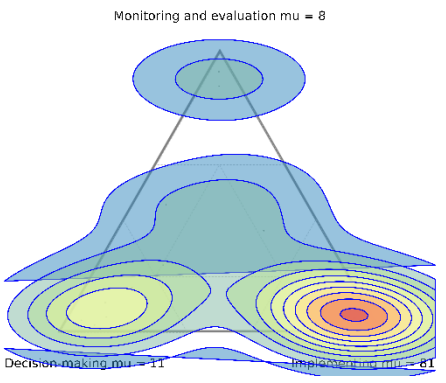
2.4 SenseMaker® insights

This analysis has considered the Cameroon residents and those living in Cameroon. This represents the population with the effective physical and emotional proximity to the NWSW Camerron crises. This is a brief analysis related to the stories collected, considering just the signifiers, other than the stories and titles that were analyzed in the precedent sub-chapter.

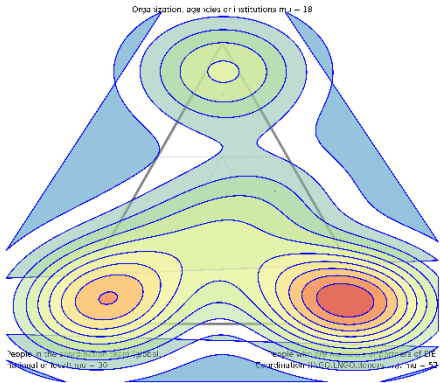
This section presents observations of the patterns for the triads, dyads, and stones and interpretations related to them. For each signifier, the general pattern is explained, as well as any remarkable differences between thematic. In addition, any interesting patterns as a result of combinations with particular filters are presented.

Interestingly, we see in this group that most of the answers in triads are polarized between defined points.

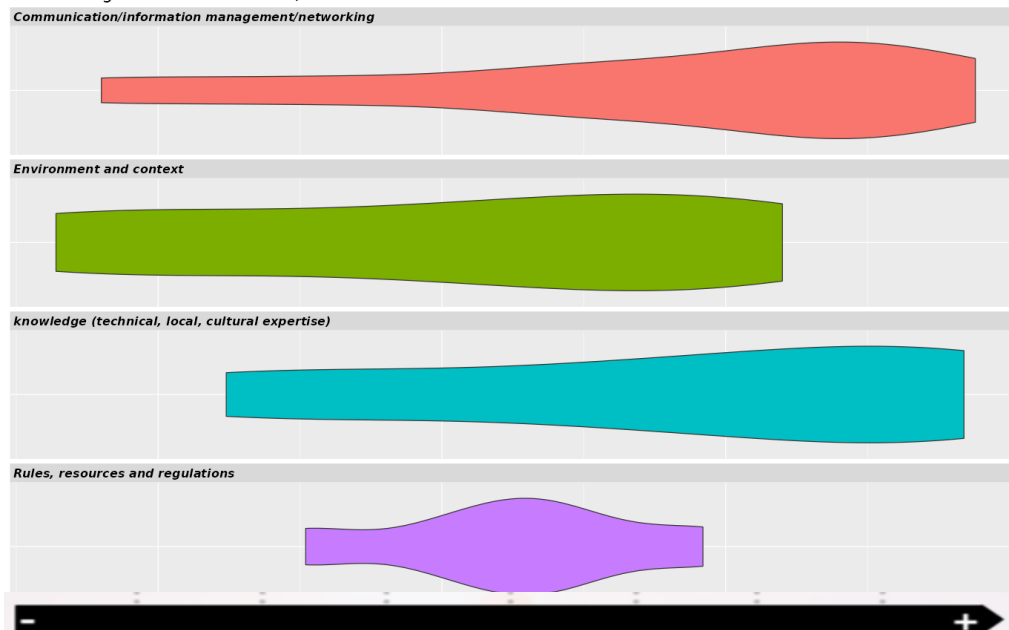
Micro dimension: The NSW Cameroon-related answers to the *unsurvey*:

UNSURVEY PROMPT:	KEY FINDINGS AND HIGHLIGHTS
1.3. The story I shared above made me feel... 	The greater emotion referred to in the first triad by the Cameroon coordination-related actors was empowerment⁸⁹. This shows the strength and the willingness of Education Cluster-related actors to engage in actions to transform their social conditions jointly. The <i>unsurvey</i> is done anonymously, and the stories do not always have positive connotations in relation to ECC. This paradox may mean that despite the constant change of coordinators and IMO's revealed as a problem in the stories, the institution of having a Cluster Approach is consistently empowering, even if sometimes it feels like resignation. Despite challenges, there is a significant drive towards positive change. This duality suggests that while the structure is empowering, operational issues can lead to frustration.
1.4 The experience I shared relates to... 	In the field-related responses, there is a clear preoccupation with implementation and the functionality of all actions. The urgency and severity of the crisis are maybe the biggest reasons for that. Despite that, there seems to be also some focus on decision-making. Even if not always the links between the triads and the stories are evident, in this case, is clear the highlight the participants wanted to give to the field, the practice, and the lived reality. This point is developed in the sub-

⁸⁹ Considering Paulo Freire's (1974) definition of empowerment: The process of developing a critical consciousness, which entails becoming aware of social injustices and taking action to change one's social circumstances, leads to empowerment.

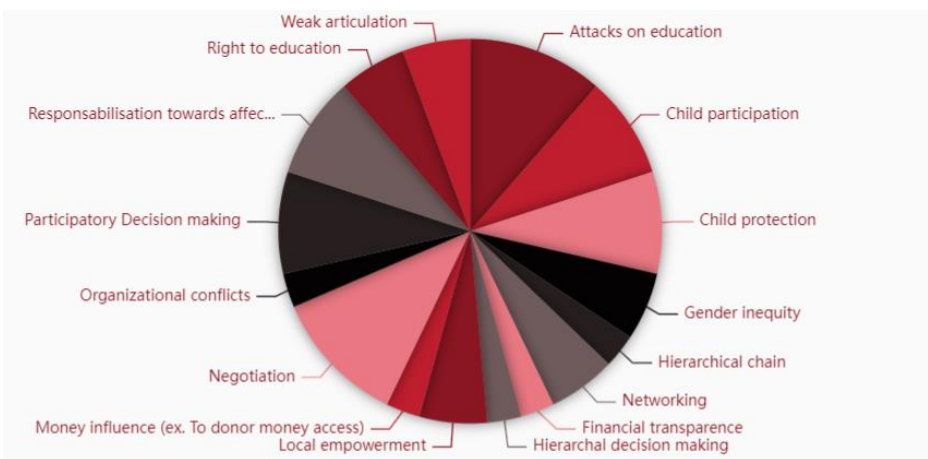
	chapter “Normative ideals and lived realities” of this section.
What happened in the story I shared above, happened because of... 	The areas closer to the "Systems and Structures" (Durkheim, 1895) point show a significant clustering of responses. This may reflect the participants' perceptions of systems' power and influence.
1.6 Your story relates to... The formal side of coordination (official and normative)  The informal side of coordination (casual and colloquial) The tension between the formal and informal sides of coordination is represented here clearly with the classification of their stories and their understandings of ECC. Even if coordination is a regulated mechanism with established processes and procedures (Foucault, 1977), through the thesis, we will discuss the role social networks and relationships—social capital (Bourdieu, 1986)—play in facilitating coordination and making a difference outside formal structures. The thesis highlights the balance or interaction between the formal and informal sides of coordination.	
1.7 How these factors played in my story: please place the images in the table in line with their influence (only use those images that are relevant):	

1.7. How these factors played in my story: Please place the images in the table in line with their influence (only those images that are relevant):



An interaction between communication, environmental circumstances, knowledge, and institutional regulations influences the relations in their stories. Favoring communication and networking and also knowledge highlights the essential role of relationships in coordinating efforts. The thesis develops these issues.

1.8. My story mention subjects that relate to (select all relevant):



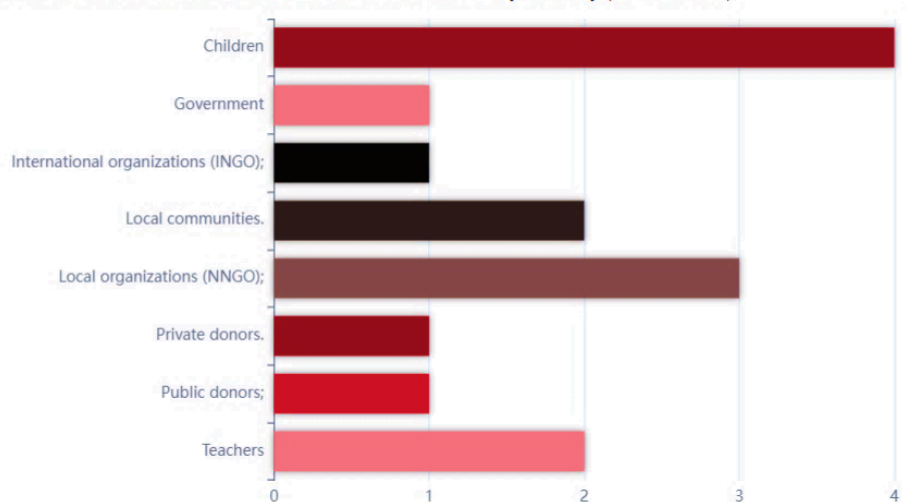
As all subjects were available for selection, a significant number of participants opted for nearly all of the possibilities. This frequently led to choices that did not precisely reflect the substance of their narratives. Consequently, in this population, it's considered that this data lacks reliability and relevance.

Other that I consider relevant adding (that is not in the list).

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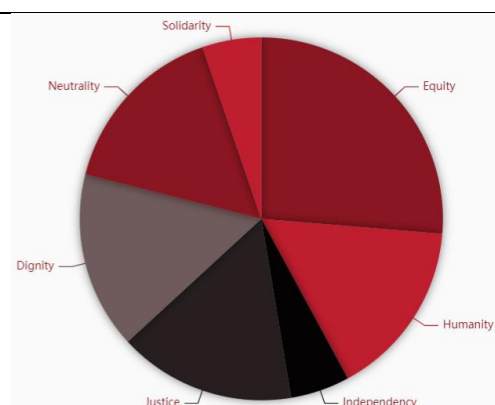
1.9. Which from the list below had more influence in your story (select max 3):

1.9. Which from the list below had more influence in your story (select max 3):



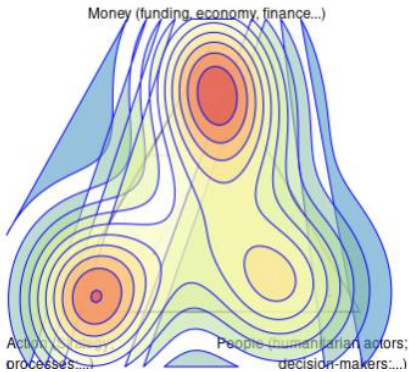
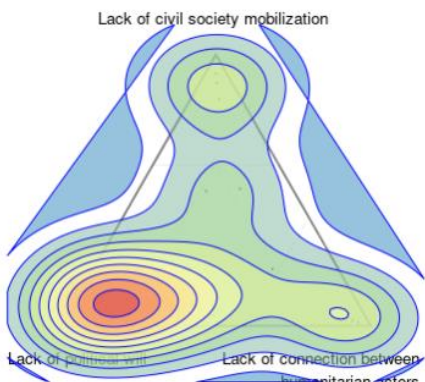
Children and local organizations (NNGOs) emerge as highly influential, with a great focus on children, reflecting a focus on grassroots involvement and child-centered approaches. The reduced influence of private and governmental contributors implies that although they offer crucial resources, the impact may be relatively restricted. This emerges as a tension with the stories from the same participants referring to the influence of these same actors. It may be related to the respondents' need to highlight these actors as generally influencing their decisions, actions, and experiences, even if the specific story they chose did not reflect this influence.

1.10. Does your story relate in some way to the following principles? If yes, which one or ones (select up to 5) :



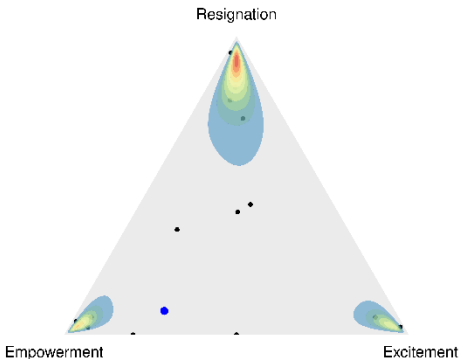
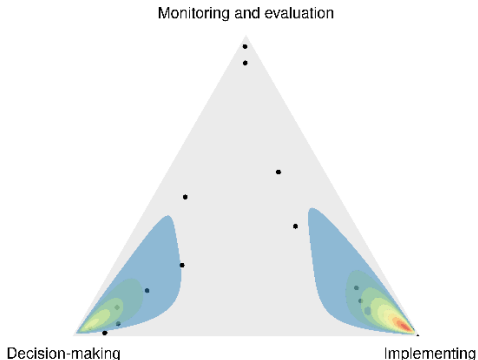
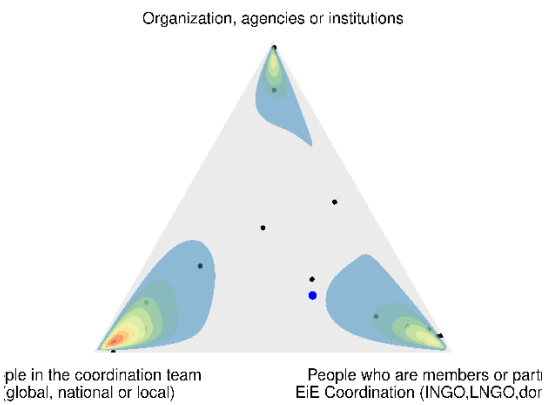
There is a clear preoccupation with both equity and neutrality that is clear in the micro-stories, also highlighted in narratives focused on the French-speaking vs. English-speaking regions in Cameroon or the emphasis on the need for more localization power.

2. If you had NO limit of power and money, what would you change in the humanitarian EiE coordination?	
I would localize implementation until it gets to the least grassroots organization or local communities. I would be more focused for real impact.	Localization and Community Engagement: Localization ensures that interventions are contextually relevant and sustainable. By involving grassroots organizations and local communities, the interventions can be more responsive to the specific needs and challenges faced by the target population.
Je proposerai des curricula d'éducation rapide afin que les jeunes ayant abandonné l'école à cause des exactions de la secte islamique "boko haram" puissent continuer leur scolarité tout en rattrapant les niveaux perdus.	Accelerated Learning Programs: The suggestion to implement rapid education curricula addresses the educational disruption caused by Boko Haram's activities. Accelerated learning programs can provide flexible and tailored educational pathways, which are more informal and adapted, ensuring that affected students can continue their education without prolonged delays.
Focus more on Conflict Affected children in NWSW Cameroon and not children in French-speaking regions of Cameroon currently having access to education compared to a majority of children in English-speaking regions of Cameroon severely affected by the conflict et having limited or, in most cases, no access to education for vulnerable children!	Politicization of Education: This response highlights the disparity in educational access between conflict-affected regions and more stable areas. This point is being developed in the analysis and discussion of data.
The way to implement the field actors in work	Enhance Field Implementation: This response suggests focusing on improving the strategies for field implementation. ECC's strategy aims to smooth and facilitate decision-making and implementation. However, the normative processes and practices are a complex system that needs to be considered a priority in the changing humanitarian architecture, including the coordination mechanisms.

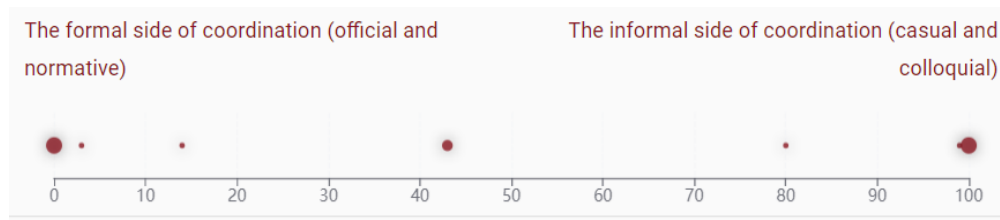
The Role of the Government to be trained on EiE/ Humanitarian / Emergency settings	Government Capacity Building: Training government officials on EiE and humanitarian settings is essential for creating a supportive policy environment. Governments play a critical role in facilitating and sustaining EiE interventions, including ECC. By enhancing their understanding and capacity in emergency education, governments can better coordinate with humanitarian actors, ensure the alignment of interventions with national policies, and provide necessary resources and support.
2.1. Your answer, in the question 2, is related to... 	When looking to the answers of the Cameroon related to possible future paths, money have an important role. Present in the stories, in the titles, in the interpretations and finally here in being part of the positive futures, is clear the message that respondents from Cameroon want to pass. Even if the number is not what we want to highlight through this research, through the words, we can see the same intensity we see in this triad.
2.2. What do you think can make the implementation of your ideas in question 2 difficult?  n = 19 nN/A = 2 filter n = 19 %age = 100% filter N/A = 2 mu = L:54 T: 10 R: 36	The lack of political will is highlighted in the triad as the main challenge to potential positive future outcomes. This suggests that respondents perceive geopolitical forces, particularly those related to the NWSW Cameroon crisis, as significant obstacles that could undermine their envisioned future paths.

General perspectives of the stories shared

UNSURVEYPROMPT:	KEY FINDINGS AND HIGHLIGHTS
Give your story a title or a hashtag#. 1. Encountered the mind of the conflict 2. Dispostifs pédagogiques en temps de crise et achèvement du cycle scolaire chez les jeunes écoles déscolarisés de la zone du grand-nord cameroun. 3. Impact of turnover on coordination 4. #educationinemergencydrc 5. #schoolingongeoundzero 6. Education can't wait 7. #importanceofeiecoordination 8. The forgotten rural schools 9. 'neglect of conflict affected children in the NWSW regions of Cameroon' 10. #readapt 11. #participatingalone 12. Accountability 13. #contentiouscoordination 14. #education for all 15. Poor allocation of financial resources 16. #eieamericahousekyiv 17. Educational resistance in nw/sw region of cameroon 18. Best practices in EiE 19. #notapriority 20. La transparence et l'impartialité dans la gestion du cluster education 21. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the coordination of education	The names or hashtags assigned by participants to their stories offer valuable insight into the dominant subjects and concerns that have the most significance for them. Specific terms like 'conflict,' 'forgotten,' 'neglect,' 'participation,' 'accountability,' 'resistance,' and 'impartiality' instantly grab our focus. The terms 'forgotten' and 'neglect' emphasize the problems of marginalization, while words like 'turnover' and 'financial allocations' emphasize the internal workings of organizations. Furthermore, the participants' requirement to manage and overcome problems is emphasized by the themes of 'adaptability' and 'resilience.' These themes are developed during this study with the purpose of amplifying the voices of the participants and enhancing our understanding of their concerns.

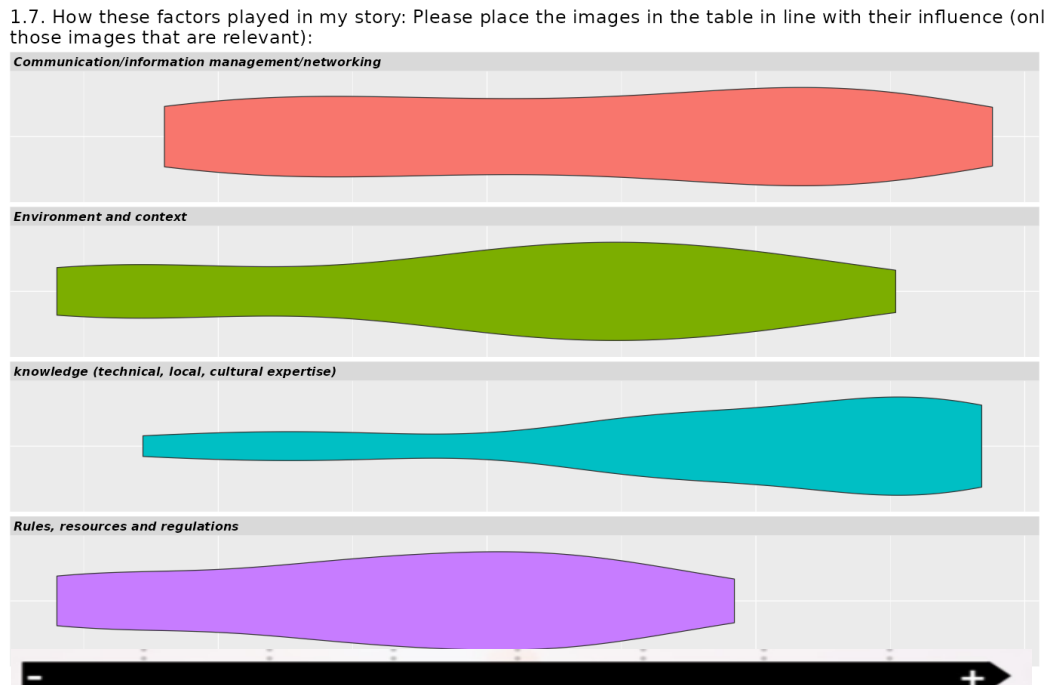
activities in the eastern region of Cameroon.	
The story I shared above made me feel... 	In the first triad, empowerment was the greater focus, but when looking at the data of all participants, that's changed, and the strongest feeling is resignation. This point is discussed ahead in the "The Feelings and Desires Place on the Coordination Assemblage" chapter
1.4 The experience I shared relates to... 	The analysis is similar to the one for the same question in the previous table.
What happened in the story I shared above happened because of... 	The data show very different answers, with a slight tendency to be close to the 'people—members of ECC,' highlighting the agency of the narrators, as we could see in some stories as the narrators became almost the 'hero' of their stories. This phenomenon can be related to the construction of identity. This could be a very interesting subject to develop in future research. In the meantime, some emphasis will be placed on the 'agency' of the ECC members.

1.6 Your story relates to...



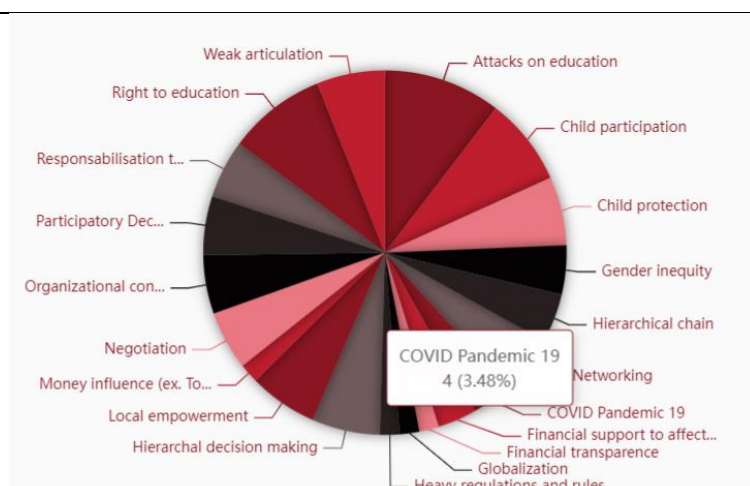
The analysis is similar to the one for the same question in the previous table.

1.7. How these factors played in my story: Please place the images in the table in line with their influence (only use those images that are relevant):



The analysis is similar to the one for the same question in the previous table. The point to highlight is how rules and regulations have a lot less importance in the stories when looking at the general picture. Although these structures are essential for stability and coordination, they can also present difficulties (Crozier, 1964) associated with inflexibility and time constraints. This issue is also considered during the thesis.

1.8. My story mentions subjects that relate to (select all relevant):



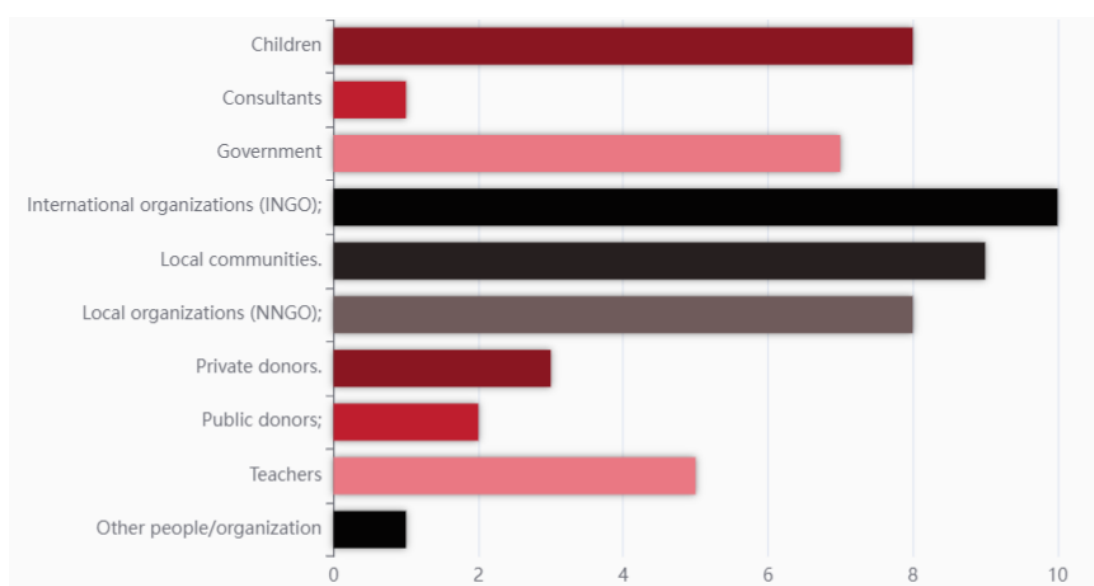
As all subjects were available for selection, a significant number of participants opted for nearly all of the possibilities. This frequently led to choices that did not precisely reflect the substance of their narratives, even being sometimes paradoxical, especially with all the 'money' importance given to the stories. Consequently, in this population, it's considered that this data lacks reliability and relevance.

Other that I consider relevant adding (that is not in the list).

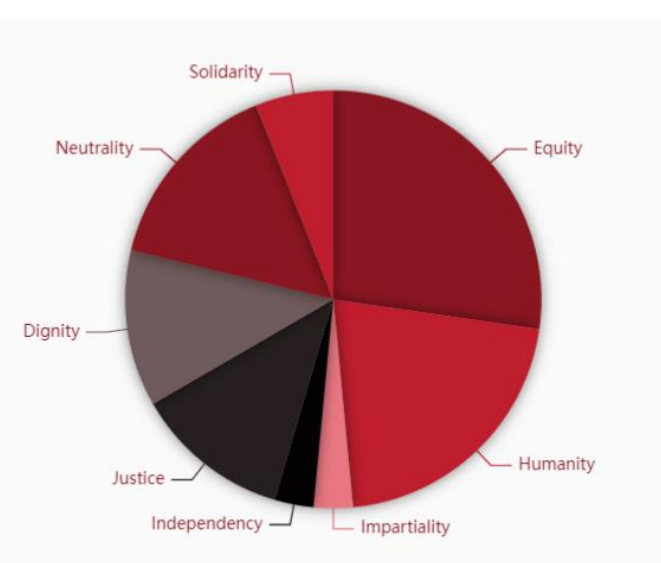
1. Risk-taking by the local partners
2. Créer des curricula de situation de crise
3. Lead agencies' accountability to support cluster coordination
4. Building capacity on EiE minimum standards and procedures, building national capacity in preparedness and contingency planning, and supporting advocacy.
5. Lack of information strategy
6. Community engagement in child-friendly spaces

These issues are developed or discussed in the thesis or referred to in the tables.

1.9. Which from the list below had more influence in your story (select max 3):



International organizations and local communities play a crucial role in influencing the chosen stories, highlighting the importance of the Glocal (Robertson, 1995) harmony of both worldwide knowledge and community engagement. This concept is developed in the thesis.



1.10. Does your story relate in some way to the following principles? If yes, which one or ones (select up to 5):

One highlight is the less chosen impartiality and independence. If the first can be related to some extent to the NWSW Cameroon nature of crisis, and to

some extent with some actual (or not so actual debates) in humanitarian, independency is not considered a priority also for the respondents. The principles issue is also discussed in this thesis but could be developed further, especially in the context of coordination, in future research.

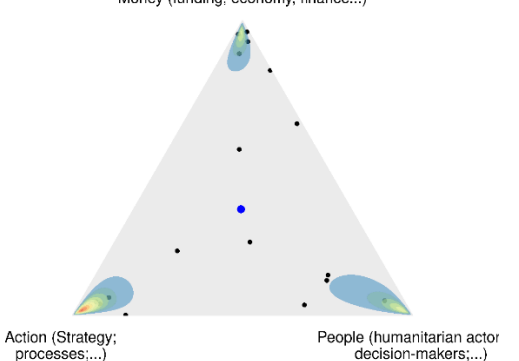
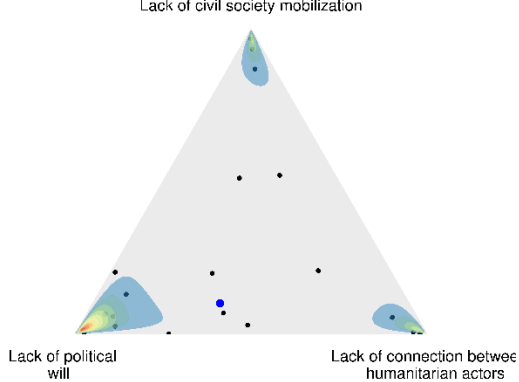
1. If you had NO limit of power and money, what would you change in the humanitarian EiE coordination?

1. I would localize implementation until it get to the least grassroots organization or local

communities. I would be more focused for real impact.

2. Je proposerai des curricula d'éducation rapide afin que les jeunes ayant abandonné l'école à cause des exactions de la secte islamique 'boko haram puissent continuer leur scolarité tout en rattrapant les niveaux perdus. (en., I will propose rapid education curricula so that young people who have dropped out of school because of the exactions of the Islamic sect 'boko haram' can continue their education while catching up on lost levels.)
3. Funding enough positions to support the cluster. At minimum, having a dedicated cluster coordinator and IMO for the longer term rather than the short term.
4. The construction of schools meeting the standards and the setting up of wash infrastructures
5. I will do more sensitization and capacity building to educate the community on the dangers of refusing children to go to school.
6. I would increase the rate of child participation in preparedness and response mechanisms, and I will ensure that there are more capacity-building sessions for cluster partners and partners from local education development working groups to enhance a better humanitarian-development nexus.
7. Focus on removing obstacles and challenges that drive emergencies and not be reactive to emergencies
8. Focus more on Conflict-Affected children in NWSW Cameroon and not children in French-speaking regions of Cameroon who currently have access to education compared to a majority of children in English-speaking regions of Cameroon who are severely affected by the conflict and have limited or, in most cases, no access to education for vulnerable children!
9. Finance coordination and local organizations.
10. Finance les organisations locales
11. With no limit of power and money, reduce the likelihood of a human-made crisis. Work closely and directly with affected people. Engage affected people in every step of the humanitarian response.
12. - I would change the language of coordination, and make it mandatory that INGOS sent national staff so that there was a sustainable and culturally informed approach to coordination
- I would make it mandatory that NNGOs, national MOEs, Teachers Unions and academic institutions had strategic roles in coordination to ensure sustainability -I would build in processes that made it mandatory to include people directly impacted by crisis to have a say in coordination

13. I will support the opening of community schools in hard-to-reach areas, support the construction of schools in affected communities where schools are now functional, provide furniture to schools, provide learning materials to learners, institute schools meals to keep children in schools, train teachers 14. I will change the way financial resources are allocated. 15. Teach EiE to all teachers in Ukraine 16. The way to implement the field actors in work 17. The Role of the Government to be trained on E I E/ Humanitarian / Emergency settings 18. Capacity building for NGOs 19. Investir dans la communication et le renforcement de capacités (en. translation: Invest in communication and capacity building) 20. Strengthen the capacity of actors in terms of EiE coordination; provide the necessary tools and equipment to actors (especially government partners end local civil society organizations/national NGOs) to facilitate coordination even during times of crisis; establish a special service in charge of EiE within the Ministry of Basic Education, ...	
	The responses clearly demand resource allocation, localization, capacity building, participation, and community-centered approaches to ECC. Some of these issues were developed during the analysis and discussion in this thesis, and others would be interesting to develop in future research. Localization is seen as a way to empower local communities, valuing cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1986) and local knowledge. Another preoccupation is the language in ECC where the access to the jargon and coded vocabulary used by INGOs, agencies, or donors is not always accessible to the NNGOs, with a coded vocabulary. Participation is emphasized here with particular highlight to the children's participation. (Hart, 1992) In conclusion, the responses reflect a complex interplay of funding, people, and strategic action in humanitarian EiE coordination.
2.1. Your answer, in the question 2, is related to...	Some stories emphasized the challenge of getting funds and the impartiality and transparency of the process; ... in this triad, the money is represented as being a possible road to improve humanitarian coordination. But the answers are well split and

	even centered in terms of average (even if we are not taking a quantitative lens in the subjects). The importance of people – ‘agency’ (Giddens, 1984) – seems well recognized in some stories, through the empowerment of communities or the notion of the influence power of some institutions for example. Finally, action through strategy, the participants highlighted the need for localized implementation, curriculum development, infrastructure, and preparedness approach.
2.2. What do you think can make the implementation of your idea, in question 2, difficult: 	The responses continued to be polarized, with most choices selecting one of the three vertices, even if some were close to the center. This seems to reflect the participants' understanding that political capital (Bourdieu, 1986) has more influence and power than community or institutions. It may also indicate constraints between political agendas and humanitarian ones.

Despite the daunting context, the dedication of local Education Cluster Coordinators, Members, and general Education actors and the community's recognition of the importance of education offers a symbol of hope for the future.

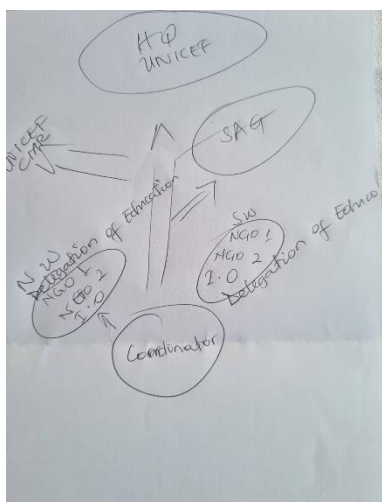
2.5 Clusters Dynamics: Visual data insights

Visual representations can help clarify the dynamics of cluster cooperation. In this section, we examine the sketches submitted by participants, which portray their interpretations of the coordination network. These graphics provide essential information about the spatial and relational features of cluster

interactions, emphasizing the significance of both formal and informal links in promoting efficient coordination.

2.5.1 Micro and Meso dimension Cluster Coordination - sketches

1. Zoe Turner



Zoe Turner starts to present her sketch, enumerating the organizations she represented in the sketch. Following, she highlights the collaborative aspect of the coordinating network and how, based on the information she requires, she strategically interacts with other stakeholders, namely the organizations closer to the affected population. She talks about using official government reports for specific data, contacting reliable non-governmental organizations for personal accounts of on-field incidents, and using her connections inside the network to obtain

advice and insights on policies and procedures. She also points out that she rarely runs across opposition when requesting information—even from government officials. She also talks about how she depends on personal connections, like those with her previous supervisor, to get more help and resources when she needs it. She also refers to contacting reliable non-governmental organizations for personal accounts on field incidents and using her connections inside the network to obtain advice and insights on policies and procedures.

“So, depending on the information that I need. Sometimes when you have to do attacks, the NGOs, the few NGOs that I get to, because I'm certain of them, have, you know, collaborators on the field that can give me real information about what happened? Yes. When he has to do with all the lights of the laptop when he has to do other information and maybe school enrollment if attacks, delegation, for example of secondary education in the (location), deregistered their attacks. They have reports. So, it's easy. The others don't do that kind. You know, some they know some you're even on informing them. Call now to confirm. If it's true to tell you if it's not confirmed, it's not confirmed. So, like I said, depending on what I'm looking for, I reach out sometimes to the sack member who also supports like, for example, when I talked about revitalizing the sack.”

She also points out that she rarely encounters opposition when requesting information—even from government officials. She also talks about how she gains from personal connections, like those with her previous supervisor, to get more help and resources when she needs them.

“I got to the members numbers on WhatsApp convened a meeting drafted to our for example. They explained to me how he function last time because I was not they explained how we went their own process the procedures, you know, so depending on what I want, generally, like I said, it's very collaborative numbers are very collaborative and open to give you information. I've never really sensed someone restricting from giving me information even at the level of the government's What does go on, they actually have this especially with government, though, and I call them because of the relationship that I've built with them. When I call sometimes, he told me that no one should come to your office. Don't give it to me online. You know, so under other information since Sir N, my previous supervisor, and we share a very good relationship when I'm stuck somewhere where I knew that if I get to him based on information that he had in this area, I'll call him. Here, that's what I wrote HQ.”

2. Mia Collins



In her description of the coordination network, Mia Collins highlights some important points. First, the work relation with the other co-coordinator

explaining that even if both are at the center, their roles are not entirely overlapping; they collaborate on some tasks while working independently on others. Mia Collins illustrates connections with OCHA, other clusters, and specific workstreams with particular clusters from other sectors. She mentions interaction with her organization's management and GEC, facilitated by different people. Additionally, Mia Collins discusses links to ECW and donors, as well as relationships with sub-clusters and specific partners, based on personal connections and technical expertise.

"[Yeah, so I put myself and my co-coordinator] in the middle together. But we're not totally overlapping. Because there are a lot of things we do together. But then there's a lot of things that we do independently. And then I put kind of like lines, the bottom left corner is like OCHA and all the other clusters."

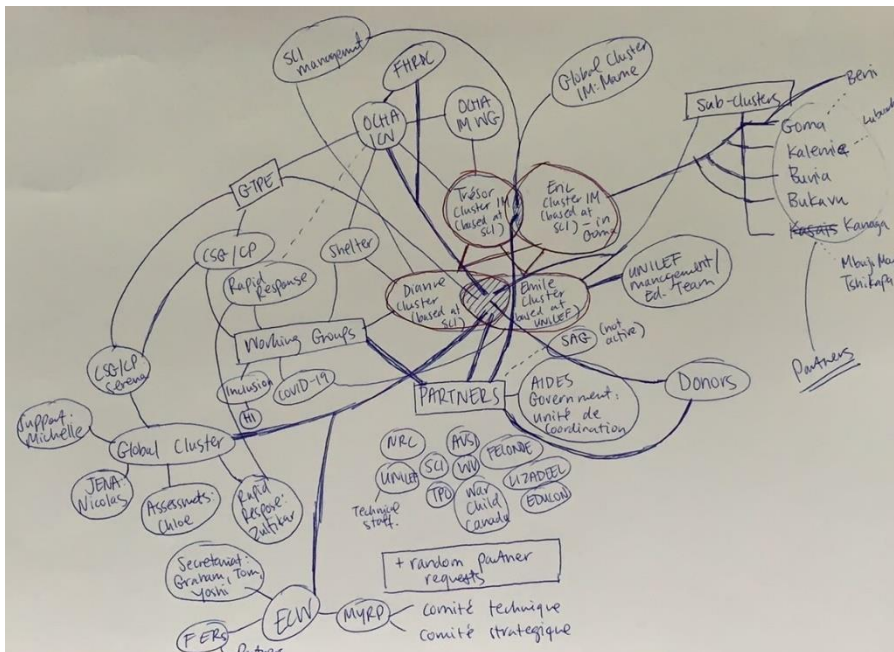
She refers to the relations with other clusters by identifying the intercluster and then she highlights link with her organization:

"So, I purchased today like to have it with the intercluster. But then we have sort of specific workstreams with some specific clusters. So, I've tried to mention those there. I interact with (my org) management, you know, not like that much. It's just over there. The global cluster. And again, we have like different people who are helping us with different things. So, it's very like individual based, and we get a lot of calls from them. And then links to ECW and donors. Yeah, I don't talk to them every day, but often."

Finally the sub-clusters are also pointed out but even if it's referred to by the end and drawn in the bottom corner, she emphasizes the strong relation they share and later she refers also to partners and the relationship they share:

"And then, on the bottom top right-hand corner, we have these sub-clusters. [...] Yeah, they're still technically part of the structure, but I think they should be becoming development. I mean, it's too bad, though, because we didn't really respond properly when they were in a crisis. And now unfortunately, there's a lot of work to be done. But, you know, it's, it's old now. So, we have to let it go. It's like reconstruction, you know. So, and then the partners, I put it sort of the bottom, I talked to Ida's and the government quite a bit. And then, you know, some specific partners that I'm more in touch with, again, some of that's a function of, like, their technical expertise. Some of it's a function of just who I know, you know, I just like happened to know, for example, that country director of War Child, Canada, so I talked to her quite a bit, she talks to me to ask me things. So, you know, some of it's just personal, and some of it based on, you know, technical expertise. And then I'm *gonna* put at the bottom, just like random requests from partners. I mean, I get a lot of just like, random emails from like, random NGOs. So, I talked to them, but it's like, just ad hoc, you know. So, there's some linkages like the meals connected to UNICEF and the sub clusters, because they're led

by UNICEF. You know, like, he talks to a lot of these people too, but I just sort of focused on me primarily. Yeah.”



In a second, more thoughtful sketch about the Education Cluster, sent and described 2 weeks later, Mia Collins highlights the essential role that she and Luke Bennett played in the coordination network.

emphasizing their tight cooperation and interactions with many stakeholders in her account. Trevor Hart and Dylan Hunter, the Information Management Officers IMOs, according to her, are essential members of the group that coordinates clusters. Mia Collins describes the relationships that her team has with important partners, showing how they interact with donors and both domestic and foreign organizations. She detailed more about the relationship she has with each person and organization.

“Um, so yeah, so it based on the original drawing that I did, but I tried to add some more elements and think about the connections a little bit better. So, in the middle, you have Mia Collins and Luke Bennett, and then where the circles overlap, that's all of the things we do together. And then you also have Trevor Hart and Dylan Hunter. So, I put some like red pen around Trevor Hart error community meal, because we're really like the core cluster coordination team at people who are dedicated 100%. And we all talk to each other. Um, so Dylan Hunter, and Trevor Hart, also, they do some things together.”

Next, Mia elaborates on her specific working relationship with Luke Bennett, detailing how their roles and responsibilities overlap and are complementary, discussing their interactions with donors, explaining the lines of communication and coordination:

“But I'll start with me and Luke *Bennett*, so this thick, the thicker blue line. So, I tried to make those like the things that we do kind of together, but then also show what we do separately. So, if you see down the bottom, we talked to partner. Together, and then I purchased all of the partners like the main partners below, and our CSR, save the children that World Vision TPO, War Child Canada, FICON, Lissadell, and EDUCON. So, as you can visit Dell, fecund and TPO, are national, faster International. And then I also kept my box for random partner requests in the bottom. Sometimes partners just call or email random things. So, you also have to deal with that.”

Mia further explains the challenges they face with the Strategic Advisory Group (SAG), highlighting the reasons behind its inactivity and their efforts to reactivate it:

“And then also, we talk to the donors. So, you'll see like a line from me and a meal to the donors, and then also from partners, because the donors are also our partners like they are they participate in the education cluster, but then sometimes we talk to them specifically for like, at the coordination unit. I try to engage with them specifically on, you know, specific things. We also have with partners, yeah, I did in the government, they form our coordination unity, yeah. And the SAG is there, but it's a dotted line because it's not really active right now.

And then (...) Dylan Hunter, they also interact directly with the partners, so I drew a line for them.

(Sorry. Do you want just to say why? It's not active?)

“Or the Yeah, I'm not sure. Yeah. It's not active. Mostly. Because I'm losing you. We kind of took we got like, scary now. [...], yep. Okay. Yeah, the Slack is not active because we like [...], then I think we just didn't do very much of a follow-up to really like motivate partners to, um, you know, to be like active members. So then, you know, you're supposed to have meetings every three months, but with other priorities, we just didn't like didn't end up calling for the meetings. And when we did have a meeting, like not very many partners showed up, so it was a little bit just so that's why it's not active. We're trying to reactivate it now. But honestly, it's a lot of work to kind of energize the

members of the SAG. So, we have a lot of committees a lot of working groups already in DRC. So, the sag is our first Exactly. Yeah."

Next, because of the importance of certain crises, Mia goes into further depth on the relationships with UNICEF management and the sub-clusters as well as their direct communication with vital areas:

"So then, yeah, Luke Bennett, I drew a line from him to UNICEF management; I guess that's self-explanatory. And then also there's a line from Luke Bennett to the subclusters and then need a meal. The answers to because we do talk to them together. But then also he talks to them separately because they're all led by UNICEF in the yellow. So, since he had better luck with IQ getting information from them, but yeah, we have mine to go (...). The interesting thing here is that technically, under Obama, along with Benny, we do interact directly with Lunia because that crisis is just so significant. And so serious and we need it, we need to interact directly with them. So, we don't really follow like the communication lines. The Goma clusters in after coordinators in coffee, but like the way the humanitarian architecture is set up, it doesn't really work because the Goma cluster, right? Does that work that to me, so we just do it directly? Yeah, and then would you mind, we're also supposed to like they're they fall under [...]. Really, not very bad and cuts out right now. But we need to bring them back into kind of the sub cluster area. That and on top of chests door and Dylan Hunter, flying to the global support lab and working group, [...]. I interact with FBI management. And so the chosen one, Dylan Hunter, although they don't really have much to do with them. They leave us alone, mostly. Just there. And then we have a lot of working groups going on right now that we have inclusion with support from Handicap International [...], we have shelter, rapid response child safeguarding, and child participation. So, there's kind of some with the JTP as well. So, all of those, like the shelter cluster coordinator is on the shelter like that apathy education working group. So, there's a line to the OCE ICN, Siemens GT is involved with this. Safeguarding Child Protection around my ICN undergone same thing, although technically the coordinator for the rapid response Working Group. At the national level, he's not actually technically a part of the ICN. That's why I did like a dotted line. And then we also have global cluster support for a lot of these working groups. So, we have Chloe Lee at the Global cluster for safeguarding and protection or sorry, participation. Then for

Jenna, we have Nicholas's assessments, and we have Chloe's rapid response to Zilpha's car. So, he's also supporting with rapid response and working group items. Blah, blah, blah, so lots of different complicated relationships there."

After that, Mia discusses the larger coordinating scene, bringing up the participation of numerous working groups and international support systems:

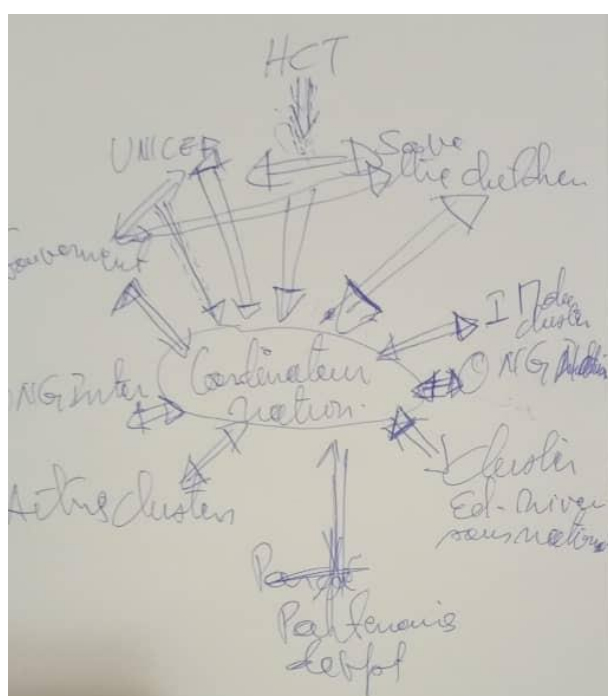
"And then we have [...]Cananga, first response windows and then the MSRP. We have two committees. And then we also talk to the Secretariat, Graham, Tom Yoshi, etc. Um, so both Luke Bennett and I do that. I think that's mostly it. That's most of what I could think of. Yeah. It's, oh, there's also a line from printers to. I know, it's a little bit crazy. Yeah. Yeah. It's a little crazy, like all that, like the partners, for example, like the partners, also, I mean, they make up the working groups, right. So, there's a big line between the working groups and the partners and then yeah, they're supported by a global cluster then also by OCHA and blah, blah, blah. And if you if you say that the three biggest balloons that are here, which one you would choose the most, I will not say time consuming, but probably it will be also time consuming enough. What are the three more that take more of you? Can you hear me? Yeah, it depends, I think depends on the time of the year, so much time. But then right now I have HRDC because we're working on that Allah Casiano stander, but then in September, it'll be OCHA, because we'll be an HPC. Yeah, but the working groups actually take up a lot of time, because I actually have to coordinate them, or Luke Bennett has to coordinate them. So, I would say, in general, the working groups, and the partners, like we have, you know, cluster meetings, and then we have ad hoc meetings, and we have trainings for the partner partners and that kind of thing. So mostly I say, yeah, maybe working groups and partners, and I could say, oh, Cha those maybe those three. Exactly, exactly. I can understand the topic. Yeah.

(...) I mean, the working groups are difficult because it's hard to keep people's attention. And it takes a lot. Nation. And I find like, every, everybody comes with their specific topic that they want to work on or then cover, and they're all. So that a little bit tricky. But on the other hand, I mean, the working groups are good, because we're actually getting some good work finished. So, it's like they take a lot of work, but also,

it's worth it. You know, it's a bit so it's, yeah, it's hard to practice it. Challenging that is worth for. Yeah. This is also the magic of it."

Mia Collins's detailed mapping of the cluster coordination team's interactions sheds light on the complexity of these networks. The emphasis on NGOs being at the center of their operations highlights the importance of these organizations in the day-to-day decision-making and planning processes. This intricately woven network of partners, donors, and governmental bodies points up the multi-layered approach to coordination and decision-making in humanitarian contexts.

3. Luke Bennett



Luke Bennett emphasizes the collaborations that make his job as a coordinator possible. He highlights the contributions that lead agencies of the Education Cluster, UNICEF, and Save the Children play. He focuses on the influence of a good entente between the 2 representative agencies and the government. Additionally, he emphasizes how important the relationships are between the government and these important allies, as cooperation with governmental goals is crucial. Luke Bennett values the contextual and relevant knowledge of the national organizations and

the expertise and financing of the international ones. Luke Bennett also acknowledges the distinctions and shared objectives in her discussion of relationships with other clusters, giving the example of child protection. The hierarchy's lower placement is the development partners reflecting the difficulties that still exist in the collaboration. Luke Bennett emphasizes the humanitarian team's role by placing them at the top but uses a not firm line to represent a different relation, less strong:

"It's a challenging exercise, as I was saying. But, as I mentioned, in my position as a coordinator, there are two very, very important partners without whom I cannot do my job. Their first partner is UNICEF, the second is Save the Children, because they are already lead agencies in my Education Cluster. If I don't have the support of both, I

can't progress with my work because I have to work at the intersectoral level, I have to work with other partners, but if I don't have their support, I won't be able to move forward. So, I highlighted the relationship between the two. The relationship between the two. Because earlier I talked about their relationship in relation to me, but there is the relationship between the two. If there is good collaboration between the two, it will also influence my work. If there is not good collaboration between the two, it will also influence my work, if there is not a good relationship between them, my work will not be done well because I won't have the necessary support. So, when you see here what I liked, I don't know... I'll talk about the right at home, but maybe yes, at home it's on the right."

Luke Bennet continues, emphasizing the importance of aligning with government priorities and maintaining good relationships between the government, UNICEF, and Save the Children. He acknowledges the influence these relationships have on his role as a coordinator, noting that poor relations can hinder his interactions also with the government. This dynamic complicates his efforts to engage the government and impacts how he is perceived, making it challenging to involve NGOs effectively. Then adding the relevance of both national and international actors.

"I put, I put the government, I put the government because the government, everything I have to do in fact, I will ensure that it is aligned with or there is more or less alignment because it depends. There may be damages, then have (...) authority, but normally I have to ensure that it is aligned with. If there are (...) That's why I put it a little higher, also showing the relationship between the government and UNICEF, the relationship between the government and Save the Children. That too. It has an influence. In my position because sometimes I know that in my position, I don't want to be a victim, but the fact that I am (...) Of these organizations. Some are at risk and others are honest and others have already had good relations between governments, but. (Sorry it got cut it got cut. We didn't, we didn't receive everything the part about relations between governments and the importance it has and cut off we didn't hear. Can you, can you say it briefly again.) It's about perception actually. Hence my position as coordinator. Because if there is, as I am based in one of these agencies. If there are no good relations, it will also affect my way of interacting with the government. I would have to initiate things, try to involve the government, but they will say and will perceive me as

someone who is not good in manners. What has been very difficult for me is at the level of NGOs (...) international NGOs. I ranked them. I am in the middle of. This means that all are important to me. But knowing that NGOs and national NGOs, for me, have more value. And the internationals have value because they have expertise, they have funding, that's good. But the nationals have an advantage because they know the context better. They can correct us all and put us on the right track to ensure that what we are planning is in line with local reality.

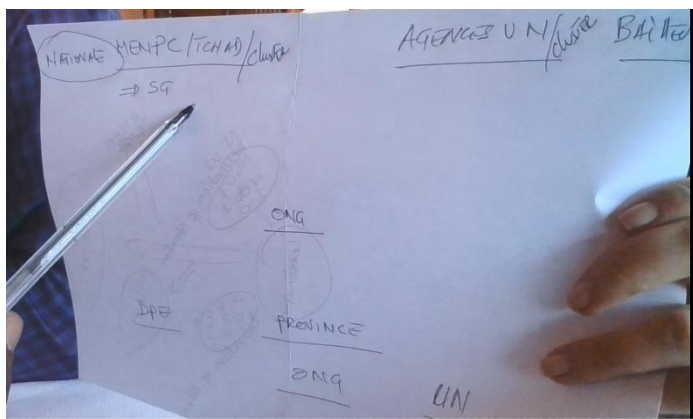
One difficulty is classifying as I am at the national level, classifying my colleagues at the sub-national level. What remains in fact? Because we, I work with them continuously. And if there are, how to say, gaps at their level, it affects and I can't do anything actually because, in fact, it's the bulk of the work, it's they who do it, they who are close to the communities, they who make the first data analyses, they who make the first analyses of alerts and I had trouble putting them. I don't know if you want, I even had to put it above all."

He continues, explaining that the interaction with other clusters varies by level. For example, interactions with child protection differ from those with the shelter cluster. While efforts are made to communicate and collaborate with development partners, these connections remain limited. He uses the sketch to illustrate these interactions, placing development partners at the bottom due to weak connections, and the humanitarian team at the top with discontinuous and continuous lines, indicating indirect impact through intersectoral levels.

"It was possible. But as the diagram didn't allow me and I don't know how to do it, there's also I put a little down to the right, to the left for the other clusters because I work in education, but I also have to interact with the other clusters, of course at different levels, because, as you know, the way I interacted with child protection. It's different from the way it interacts with the shelter cluster. It's a bit closed, but somewhere, if we find commonalities that we do together. I put at the bottom of the scale, development partners because frankly. It shows work a connection with them. In my current work, even if we make efforts to ensure knows in communication and collaboration. But it's still far.

I put at the top the humanitarian team by making points, how to say, discontinuous and by continuous lines because it doesn't directly impact me. It goes through her at the intersectoral level.”

4. Dylan Hunter



Dylan Hunter draws attention to the crucial function that the coordinator of the education cluster plays in fostering cooperation and communication within the network of coordination. He places a strong emphasis on maintaining regular contact with

UN agencies, working closely with NGOs, and having direct access to national educational authorities. Dylan Hunter places NGOs at the center of the network because he identifies them as the main partners. He emphasizes how important it is for the coordinator to be present and visible at the national and provincial levels, acting as a point of contact for stakeholders in education.

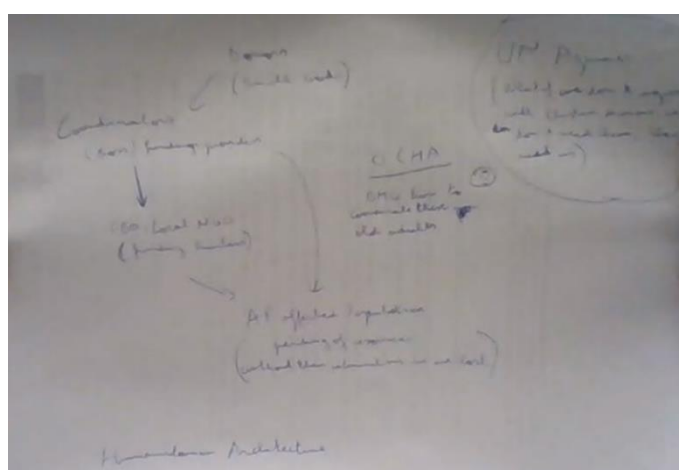
“So, in this sketch, I've shown the various entities, the actors with whom the cluster collaborates and is in relation with at all times. So, concerning education in emergency situations or education issues in general, we have direct access to all educational authorities at the national level, at the Ministry of National Education, at any time, at any time, at any time, at any hour. I can call or I can be called by any of these authorities. I also have contacts with all UN agencies that have an educational component or even aspects that are not directly educational but may have cross-cutting aspects with education. I am required to collaborate with them, to have discussions and exchanges with them. Also, at any time, I've placed the NGOs here because NGOs are the ones we really work with the most and at any time.”

Dylan Hunter continues, stating that NNGOs are central to their efforts, with primary collaboration occurring with NGOs. Discussions, schedules, and challenges are addressed with UN staff, donors, and the Ministry of National Education at both national and provincial levels. This inclusive approach ensures visible coordination, linking various education actors and maintaining a strong presence across

different levels of engagement. For instance, in regions like Gorée, education actors recognize and can contact the cluster coordinator, highlighting the coordinator's pivotal role in connecting diverse stakeholders in the education sector.

“Here, they (the NNGO) are at the center. That's why I really put them here at the center. So, I would say our primary collaborators are the NGOs in everything that happens here with NGOs, in terms of discussions, schedule plans, challenges on the ground are discussed again with UN staff, with donors, with the Ministry of National Education. And indeed, all these issues are also reflected at the provincial level, so at the sub-national level. And the same interactions are developed with the decentralized services of the Ministry of National Education, with NGO offices in the field, and with UN agencies also in the field. So, we really have a presence in terms of coordination and less in terms of coordination facilitator. I have a presence that is visible among all actors, whether at the national or provincial level. Today, for example, you arrive in the South. Suppose you arrive in the Gorée area where there are returned Central African refugees. You mention the name of the cluster coordinator to education actors. They know me, they know they can contact me. So, I think the role of the cluster coordinator is really... It's a central role, it really... it connects the various education actors, and it concentrates in itself this ability to also link these different actors.”

5. Liam Walker



The dynamics of power, and coordination within the Education Cluster Coordination are clearly portrayed in George's description of the coordination network. The donors are referred as being perceived as ‘Small Gods.’ They are seated at the top of this hierarchy and have enormous influence over the resources and direction of the network.

Underneath them, the cluster coordinators are compared to ‘Bosses,’ who oversee and allocate funds:

“Here's what I'm saying: In the middle, at the top, we have the donors - in parentheses, 'Small Gods.' These are small, little gods. And the arrow pointing downwards represents the cluster coordinators, looks like 'Boss'. 'The bosses'. They resemble 'the bosses', and we perceive them as such. We look at them as funding providers.”

Civil society organizations CSOs and NGOs are portrayed farther down the chain; Liam Walker states that they are perceived as 'Founding Hunters,' constantly looking for funding to finance their projects. They are vulnerable within the network since their hopes are frequently dependent on the decisions made by players at a higher level.

“Now, the arrow that follows downwards. At the bottom, we have the CBOs, the local NGOs, who are 'Founding hunters,' so they're fund seekers. And then the coordinators. The CBOs are above the affected populations who are waiting for the resources, and sometimes they think that maybe without interventions from the Boss or the local NGOs, they are lost. All their hope lies in these actors.”

OCHA is in the middle, with a complacent view of the clusters as they try to help them. He also adds that the large multinational NGOs and UN agencies have a strong presence and position themselves as independent of the Cluster if they disagree about something:

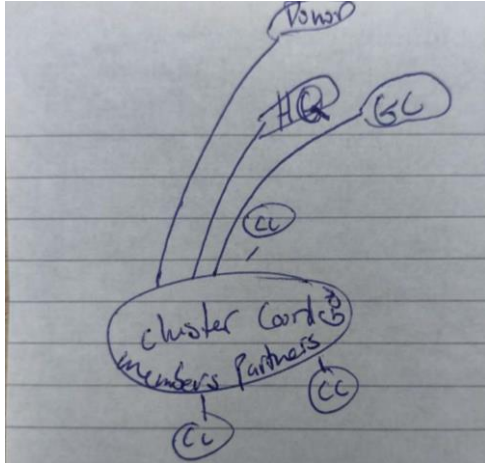
“And then in the middle now, it's OCHA. And then, on the far right, at the top, there are the UN agencies. And in some cases, I say, with the large international NGOs, and in parentheses, "what if we don't agree with cluster decisions? We don't need them, they need us." Because we have our resources, well, we do the cluster, but we can lead our activities, and we don't have a problem. So, in the middle, we have OCHA. Oh my god! How to coordinate these old children. We've said it because often, if we are aware of the importance, because sometimes and well. And there's a little drawing there, it's the face of OCHA shaking my head. Oh my God, it is this.”

2.5.2 Macro dimension Cluster Coordination – sketches

Although the preceding sections centered on the micro and meso aspects of coordination, it is crucial to consider the macro dimension. This part further examines the analysis to incorporate the wider, worldwide viewpoint of Education Cluster Coordination. Through the analysis of sketches and narratives created by practitioners worldwide, a greater understanding of how international policies and

frameworks interface with local practices, can be perceived, thereby influencing the overall coordinating landscape.

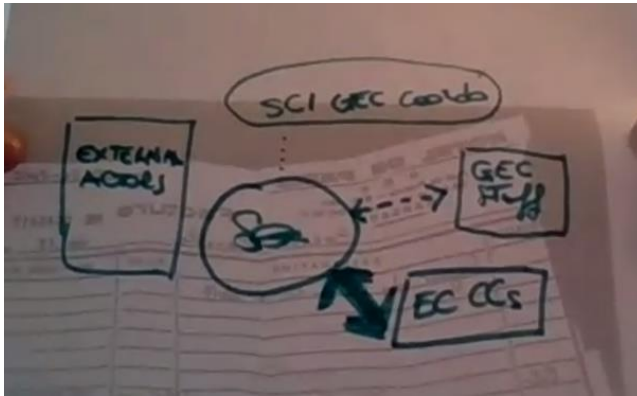
1. Chris Taylor



Chris Taylor draws attention to the several levels of communication and support that exist within the coordination network. He underlines how crucial it is for cluster coordinators to have strong contacts with local authorities and communities as their main sources of support. He also emphasizes the value of peer support from other cluster coordinators, who may provide useful guidance, resources, and emotional support based on the same experiences.

“And then kind of like within that, like, space, I have like cluster members, partners, like would include, like, local, like communities, and the government. So, I think those are the people that like cluster coordinators rely on first. Because that, that's kind of their community. And then close around them. I have other Cluster Coordinators (CC) who have like, been through the same thing. And like, I've seen, like other cluster coordinators, they can provide like, lesson like technical support, like Lessons Learned tools, like, tools, they've actually used, you know, like examples of how they've used them. But they can also support like, provide, like social emotional support, you know, to be like, oh, no, that that wasn't acceptable. Like, that happened to me too. Or, you know, like, yeah, just like as a peer, you know, like, just on the social emotional level to, like, get that level of support that other people like, you know, I was working in headquarters like if I'm like, Oh, that's so bad. Sorry. You days so busy. Have a question for you. You know, like, that's, that's not that's not sincere, you know, like, yeah, like, Oh, I'm so sorry. You're understaffed. When will you get the budget back? You know, that's not Yeah.”

While acknowledging the importance of the Global Education Cluster and headquarters (HQ), Chris Taylor also points out that the level of relationships in these organizations can affect how supportive they



are. In order to avoid interference, he proposes that contributors could occasionally participate remotely, although he still emphasizes the significance of providing requested assistance.

“So, then HQ is like, depending on the relationships, you know, like it really depends on the relationships like it's against at this level. I can't generalize because, you know, some sometimes at HQ, you're able to help a lot. Sometimes. I've seen I haven't been able to do anything. It has been like that. Like, when is the budget coming? We're like, I need I'm sorry, but I need it today. And then second to that I have like the Global Education cluster, I presume that same thing, like, sometimes helpful, sometimes not available. And then like, even farther away is like the, of course, like the donor. And don't know, like, without, especially with that, like, without being more involved, I almost think like, it's better for them to be farther away, you know, and stay farther away and not like, you can't be like, one, one toe in one foot out, you know, and then come in and, like, make demands or comment on the context or the organization. Like, if you're that same with HQ, like, if you're that far out of the picture. Sometimes it's better to just stay out of the picture and give what's asked of you, you know, also not everybody can be super involved, you know, so. Yeah.”

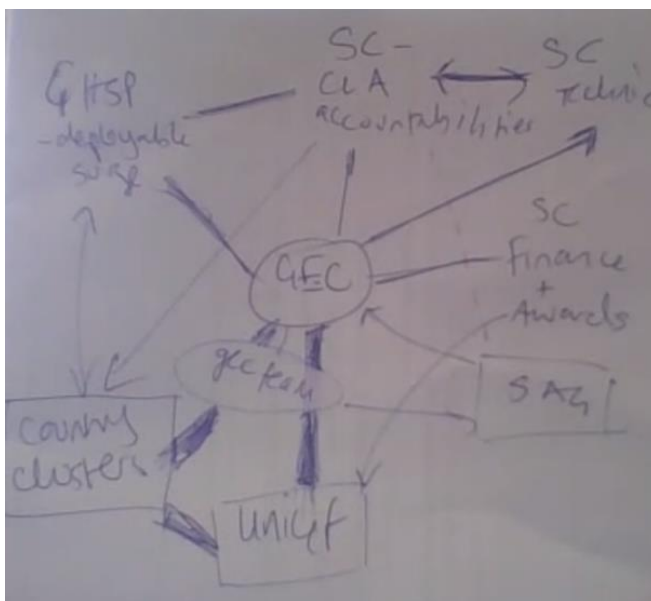
2. Chloe Lee

Chloe Lee's narrative reveals complex social processes inside the Education Cluster Coordination network. Her division of interactions, which is marked by various levels of reciprocity and formality, reflects the complex nature of human relationships inside bureaucratic frameworks. She emphasizes the central role of her relationship with national education cluster coordinators, highlighting its bilateral nature and its significance in her work. She contrasts this with her more sporadic and irregular collaboration between the macro dimension actors. She emphasizes the value of spontaneous teamwork. She also talks about her interactions with external players, characterizing them as existing yet requiring some degree of engagement or cooperation while having no formal connections.

“So, it's me in the center. So, the big connection and arrow and relationship which is a two way is with education cluster coordinators, really. They are buying relationships, relationship at work. So that's, I think our role and it's a two-way communication and cooperation system. I also have a two-way communication and cooperation relationship with the other staff at the GC. But it's a dotted line because it's more limited. It's and it's much more ad hoc. So, it's not really. Yeah, it's not really systematic and organic. Unlike with the coordinators, even though as you know, here, I'm talking only of choice and guarding child participation, as we're explained. So, it's not about general coordination. So, with the other GC staff, I have another doc occasional, or with a needs-based relationship, it's a little bit opportunistic. So, when I need something, I would work with them, or vice versa. But here, I should change it not to make you think, because I do the two arrows the two-way communication. Because that's how it should be. But to be honest, frustration that I've had that I've discussed with my line manager is that sometimes I think that I'm one of the few are the only one who brings up the need for working together on our mutual work screen, but it's not duplicating work, but really how we put things together, because we have a tendency for everyone to do their own business. And then when it needs to be like sometimes you need the others, you would go and ask for a form of cooperation. So, it's not systematic, it's not organic, it's not very effective. And I go back to what I said before I come from the field. And if you're a field bass animal, like me, you know what it means to work with the others, instead of, you know, sitting in the same team with someone else that is very different. And I think that if you don't have people with that big ground, and they're just they're young people who have only been working at the global level, I don't think that they barley you are working more organically with others. So, I think it should remove the arrow that comes towards me here, then I have just like a little dotted line towards the, say the children GC coordinator, global coordinator, Casey Lee, because she's my in-line manager. But it's, its Yeah, information sharing because I'm very independent. She's very hands off. So, we relate, we have an established communication system and everything, but I wouldn't call it. So, it's more like management than actual and general direction, but I'm totally independent from her in my work. And then I just put a box with external actors, by external actors, I mean, a lot of things together. So, it could be some of the working groups that I'm a member of from other organizations. Or it could

also be internal to say, the children or to UNICEF, within the GC, but they are external to the core of the people that I work with. And we I put them without any connection, meaning that yeah, they are there, I cooperate better. So, I relate to them somehow, but it's not really the formal the formal linkage that I have with them, so it could be linked somehow, but I didn't know how to represent because it's very, like touch and more of a participation to some other some people initiatives than contributing or to receiving from them. So, it's coexistence probably with them.”

3. Sydney Quinn

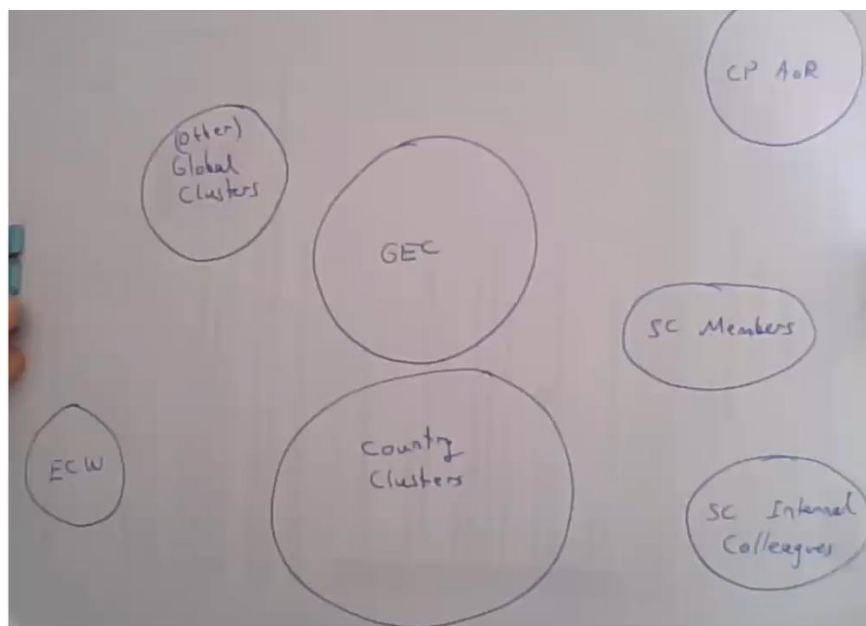


Sydney Quinn points out the numerous and different type of interactions she manages in her position. She highlights the SAG team, the Global Education Cluster Team and her main institution. In addition, Sydney Quinn acknowledges the relationships and overlapping tasks that frequently obfuscate organizational boundaries, pointing at the complexity of her position.

“So, I put, let's see, I kind of did the bigger the bigger interactions between GC, although that's kind of me rather through the GC team, both to country clusters and also to GC UNICEF. The other the other functions that I interact a lot is with the Save the Children's search team to be able to support country clusters to fill the gaps and to have the support that they need. So that links into country clusters and I also interface with Save the Children a lot to be able to support or, I guess to strengthen our organizational commitments and fulfillment of our accountabilities as a cluster lead agency, so working with them, both on funding and staffing and visibility of the cluster and commitment to the cluster. They also link to the countries they also link to deployments. And then their technical kind of work streams as well to make sure that the cluster is featured in those kinds of standard approaches and best practices and

communications with countries on EA programming in general. Another big part that I work on is the strategic advisory group; they support the GDC team directly in different work streams. There's also the link to countries with different members that are in our sag and the different work of the sag that is aimed toward country clusters. And then I also have some role with finance and awards, which links to our accountabilities, links to UNICEF, and links to some countries as well, when we're funding their activities. So quite messy. (...) I think I put the squares on kind of where the majority of or the biggest relationships are maybe or the biggest responsibilities in terms of my working relationships. Like a dotted line? Yeah. That one was because some of the people are the same in each group. So, some of our sag members are, are safe, the children and some of the sag members, our country clusters as well”.

4. Jordan Blake



The complex dynamics of power, rivalry, and informality within organizational connections are highlighted by Jordan Blake's reflection on his network. For his sketch Jordan Blake's focus on the number of times he contacts or connects with other members:

“So, this is (my) our relationship, it's all the different stakeholders. And the bigger the circle is the more interaction I have with the more the stronger relation that's stronger the more relationship I have with them on a day-to-day basis. So, GEC is the Global Education cluster, it's quite big. The country clusters are slightly bigger. So, I have the focal points from the country clusters are also important, important innovation with them. So CPAoR, the child protection area responsibility, it's slightly smaller than GEC, but almost, I mean, it's also quite big, because they also have agenda on localization.

And we are, in many fronts, we are pushing it together, when there is a webinar for localization, we try to do it together, etc. And then on the left, you have other global clusters. So different focal points from other clusters, I also get in touch with them regularly to do some activity on anything. But especially localization, yeah. And then here, you have saved the children members. And the members are the organizations which are independent from each other. And they are the main way for providing funding for, save the children. So, they're the fundraising organizations that are (...). So, I have focal points from these members, I also speak with them frequently. And then on the down, you have saved the children, internal colleagues, which means Save the Children International. We have technical advisors, for in different locations, I also get in touch with them a lot. So, this is also like, for example, the EiE advisors, who can provide localization in one of the countries they focus on together, etc. And then there's ECW education cannot wait on the other side. As well, I forgot to mention the local members in our GEC SAG, the strategic advisory group, but for my team, I think they would also be a circle as big as think, say which members, it would be as big as service. (...) I'm not in this picture to this is the size of the circle shows my relationship with them. The bigger the circle is, the bigger the diameter of the circle is. The closer I get the more frequent I am in touch with them. So, GEC means my colleagues at GEC including my supervisor or my other colleagues, who work on ...child safeguarding etc. (...) You can think of me as the paper itself".

The network designs reveal a social dynamics patchwork, organizational importance, and interconnectivity in the Education Cluster spaces (not geographically but physical or non-physical environments). Every sketch reflects the complex network of ties and interactions that make the Cluster coordination social environment, with different representations of importance, the perceived importance of particular entities, the positioning of organizations within the drawing, and the frequency or even metaphors expressed. These differences in emphasis highlight the subjective lenses through which people see their social environments.

The analysis integrates the networks in a multiscale perspective, meaning that the focus is not on which dimension in scale the participant but rather on a more fluid and less structured perspective, following Deleuze & Guattari's (1987) philosophical post-structuralist framework. The Assemblage Theory, developed by Deleuze and Guattari, highlights the diversity and fluidity of links within networks. The

education cluster might be understood as an assemblage, an adaptable and dynamic entity made up of diverse components that come together to address EiE.

The fluidity and intensity of social relationships indicated by the frequency of connections relate to the dynamic, frequently chaotic structure of social networks. Because the time for the sketch drawing was limited, only a part of the real network appeared. This emphasis on the 'ties' that unite people and groups implies that the quantity and quality of these ties have a major impact on social capital and cohesiveness. On the other hand, drawings also highlight the significance of some organizations over others demonstrate how social networks are hierarchical and at the same time the value judgements individuals make regarding which connections are most beneficial or critical to their interests. Most 'important' organizations (by hierarchy and/or by value of judgement) frequently have more influence over how information and resources move across the network.

These illustrations of organizations' places on paper provide a symbolic representation of social stratification. The 'zone' in which an organization is located within a drawing might represent its accessibility, influence, and status within the network, just as actual geography can determine access to resources and influence in the real world.

The variations in the names of organizations across sketches demonstrate the imprecise nature of identity and recognition in social networks. At the same time and considering that every cluster functions within a different context and that this analysis covers multiple aspects of cluster coordination, these discrepancies can be understandable. In other words, the way an organization is seen and acknowledged might differ greatly depending on the unique traits and goals of every cluster we examine, in addition to the context.

A common concern that one of these sketches about forgetting to include someone – often when describing the network, someone or some organization would pop up shows a clear interest of most of the participants in being inclusive and having a representation the closest to the reality as possible. The process of creating these networks involves not only analysis but also moral judgment, as we can see, especially with the example of Liam Walker. The participants expressed that there's more than just drawing connections; it was also about making careful choices to ensure no one is left out and recognizing that not every connection could be highlighted or how difficult this exercise can be.

When circulating through the Education Cluster spaces, the multiplicity and diversity of actors and relationships are very clear. It can be described as an assemblage that includes a diverse range of

actors, each with their own desires, goals, and capacities. This assemblage is characterized by its heterogeneity, including (sometimes) CSOs members, governmental bodies, and non-governmental entities, donors, EiE experts, private institutions, and others. Assemblage Theory helps us understand that the power and efficacy of the Education Cluster emerge from the interactions and relations among these diverse components rather than from any singular entity. As referred to by Deleuze and Guattari: “An assemblage is precisely this increase in the dimensions of a multiplicity that necessarily changes in nature as it expands its connections. There are no points or positions in a rhizome, such as those found in a structure, tree, or root.” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 8)

The sketches also illustrate Castells' concept of power lying within networks of communication. Here, programmers and switchers are not isolated entities but form networks themselves, navigating through a labyrinth of sub-groups and meetings. For him, the power lies within the networks of communication where actors gain influence through their ability to switch between different networks. As referred one of the meso dimension participants during an interview:

“There are a lot of subgroups and a lot of meetings. I'm someone that normally I don't know, a lot of meetings, and I don't know a lot of sub-groups, because I always have the impression that the end of the day before we have meetings ... I am the person I think I'm more of delivering (person) than meetings (person).”

At the same time, Zoe Turner's preference for action over meetings captures a frequent critical tension within humanitarian efforts: the balance between deliberation and direct action. This tension is further complicated by the network's structure, which, while decentralized to enhance resilience and inclusivity, also poses significant challenges in terms of control and regulation.

Castells describes the switchers as “the mechanisms connecting or disconnecting networks on the basis of certain programs or strategies.” (Castells, 2004, p. 224) That said, the Education Cluster's main actors in different dimensions often play this role, facilitating links between members and other players to improve efficiency and coordination even if this is not explicit in their role guidelines. But there are other relevant switchers in these landscapes. The hierarchical dynamics that result from Liam Walker' depiction of donors as ‘Small Gods’ highlight Castells' idea of ‘switchers,’ who control the flow of resources while highlighting the power dynamics inside networks.

Castells' hypothesis on the centrality of communication networks in the power-making process finds concrete expression in the operation of the Education Cluster. Using the 5W tool and making sense of

the results is a perfect example of how, in times of crisis, smart networking may increase advocacy and influence in the education sector. Also, the participants' emphasis in strategic and collaborative relationships shows the centrality of networks power and influence in the humanitarian sector. In the meantime, with all the technological advances and AI (that can support data analysis, decision-making, and even predicting future educational needs in crisis), the Education Cluster's ability to together discuss and make sense of the available data can represent a significant evolution in its operational capabilities. The potentialities of these tools also come with ethical and structural challenges that the Education cluster can work in all dimensions.

With advancements in technology and artificial intelligence, the next frontier for the Education Cluster could involve enhancing its role through more sophisticated sensemaking of collected data. This evolution would align with integrating Latour's ANT provides a framework for understanding the roles of both human and non-human actors in networks - the theory challenges conventional divisions between subjects and objects, as well as between the natural and social worlds, by claiming that actors gain their identity and agency from their placement within networks. In the sketches, during the interviews, and in the stories collected, the relationship between humans and non-humans is frequent and is even more highlighted when related to the COVID-19 pandemic and afterward. The non-human actors and semiotic aspects have a constant presence in the Education Cluster interactions between scales and dimensions and also between members. Technology, data-gathering instruments, communication and collaboration tools (Skype, teams, etc.), policies, and methodologies are examples of non-human actors that are crucial in influencing choices and activities inside the Cluster. These components play essential roles in shaping decisions and actions within the Cluster. The results could never be the same without the non-human tools as the flow of information, influence, and support between different dimensions of Education Cluster actors are an especially important part of the role.

The Education Cluster, as a rhizome-like structure (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987), ensures that while no single entity can dictate the network's functioning, the collective actions of its diverse components drive its effectiveness. Deleuze and Guattari also highlight heterogeneity and fluidity.

Integrating Castells' ideas on networked power and Deleuze and Guattari's rhizomatic structures, we can understand the Education Cluster as a fluid, adaptable network through its human and non-human actors.

Networks within the Education Cluster represent complex, hybrid formations that blend hierarchical structures with the principles of rhizomatic organization. This duality demands an extraordinary level of

agility, particularly in response to the fluid nature of roles and memberships that evolve within these networks. Such fluidity is combined with the unpredictable nature of emergencies. Deleuze and Guattari's concept of 'becoming' captures the essence of this dynamic, pointing out the continuous process of transformation inherent in these networks.

Adding to this theoretical landscape, Karl Weick's (1976) delineation of a 'loosely coupled system' provides a critical lens through which to view educational organizations. Weick's theory also challenges traditional, mechanistic interpretations of organizations that rely on linear, causal, and highly articulated organizational structures. Instead, he posits that educational institutions function more effectively as loosely coupled systems, where elements are responsive yet retain a degree of independence.

The inherent tensions in educational clusters, where the need for a coherent structure must be balanced with the demand for flexibility to accommodate ongoing changes in roles, responsibilities, and environmental conditions, align with Weick's concept of a 'loosely coupled system.' His framework emphasizes the value of adaptability and responsiveness over rigid control, suggesting that educational networks thrive on a balance between structure and chaos. This theory highlights the importance of embracing complexity, uncertainty, and continuous adaptation in encouraging resilient educational environments.

By adopting a hybrid perspective, combining aspects of Latour's ANT, Castells' Network Society theory, and Weick's Sensemaking theory into a hybrid viewpoint that captures both the structural dynamics and the individual and communal sensemaking processes at work, it's intended to have a more comprehensive and holistic view of the network's viewpoints of the participants.

Even if Latour's (1996) have a view of the actors without strategic positioning and highlights the fluid and dynamic nature of networks, where any actor (human or non-human) can potentially influence the network's shape and direction based on their relationships and actions. Castells focuses on a more defined strategic positioning where the power of actors (individuals, organizations) derives from their ability to position themselves within networks of information and communication technologies effectively. Both theorists acknowledge the importance of connections and relationships in determining an actor's power within a network. According to ANT, networks are created and kept active by the interactions and relationships of a wide range of individuals, including both human and non-human creatures. Constant alliance-building, resource mobilization, and negotiation are all part of this construction process. Strategic positioning can be viewed from this perspective as the result of these continuous activities. Also, Latour gives a more micro-level perspective, and Castells highlights a Global one – as we are

focusing on both, and in the flow and dynamics between them, a hybrid perspective also shows this intertwined and complex reality.

Finally, the Cynefin framework of Dave Snowden brings not only a way to support decision-making but also a powerful advocate for creating sensemaking in complex contexts. This framework categorizes issues into distinct domains—Simple, Complicated, Complex, Chaotic, and Disorder—each demanding a different approach to decision-making and problem-solving. The Cynefin framework's Complex domain is particularly pertinent to the nuances of Education Cluster Coordination. It advocates for a sensemaking process in which patterns emerge by interaction and experimentation, mirroring the difficulties that educators and coordinators actually encounter in emergencies. Furthermore, the Cynefin framework places a strong emphasis on contextuality while making decisions. It promotes an awareness of the specific needs and characteristics of every situation.

Jones and al. (1997) propose a 'theory of network governance', arguing that networks surpass markets and hierarchies in terms of uncertainty, complexity, information restrictions, and asset specificity. Disasters, by definition, include turbulent and complex situations that necessitate flexible decision-making under uncertain conditions and information constraints. Networks of relief groups can provide effective coordination and governance during disasters. Managing disasters in complex contexts might provide extra network challenges.

The Education Cluster is a network governance model that seems well-suited to managing the complexities and uncertainties of catastrophe and emergency situations. These theoretical perspectives present the Education Cluster as a living, dynamic organism that acts on multiple levels and scales. Coordination is not made by parts or the whole but rather an overlapping entity (with Local, Country, Regional, and Global agencies).

This entity does not have sovereignty over another. It is distinguished by a constant state of 'becoming'—a dynamic process of adaptation and change that reflects both the challenges and opportunities inherent in coordinating education in an emergency. Its hybrid/overlapping structure combines features of hierarchical management with the flexibility of decentralized, networked interactions, resulting in a strong model for coordinating in the dynamic field of emergency education.

2.5.3 Interrelations between perspectives – rhizomatic portraits

The complex web of relationships within Education Cluster Coordination can be likened to a rhizomatic structure, where connections are dynamic and often non-linear. This section explores the interrelations

among various actors, using visual representations and participant sketches to illustrate the complexity of these networks. By examining these rhizomatic portraits, gaining a deeper understanding of the power dynamics, communication flows, and collaborative efforts that define the coordination process.

The NWSW area of Cameroon is characterized by complex interconnections among cluster coordination, government, separatists, and people of the region, resulting in unanticipated and amplified impacts on the entire system. The ripple effects of decisions and actions of the community and the government give Coordination an unpredictable, not easy, nor linear situation to deal with. In this scenario, Coordination is also mostly made of community members. Also, the humanitarian principle of neutrality can be questioned or pointed out. As the situation aligns with the characteristics of complexity, there is no straightforward solution, and the decisions in the Cluster Coordination emerge through ongoing interactions (Kurtz & Snowden, 2003) between the actors involved.

In Clarisse's narrative, initially, there seems to be a sense of belonging and working together, referring that 'everyone was participating,' but there was a shift in the report phase from active participation to a sense of almost abandonment: 'I felt alone participating.' This shift may reflect the dynamics of group participation and the influence of social roles within the cluster. The significance of engagement in an era focused on data effectiveness and efficiency prompts reflection on whether to be physically present or actively collaborate with one task. However, the participant's emphasis lies not in mere presence but in the substantial engagement in actions, collaborating with others to bring about meaningful change. The coordinator handbook (Global Education Cluster, 2010) recognizes that "Coordination is about teamwork; therefore, cluster partners should feel part of it." Collaborating within a group to achieve a common goal is not an easy task. Given the diversity among members (including the coordinator or the IMO) who all work as independent agents with their own 'agencies', institutional beliefs, and aims, the group's dynamic can either evolve into a cohesive community or remain fragmented. The capacity to work together effortlessly is determined by various elements, including timing, the nature of the tasks at hand, work techniques, and each group member's level of engagement, for example. However, participation in the coordination mechanism does not necessarily provide tangible or visible outcomes.

Castells delineated power within the network society in the digital and globalized landscape, giving great importance to communication networks in constructing social meaning. He identifies programmers and switchers as pivotal actors: "programmers and switchers are the holders of power in the network society. They are embodied by social actors, but they are not individuals; they are networks themselves." In the landscape of the Cluster coordination and integrating the Education Cluster Coordination, we can

see the members of the Cluster as the programmers and the Education Cluster Unit in different dimensions and positions (coordinators, IMOS, co-coordinators, and co-facilitators) in the different dimensions as Switchers. “Of course, networks are formed by actors in their networking arrangements. But who these actors are and what their networks are is a matter of the specific configuration of networks in each particular context and in each particular process.” (Castells, 2011, p. 786)

The organizations, NGOs, government bodies, and international agencies that design and implement educational strategies tailored to emergency contexts represent the programmers.

Switchers, on the other hand, could be interpreted as the Education Coordination Unit. They move between different networks—connecting humanitarian agencies, educational institutions, ONGs, donor communities, and governments—to ensure that educational interventions are appropriately aligned with the needs of affected populations and collaborative. Their power lies in their ability to facilitate, mediate, and direct the information and resources across these networks, optimizing the impact of educational interventions.

The Education Cluster Coordination is a network of EiE stakeholders created to close down a fragmented environment. Structurally, the Coordination involves a multitude of actors with varying degrees of interconnectedness, forming a network that ranges from more ‘loosely’ affiliated to ‘tighter’.

During most interviews, we invite the interviewee to sketch a representation of their network within a 5-minute window and then explain it briefly. This method enables us to delve into their interpretations of these relationships and their interpretation of the visual representation. The analysis frequently shows an ecosystem characterized by concerns surrounding power dynamics, competition, and fundamental principles.

We didn’t count or enumerate the network nodes. We focused on the qualitative and interpretative vision of it. In the images, we can see the type of the EiE actor and the form of the network. Sometimes, the form is not important, and other times, it has a meaning, and for that, we are letting the images be as they were shared.

3. Sensemaking narratives

3.1 Principled non-linear paths

This section explores the strategic, non-linear routes that players follow, highlighting the significance of adaptability, introspection, and commitment to humanitarian principles. We emphasize the adaptive methods utilized by coordinators to handle the uncertainties and complexities of emergencies by combining theoretical insights with actual evidence.

Decision-making procedures regularly stray from linear paths in the dynamic of Education Cluster Coordination. The framework for action follows the Humanitarian Program Cycle. By country, usually, the Education Cluster team creates a Strategy, and much decision-making is part of the day-to-day work and has the support of many national and international norms, helpdesks, and National NGOs. For this I

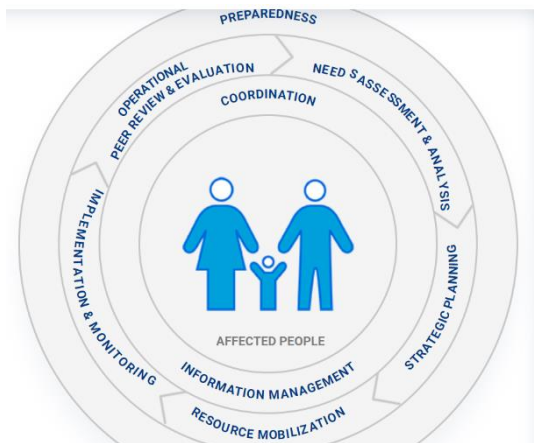


Figure 15: Humanitarian Programme Cycle Elements

mean that the decision-making in the Education cluster teams is a frequent and qualified process. Nonetheless, by the nature of the emergency context and sometimes the non-continuity of the members, decision-making can deviate through non-linear processes where uncertainty and rapidly changing circumstances are a reality. Navigating this non-linear decision path while

adhering to humanitarian principles and facilitating processes with a wide range of stakeholders can be very challenging.

Non-linear decision pathways in humanitarian contexts are characterized by adaptive, iterative, and frequently reactive decision paths. These techniques are flexible and enable quick adjustments depending on new information, changing priorities, and the emerging requirements of affected communities, in contrast to standard decision-making models that follow a sequential and predictable pattern. This flexibility is crucial in emergencies since things might change suddenly and drastically, necessitating a review and revision of previous judgments in light of the new situation.

The fundamental idea of non-linear decision-making is reflexivity, which is a never-ending process of introspection and education that empowers humanitarian actors to critically evaluate their presumptions,

comprehend the consequences of their acts, and modify their plans of action accordingly. Reflexivity promotes choices that are not just practical but also mindful of the specifics of each situation by fostering a greater engagement with the ethical, cultural, and political aspects of humanitarian action.

The process of reaching a consensus is difficult and time-consuming since each participant brings unique viewpoints, goals, and limitations to the table. Furthermore, tensions arise between the requirement for inclusive, participatory processes and the necessity of quick decisions during emergencies, which frequently conflict with the slower pace of group discussion.

The humanitarian principles of independence, neutrality, impartiality, and humanity provide direction in the face of these difficulties. These values serve as a moral compass, guaranteeing that humanitarian action is devoid of political, economic, or military goals and that it relieves suffering while upholding the dignity of those impacted. These guidelines emphasize how crucial it is to prioritize the needs and rights of impacted groups when making decisions in non-linear decision-making. This will help to prevent interventions from making vulnerabilities or inequality worse. At the same time, questioning the Humanitarian Principles because they are not being effectively respected or questioning if that should be the priority, as explored in the theoretical part of this study, is a very actual debate. Considering it, the ICVA published, just a few days ago (ICVA, 2024), the ToR for a Principled Humanitarian Action Steering Committee (PHASC) Navigating dilemmas and identifying compromises “aimed at developing guidance and tools to assist aid agencies and coordination mechanisms in navigating humanitarian challenges and promoting principled decision-making”.

Multiple methods can be used to traverse non-linear choice paths while respecting humanitarian ideals ethically. First off, developing solid, dependable bonds with stakeholders and local communities improves the responsiveness and validity of humanitarian operations. Investing in information exchange and capacity building also empowers local actors and guarantees that local knowledge and insights guide decision-making. Finally, adopting cutting-edge strategies and tools can enhance communication, data insights, and collection—allowing for more quick and well-informed decision-making.

3.2 Communication, trust, and Fluctuating Power Dynamics

This section delves into the fluctuating power dynamics within Education Cluster Coordination, exploring how trust is built, maintained, and sometimes challenged. Through the narratives of participants, we uncover the delicate balance of power, collaboration, and conflict that characterizes the coordination process.

ECC should be based on trust and communication, which are essential for building relationships, facilitating operations, and collaborating in the difficult situation of emergency education.

Teboh appreciates the Cluster Approach for its informative meetings and highlighting the value of support from the cluster. He says, "The cluster helps us a lot. The meetings are always very interesting." This positive perception points out the participant's acknowledgment of the valuable support provided by the cluster. However, he also pointed out a significant challenge: "People are always changing, and many times, there are no coordinators or no IMO. So, the cluster is always learning our names and posts...". This situation was also highlighted in the CLARE II evaluation for example, when referring that "Based on information provided by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), eight out of 67 full-time UNICEF cluster coordinator positions at the country level were vacant for more than three months in 2020." (HERE-Geneva, 2022) This shows the substantial barrier posed by the lack of continuity, potentially hindering the work of coordination and the relationships in the Cluster. Such challenges can impact the overall effectiveness of the cluster in the long term. Clarisse Bih shared an experience during the Child Consultancy process, mentioning that initially, the process was highly participative. However, no one was actively engaging later, and she felt isolated, seeing that other members of the cluster were not participating. This narrative describes a specific situation, making it unclear whether she frequently feels isolated when participating or if this was an isolated incident.

In Clarisse's narrative, initially, there seems to be a sense of belonging and working together, referring that 'everyone was participating,' but there was a shift in the report phase from active participation to a sense of almost abandonment: 'I felt alone participating.' This shift may reflect the dynamics of group participation and the influence of social roles within the cluster. The significance of engagement in an era focused on data effectiveness and efficiency prompts reflection on whether to be physically present or actively collaborate with one task. However, the participant's emphasis lies not in mere presence but in the substantial engagement in actions, collaborating with others to bring about meaningful change. The coordinator handbook (Global Education Cluster, 2010) recognizes that "Coordination is about teamwork; therefore, cluster partners should feel part of it." Collaborating within a group to achieve a common goal is not an easy task. Given the diversity among members (including the coordinator or the IMO) who all work as independent agents with their own 'agencies,' institutional beliefs, and aims, the group's dynamic can either evolve into a cohesive community or remain fragmented. The capacity to work together effortlessly is determined by various elements, including timing, the nature of the tasks at hand, work techniques, and each group member's level of engagement, for example. However, participation in the coordination mechanism does not necessarily provide tangible or visible outcomes.

Chloe Lee stresses how crucial communication is to preserving unity amongst varied partners on the field,

“When you are in the field, you're dealing with very many partners. And to me, probably that level of ability to communicate with others, keeping people together. It is fundamental. So probably a coordinator who is someone who's not engaging well with others would be able to do their job, but I don't think that they will be persuasive, for example, or be seen as a reference point.”

Her observations are consistent with Castells' Network Society thesis, which holds that the capacity to coordinate and impact communication is a key component of power in networks.

Chris Taylor's reflections on the necessity for trust, the difficulties in managing relationships, and the importance of both formal and informal skills in navigating these complex networks provide a nuanced understanding of the coordinative processes at play. Gannon's perspective on the importance of building trust and effective communication among cluster members, as well as his acknowledgment of the critical role of soft skills, reinforce the complexity and adaptive nature of decision-making in emergency education contexts: "The happiest clusters I've seen are the ones that have known each other in that system for the longest...based on trust". (Chris Taylor)

The centrality of communication in Castells' Network Society is echoed in the emphasis on trust and communication within the Education Cluster. The narratives describe a need for transparent information exchange, much like Castells' description of power in networks being tied to the ability to control and influence communication.

The inherent need for significant flexibility and adaptability within the Education Cluster's network structure is accentuated not only by the exigencies of the emergency context but also by the intrinsic volatility of roles within the network. The frequent turnover in membership, driven by changes in individual representation and the informal nature of cluster engagement, highlights the challenges of maintaining continuity and coherence in operations. Empirical findings highlight the crucial importance of trust, networks, and collaborative norms in promoting effective coordination of EiE, aligning with fundamental principles of Social Capital Theory. This theory, proposed by Bourdieu, Coleman, and Putnam, emphasizes the importance of social networks and the assets that are exchanged within these networks to enable collective action. Within the context of EiE, the development of social capital through activities that build trust, establish common norms, and create strong networks among non-

governmental organizations (NGOs), government agencies, and community groups is identified as a crucial factor in facilitating coordinated educational interventions.

The empirical findings also prompt a Critical Theory analysis, particularly in examining the power dynamics and inequalities inherent in the allocation of resources and decision-making processes within EiE. Critical Theory, which focuses on analyzing societal systems that sustain unequal power dynamics, offers a framework for evaluating how educational policies and practices can either perpetuate or confront prevailing inequalities. An example of how power dynamics might impact the fairness of educational initiatives is the biased distribution of educational resources in Cameroon, where French-speaking regions receive preferential treatment while English-speaking areas afflicted by violence are neglected. This situation not only reflects systemic biases but also raises questions about the politicization of humanitarian aid.

The documents and empirical evidence also reveal the complex power dynamics within the Education Cluster coordination mechanisms. The roles of major international actors like UNICEF, Save the Children, and ECW, juxtaposed with local NGOs and community-based organizations, reveal a complex landscape of power relations where funding, expertise, and legitimacy intertwine. Despite the rhetoric of partnership and collaboration, the reality often reflects a hierarchy where ‘Small Gods’ (donors) and ‘Bosses’ (cluster coordinators) wield significant influence over priorities and resources.

Coordination of EiE is a complex process that involves a wide range of stakeholders, including INGO, NNGO, local authorities, donors, policymakers, advocacy, and EiE experts, as well as communities themselves.

3.3 Money and power – reproducing societal schemes or empowering change

Despite an increase in private financing and contributions from non-traditional donors, reports from the Geneva Global Hub for Education in Emergencies (2022) and the Brookings Institution (Nishio & Tata, 2021) show a rising gap between humanitarian needs and available funds. The necessity for a more sophisticated, contextualized approach to humanitarian intervention and the emphasis on localization draw attention to the complexities of funding sources and their effects on EiE. The recent joint pledge to increase financing and coordination and improve education for refugees⁹⁰ The contribution made by ECW, GPE, and the World Bank at the Global Refugee Forum is also a promising step. However,

⁹⁰ first posted on the World Education Blog of the UNESCO GEMR - <https://world-education-blog.org/2019/12/16/our-joint-pledge-to-increase-financing-and-coordination-and-improve-education-for-refugees/>

continuing the demand for funds can be exhausting for those contributing and not the most sustainable approach. As discussed in the theoretical part of this study, education is not the most unanimous sector for financing in the humanitarian field. When financing shrinks, EiE often faces significant challenges. The sector is frequently deprioritized in favor of sectors considerate more immediate life-saving needs, such as food, water, and shelter.

Max Reed suggests that “while governments may not entirely overlook education, there's a lack of sufficient focus or acknowledgment of the need for substantial investment in this sector. I don't want to say they are not prioritizing, but they are not giving enough attention or recognizing the importance and priority of investment in education” In his view, “children are not voting on elections” may contribute to education not being a priority for governments, highlighting a gap between policy focus and the educational needs of the younger population.

At the Global dimension, advocacy for funding is a task taken seriously, as Jordan Blake reveals: one of the things that we tried to identify was the gaps in funding and advocate for calling it more funding (Jordan Blake). He shares the efforts GEC makes to pinpoint funding gaps and advocate for increased support, illustrating proactive steps towards financial shortages in EiE.

Sydney Quinn's observation that all cluster members perceive the coordinator “as the cluster differently because you're the source of funding.” highlights the pivotal role of funding in shaping perceptions and dynamics within the cluster:

“I think people are not so honest or open or critical of the way that the cluster functions are pushed back to the cluster. Because you want to also get funding through the cluster. So, this is one thing that creates a huge dynamic. And alongside the cluster, are the funding that comes through the cluster like CERF and pooled funds and things like that. And ECW, as well, now, then you also have the cluster lead agencies as a donor to many of the partners as well. So especially UNICEF, but also save the children has implementing partners in many countries. So, keeping the neutrality of that person of that cluster coordinator.”

She continues highlighting the double hatting in UNICEF and the many roles the coordinator can add to his function. This overlap causes some to see the cluster as just a program coordination group, leading to disengagement if they don't receive funding or perceive the process as unfair.

“And often, especially UNICEF cluster coordinator is a double hatting. So, then they're in charge of the PCAs. And the partners reporting to them on their UNICEF projects, and also the partners reporting to them as their 3/4/5 w's or their cluster work. So, it becomes very, very blurred. And in some countries, the notion of cluster partner is just UNICEF, PCA partner. And a lot of part, and in some countries, we've seen partners will not engage in the cluster anymore, because they feel like, it's just a program coordination group. They don't get money through it, so they don't see the value of participating or they feel like it's not a fair, competitive process for getting those funds. So then, that that option of providing funds through the cluster is also a deterrent for some people to not participate in coordination at all, because it's not serving the purpose that they thought it would”

Jordan Blake further amplifies this notion by saying, “It's a lot of responsibility” (Jordan Blake). According to Jordan Blake, the coordinator role is ‘very powerful’ because of the funding decisions he deals with, “I think it's a very powerful role in terms of I mean, you get to decide how much which organization receives, what part of a big fund like \$5 million, you decide, you get to decide how \$5 million to distribute the sum of money. It's a lot of responsibility.” Next to it, he also explains what can consist of responsibility, linking it to accountability, transparency, and principles. He adds also that funding is not all and that local partners should recognize their involvement in humanitarian efforts as a chance for networking and enhancing technical skills beyond just obtaining funds, referring also important for local partners to, you know, to understand that this is more than just, you know, funding this is also about networking is also about improving the technical guidance, or about correct identifying needs, etc. (Jordan Blake)

According to Stephenson, and Schnitzer (2006), an organization's tendency to participate in collaborative initiatives is greatly influenced by its funding: “If funding can operate as an organizationally exogenous or strategic-scale variable, the source of funding can also act as an organizational-level incentive that conditions whether institutions participate in coordination efforts. If an organization relies primarily on private and dedicated funding sources, it may have no incentive to cooperate with other institutions.” Today, the Cluster Approach was created, and the landscape has evolved with donors increasingly promoting integration and active participation in coordination mechanisms. Notably, the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) and Education Cannot Wait (ECW) also channel funds through coordination bodies such as Education Cluster Coordination.

Funding cycles and processes or organizational competition may have a great impact on the humanitarian player's motivation to integrate, participate, and implicate themselves in coordination mechanisms, principally at the country and local levels. Stephenson (2006), was able to illustrate it very well. Even if the actuality is a bit different, the idea is there: "Funding, for example, can determine whether an adequate level of humanitarian assistance is available for a given crisis."

A deeper thought comes from Sydney Quinn related to salary discrepancies and social justice. Even if she understands that there are maybe reasons for the salary differences, she argues that compensation could reflect the skills and capacities brought to the role, irrespective of geographical or cost of living differences,

"Localization is not a cost saving mechanism. And perhaps there's reasons for discrepancy in salary based on cost of living of your home locations. But to do the same job and if you bring the same skills and kind of capacities to the table, why are we why are you? Why is the pay discrepancy so different?"

The sensemaking lens about funding within the field of humanitarian education demonstrates a complex interplay of power, responsibility, and the evolving dynamics of aid financing. The role of coordinators, the impact of financing on organizational behavior, and the strategic significance of localization and collaboration become crucial as the sector struggles with growing demands and constrained resources.

3.4 Accountability

The empirical data collected reveal that participants highlight the critical role of accountability (as referred to in CHS Alliance, 2014) and, at the same time, show a preoccupation with enhancing accountability to the affected population, especially children, revealing a substantial gap between humanitarian actors and the communities they aim to serve. This disconnection stresses the challenges in fully integrating the needs and voices of affected populations into the decision-making frameworks and operational strategies of humanitarian efforts. Based on the interviews, there is a distance between humanitarian actors and the affected populations: "We don't really hear much about them" (Jordan Blake). The participants emphasize the crucial gap that exists between the affected people and humanitarian actors, pointing out the difficulty of fully incorporating the needs and voices of those affected directly into the frameworks for operationalizing humanitarian efforts and making decisions (Jordan Blake). He adds,

“they are the reason of our existence of our support, but I think they are very far away, to be honest. We hear that about them only during the nice assessment process, where they feedback on their overall needs”.

Jordan Blake's observations highlight a crucial aspect of this issue, pointing out that the affected populations, though central to the existence of humanitarian support, are paradoxically distant from the processes that determine the nature of this support. The feedback mechanism, which should ideally bring the needs of these populations to the forefront, appears to be limited to assessment processes that might not fully capture or address their complex realities. This scenario is not unique to the Global Education Cluster (GEC) but reflects a broader concern in humanitarian efforts where achieving closeness with affected communities remains a challenge despite recognition of its importance.

In the GEC, the distance is even bigger, and every single participant in this study notes it and wants to improve and make the relationship closer, but at the same time, it seems that no one knows how to do it. Sydney Quinn relates exactly this missing feeling and also highlights the children's participation in as Education Cluster. She thinks that is crucial: “we talk about all these clouds of people that turn around in the chair around cluster and coordination and everything. And when we talk about the affected population, where do you think they lie? What is the relationship that we, including myself, we as cluster have really had with the affected population, and maybe specific with children”. Then she relates the reality to the normative tools of the Education Cluster, revealing a disconnection between the ideal and the actual practices: “I mean, in all clusters, who's at the center of the diagram is the effective population? But the extent to which we do that in practice and do it? Well, I think is another question”. (Sydney Quinn) Similarly, Chloe Lee says, in a symbolic way, that without children, there is no need for EiE and that if the Education actors come from Education professionalization, maybe that would be simpler:

“So, I would probably think that also selecting people who come from within the field of education and move them to global level coordination roles with time would probably help in, in, in having coordination which is a much more principled principle towards the benefits of children, we wouldn't even be here if they were in children to assist in the first place. So, we should understand that they are our, our, our objective should be their wellbeing, not ours, our system will be how do you define”

Some efforts are being made, and Sydney Quinn highlighted some of them: “There's been strong attempts to improve, I think, in all clusters, but I can speak to the education cluster; there's been much work recently trying to encourage and support countries to include children in the needs assessment. And also, their feedback on how the cluster is performing”. (Sydney Quinn) But are they enough? Even the Education Cluster community seems to think that's not the case! Another example brought through Casey Lee being: And the monitoring never happens in most of the clusters in coordination, so then there's never really accountability to ourselves to each other, or the, you know, the local actors on the children return.”

Participants emphasized that feedback mechanisms, ideally designed to capture the needs of these populations, are often limited to assessment processes that do not fully address their complex realities. Sydney Quinn and Chloe Lee echoed this sentiment, accentuating the importance of aligning humanitarian efforts with the well-being of children and the need for professionals with a background in education to prioritize children's interests in coordination roles.

The international community has a role to play in empowering the local community without being afraid to become irrelevant. The Education Cluster needs to become this enhancer of national organizations, provoking collaborations and shadowing work with international partners; the model of inclusion integrating the Education community in the decision-making processes and ensuring representation of all stakeholders, considering having mechanisms to listen to children and youth, too, in a non-tokenism way. (Hart, 1992)

Knox-Clarke and Mitchell (2011) call for transforming the humanitarian system to integrate different accountability processes related to different stakeholders, national authorities, and affected people. Empirical data reflect this sentiment, with participants acknowledging the need for systemic changes to improve accountability and engagement with affected populations. At the same time, they highlight the role of Education Cluster Coordination in integrating the voices of children and young people in their activities while Education Cluster members also improve their accountability processes.

3.5 Bureaucracy Weight in Complexity Contexts

Crozier's (1964) vicious bureaucratic circles seem to be mirrored in the Education Cluster actor's reality, the data show. Formal processes can hinder very important observable hints or constrain Education Cluster actors to act strategically. The participants have noted with concern the expansion of bureaucratic measures and the time-consuming *tick-the-box tasks* in recent years. This dynamic shows a

paradox within Education Cluster Coordination actions, where formal processes, initially designed to structure and streamline efforts, are impeding the very adaptability and responsiveness crucial in emergency contexts. As referred in CLARE II, “this ‘mission creep’ has resulted in a rather mechanical way of working in which processes and tools (templates, dashboards, humanitarian planning cycle, etc.) dominate cluster work, sometimes at the expense of more strategic work.” (HERE-Geneva, 2022)

One example is the Humanitarian Program Cycle (HPC) and associated administrative tasks, as detailed by participants like Sydney Quinn, exemplify the dilemma faced by Education cluster coordinators and IMO in different dimensions. These processes, while providing a necessary structure, are restricting EIE coordination actors’ ability to engage in strategic thinking and action due to the rigidity of templates, timelines, and heavier and longer tasks. Sydney Quinn articulates this dilemma, noting the limitations imposed by these bureaucratic processes on mental and temporal resources available for strategic consideration:

“HPC, and all of the procedures and all of the tasks that a coordinator has to do, it becomes quite, it can become quite limiting. And coordinator, because either because those processes are so time-consuming that you don't have the kind of mental space or time space to think strategically. (...) processes are quite limiting in terms of the template you have to use or the timeline that you have to follow. So you don't have a lot of freedom to think critically about. And maybe this is not true of every context.”

The need for structuration and the growing bureaucratic part of the mechanism reflects a broader tension within the Education Cluster. Casey Lee further emphasizes that the layering of processes and checklists can diminish individual agency and critical thinking, crucial in emergency contexts, when saying that the coordination system, as a whole, is adding on more and more and more and more layers of processes and tick boxes, what then ends up happening is individuals, they then think less and less and less, and you check more and more boxes (Casey Lee) , the same idea was expressed by Sydney Quinn when saying that people in the field cannot know, everything that is being discussed at the global level, just because they don't have there is too much pressure on the delivery side of a at the field level, and people are overcharged with too many responsibilities (Sydney Quinn) There is little time for participation in international conversations or ongoing learning and growth due to the pressure to provide results and the weight of duties. The push for standardization, aimed at ensuring uniformity, risks suppressing local innovation and sidelining community-led responses.

Another point highlighted by the participants is the immense pressure and time constraint on field operations (country and local Cluster related). This point was also highlighted in the CLARE II evaluation (HERE-Geneva, 2022), reinforcing the interview data from this study. The demand for delivery and the accumulation of responsibilities – for example, double-hating, or even, in some cases, as Zoe Turner referred to her role, the triple hatting - leaves little room for staying informed about global discussions or engaging in learning. This also exacerbates the challenges of bureaucracy, as decisions may become disconnected from the realities and needs of the field.

Working together under the umbrella of a bureaucratic system and in the somewhat pressurized and sometimes competitive environments in the context of emergency response also resonates with Gramsci's (1971) concept of hegemony. He argues that for a class to dominate, it must exert moral and intellectual leadership, shaping the norms, values, and beliefs of a society in such a way that its rule is seen as legitimate and natural by its colleagues. By influencing society's norms, values, and beliefs, the ruling class's governance is perceived as both legitimate and natural by the wider population. The concept of hegemony highlights a form of authority that trusts more in voluntary compliance than in force or rules, effortlessly integrating into the societal and institutional frameworks.

This hegemonic approach frequently adopts a single cultural perspective in the context of coordination, giving capitalist business models precedence over cultural variety. As Liam Walker called it, the 'Small Gods,' as he thinks donors are viewed by other Education Cluster members from the micro dimension. Or as Jordan Blake from the macro dimension shared in the story of a consortium where sharing the information was a problem solved with the dissolution of the group:

“Under a consortium it was implemented through a consortium. Two of the leaders of the consortium and the sub one of the sub-implementing partners of them were national NGOs. And they were really *pissed* at each other they were fighting. Just because of the, you know, the leader organization wouldn't share some of the information about, you know, the proposal, the overall objectives, overall targets, and the Employment Department, they want to see it, they want to see how it is done. So it was very funny, because it was, in the end, the people from the center had to come interview for minister, education cannot wait, focal points.”

This strategy minimizes the value of cultural diversity, communication, and teamwork in favor of an entrepreneurial and competitive mindset. Such a monocultural focus within the EiE sector may result in

rivalry taking precedence over cooperation, pitting one humanitarian approach against another. This competitiveness amongst EiE stakeholders—whether local, national, or international—runs the risk of making competition a bigger motivator and a challenge that could weaken the teamwork that is necessary to solve humanitarian issues in the most relevant way. This could also work to eliminate local innovation and community-led response work, which might be causing successful and lasting change in favor of strategies that are recognized and rewarded by the broader international community – AKA donors or international leaders, including education cluster coordinators. In effect, this could result in a kind of institutional performativity within the cluster coordination space, where the areas of work and objectives of different sectors are progressively more tightly aligned with the objectives of the international community and cluster planning rather than considering the nuanced and diverse local needs.

Several participants from different dimensions refer to the power dynamics in coordination, saying that often, the decisions are influenced more by agencies or donors than by local organizations or Affected Populations. The drive towards results-based work and the valorization of performativity over substantive engagement and innovation risks ‘dumbing down’ the strategic and creative capacities necessary for contemporary humanitarian work. Through Santos's lens, this example of hegemonic behaviors is perceived in favor of certain interests above others, frequently at the expense of the most vulnerable.

There is a lack of comprehensive and direct communication among different actors within the cluster. On the one hand, according to the observation in the field, the current practice of joint work is done in formal meetings between officials. At the same time, the major decisions are sometimes made "by some persons in an informal gathering." On the other hand, interviews have revealed that stakeholders have different – sometimes contrasting – interpretations and expectations of the term "clusterization" due to the lack of a commonly shared professional understanding. One of the interviewees, who is a manager of a non-governmental organization, has commented that "those who are in a leadership position might have a different idea of what clusterization means, vis-a-vis people who are not in the leadership position."

Given the bureaucratic nature of the process and the divergent expectations among different stakeholders, effective cluster coordination is deemed to face challenges. First and foremost, the limited funding for humanitarian education and the importance of numbers deprioritizes funding for coordination, and UNICEF and Save the Children, with other leader organizations at the country level, often need to make hard choices to allocate funding to coordination.

3.6 Constructed Intersectoriality – the “360°response” (Jordan Blake)

The debate around the humanitarian system, notably the Education Cluster's approach has been strongly influenced by a growing emphasis on intersectionality. This emerging paradigm, encouraged by voices within the sector, was reinforced during the interview with Sydney Quinn when she said, “I think something to improve intersector collaboration is critical.” It attempts to take down the segmented character of assistance distribution, calling for a more holistic model that better matches the interlinked needs of affected populations.

Sydney Quinn's views on the cluster structure highlight an important aspect of humanitarian coordination. The observation that the sector may benefit from reevaluation—moving from a fragmented to a more unified approach—questioning if it could be possible to redesign the humanitarian architecture,

“Is the cluster system leading to silos? Should we completely think of a different way to do it, I think there's, maybe we should go back to the drawing board, and learn from those things that those benefits that coordination has provided.”

In the same way of thinking, Casey Lee also questions the broader system,

“The intersectoral stuff with wash, water and sanitation, you know, so there's no easy answer, but both in terms of education coordination for quality services that take into account all of those dimensions, but also maybe from a population perspective, is the way we drive the services, the right one, and have we got the right balance in the architecture?”

Jordan Blake's ideas propose practical ways to improve intersectoral collaboration, including a decentralized approach to coordinating that brings decision-making closer to affected communities. This localized coordinating system, founded on an adequate understanding of community needs, offers a realistic technique for ensuring that humanitarian architecture is both adaptable and inclusive: “But still, we will need to. Yeah, speak with other clusters a lot to see how we can make the response more rounded, and more 360-degree response”. He continues,

“I think rather than this sectoral approach; you will still have sector technical advisors. But I would like to have more, I mean, this humanitarian architecture, more

coordinated at more local levels. At the sub-national level, regional level, for example, in DRC, you would have one in one region of the DRC in one state and understand you have the coordination mechanism, which would badness over focus on the actors, education, wash, etc. But which would face on more on the needs of the people in that region. So, any humanitarian so that the structure would be, yeah, these, all these sub-national levels, they will have their own coordination mechanisms, and perhaps one, but the international level, having all the information from these smaller parts of the country. I think that's the whole purpose of saying that is that we bring the coordination closer to the effective people so that they have, they are closer to the ground, they have more access to those meetings, are more opportunities to influence those meetings. Most of the international staff would like to travel to other capital spaces, so you will have less International and more local national people who are doing the coordination itself at the sub-national level. So yeah, I think that will be one thing that I would like to do."

OCHA, as the coordination umbrella of the Cluster System as an important role to play in the intersectoral approach being more or less tight. As previously stated, the quality of coordination can vary substantially between countries, with individuals involved in these procedures frequently having a significant impact on the outcome. In some cases, innovative and collaborative practices within inter-cluster coordination groups create an atmosphere in which sectors function effortlessly together. In contrast, in other situations, coordination might feel like an uphill battle, primarily reliant on the personalities and collaborative spirit of people in control. Sydney Quinn points out this situation:

"It's also OCHA and the kind of coordination. Yeah, in that country, and it can depend from country to country, some countries are super innovative within OCHA and within the kind of inter-cluster Coordination Group and super collaborative, others are the opposite. And then it's just trying to pull teeth and trying to survive till the end of your contract. So, unfortunately, I think coordination, more than most other sectors, is very personality-driven. And so, your experience will be determined greatly by the others that you're working with, within education within other spec sectors within OCHA".

Sydney Quinn's views on sectoral organization within the humanitarian system shed light on a tension. The effort to get education recognized as a life-saving sector and included in the early stages of

humanitarian response exemplifies the contradiction between pushing for sectoral recognition and the necessity for a more integrated strategy to dealing with emergencies. While there is a compelling case for breaking down divisions to improve cross-sector integration, such a shift involves risks, particularly for sectors like education that have worked hard to gain respect and inclusion. The concern that education may suffer as a result of efforts to encourage greater intersectoral integration reflects a larger humanitarian dilemma: how to balance the benefits of specialized sectoral expertise with the benefits of a more cohesive and coordinated response. She argued,

“But then I am very hesitant to say that because something like education, I think we fought so hard to get recognition as a sector as life-saving as it should be included in the first phase of humanitarian response. So, I fear that a change like that, which would probably do wonders for integration and intersectoral work. I think it has a big risk of actually doing harm to education rather, rather than yes, improvements for integration, but I think education would suffer. So, I would be hesitant to wave my wand at that one.”

However, the general sentiment is unanimous, and the need for an intersectoral approach is clear; the path to doing it needs to balance the expertise of each sector and the contextualization of all responses.

3.7 Learning – a growing scary target but a way to have a better future

The hashtags and story titles given by participants in the NWSW regions of Cameroon when filling out the SM *unsurvey*, have a range of strong feelings and sentiments related the conflict situation. One of those examples is the "Neglect of conflict-affected children in the NWSW Regions of Cameroon." This title highlights the neglect and disregard for children whom the conflict in the NWSW regions has impacted. It also addresses the more general problem of how armed conflicts disproportionately impact society's most vulnerable and marginalized groups. Children are an “easy target” and a “great damage” to the ones attacking them. The failure of the social, political, and economic structures to adequately protect and support those who need it most can be interpreted as a sort of structural violence, which is what happens to these children when they are neglected. In addition to depriving children of their fundamental rights, this neglect feeds the cycles of poverty and marginalization, which has long-term effects on society. Many children are already displaced and from collected data, the reason for displacement was also to find better education conditions and opportunities for students.

Another strong example of title given by one of the participants is "Educational resistance in NW/SW region of Cameroon". In this case, the title and the related story highlight the communities' resilience and defiance in the face of the conflict's negative effects on education. It represents the agency of people, teachers, parents and other groups to oppose repressive systems and work toward change fighting for the right to education. Despite the challenges encountered, the NWSW region's opposition to educational restrictions represents a united attempt to regain agency and maintain the right to education.

The African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (The African Children's Charter, 1990), established in 1990, is a vital document that aligns international legal standards with local perspectives, asserting pre-eminent authority on children's rights in Africa. (Kaime, 2009) In 2021, a new social contract for education was published, defending foundational principles such as "the right to education and a commitment to education as a public societal endeavor and a common good." (UNESCO, 2021) Nonetheless, the right to protection, education, and the best interest of children is clearly not ensured. Besides, education is being used by various parties as a means to achieve their objectives and weaken their opponents; instead, a right is becoming dangerous and even mortal sometimes.

In this context, this study deviates from discussions on coordination at agency headquarters and interagency tables in New York and Geneva. Instead, it focuses on the dynamics unfolding in various on-the-ground scenarios in NWSW Cameroon. This involves deciphering the coordination-linked concepts by understanding the perspectives and feelings of coordination actors. Rather than prescribing solutions, conclusions, or recommendations, the intent is to conduct a nuanced interpretation.

The complexity of the education cluster coordination in the NWSW regions of Cameroon, a *transborder context*⁹¹ amidst the Anglophone crisis exemplifies the dynamics of EiE in a conflict crisis, especially in an internal conflict. Morin's insight into complexity emphasizes that "the whole is more than the sum of its parts" due to the emergence of new properties and also "less than the sum of its parts" due to the inhibition of certain qualities:

"the old formula is known that the whole is more than the sum of its parts, because the addition of qualities or properties of the parts is not enough to know those of the whole: new qualities or properties appear, due to the organization of these parts in a whole, they are emergent. But there is also a subtractivity which I want to highlight, noticing

⁹¹ 'transborder contexts' refer to spaces that belong politically to the same country and share a deep level of historic cultural and/or ethnic entanglement but can be ideologically, linguistically, and socially divergent(Xu, 2018).

that the whole is not only more than the sum of its parts, but it is also less than the sum of its parts. Why? Because a certain number of qualities and properties present in the parts can be inhibited by the organization of the whole.” (Morin, 2007, p. 7)

In the context of the NWSW Cameroon, the Education Cluster Coordination works together to give educational opportunities in a very harsh environment. Collaborating, many challenges are surpassed, and emergent solutions are tailored to attain this objective. Negotiation with armed groups as shared Jack Thompson (one of the Education Cluster coordinators in NWSW Cameroon), “now, we have access to the Working Group, which really negotiates with the actors on the ground for the humanitarian actors,” he explains that coordinating in that circumstances is a real challenge because not only all the armed groups use the schools' closure as a way to show the government that they cannot deliver education, but they also need to negotiate with different groups, he says, “they are not only one entity, they are different entities. There are many groups. This means some of them are (and at the beginning, all of them were) against educations.” (Jack Thompson)

In this scenario, together, humanitarian actors and EiE actors led by the Education Cluster Coordinator negotiate and can have some ways to dissuade some groups and have some information on where children can go to school and how to manage the situation. This is a clear sum of its parts,” where all humanitarians together achieve a much better result in this context.

But this is not possible with some subtraction. This means that the need for consensus within the cluster or by overarching strategic priorities may inhibit certain actions or initiatives that individual organizations could pursue. Also, there are some constraints like the security rules of the organizations that don't allow faster negotiations or the fact that the Cluster Coordination asks for a tight relation with the government authorities – this is a constraint or a *subtraction* in the sense that advocating and listening to the affected population and work with the government in an internal conflict, even with neutral and impartial principles at the base is very difficult.

Members of the Education Cluster Coordination in Cameroon's NWSW region see the government's policies, notably in education, as a purposeful attempt to impose conformity and control on the population, an expression of biopower, as explained by Foucault. (1978) The Foucauldian concept of biopolitics (Foucault, 2008) is defined as "the regulation of population." Biopower and biopolitics refer to the tools and strategies used by modern governments and institutions to monitor and control individuals by regulating their biological lives through political, economic, and social supremacy, as well as

individual and community governance. For instance, biopower is evident when government officials attempt to influence the curriculum, limit specific narratives, and control activities in educational settings.

In fact, population dynamics, especially displacement, are sources of biopower in the Anglophone crisis. Education leads to displacement, with the population perceiving government influences regarding fund allocation, favoring French-speaking regions, and neglecting the needs of the English-speaking population.

Simone and Moussa chose to address the injustices they saw in the finances supplied to the French region. Moussa went on to say that this happens "even when the majority of children affected by the conflict were based in the NWSW regions of Cameroon!" He underlined that this is the politicization of education, emphasizing this sentiment twice during the '*unsurvey*.'

In a complex and 'no one's land' feeling space, the 'politicization of humanitarian'(Fassin, 2007) mechanisms and organizations can be a reality. "Politicization, in the most general terms, means the demand for, or the act of, transporting an issue or an institution into the sphere of politics." (Zürn, 2019, p. 976) At the national level, politicizing is frequently associated with bringing a social issue or notion constructively into the political sphere. However, the participants did not see it in this way; rather, they saw it as an expression of government power that lacked regard for the population.

The coordinators of EiE establish a communication bridge with separatists; ONGs decide where the funding is going and to do what, sometimes not consulting the population and sometimes just partially doing it. All this can be understood as politicizing as well. EiE humanitarians and advocates can be highly motivated and well-intentioned; however, when power is used, humanitarian activities can become politicized, impacting decisions about funding allocation, recipients, and methodology. Decisions are tied to the government, as per the participants' narratives, but maybe also to humanitarian actors such as donors, coordinators, and country managers.

The crisis started with the pacific protests from the Anglophone communities against the government's governance and strategic choices. Educational disruptions emerge as a consequence of these sociopolitical conflicts. The protest gained form with the teachers calling for ghost schools – "ghost town protests" with schools closing. It took place in schools, resulting in violations and challenges. Therese highlighted in her narrative: "I have watched children chased away from school as a result of the

Anglophone crisis. I also live in a context where children are kidnapped or killed simply because they want to go to school.” The victim’s being the educators and learners, also Therese: “Teachers kidnapped, killed, hands cut off, simply because they want to teach. In addition, there is an increase in teenage pregnancy because of no access to schools.” Nkunda Ngala shared a first-person experience, saying: “As a local coordinator, I was apprehended three times by the nonstate armed men who interrogated me, but due to the timely intervention of some community leaders who saw the need for education, I was released.”

Similarly, Mireille characterizes education as a "weapon of war." This expression evokes the famous Nelson Mandela, who asserted that "education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world." Notably, "weapon" is employed with contrasting connotations to describe the same entity - education. In the NWSW Cameroon situation, as elucidated in this and other narratives, as well as in media or humanitarian reports, it is quite clear how education was strategically utilized to gather government attention through school boycotts, attacks on children and teachers, and the co-opting of schools for their purposes.

The crisis in the NWSW regions is not unique globally, as schools in various countries face attacks. Recognizing these problems, the international community is actively working to create a safer and more secure global educational environment through various advocacy and worldwide initiatives. Since 2015, the Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack (GCPEA)⁹² has played an important role in advocating for and taking real actions with governments. For example, the "Safe Schools Declaration"⁹³ has been a notable campaign, with 199 states signing on. This fact points out that education is highly valued by all parties: the government, the parents and communities, the rebel groups, and others.

3.8 COVID-19 through the eyes of ECC members of NWSW Cameroon

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought unprecedented challenges to education systems worldwide, exacerbating existing vulnerabilities and inequities. Education Cluster Coordination teams have had to quickly adjust in reaction to this complicated crisis, highlighting the complex interactions between global crises and local education solutions. The investigative journey, though not initially directed toward the pandemic's impacts, inadvertently uncovered a wealth of insights through interviews and micro-stories.

⁹² GCPEA is an umbrella organization that brings together diverse stakeholders, including United Nations agencies, non-governmental organizations, and academic institutions. The coalition works collaboratively to address attacks on education, advocating for policy changes and promoting best practices to ensure the safety and continuity of education in conflict-affected areas (<https://protectingeducation.org/>).

⁹³ Safe Schools Declaration is an inter-governmental political agreement dedicated to protecting education in armed conflict.

These narratives provide an exploration of the complex aspects of coordinating EiE, highlighting some difficulties, the pressing need for flexible approaches, and the significant effects on communities through the prism of sociological and scholarly literature.

One of the story titles chosen for a micro-story collected with SenseMaker® was "The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the coordination of education activities in the Eastern region of Cameroon." It highlights how different social occurrences are related to one another and influence people's experiences. The COVID-19 epidemic makes it more difficult to plan educational initiatives by piling sociopolitical difficulties on top of already-existing problems. It highlights pre-existing discrepancies in educational access and widens them, especially in areas already experiencing disruptions from violence.

Max Reed highlighted a significant challenge he saw in the educational system during COVID-19: the difficulty of adhering to standard curricula in a period that was anything but standard. Despite efforts to adjust, the system continued to assess student's progress against the same benchmarks used during normal times, even though the pandemic disrupted education for over two years. This mismatch between expectations and the altered reality asks for flexible, context-sensitive approaches in education during crises. Max Reed's observations shed light on this reality:

"I saw during the COVID one of the major challenges in the educational system because the educational system or, despite the fact that they did their best to adjust the point is they were dealing with the standard Quirico in a completely non-standardized period that did not last for a month, three months, it was known for two years. So, the expectations for kids are the same as they are in a normal situation, and they are your progress is assessed based on the same standard which shouldn't be the case."

Another challenge revealed by Jordan Blake was the non-presence type of relationships that started to become normality during quarantine times. Drawing from his experience in the Tigray region, where military operations necessitated face-to-face meetings due to communication disruptions, Jordan Blake observed firsthand the accelerated pace at which trust and relationships can be built when people interact directly. This direct engagement, he suggests, is not just about meeting; it's about creating a foundation of trust that allows for more effective and swift action. The absence of such interactions during the pandemic represented a significant loss in the dynamics of trust-building and decision-making within the sector:

“what is missing? I mean, definitely, maybe face-to-face. Acquaintances, this is awesome. One thing that's missing. We are, we are a sector that used to work a lot, face to face, face-to-face meetings with fixed reunions. And that's now missing; I experienced how it makes a difference when I was deployed in HR PA in the Tigray region. That was because of the military operations, the communication was cut down. So, all the meetings had to happen face-to-face. And it was such an accelerator of how you build relationships and trust; when you have face-to-face meetings, I think that's one thing that's starting is missing increases by an increases trust. So, you can be on the move and fast.”

The COVID-19 pandemic, magnifying existing inequities and vulnerabilities, underscores the urgency of developing resilient, adaptable education systems capable of responding to the diverse needs of affected communities. They demand an integrated strategy that closes the knowledge gap between theory and practice, global and local, and brings the capacity to Education Cluster actors to bring emergent solutions.

3.9 Localization – efforts to erase abyssal lines

Education Cluster Coordinators, working at various levels and in different countries, operate within collaborative interconnected networks involving other coordinators, donors, country authorities, International Human Rights and Humanitarian Non-Governmental Organizations (INGOs), Agencies, and National or Local Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), and Civil Society Organizations. (CSOs) The cluster coordinator is usually an international, sometimes Western, person with limited knowledge of the culture and the country—inherited abyssal knowledge. (Santos, 2018) The technical and normative knowledge of the leading Cluster Coordinator in any dimension (global, national/regional/local) generally gives them the power to occupy the role. This power dynamic often leads to a top-down approach in decision-making processes within the cluster system. The cluster coordinator's technical expertise and normative knowledge are viewed as superior to the local, contextual understanding of the crisis-affected population and local actors. Consequently, the voices and knowledge of local actors are frequently marginalized or overlooked. This scenario might lead to a gap between the needs and priorities of those affected and the initiatives implemented by international humanitarian groups. This can demonstrate a type of "abyssal thinking" (Santos, 2018) in which specific forms of knowledge are considered authentic and authoritative, while others can be considered unimportant. The existence of

this *epistemic hierarchy*⁸⁴ inside the humanitarian system results in the continuation of inequalities, often resulting in interventions that do not completely correspond to the cultural, social, and political circumstances of the people impacted. While the technical and normative knowledge of the cluster coordinator is essential for managing complex humanitarian responses, it is crucial to recognize and address the limitations of this approach. Incorporating local knowledge and ensuring meaningful participation of local actors in decision-making processes can enhance the relevance, effectiveness, and sustainability of humanitarian interventions. Santos (2018) calls for a more inclusive and equitable approach to knowledge production and utilization in humanitarian settings, emphasizing the need to bridge the epistemic divides that characterize the current system.

As a member, the Local NGO or CSO starts at a disadvantage: less “professionalization,” sometimes not working in their native language, fewer funds... and less voice. The number and type of members in local or regional Clusters are smaller. In the NWSW Cameroon Education Cluster, where the majority of members are locally led organizations (28 NNGOs, 2 INGOs, and 2 UN Agencies), the voice of the NNGO remains challenging to amplify in coordination efforts, consequently impacting their presence in advocacy systems, media, and various communication channels.

Jordan Blake notes that local partners are keenly interested in efforts towards localization, recognizing that such initiatives can enhance their influence within coordination mechanisms. This increased influence, in turn, is seen as a pathway to securing more funding: when it comes to local partners, there, they are very hungry, and they are really receptive to localization efforts, obviously, because it will increase their influence on the coordination mechanism, which will in turn, have up them access more funding (Jordan Blake) He further explains that this interest is not merely about resource allocation but signifies a broader shift towards economizing and altering the existing power dynamics within humanitarian efforts: I mean, to be to be very honest, this is about economizing, and is about changing power dynamics. (Jordan Blake)

“In crisis, the first responders are typically the people and communities affected. The international system became much more aware of the primacy of survivor/community-led response when its own access was constrained during the COVID-19 pandemic.” (ALNAP 2022) In all dimensions of Education Cluster coordination, an effort is being made for the integration of the national NGOs in the Clusters, advocating for this perspective to be integrated into programs and in the main Ways of Working. The

⁸⁴ Epistemic hierarchy is a ranking or importance of certain categories of knowledge over others in a certain context or system. In the case of humanitarian operations, this hierarchy frequently displays itself in the prioritization of technical and normative knowledge held by international specialists and coordinators over the local, contextual knowledge of affected populations and actors.

GEC has made some significant progress in localization, including establishing a dedicated GEC position to promote this agenda. Local partners now make up seven of the SAG's 20 seats, bringing new perspectives and field realities into its discussions (GEC, 2022) and the interest is to do more and more; if we follow the data, we see a real engagement, as we can see from Casey Lee and Sydney Quinn's interventions: "allowing there for much more power to, you know, local actors, local voices, to say what's important to them in all of this process." (Casey Lee); "the kind of conversation around decolonizing aid is becoming a big topic of conversation in our teams at the moment." (Sydney Quinn) However, the reality of the coordination actions is yet far from the objective if we consider the data collected. For example, Sydney Quinn shares his doubts and fears in 2 moments. One expressed questioning the impact, and another said that saving money cannot be an excuse:

"Lack of research or lack of evidence on this topic, or maybe it's something that we're just all trying to figure out together. But I sense there's a lot of uncertainty about (how) what next step we take. There's a there's a broad agreement that we want to do this. But we haven't seen so many great examples. We've tried a lot of initiatives and kinds of outputs and risks and done output-level activities. But how do we start to track and understand what the outcomes and the impacts of those efforts are? So, for Global Education cluster? We, have, since late in 2019, we added seven national organizations to our global strategic advisory group. So, okay, that that was an attempt to advance our work under the localization agenda. But they've sat in our attended our meetings, participated in our meetings participated in our different work streams that the strategic advisory group does. I wonder what impact that has for this effort for this agenda?"

"even if you don't have money, enough money for an international position, but you've done an analysis in the country and feel like a national coordinator would be detrimental to the sector. That's not a reason to nationalize the cluster coordinator position to save money".

A dynamic at work in global-local interactions within the context of Education Cluster coordination by the difference between the local and contextual knowledge offered by national NGOs and the funding and expertise provided by international NGOs. As Ahmad states: I really see an added value of international agencies' presence in the country with long and extensive experience in providing support and running education in emergency context for children, because they are able to bring different knowledge lessons

learned from places around the world, that the institution should be benefiting from (Max Reed) This dynamic is characterized by both tension and synergy, reflecting the complexities of coordinating educational responses in emergencies across different scales and cultural contexts.

Tension arises when international players come with resources, standardized methodologies, and global expertise, which can overshadow the contextual understandings and cultural insights of national organizations. This can lead to conflicts or tokenistic discussions and reinforce power imbalances, with national NGOs feeling sidelined or undervalued despite their crucial local insights and capabilities.

However, the collaboration between global and local non-governmental organizations within the Education Cluster can produce powerful synergies that augment the impact of education during times of crisis. The efforts of national NGOs can be strengthened by the substantial resources, technical know-how, and worldwide networks that international NGOs provide. National NGOs, on the other hand, make vital contributions to community trust, cultural competency, and local knowledge—all of which are necessary for educational initiatives to be relevant and long-lasting.

The localization agenda seeks to empower local actors, communities, and institutions, acknowledging their inherent skills, expertise, and rights to lead and take part in their emergency responses. The move towards localization aligns with Santos' concept of moving 'Beyond Abyssal Thinking,' challenging the traditional dichotomies that have historically marginalized certain knowledge systems and geographies. Santos' critique of 'abyssal thinking' sheds light on the invisible lines that have traditionally separated 'valid' from 'invalid' knowledge, 'civilized' from 'uncivilized' spaces, and 'worthy' from 'unworthy' peoples. "Throughout the world, there are not only various forms of knowledge about matter, society, life, and spirit but also many different concepts about what counts as knowledge and the criteria that can be used to validate it." (Santos, 2009) The localization concept aims to promote a more democratic, inclusive, and just approach by contesting the colonialist and imperialist legacies that are part of the humanitarian work. It demands an epistemological variety in which many knowledge modalities and worldviews are recognized and incorporated into the planning and execution of programs for humanitarian education.

In the context of localization in EiE, moving beyond these 'abyssal lines' (Santos, 2018) involves recognizing and valuing the knowledge, practices, and priorities of local communities and actors as equally valid and crucial for effective humanitarian responses. This approach aligns with the Santos' concept of ecology of knowledge:

“In the ecology of knowledges, as a post-abysal epistemology, the search for credibility for non-scientific knowledge does not imply discrediting scientific knowledge. It simply implies its counter-hegemonic use. On the one hand, it is a question of exploring the internal plurality of science, i.e. the alternative scientific practices that have become visible through feminist and post-colonial epistemologies and, on the other hand, to promote the interaction and interdependence between scientific knowledge and other, non-scientific knowledge” (Santos, 2009, p.23).

The ecology of knowledge argues that knowledge should be seen as an intervention in the real world rather than merely a representation of it. In this context, the measure of realism lies not in the accuracy of representation but in the efficacy of intervention. The credibility of knowledge is assessed by its impact on the world, whether positive, facilitating, or negatively impeding. This evaluation incorporates both cognitive and ethical-political aspects, highlighting the distinction between analytical objectivity and ethical-political neutrality. Thus, the ecology of knowledge acknowledges the interconnection between knowledge and ethical and political issues, emphasizing the importance of considering these aspects in the production and application of knowledge (Santos, 2009).

Santos (2009) emphasizes the importance of dialogue among diverse cultural perspectives, advocating for a process that is genuinely inclusive and participatory. This dialogue aims to establish a dynamic balance between the principle of equity and the recognition of difference, ensuring that diverse cultural contexts are not just acknowledged but are considered for the understanding and realization of human rights. Also, the sociologist discusses the need for human rights to evolve beyond a narrow focus on individual liberties to encompass collective rights, such as the rights of communities and Indigenous peoples, and to address broader issues of social justice, including economic and environmental rights (Santos, 2010).

The Education Cluster Coordination has a key role to play in this push for localization within the EiE sector, emphasizing partnerships between international actors and local entities; the cluster seeks to ensure that interventions are contextually grounded, culturally sensitive, and aligned with national educational policies. In addition to empowering local actors, this localized approach increases the responsiveness of educational interventions to the unique needs and dynamics of affected communities. This effort requires building capacities in different spheres: establishing collaborations with academic institutions in the Global South to improve humanitarian technical competencies in EiE; local workers and NGOs can focus on capacity-building initiatives at the technical level, and the international EiE

expert can improve their capacities to be creative, to improve participation and collaboration and the local communities be invited to collaborate and integrate intersectoral and holistic approaches in the implementation of programs and the decisions at political and strategical level.

Drawing from the insights of Vermeiren (2018), it becomes evident that in order to debunk policies from the sector or related, the coordinator must tailor their role to accommodate the varied perspectives among members. Successful output creates an environment in which the fundamental principles of policies are reexamined and reconstructed. A climate like this should lead to an open and democratic dialogue with stakeholders. The networks should be able to provide affected people with the necessary power and agency (Lister, 2004), including children, to participate and have a voice in this process.

Mia Collins's micro-narrative highlights the unclear lines between EiE in humanitarian and education in the development field, illustrating the tension between immediate humanitarian responses and long-term development goals. This tension reflects broader debates on structure and agency, where the structural constraints of funding, policy, and institutional frameworks intersect with the agency of individuals and organizations to get past these challenges.

4. Education Cluster Coordination – Discussion on “Multiplicities”

The complex environment of education cluster coordination involves numerous stakeholders, including agencies, donors, and both national and international organizations. This environment is often marred by the ‘my organization first’ attitude, a term described by T’Hart (2010) as a ‘Battle of the Samaritans’. This chapter delves into the problematic nature of this syndrome, its manifestations within the education coordination cluster, and its impact on effective coordination and cooperation among stakeholders. Insights from key interviews with cluster coordinators and stakeholders highlight the challenges and potential strategies to mitigate these issues.

The ‘my organization first’ syndrome, as highlighted by T’Hart (2010) and Weinlich and al. (2022), reveals a tendency among organizations to prioritize their interests over collective goals. This attitude is particularly detrimental within the context of education cluster coordination, where effective cooperation is crucial for addressing the urgent educational needs of crisis-affected populations. In the next sub-chapter note, Max Reed, a seasoned education cluster coordinator, notes the competitive nature among co-lead agencies within the global education cluster. He observes that the emphasis often shifts from contributing quality and competencies to a struggle for power and positioning within the cluster and in

relationships with education ministries. This competition diverts attention from the primary objectives of the cluster, leading to fragmented efforts and reduced effectiveness in meeting educational needs.

Jordan Blake describes the coordinator as a 'powerful role.' The coordinator of the Education Cluster functions as a composite actor-network, linking various actors and facilitating decision-making processes at multiple levels. This role requires a unique combination of skills, including diplomacy, emotional control, and a thorough understanding of the diverse needs of cluster members. Drawing on Castells' (2012) concept of the network society, the power inside the education cluster is not exclusively confined to institutions but rather resides within the networks that shape society. This viewpoint emphasizes the significance of comprehending and maneuvering through the complex network of connections and power dynamics within the cluster.

Deleuze and Guattari (1987) argue that desire and affect are the driving forces behind assemblages, emphasizing the importance of individual motivations and challenges in the coordination process. The data collected indicates a clear division between coordinators' sentiments of empowerment and resignation, with a strong feeling of empowerment when linked to the local members despite all the challenges they describe. This suggests that there are continual discussions and deliberations between the desire to be influential and, in some cases, the belief that they are unable to make a difference.

Exploring these realities within the education cluster reveals a paradox: while the intention is to foster collaboration and effective educational responses, organizations' competitive nature and individual agendas often impede this goal.

4.1 Normative ideals vs. lived realities.

Participants handle their experiences, selecting and forming stories influenced by any number of factors, such as societal norms, cultural expectations, and personal perspectives. The micro-narratives shared through the SenseMaker® highlight lived realities, adding layers of complexity and variation that may challenge or supplement these normative ideals. They reflect individuals' experiences and contribute to the ongoing construction and reconstruction of the normative framework itself. Notably, when participants, especially the Education Cluster members at the local level, were asked to share stories about coordination, most of their responses included remarkable field experiences. These testimonies frequently focused on the influence of coordination mechanisms on local communities or highlighted their dedicated work within their organizations, which overshadowed the coordination

relations. The coordination relations are not necessarily the main point they feel compelled to share. At the same time, the coordination mechanisms are not and should not be the focus of their work.

Some narratives try to define Coordination. Mireille Nkem from the NSW Education Cluster, aged 26-35, shared her perception of Cluster coordination based on the 'first meetings' information:

"I understood from introductory meetings that this was a coordination mechanism put in place to ensure coordination of education responses through the cluster, for strengthening system-wide preparedness (after identifying gaps in response), and for avoiding duplication of efforts.

Since the establishment of this coordination mechanism, education actors within the NSW regions and especially within the cluster have built the capacity they need to respond according to set national and international standards for EiE; the quality of the response is better, there is transparency and accountability in the responses, responses are more predictable and timelier which reduces waste and duplication of efforts. The cluster has also played a major role in supporting robust advocacy and monitoring and evaluating the performance of the interventions carried out."

She seems to agree with the definition but doesn't give us concrete examples or specificities. While stories of lived experiences shed light on the practicalities and challenges of coordination in specific contexts, the normative definitions provide a conceptual framework that individuals may deal with in their daily practices. In Mireille Nkem's recollection of the 'first meetings' of the Cluster Coordination mechanism, her agreement with the definition suggests an acceptance of the normative aspects of coordination. However, her limited mention of examples or specificities highlights the potential gap between the theoretical understanding of coordination and its application in her real world. The lived experiences shared by others offer a more grounded perspective, revealing the challenges and adaptations made in response to the dynamic nature of coordination.

These descriptions from normative places were constant realities in all the dimensions of participation. Even if, in the SM presentations or during the interviews, we were constantly reminded that we were asking for experiences, anecdotes, and lived practices, the answers were constantly driven by "this event that is coming says that"; "There was a two-article on African Affairs, which talks about..."; etc.

The standardization, the norm, and the rules are needed, as put it Sydney Quinn (participant from the Macro dimension): “All of the tools and the processes have been put in place for specific reasons. And they can be quite good and help us to do our job, especially if you're a new coordinator. It's helpful to have that structure. But then there are consequences in the flexibility of the approach and the creativity.”

Jordan Blake asks for frank conversations where the true(s) can be brought and analyzed without different points of the humanitarian system, and here he highlights the positioning of the UN system:

And when people can decide everything by themselves, they don't want to let go of that kind of power. This is how I think the current system, the UN standard system, is. I mean, still, it's there are discussions, but mostly among people who are not removed from the affected communities, is people from someone else coming in and, you know, doing their needs assessments on everything under siding, all the things. So, it's really difficult to get affected people from that active role to a passive role where they are part of the process. So, because of that resistance as well. So, I would really love to see a conversation more in the agenda of the coordination mechanisms and a discussion point and less resistance on more frank discussions on what can we do on this?

When moving between dimensions and scales, communication and trust are very important, and the creative process allows your interaction to become relevant. Sydney Quinn makes this point with very clear points when she says,

“Coordination is we rely so much on our partners to do this, right, if you're one person sitting in, in the capital, you don't have any contact with the affected population. So, you're having to think more about the, the processes you could influence or the levers you could pull among your members to try to do to try to help them do things differently. And it requires us to be quite creative and quite persuasive to get partners to do things differently as well. So, we're, I think we have a duty to do so but we're also one step removed. So, it's like a bit of a chain a chain reaction then we can't just say okay, now I'm going to, now, I'm going to consult affected populations because in between me and the affected population is my members who are the ones who will actually go out and do the assessment or collect the data for the four w's that kind of thing.”

Such a perspective illustrates the nuanced challenges of coordinating efforts from a distance, necessitating innovative strategies to engage and influence ground-level actions and vice versa. In this sense, even if norms and guidelines are a reliable and important source of support for decision-making, the social and political context, personal habits, and reality at the moment are crucial to communicating and deciding.

Edgar Morin uses a metaphor to illustrate the contextualization that can be relevant for the local implementation of normative possibilities:

Anybody who has made a translation in a foreign language will seek an unknown word in the dictionary, but with words being polysemous, it is not immediately known which is the good translation; the sense of the word will be sought in the sense of the sentence in the light of the global sense of the text. Though this play from text to word, and from text to context, and from context to word, a sense will crystallize. In other words, the insertion in the text and in the context is an evident cognitive necessity (Morin, 2007).

Edgar Morin's metaphor for the complexities of translation perfectly reflects the core of this challenge. Just as a translator handles the polysemy of words within the larger context of sentences and texts, EiE coordinators must understand norms and guidelines within the complicated structure of local contexts.

The quest for a coherent approach to EiE coordination amidst the complex, multi-layered challenges of emergencies is a recurring theme. The strategies articulate a vision of coordinated, inclusive, and quality education responses, aiming to bridge the gap between humanitarian and development efforts and to align with broader Sustainable Development Goals. However, achieving this coherence in practice requires navigating a labyrinth of stakeholders, competing priorities, and changing needs, all within the constraints of limited resources and political sensitivities. The empirical evidence and narratives from the ground underscore the importance of innovative, flexible coordination practices that can adapt to the fluid realities of emergencies while maintaining a clear focus on the mission of ensuring education for all affected children and youth.

The participants' normativity lens preference can be understood or compensated with the visible reflexivity felt in the field. Some publications have a reflexive agenda, questioning hierarchies, focusing on localization and cash activities, questioning technocracy, or focusing on outcomes. The humanitarian EiE perspectives seem to be attentive and reflexive, even if more theoretically than practically.

4.2 Competitive Environments in a Collaborative Platform

The problematic nature of a 'my organization first' syndrome, or as T'Hart called it (2010) a 'Battle of the Samaritans' implies that organizations tend to prioritize their interests, which Weinlich and al. (2022) also highlighted, relative to the UN agencies, in the context of the United Nations Development System reform. This approach manifests itself in a particularly complex manner within the context of the education coordination cluster involving numerous stakeholders, including agencies, donors, and both national and international organizations. A reference to this approach among co-lead agencies in the global education cluster that mirrors attitudes observed across various dimensions of education coordination was referred to in the macro-dimension interviews. Max Reed observes that there is some competition for leadership positions within the cluster and that the emphasis frequently switches from contributing quality and competencies and ensuring effective cluster operation to a power struggle for positioning within the cluster and in relationships with education ministries:

Sometimes, and here is nothing to complain or to blame anyone about the process, sometimes, I'm having a feeling that there is a certain level of competition, who should be leading the cluster. And, it's not about the securing the proper cluster functioning or who is bringing more competencies and the quality to the table, but rather about positioning within the cluster; positioning within the ministries and which to a certain extent brings an additional layer of complexity to the whole story or the confusion with the relevant authorities in the ministry of education.

The priority of individual objectives above group goals in this complex network not only reflects but also perpetuates the competitive and individualistic society norms, which create major barriers to effective and cooperative coordination. Jordan Blake shared in the interview an example of the difficulty of an organization to share information with an implementing partner:

I was with the "education cannot wait funding available in one of the countries and there, the funding wasn't distributed as a consortium. Under a consortium, it was implemented through a consortium. And two of the, the leader of the consortium and the sub one of the sub implementing partners, both of them were national NGOs. And they were really *pissed* at each other, they were fighting. Just because of the, you know, the leader organization wouldn't share some of the information about, you know, the

proposal, the overall objectives, overall targets, and the implementing partner wanted to see, they wanted to see it, they want to see how it is done. So it was very funny, because it was, in the end, the people from the center have to come intervene from minister, education cannot wait, focal points. "(Jordan Blake) in the end "they had to split consortium"

In this case, the competition was solved with help from the coordination team, showing that this "my organization first" approach can create some challenges in any dimension of coordination. Nevertheless, it shows the potential for competition and lack of transparency to disrupt coordination efforts and strain relationships among cluster members. Organizations driven by their agendas over group objectives may get overtaken by the effects of this tendency in the coordinating cluster. When every organization tries to highlight its programs or approaches, the group effort may become dispersed, which will ultimately reduce the effectiveness of the group in meeting the target population's most urgent educational requirements. The conflicting priorities within the education cluster coordination, alongside the institutions and practices meant to facilitate collaboration, may paradoxically hinder the shared objective of improving EiE.

One of the interview questions was, "There is something that you were surprised that I didn't ask. And I should ask you - Do you think that could be asked?" Jordan Blake brought the co-leadership question to the table. This question was one of the points of the evaluation CLARE II that went out near this time and where Global Education Cluster members had participated. I asked him to share what he would answer to that point to what he said:

"co-leadership (...) it's a challenging relationship in terms of Yeah, we support each other when needed. But there is also some competition at the leadership of education cluster. Both had to go up a level, but mostly I can't two levels. You can see a lot of some issues by the speaker cluster coordinators, some, you know, disapprovals, or, yeah, issue issues or problems in terms of the relationship. So it's also more informal than expected. What I mean is that, in many countries, there is not a science, Memorandum of Understanding MOU, or a term of reference (ToR). Mostly, it's standard by an agreement, a handshake between the two organizations' lead people, and they hire a recruiting coordinator, and then they start calling maybe this on purpose, they want to be flexible, or they don't want to commit themselves into this coordination's relationship."

Jordan Blake's reflection shows again the dynamics of power and the possible challenge of informality in the Education cluster dimensions.

The collective effort may become diluted as a result of this diversity of focus, making it less successful in addressing the critical educational needs of the people it seeks to assist. The cluster may create goals and results that are so broad in their quest for agreement that they become ambiguous and unproductive. Even though they are inclusive, these results may not address the unique and pressing demands of the situation, representing the organization's lowest common denominator. The tendency to put one's own organization's interests first might impede the integration of crucial initiatives, such as the incorporation of cutting-edge pedagogical techniques or the adaptation to local educational contexts. This runs counter to the idea of providing a coherent educational response that is centered on the actual requirements of students and the educational community. The fact that parties' desire to cooperate, exchange information and resources, and match their strategies and interventions with group goals is a critical component that makes the situation even more complex. When stakeholders put their objectives ahead of the group's objectives, coordination can become difficult and ineffective. This leads to dispersed efforts and redundant work, which eventually lowers the overall effect on the education activity.

As reflected by Sydney Quinn, an example of how collaboration within the coordination can increase the Education Cluster efforts:

“And the things you can do in in a cluster, when you're both just gelling, and then you have like, two people, four hands, you can do amazing initiatives, quality things, as well as all the tasks that are required of a cluster. So, I think you multiply even beyond like two people, then you become even more effective and creative. And it seems like there's no limits to what can happen in that kind of perfect situation.”

She further highlights the detrimental effects of sour organizational and personal relationships on coordination work:

“And I know, many stories of the exact opposite. Where if, if the organizational relationships are sour, if the personal relationships are not conducive, then you don't even have two people's work and, and two people's hands and two people's brains, because half of their energy is going into politics in fighting and positioning, and detracting from actually doing coordination work, because you're managing a

relationship and trying to stay in your lane and avoid kind of CO leadership conflict, I guess. I mean, my examples are specific to education, but I imagine that could happen also in intercluster relationships and cluster *otro* relationships as well”.

4.3 Coordinator – a “powerful role”

The role of the Education Cluster Coordinator is multifaceted, combining elements of leadership, mediation, and strategic planning. This section examines the coordinator's ‘powerful role’ (Jordan Blake) and conceptualizes it within the framework of Actor-Network Theory (ANT) as a composite actor-network. By analyzing the coordinator's interactions and influence, we gain insights into the dynamics of power and agency within the cluster.

The coordination as a composite actor-network gravitates in the Coordination team ((co-coordinator(s) and IMO)

Dylan Hunter’s description of the network of relationships and collaborations at both the national and provincial levels underline the central role of the Education Cluster coordinator. This role is pivotal in linking various actors, including national education authorities, UN agencies, and NGOs, which are at the core of decision-making processes in the education sector during emergencies.

On a macro scale, for the Global Education Cluster, a Sydney Quinn Vermeiren said that,

“It depends 95% on your relationship with the CO” (Sydney Quinn). Between Global Cluster and Country cluster is a catch 22 says Sydney Quinn: “not wanting to bother coordinators. Also, having been a coordinator, I feel a lot of I guess, empathy to the workload of coordinators. And I'm very hesitant to take up their time or ask. Ask for their time or ask for their contributions. But at the same time, it's kind of a catch 22 That that's also denying opportunities to highlight their work or bring their story to the global level and to other countries to share maybe the good practices that they've done. And many coordinators probably would appreciate that as well.”

Analyzing the data collected about the Country Coordinator and the ‘profile’ expected (we are not exploring the IMO but just the coordinator position) reveals a complex role that requires a unique combination of skills, attributes, and challenges. The coordinator is shown as an essential for cluster members support at the country level, necessitating a profound commitment and comprehensive technical knowledge in both EiE and humanitarian practices. This role demands initiative, highlighting

the solitary nature of the position, which is both empowering and isolating, positioning the coordinator as a key support for cluster members, decision-maker, and agent of change. “first of all, I think, valuing the role of coordination and leadership, the extent that we actually put people in who aren't just somebody who's done one Field Office program in the first place, so that they can make these difficult decisions and be reflective.” (Casey Lee) For the participants, key attributes necessary for the coordinator include the ability to foster partnerships, collaborate effectively, be responsible, with strong values and principles, and be creative. Most of these characteristics were attached to the word personality, as it was also in the CLARE II (HERE-Geneva, 2022) evaluation. The challenges referrer associated with this role are high staff turnover, bureaucratic hurdles, time-consuming tasks, and the need for greater recognition within the broader humanitarian ecosystem. The emphasis on personal attributes such as empathy, creativity, and the ability to manage funding added complexity to the role. These individuals must balance technical proficiency with soft skills, facilitating communication and collaboration among diverse stakeholders while also efficiently managing resources and different networks.

As Jordan Blake notes, effective EiE coordination depends on a cultural mindset that values mutual respect and collaboration within groups. This culture is essential for organizing cross-sectoral coordinated activities and making sure aid meets the complex needs of impacted populations. The idea that coordination is “very personality driven” emphasizes the importance of interpersonal interactions in defining the coordination experience, which can range from very innovative and collaborative contexts to more difficult situations where coordination feels like “pulling teeth.” He also highlights the importance of being “agile, who likes to be, you know, alert all the time and very flexible. (Jordan Blake) He goes on to discuss the attributes that an EiE coordinator must possess, such as diplomacy, emotional control, approachability, and a thorough awareness of the cluster members' different needs. This comprehensive skill set enables coordinators to effectively serve members on technical, institutional, organizational, and advocacy levels. Furthermore, Jordan Blake's emphasis on reaching out and socializing with focal points from other clusters emphasizes the importance of ensuring solutions are appropriate and thorough, transcending sectoral boundaries to satisfy individuals' holistic needs. The power dynamics and funding systems within the humanitarian sector also present significant challenges to equitable and successful collaboration. As Jordan Blake points out, network connections with donors, governments, and important stakeholders, as well as financial and human capital, can support established funding cycles that may not always be in line with the most pressing needs on the ground. Breaking these loops needs coordinated efforts to build capacity for a broader range of organizations:

“He or she will need to be reaching out to people, you know, socializing, making sure that he interacts with other focal points from other clusters to make sure that the response is relevant for children in always like, because we tend to focus too much on our sector and forget that people are not just education in meet people. And then you have another person who is washed in need. And as someone who is hungry, so food. So, this is one person who has different needs. And we had to start with thinking about silos. I mean, there are some recent attempts to overcome that challenge.”

And he continues,

“I think this is the source of their power, and their network connections with donors, with the government's key stakeholders. But of course, they also have resources to do that as well, the financial resources or human capital, for the technical, technical capacity to respond, operational capacity to respond to scale up in a very short time. Yeah, these kinds of things also bring in more donor funds as well. And if you're a donor who wants to fund as soon as possible, you have \$10 million, and you unit the burden in one month or two months, you go there or go to institutions. And so same ones, and it's really difficult to break that cycle, unless we do capacity building for different organizations.”

Sydney Quinn and Casey Lee's views highlight the complexity of communication and responsibility in the EiE sector. Sydney Quinn's assessment on the difficult process of establishing trust and ensuring that contributions from country coordinators are recognized and valued emphasizes the importance of more strong communication routes. Similarly, Casey Lee's tale about seeing "crazy things" in the field as a result of breakdowns in fundamental accountability and communication exemplifies the potential gaps between policy and practice:

“But it's quite slow. And it takes a while to build confidence that your contributions are that that you that your contributions want to be heard from the other members that they're valuable, that that that country perspectives are necessary and important to be heard at global level conversations. And it's really curious why. at the country level, when I was a country coordinator, I thought I can never talk to the global coordinators, the global team, I have to stay quiet I have to, like not be noticed. If I got an email with their names in it and everyone in copy, my heart stopped. I was like, oh, and at global

level, we're dying to hear and dying to be connected to country. Coordinators. Were very sensitive because we know they're busy. So, we don't want to send them too many emails or talk to them unnecessarily or bother them or take up their time. So, on both sides, we have a very big reluctance to communicate really, or to bother each other.” (Sydney Quinn)

“... sometimes you go to the field, and you just see crazy things. Because nobody's using just basic judgment. I don't like going to a school where, you know, there's a hole in the ground with a drain which people could fall down. There's really basic things of accountability and quality. And then you say something, and they say, oh, well, that was somebody else's job, or Oh, no, I don't need to. Oh, it's the cluster coordinator center. Oh, yeah, I've seen that. It's been like that for nine months. Who did you tell nobody, you know, this kind of, you know, like, we talked about accountability, we have these big things. And then really, like simple things, like just giving somebody information about some poor practice, doesn't happen. So that's some that's some 111. Kind of an example of the type of story I mean, which is kind of on my mind about coordination and getting the balance right between, you know, the big picture, things were meant to achieve, but light enough that people can just lead and do their jobs. (Casey Lee)

Drawing on Snowden and Weick's theoretical models, it is clear creating a culture of trust and empowerment is critical for enabling localized, adaptive responses to complex catastrophes:

The models proposed by Snowden and Weick guide us in establishing sufficient trust to enable individuals to engage in complex local circumstances, including the ability to react promptly. If small, localized influences can initiate significant transformation, then it is important to have observers acting on these influences as a strategic approach. (Browning & Boudes, 2005)

In a time where the understanding of the importance of anticipated action, risk reduction and all that. Adding the recognized importance of data-driven decision-making. This emphasis on metrics, efficiency, and quantitative data has another other side of the mirror being that emergencies and complex crises often defy prediction, being characterized by prolonged instability and unexpected challenges that demand creative and sustained responses. As discussed at the beginning of the theoretical background, emergencies are characterized by unpredictability and complex crises defined as extended periods of instability and complexity, frequently requiring extensive and long-term responses. This duality

emphasizes the crucial importance of maintaining a balance between events capable of being anticipated and risks being reduced with the importance of developing tools and skills for managing the uncertain and unpredictable characteristics of complex emergencies. It can be argued that utilizing the "ears and eyes" of persons on the ground as observers and actors in local settings is a strategic need.

In the new INEE MS (2024), the Triple Nexus – humanitarian, development, and peace – is viewed as a reality in practice. Humanitarian, development, and peacebuilding activities often occur concurrently, intersecting in their shared objectives of alleviating human suffering, enhancing resilience, and preventing conflict. Data collected reveals a different feeling, for example, in the words of Sydney Quinn when referring that donors (explicating that not just ECW) and the global pressures being put on the Education Cluster Coordination actors decided to ‘put some nice words in about Nexus’ but she feels that “GCC has a bit more realism in it. So, I guess it depends on, and it comes again to this catch-22. I understand why the donors are pushing that because you need to change the way of working, and that will require extra effort. So, if you don't try to change the way of working, then you don't change the way of working. So, it's like a balance between realism and creativity maybe?”

4.4 The feelings and desires place on the coordination assemblage

The emotional and psychological aspects of coordination are frequently disregarded in scientific research. Nevertheless, they have a key role in influencing the actions and decisions of coordinators. This section examines the emotions and desires associated with the coordination process, uncovering how individual motivations, goals, and difficulties impact the coordination process.

Deleuze and Guattari (1987) emphasize the importance of desire and affect in driving assemblages. Throughout the data collection phase and the entire research trajectory, emotions were prominently and diversely manifested, underscoring their significance to each participant involved in the study.

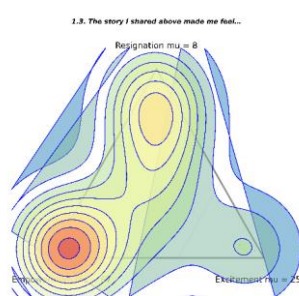


Figure 16: NWSW Cameroon feelings triad

In utilizing the SenseMaker® platform (data collected from meso and micro dimensions), the intention is to collect the interpretation of the micro-story previously shared; however, most of the answers were more general, reflecting the overall understanding of the Education Cluster rather than specific insights into the micro-narrative itself. In the first triad

reflecting the feelings of the cluster, coordination was polarized between feelings of empowerment and resignation. This polarization did not

exclude the excitement, even having someone selecting it as an almost unique feeling.

Interestingly, when we isolated the data solely from the micro dimension – NWSW Cameroon, the responses unequivocally leaned towards empowerment, and the ones from excitement disappeared (figure 17). Finally, the resignation looks a lot more faded. Even if it the difficulty to externalize the understanding with stories that reflect these feelings, often they were more disconnected directly from the education cluster mechanism, but we can highlight some that reflect these feelings:

On the other hand, reflecting on what the participants who selected the resignation feeling shared in their micro-stories that can be related to the feeling:

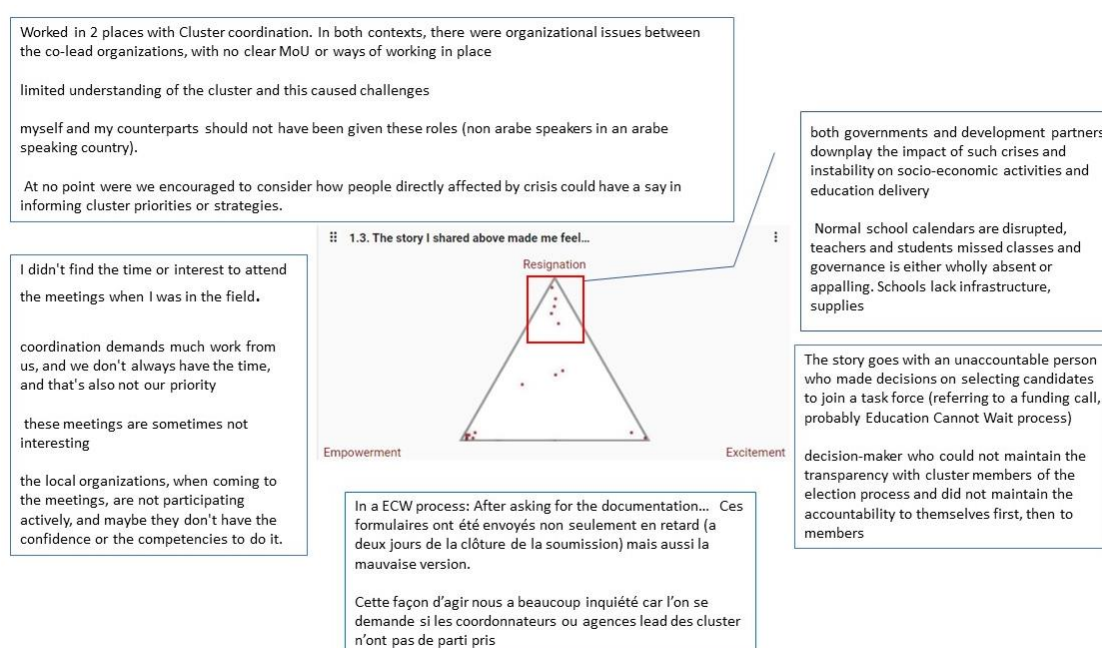


Figure 17: Stories Related to Feelings of Resignation

The feelings of empowerment and resignation captured in the SenseMaker® data can reflect the ongoing negotiations between the desire for relevance and the feeling of incapacity to make the impulse towards change. Also in CLARE II evaluation, the lack of valorization and prioritization of CLA role was highlighted referring that organization's incentives and evaluation systems reward staff for their achievements for the agency, instead of for the collective through clusters. (HERE-Geneva, 2022)

The place of member, coordinator, information manager, expert or any other being part of the cluster is also a place for becoming. In the context of the Education Cluster, becoming can be seen in how individuals and groups deal with their experiences of empowerment and resignation, continually adapting and redefining their contributions and relationships within the cluster.

This divergence shows the uniqueness of each dimension, which, though not universally applicable, provides valuable insights into the varied experiences and perspectives within the Education Cluster. It's important to highlight that the particularity of each dimension is not generalizable. Each dimension corresponds to a very specific context and is just an example that can help us understand different realities and positionings.

4.5 Coordination – the ‘in-between’ place to be

“We are held back by insufficient coordination and accountability on system-wide activities... far too much of what we do is rooted in the past rather than linked to the future we want.” UN Secretary-General Guterres (Remarks to Economic and Social Council on Repositioning the UN Development System to Deliver on the 2030 Agenda, 2017)

Coordination in emergencies is commonly referred to as a place where coordinators manage the conflicts arising from many stakeholders, sectors, and levels of governance. This section explores the characteristics of this intermediate location, emphasizing the coordinators' methods for handling conflicting interests and priorities. Through analyzing these intermediate positions, we reveal the complexity of ensuring consistency and harmony within the ECC.

Latour says, “Nets have no ‘in between’ to be filled in” (Latour, 1996), meaning that the networks are there, coordination exists already, and it will not fill empty spaces or slide into some gap. Networks are dynamic and constantly evolving, shaped by the interactions and associations among actors. In this perspective, the Cluster mechanism is meant to manage these interactions within pre-existing networks, not filling gaps but empowering possible partnerships, working groups, or potentiating new dynamics.

Cluster Coordination operates as a formal framework with some informal characteristics, creating a unique challenge. Knox-Clarke (2013) notes,

“these structures create a specific challenge: how to ‘lead’ a group over which one has very limited formal authority, where the people who are ‘led’ represent organizations accountable to different stakeholders. These people may have different priorities, procedures, and cultures and may well perceive themselves to be in competition with one another”(Knox-Clarke, 2013, p.11).

When individuals come together in the Cluster system, they represent different stakeholders, and they are not bound by any official obligations—membership and participation are voluntary. Each ECC member has his own agency and has different interests, methods, and cultures to collaborate despite potential competition and conflicting agendas. According to Lopes Cardozo and Novelli (2018), the network's horizontal structure and open membership encourage broad participation, and certain mechanisms filter who gets heard and whose interests and priorities are embraced.

This dynamic is further complicated by the fact that, as in organizational settings described by Cilliers (2016), coordination involves some clearly complex characteristics: Coordination is determined by the interaction between its members and relationships; it is an open system with information flowing through it, and boundaries are not clearly defined. Each collaborating organization has a unique position and place and varying degrees of interconnectedness with others.

Participants often have demanding responsibilities within their own organizations/agencies, making Cluster engagement in activities or initiatives less prioritized. The position is also specific for the coordination leads: it is neutral by definition, but they are contracted by one specific organization with their agendas. This duality introduces potential conflicts of interest, as coordination leads must balance their formal attachments with their responsibility to the broader coordination effort. Additionally, coordination leads, although affiliated with an organization, also embody individual agency. The notion of a 'career' becomes relevant in this context, as assuming the role of a coordinator can serve as a professional stepping stone, potentially opening doors for career advancement in another position.

The challenges faced by cluster coordinators are evident across various contexts, including the Local Cluster in Northwest and Southwest Cameroon. The narratives, such as Thebo's story, illustrate the difficulties of navigating a system characterized by multiple bureaucratic layers. The complexity inherent in the Cluster Coordination mechanism with multiple bureaucratic layers and a multitude of actors (with their agency and understandings and the hidden agendas of their organizations) is the fertile field for much knowledge 'absences' (Santos, 2018) creates within the system – the silenced voices, the marginalized knowledge, and the overlooked practices that do not conform to the dominant paradigms or standards. Top-down approaches are frequently favored by bureaucratic procedures (often with *jargon* language), which can inhibit local initiative and creativity—both of which are vital in an emergency.

Data shows through the lens of the sociology of absences that local knowledge and practices might be ignored in favor of well-known global standards and processes. This can lead to a type of epistemic

injustice where the knowledge of local communities is not valued or recognized, even though it may be better at meeting their unique educational needs during crises. As Max Reed suggests, providing support becomes, to a certain extent, a competition between different agencies, each trying to push their own agenda, which may not necessarily align with the best interests of local authorities and specific contexts. (Max Reed).

A pertinent example of the importance of *ecology of knowledge* happened when the nonstate armed group captured Nkunda Ngala, and the solution came from the informal contextual network, the community leaders. This situation is not totally new or unexpected in the context, and community ties enable swift problem-solving, contrasting with the limitations of formal structures in unexpected situations. The level of uncertainty of a sudden event can bring an emergent factor that hinders or does not favor the preparedness protocol or the normative guidelines studied. This is especially important because certain narratives emphasize the importance of training and capacity building, implying that individuals have competencies and skills acquired through formalized processes that improve decision-making. The training brings tools and strategies to deal with decision-making, organization, performance, and effectiveness. Still, the danger is that working becomes a technocratic entity and brings more results to the paper instead of the real needs. Having a guideline with solutions with one-size-fits-all solutions to the different realities. Expressions like ‘according with the context,’ ‘triple nexus,’ and ‘accountable to affected population’ are present in all guidelines and training. However, it is crucial to question whether these concepts are genuinely understood and applied in practice. Are the formal trainings preparing for the emergent situation’s responses or just for the scalable/duplicable/replicable solutions, prevention, and risk controlling based on historic pass data? A more nuanced understanding of both formal and informal networks’ roles is needed to respond to unforeseen challenges effectively.

The report of the South-South Humanitarianism Conference, (Cookson & Stirk, 2014) shed light on a growing skepticism towards global normative frameworks, stating:

“Participants noted that the appetite for global normative frameworks was shrinking. Even the principle of universality, which has been at the center of the traditional humanitarian framework, is being contested by new thinking and practices.”

This change indicates a requirement to transition towards frameworks that prioritize distinctiveness and precision rather than universality. In his work, Snowden (2011) reaffirms this point of view, emphasizing

the importance of not allowing past events to limit the potential of the current and future circumstances, particularly in new settings.

Effective coordination should aim for outcomes greater than the sum of its parts. Stephenson (2005) suggests, that organizations should cultivate a culture of trust and cooperation rather than depending on hierarchical methods. Embracing collective rationality and sensemaking would result in a cultural revolution, leading to better coordination and more effective outcomes for those being served. Altering organizational cultures and attitudes is a difficult but essential task in order to achieve improved coordination that is more united and responsive in humanitarian contexts.

Conclusion

Arrived at this point and reflecting on my journey through my PhD, exploring Education Cluster Coordination has been a journey marked by discovery, challenge, and profound learning. Learnings across different domains, a dive into scholarly realities, and engagement with a network of passionate individuals in the field of EiE—frontline coordinators and other education-related players, global thinkers, international policymakers, and advocates — especially those linked to the NSW context have all highlighted the complexity of this field.

The main objective of this research was to investigate the various logics of action within the ECC, which we sought to grasp essentially from the narratives of the actor-coordinators and the meanings they give to their practices and narratives within the ECC, focusing on the micro, meso and macro dimensions and their interconnections of coordination practices. The option for *dimension* over of *level* through this study is related to the hierarchical connotation of the word *level* that was not adequate to reflect the relevance of each scale. Specifically, it aimed to understand how different coordination logics interact and are perceived within the multi-level and multi-actor dynamics of ECC. The research illuminated diverse logics of action within ECC, highlighting how both global norms and local realities influence various coordination strategies and practices. It found that local actors often face challenges in aligning their practices with global expectations, emphasizing the need for flexibility and adaptability in coordination efforts.

The secondary objectives included identifying enablers, constraints, and tensions within the ECC, from the viewpoints of all participants, and especially the ones from NSW regions of Cameroon. Key enablers include the active participation and the integration of informal networks in the ECC formal mechanism, which enhance the responsiveness and relevance of coordination efforts. Additionally, some contradictions, challenges, and potentials were uncovered including the coordinator's position, analyzing the equilibrium between prescriptive norms and pragmatic circumstances. This required comprehending the two-fold difficulties encountered by coordinators as they move through both official and unofficial networks, serving as neutral facilitators while simultaneously representing their respective organizations. Equally, constraints such as bureaucratic rigidity and resource limitations were found to hinder effective coordination.

This work offered me a unique multidisciplinary lens to understand the complexities of coordination, collaboration, and networking within the humanitarian field. My engagement with the NSW Education Cluster team provided invaluable insights, particularly in analyzing the micro-dimension of ECC in the

context of hysteresis (Bourdieu, 2000); established norms undergo a transformation during times of disruption.

In a world “much less safer place” (Donini, 1996, p.1), the increase in humanitarian needs is a reality. More and more, crises have a ‘de-bounded’ nature, transcending traditional borders and becoming more complex. In this scenario, coordination can smooth the work of EiE stakeholders and create platforms and environments where formal and informal networks can enhance the educational practices and well-being of children in crisis. This work aims to give voice to and make sense of different coordination logics of action (Thévenot, 1993). By exploring these coordination logics, the study highlights the voices and concerns of the ECC-related actors. Moreover, the greater consideration (positive and negative) of non-human elements in the formal and non-formal networks of coordination can be relevant in the actual ‘risk society’.

Through a combined nomad-inspired (Gilles Deleuze and Guattari 1986) and cosmopolitan (Beck, 2016) qualitative methodology, I sought to challenge my more traditional research approaches. This research embraces more adaptable, open, and fluid methods. These approaches allowed for a rich narrative interpretation focused on the tangled network dynamics within the ECC. This approach has allowed for a better understanding of complex phenomena, highlighting the need for a balance between structured coordination and the adaptability required to face the emerging challenges of a 'risk society'. Trying to cope with complexity can, on the one hand, mean acting against normative guidelines and, on the other, being creative, making it more fragile and possibly failing. What's more, these approaches can bring innovative methods that more effectively address the problems of specific populations and may even trigger the creation of new techniques applicable in other situations. Because the approach used is very broad and diversified – centering on different dimensions, issues, and tensions – it was not possible to analyze the empirical data comprehensively as expected. Rather, this approach opened many possible discussions and questions that would be interesting to unlock in future publications.

The analysis of global educational policies and documents related to Education Cluster Coordination, against the backdrop of empirical evidence from the different dimensions, especially the NWSW Cameroon data, illuminates the tension between global aspirations and local needs. Global normative documents aim to standardize and guide humanitarian education responses across diverse contexts. Yet, as strategies for NWSW Cameroon and empirical analyses suggest, the practicalities of implementing these guidelines are deeply influenced by local socio-political dynamics, cultural norms,

and the lived experiences of communities in crisis. This tension highlights the importance of flexibility and adaptability in translating global norms into local action.

Not concluding but still closing, the study identifies several tensions within the ECC model, such as the challenge of integrating a collaborative network platform within a competitive environment, finding a middle ground between normative guidelines (for example, EiE definitions, accountability goals, or even triple nexus) and actual experiences, and maneuvering through bureaucratic systems in complex settings. Additionally, some tensions were identified in the role of the coordinator itself, such as maintaining neutrality while being part of an organization and balancing leadership with facilitation.

The concept of cluster coordinators as 'switchers' (Castells, 1996) highlights their pivotal role in formal networks established by humanitarian and governance structures while also recognizing the significance of informal networks, recreated in a reticular manner. These dynamics highlight the importance of local partners in coordination roles, and it celebrates the shared leadership model at the global level, which sees UNICEF and Save the Children (an INGO) jointly in the Cluster's direction.

There's a delicate line between achieving this balance and swinging toward excessive rigidity. The bureaucratic growth and additional workload observed in Education Clusters referred to in interviews, micro-stories, and other research (e.g., CLARE II) indicate a potential shift toward a tightly coupled system. Such a system, characterized by high bureaucracy and stringent 'tick-box' processes, risks losing sight of the field's evolving needs. This shift toward rigidity could compromise the system's ability to adapt to the complex, ever-changing contexts of EiE, where flexibility and responsiveness to unforeseen challenges are paramount. Ensuring the system retains its capacity for flexibility, innovation, and responsiveness to the field's actual needs is crucial for its effectiveness in supporting education amidst crises. On the other hand, without some level of structured coordination, there's a risk that central goals might not be met efficiently. This is where a more formal and partly bureaucratic ECC Approach plays a critical role by infusing previously loosely coupled networks with a degree of structure and regulation necessary for achieving central roles and relevance.

Globally, the ECC approach deal with the complex politic and economic shifts that impact education as was emphasized in the NWSW Cameroon context, where the dependency on external aid and the existing power imbalances poses significant challenges to effective coordination and implementation of educational programs. The interconnected nature of dependency on external aid, power imbalances, and numerous challenges faced by education systems in conflict-affected areas requires a nuanced understanding and approach. Addressing the complex political and economic factors, as highlighted by

Novelli (2021), and understanding the unique challenges in various contexts, such as NWSW Cameroon, are essential for the relevance of ECC in supporting EiE.

The study acknowledges limitations, namely in terms of the variety of data sources and tools utilized and suggests that further analysis using thick description and Critical Discourse Analysis could provide deeper insights. It was a non-linear path that required a lot of adaptation from my side, using innovative software from scratch, adapting to the changes the humanitarian sector and EiE coordination were under, and, like everyone else, adapting to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Looking ahead, the landscape of EiE coordination is in the process of transformation, guided by the principles of the triple nexus, localization, and active participation. This study confirms that significant societal transformation often begins with a single action, a collective narrative, or an instance of mutual comprehension and collaboration. The second International Symposium of Education in Emergencies is being organized, and despite the difficulties, the consistent focus on empowerment through Cluster Coordination stands out.

This research adds to the current discussion on how ECC may more effectively meet the needs of communities affected, especially children, ensuring that education continues to be a source of hope and resilience in challenging situations.

Possible contributions to Science and the ECC

In light of the ongoing crises and global risks, the relevance of educational research in emergencies has significantly increased, especially in regions like the NWSW regions of Cameroon. This research is driven by the urgent need to address the severe educational disruptions in these areas, where crises have had a profound impact on both access to and the quality of education.

Innovative theoretical and methodological approaches are essential to understanding the complexities of EiE. This research leverages Weick's sensemaking theory and the concept of loosely coupled systems to gain insights into the operation of informal networks within emergency education settings. These theories emphasize the importance of maintaining a balance between structured coordination and the flexibility required to adapt to emerging challenges.

A key methodological innovation in this research is the use of SenseMaker® and other narrative-based tools. By focusing on narratives and micro-stories from stakeholders, the research reveals the lived

experiences and challenges faced by those involved in educational coordination, offering a more nuanced understanding of on-the-ground realities.

The significance of this research extends beyond its immediate context. It contributes to the scientific understanding of EiE and the practice of Education Cluster Coordination. Providing both theoretical advancements and practical insights, this research intends to contribute to the socio-political context, especially the NWSW Cameroon, and professionally to the work of policymakers, practitioners, and scholars in the field.

This study's exploration of the interplay between global educational policies and local implementation strategies highlights the necessity for adaptability in educational coordination. The insights derived from this research can inform the development of more effective and inclusive educational policies and practices, ensuring that education remains a priority even under the most challenging circumstances. By focusing on the human elements driving coordination efforts, the research advocates for a more inclusive and participatory approach to educational coordination, empowering local communities and ensuring their voices are heard in the decision-making processes.

Future directions and possible future research paths

As the field of EiE continues to evolve, it is important to outline future research directions and potential next steps that can build upon this study's findings.

Future studies could employ advanced network analysis techniques to explore the relationships and power dynamics within Education Clusters actors. Understanding how these networks function at different levels—global, national, and local—can provide deeper insights into the mechanisms of coordination. Such analysis would reveal the complexities and interdependencies that characterize these networks, shedding light on the ways in which actors interact and influence each other. Building on Latour's Actor-Network Theory (ANT), researchers can investigate the roles of both human and non-human actors—such as policies, technologies, and funding mechanisms deeply—in shaping the outcomes of educational coordination efforts.

Further investigation can also concentrate on certain signals derived from the data that deserve review. A participant suggested, “changing the language of coordination and making it mandatory that INGOS sent national staff so that there was a sustainable and culturally informed approach to coordination.” Thus, in addition to localization, another interesting issue to investigate is the lexicon and linguistic expressions employed by influential entities. These could present a challenge for national non-

governmental organizations (NGOs) in obtaining information or funding and may not be well adapted culturally.

Even if the subject of principles in humanitarian coordination is approached in this thesis, it is a subject worth exploring deeply by future scholars, especially on coordination dynamics.

Another critical area of future research is investigating how policies can be designed to be more adaptive and responsive to changing crisis conditions. This research can explore mechanisms for continuous policy feedback and adjustment, ensuring that policies remain relevant in the face of evolving challenges. Such adaptability is essential for maintaining the efficacy of educational interventions in dynamic and often unpredictable environments.

Investigating the role of technology in facilitating coordination and the constraints also of devices and other online complexities, particularly in remote or insecure environments, can offer solutions for overcoming logistical and communication challenges.

By exploring network dynamics, community participation, and the impact of sociopolitical contexts, we can develop more effective and inclusive educational interventions. Additionally, aligning global policies with local realities and strengthening coordination mechanisms will enhance the resilience and responsiveness of education systems in crisis settings. These steps are crucial for ensuring that education remains a platform of opportunities and well-being for the communities.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Sensemaker® Framework Design

Study title: Coordination of Education in Emergency (EiE) Situations - A case study of Education Cluster in Cameroon

Doctoral student's name: Mara Sofia Garcia Pinto

Hi, my name is Mara Sofia Garcia Pinto, and I am a Ph.D. candidate at the University of Minho. I am doing a study funded by the Foundation for Science and Technology (FCT Fundação para a Ciência e Tecnologia) in Portugal and supported by the Cynefin Center analysis.

The primary **objective of the study is to deepen the global knowledge about Education in Emergency (EiE) coordination from the context of Cameroon Northwest-Southwest in detail and add the wider Global perspective thereafter**. The results of the study will allow better understanding of how EiE coordination works and the perspectives of participants.

We appreciate your assistance in responding to the following survey, which consists of five key questions and associated sub-questions to dig deeper. The survey should take approximately 30 minutes and up to 40 minutes if you are a coordinator. It asks you to share an example of an experience (lived, observed, or heard) related to EiE coordination and answer questions about what that experience means to you.

Participation is voluntary, and you may exit at any time if you don't feel comfortable answering the required questions. There are required and optional questions. You participate anonymously to maintain your privacy. The information collected does not aim to judge people or organizations in any way but rather to contribute to obtaining an overall picture of the perceptions and perspectives involved, both direct and indirect, in EiE coordination. If you have any questions about the study, you can contact me at id9006@alunos.uminho.pt.

Thank you for your valuable time.

I understand the above and consent to participate:

- I agree

Nr	Type of prompt	Question
1*		Please share one story, if possible, based in your lived experience, related to Education in Emergency coordination. This can be something that you lived or heard about, or you know of. It could be an example of something that worked well or didn't work as well as anticipated, with you or someone you know. It can be related to a personal experience, an episode, a situation, or an event lived or observed by you. Free text
	Free Text	1.1. Give your story a title or a hashtag#.
	MCQ	1.2. My story relates directly to an: • Education Cluster • EiE Working Group • other kind of Education coordination (space to specify) _____
	Triad	1.3. The story I shared above made me feel: • resignation • trust • empowerment
	Triad	1.4. The experience I shared relates to: • Monitoring and evaluation • Decision-making • Implementing
	Triad	1.5. What happened in the story I shared above happened because of: • Organization, agencies, or institutions • People in the coordination team (global, national, or local level) • People who are members or partners of EiE Coordination (INGO, LIGO, donors, ...)
	Dyad	1.6. The story I shared relates to: The formal side of coordination (official and normative) —————The informal side of coordination (casual and colloquial)
	Stones	1.7. How these factors played in my story:

		Please place the images in the table in line with their influence (only use those images that are relevant):  communication/information management/networking  knowledge (technical, local, cultural expertise)  environment and context  rules, regulations, and resources
	MCQ (multiple answers possible)	1.8. My story mention subjects that relate to (select all relevant): ● Attack on education ● Child participation ● Child protection ● COVID-19 pandemic ● Financial support to affected population ● Financial transparency ● Gender inequality ● Globalization ● Heavy regulations and rules ● Hierarchal decision making ● Hierarchical chain ● Local empowerment ● Money influence (ex. to donor money access) ● Negotiation ● Networking ● Organizational conflicts ● Participatory decision making ● Responsibility towards affected population ● Right to education ● Weak articulation Other that I consider relevant adding (that is not in the list).
	MCQ (allow multiple choices)	1.9. Which from the list below had more influence in your story (select max 3): ● Children ● Consultants ● Government ● International organizations (INGO) ● Local communities ● Local organizations (NNGO) ● Private donors

		• Public donors • Teachers • Other people/organization
	MCQ (allow multiple answers)	1.10. Does my story relates in some way to the following principles? If yes, which one or ones (select up to 5): • equity • humanity • impartiality • independency • justice • neutrality • solidarity • dignity
2*	Are you working as Education Cluster or Education in Emergency Working Group Coordinator? • Yes • No If your response is 'no', please skip this question. If yes, please explain your role.	
	2.1. What organizations, institutions, or people do you work with on a day-to-day basis? Can you draw a scheme/sketch of the network of contacts that you interact with most frequently or in an important way in your work (you can stipulate dimensions, create metaphors, add symbols or drawings, etc), in around 5 minutes? Please do this on your computer or a sheet of paper and upload a picture/image of it. Add the photo of your draw here	
	Free text or audio	2.2. Can you briefly explain your network draw?
3*	If you had NO limit of power and money, what would you change in the humanitarian EiE coordination? Free text	
	Triad	3.1. Your answer, in the question 3, is related to: • Money (funding, economy, finance) • People (humanitarian actors; decision makers) • Action (strategy; processes)

	Triad	3.2. What you think can make the implementation of your idea difficult, in the question 3: • Lack of civil society mobilization • Lack of connection between humanitarian actors • Lack of political will
4	4. There is anything you were surprised that I didn't ask? What? Anything you want to add? Free text	
5*	DEMOGRAPHICS I am: F/M; Age	
	MCQ	Country of residence
	MCQ	Your nationality
	MCQ (multiple answers possible)	You work (please select all that apply): • directly at the Global Education Cluster • directly in Education Cluster as country coordinator or IM • directly in Education Cluster as local coordinator or IM • directly as a partner or member of the Education Cluster • in another education coordination mechanism • in another non education coordination mechanism • indirectly as an educator or administrator in a school • as an Education in Emergency consultant • as a Humanitarian student • as an academic • in a Education in Emergency Network (ex. INEE or NORRAG) • in a National NGO • as a Donor • in a International NGO • other please indicate....
	MCQ	Type of office: • Country Education Office or related • Headquarters • Regional Hub • Country Office • Field Office

		• Other Please indicate
	MCQ	Your work is or relates directly/indirectly with (please choose the most significant): • Global Cluster • Country/national • sub national or local cluster • N/A

Sex – male, female, prefer not to say/ Age group – 18-25, 25-35, 36-45, 46-55, 56-65, >65

Appendix B

Data Collector SenseMaker®

FCT

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e a Tecnologia



Universidade do Minho
Instituto de Educação

EiE coordination

English ▼

☐ I agree.

1.2. Your story relates directly with

- ☐ Education Cluster
- ☐ EIE Working Group
- ☐ Other kind of Education coordination

You need to move the marker icon to a place that describes your experience. See an example on how to fill the triads.

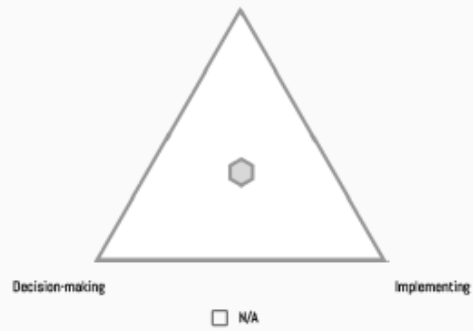


1.3. The story I shared above made me feel...

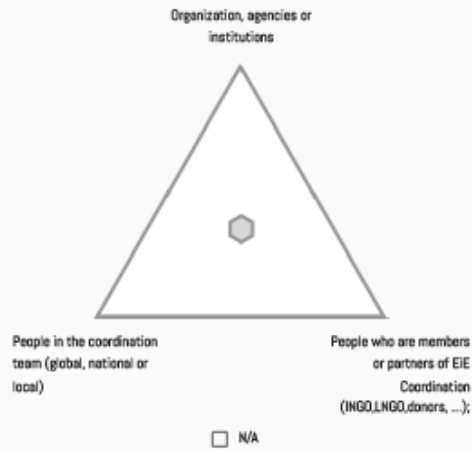


1.4. The experience I shared relates to...

Monitoring and evaluation



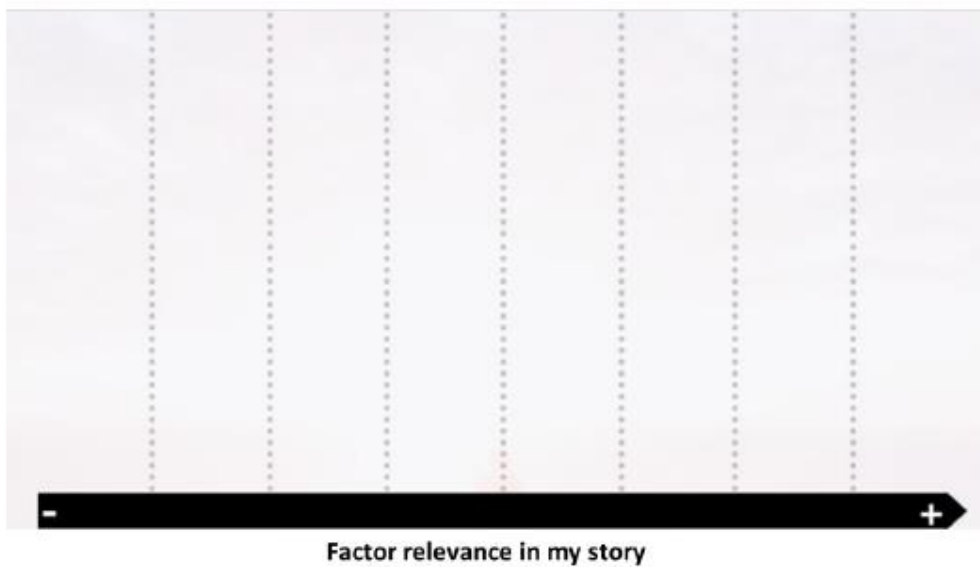
1.5. What happened in the story I shared above happened because of...



1.6. Your story relates to



1.7. How these factors played in my story: Please place the images in the table in line with their influence (only use those images that are relevant):



Below are icons representing different subjects. Select all relevant subjects for your story.

-  Story, literature and language
-  Connections/Multimedia technology/Networking
-  Knowledge (Science, Social Science, Sports)
-  Environment/History

8. My story mention subjects that relate to (select all relevant):



☐ Attacks on education

☐ Child participation

☐ Child protection

☐ Gender inequity

☐ Hierarchical chain

☐ Networking

☐ COVID Pandemic 19

☐ Financial support to affected population

☐ Financial transparency

☐ Globalization

☐ Heavy regulations and rules

☐ Hierarchal decision making

☐ Local empowerment

☐ Money influence (ex. To donor money access)

☐ Negotiation

☐ Organizational conflicts

☐ Participatory Decision making

☐ Responsabilisation towards affected population

☐ Right to education

☐ Weak articulation

☐ N/A

Other that I consider relevant adding (that is not in the list).

1.9. Which from the list below had more influence in your story (select max 3):



☐ Children

☐ Consultants

☐ Government

☐ International organizations (INGO)

☐ Local communities

☐ Local organizations (NNGO)

☐ Private donors

☐ Public donors

☐ Teachers

☐ Other people/organization

☐ N/A

1.10. Does your story relates in some way to the following principles ? If yes, which one or ones (select up to 5):

☐ Equity

☐ Humanity

☐ Impartiality

☐ Independency

☐ Justice

☐ Dignity

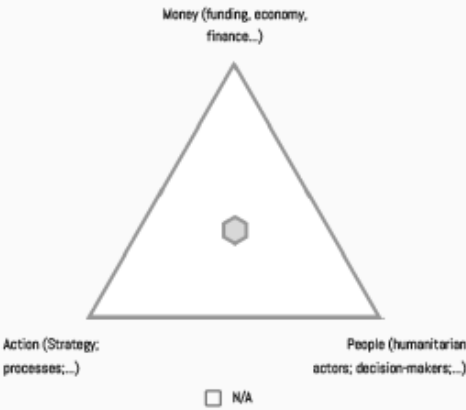
☐ Neutrality

☐ Solidarity

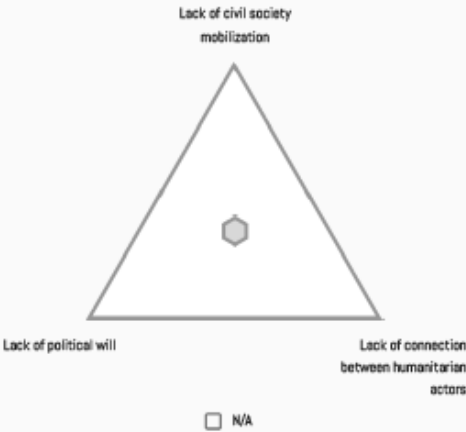
☐ N/A

2. If you had NO limit of power and money, what would you change in the humanitarian EIE coordination?

2.1. Your answer, in the question 2, is related to...



2.2. What you think can make the implementation of your idea, in the question 2, difficult:



There is anything you were surprised that I didn't ask? What? Anything you want to add?

Country of residence



☐ N/A

Your nationality



☐ N/A

Your gender:

☐ Female

☐ Male

☐ Prefer not to say

☐ N/A

Age group:

☐ 18-25

☐ 26-35

☐ 36-46

☐ 46-55

☐ 56 or more

 SENSEMAKER®

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Appendix C

Email invitation for participating in the filling out the *unsurvey*.

Hi all! Wishing you all an excellent 2023!

I could delay once more my data collection, so I can have the opportunity to receive your stories and opinions. So:

- I'll be available tomorrow at 15h if you want to join me, and we can fill out the *unsurvey* together.
- Alternatively, I'll set up 30-minute interviews/drop-in sessions over the next few days to be able to answer any questions and help to fill out the *unsurvey* personally. Here is a link to book a calendar slot.
- OR yet, please send me a WhatsApp message (00351 963063146) with the times/dates that work for you, and I'll answer as fast as possible

PS: Please feel free to share this email with all that may be interested in participating. Thank you!

Looking forward to talking with you!

Warm wishes!

Mara

Appendix D

Informed Consent

Adult Research (18+): Informed Consent Statement

Title of this investigation: Coordination of Education in Emergency Situations - A case study of Education Cluster in Cameroon

Doctoral student's name: Mara Sofia Garcia Pinto

Hi, my name is Mara Sofia Garcia Pinto and I am doing a study at the University of Minho for my Ph.D. which is funded by a grant from the Foundation for Science and Technology (FCT Fundação para a Ciência e Tecnologia), in Portugal. The primary objective of the study is to deepen the global knowledge about the subject of EiE (Education in Emergency) coordination. Hopefully, the results of the study will allow me to understand better how, within the Cluster, coordination works, as well as the different perspectives of actors about this and other linked aspects that could be revisited.

I want to invite you to participate in an interview that will take approximately 1h30.

I want to ask questions regarding your understanding of the functioning of the coordination system in Education in Emergencies, including the Education Cluster. Your perspective will help me get to know your personal visions and specific needs, as well as potentially good practice notes, shared moments of enthusiasm, frustration, and different emotions.

Your participation is especially important to me and my study, but it is voluntary. If you become uncomfortable or no longer want to participate, you can stop me at any time. It is also okay to skip questions you don't want to answer.

If you agree to participate, the information you provide will remain confidential. I will keep your participation anonymous, and you will never be individually identified.

The collection of information does not aim to judge people or organizations in any way, but rather to contribute to obtaining an overall picture of the perceptions and perspectives of the elements involved more directly or indirectly in the coordination of EiE.

If you have any questions about the study, you can contact me at id9006@alunos.uminho.pt.

CONSENT

As a form of consent, and since the interview will be conducted remotely, please send an email stating that you voluntarily agree to participate in the activities under the conditions described above.

Script for points to consider or touch on during the interview:

Considering the Cluster coordination, a mechanism acting in a complex environment and valuing the perspectives of each element, it is intended to carry out a conversational interview where the main **objective** is to allow the participants to **express themselves**. In addition, there is also a reflective moment when the respondent can create a visual scheme and interpret it. This will allow all the participants to have not only the audio interview to express themselves but also this visual information, produced and interpreted in 2 different moments (in the moment and a posteriori). In this way, I can understand in a more complete and complex way the perspectives and opinions of the participants.

With quasi-biographical questions, I seek to create a subjective, expressive narrative, based on the narrators themselves as individuals. Thus, there are no correct or incorrect answers, nor well-founded opinions. The facts are not sought, but rather the emergence of moments/actions that may reveal emotion, interest, or singularity.

A big thank you for making your time available for this interview, which will be particularly important in my study.

Here are the Points that will be explored during the interview:

- **Current situation of Education in emergencies and coordination of EiE**
- EiE research
- **Coordinator position: feelings, perspectives, examples,...**
- Interrelations in EiE coordination
- **Development North-South/decolonization/localization/nexus**
- Coordination network and power relations

Appendix E

Email invitation for interview:

Dear participant,

Thank you so much for your response and your availability!

As talked with you informally on Skype, I would be happy to e-meet you next Thursday, **July 1st**, at 10h30 CEST for a Zoom call to discuss coordination in EiE. As I mentioned, one of my supervisors, Professor Fernando Ilidio (most probably), **will also attend** the interview, with your consent, as an observer.

During the interview, I'll ask you to draw a sketch or diagram so, if possible, I'll ask you to **have some pen and paper** with you.

I'm studying Sociology and Education Policy at the University of Minho, with a scholarship. With this study, I would like to have an overview of the Education in Emergency coordination from different perspectives and realities. I want to collect not just answers but real perceptions, emotions, and narratives from the members of the Education Cluster at the Global, Country, and Local level. Furthermore, I want to unveil new learnings, different perspectives, and opportunities for innovation.

After a preliminary literature review, I am interviewing some Education Cluster Coordinators/specialists/partners to gather some perspectives, feelings, and views. Then, I intend to do interviews and later collect micro-narratives from different cluster members.

Attached to this email, you can find the **Consent Letter** and some topics that will be explored during the interview. - After reading and if agreed, as a form of consent and since the interview will be conducted remotely, **I ask you to send an email** in which you say that you voluntarily agree to participate in the activities under the conditions described above. You can just answer this email with the following sentence: "**I agree to participate in the interview under the conditions described in the consent attached to the previews mail.**"

Thank you so much, and I hope to e-meet you soon!

Warm regards

Mara Pinto

Appendix F



Interview road map

Points to be considered during the interview:

Considering the Cluster's coordination to be a complex environment and valuing the perspectives of each element, an informal interview is intended, with the main objective of allowing the participants to express themselves. We also intend that they can interpret their own voice through a reflective moment of a scheme produced at the moment.

With almost biographical questions, a subjective, expressive narrative is sought, based on the narrators themselves as individuals. Thus, there are no correct or incorrect answers, nor more or less substantiated opinions. The facts are not sought, but the emergence of moments/actions that can reveal emotionality, interest, and uniqueness.

1. **How do you see the current situation of Education in emergencies? And about the coordination of EiE?**

2. **What would you like to see addressed in research on the coordination of Education in emergencies? What issues related to the coordination of education in emergencies would you like to see addressed during this investigation? How do you consider the situation of research and the role of academia in EiE and in particular in the coordination of education?**

3. **What led you to work in EiE? What made you choose this position? How did you decide to work in EiE? What attracted you and what attracts you? And challenges?**

4. **Imagine you have a friend who wants to run for the position of coordinator of**

Cluster Education. What would I tell you? How would you explain what you do and how you do it?

5. **If you wanted to share with a friend a story that happened to you (event, situation, episode) ...**

6. **What do you think and feel about your work?**

7. **How would you define the relationship you have with the different actors (members, local clusters, MoE)? (What is valued, how does it happen, how are points on international agendas and local agendas prioritized at national meetings?)**

8. **What have you found in other coordinating colleagues and collaborators that excites, intrigues, and/or inspires you?**

9. **If you had a magic wand, what would you change in the architecture of humanitarian coordination and in particular Education in Emergency?**

10. **What organizations, institutions, people do you work with daily? Can you draw us a diagram/sketch of the network of contacts, in +/- 5 minutes, which you activate more frequently or in an important way? Can you explain this scheme to us? We will ask to draw it again with more time. I propose 5 days (do you think the time is adjusted?) To elaborate with other details as you wish and send me by email with a short explanatory text. Can be? I know that your time is scarce, but it would be truly relevant and enriching for my research.**

11. **In which sense you see the development in this context?**

Appendix G

Other SM stories and some findings

SM story	Brief summary
1.1. Give your story a title or a hashtag#: ENCOUNTERED THE MIND OF THE CONFLICT	
In 2017, we gained access to a conflict-hit community in the SW Region of Cameroon. I came in contact with some separatist fighters who disguised as builders. We were engaging conflict affected children in "Sports and Recreational games for mental healing and positive coping mechanisms" using footballs, handballs, basketballs and volley balls. Each time we go out with these children some would take a different path to get to the learning center. This made me curious as the project coordinator. So one day I used same path to see if it was safe for the children. When I got there, I saw three boys carrying sand. Immediately I said "wow, it's been long since I carried sand, can I try?" One of them immediately looked at me and said "you look like a spy, we have never seen you here" Immediately it dawned to me that these were separatists, and a little fear set in. And I told them that "I am not a spy, I only play sports and recreational games with these children who have been traumatized with the current situation of our country, And children love these activities that is why I always come here, you can find out yourselves" From that	In 2017, access was gained to a conflict-affected community in the SW Region of Cameroon. While engaging children in sports and recreational activities for mental healing, the project coordinator discovered that some children took alternative routes to the learning center. Investigating this, the coordinator encountered separatist fighters disguised as builders. Initial suspicion turned into an opportunity for building trust, as these fighters allowed the activities to continue after confirming the project's non-political nature. Over time, a relationship of mutual respect and understanding was established, facilitated by a well-respected community leader, leading to continuous monitoring and eventual trust-building. Key findings Social Capital (Bourdieu, 1986) and Trust Networks encountered the mind of the conflict story: The involvement of a respected community leader to gain access to the community illustrates the importance of social capital, "a capital of social connections" (Bourdieu, 1984). Trust networks are crucial in conflict zones where formal authority

day, I started seeing these guys each time we are in the communities playing with the children. We later found out that some of the children were theirs and after every sports activity, they asked their children what we said or taught. It was the most critical moment which I saw the need for careful communication, trust, and community involvement in conflict sensitive areas. What made these separatists to allow us was/is that we accessed this community through a well known and loved community leader, and our project was conflict sensitive (different from the regular history subjects which is related to the ongoing conflict, no symbol of the government was use in terms of colors, etc). As the project continued we were regularly monitored by these guys. Until date, we have built continuous trust.	structures may be mistrusted, met with suspicion, or contested. The ability to leverage these networks can determine the success of interventions and the safety of those involved. Power Dynamics (Michel Foucault, 1975) in the encountered the mind of the conflict story: The regular monitoring of the project by separatist fighters indicates a form of community surveillance that reflects underlying power dynamics. This surveillance serves as a mechanism of control and reassurance for the fighters, ensuring that the project remains non-threatening to their interests. It also highlights the constant negotiation of power between different social actors in conflict zones. power dynamics and biopolitics Michel Foucault's (1978) in the story encountered the mind of the conflict, the interaction with separatist fighters who monitored the project reflects how power operates within social interactions, shaping identities and behaviors through surveillance and control. This dynamic of monitoring and control demonstrates the exercise of biopower, where the fighters assert their authority and influence over the community and external actors, guiding behavior and maintaining dominance within the societal structure.
1.1. Give your story a title or a hashtag#: DISPOSTIFS PÉDAGOGIQUES EN TEMPS DE CRISE ET ACHÈVEMENT DU CYCLE SCOLAIRE CHEZ LES JEUNES ÉCOLES DÉSCOLARISÉS DE LA ZONE DU GRAND-NORD CAMEROUN.	

Au Cameroun par exemple, les exactions perpétrées par la secte islamique "Boko Haram" dans la partie septentrionale du pays a conduit plusieurs élèves au décrochage scolaire, voire à l'abandon scolaire. La situation devenant un peu plus stable, rien n'a été déployé afin que les élèves qui ont abandonnés l'école puissent y retourner. Par ailleurs, quelles stratégies mettre sur pied afin qu'ils rattrapent les niveaux perdus?	Boko Haram's attacks in Northern Cameroon caused significant school dropouts. Despite stabilization, no measures were implemented to help these students return to school. Strategies are needed to help these students catch up academically.
1.1. Give your story a title or a hashtag#: #schoolingongeoundzero	
At the height of the crisis in the NWSW Cameroon, my organization came up with a strategy to reach out-of-school children. This crisis targets education in all its forms, be it infrastructure, teachers, and students. To move within this context was not easy but with the strategy we put in place, we were able to reach about 6000 children with literacy and numeracy in collaboration with religious authorities. These authorities are considered neutral by both parties in the conflict reason why we were able to implement this project.	During the height of the NWSW Cameroon crisis, an organization implemented a strategy to reach out-of-school children. Targeting education infrastructure, teachers, and students, the strategy successfully provided literacy and numeracy education to 6,000 children, collaborating with religious authorities considered neutral by both conflict parties. Key findings Coordination as Entangled Networks (Thévenot, 1993) In the story #schoolingongeoundzero, the collaboration with religious authorities, who were considered neutral, exemplifies the intertwining of networks essential for successful coordination. This approach ensured that 6,000 children received literacy and numeracy education, demonstrating how integrating various actors and fostering trust can lead to effective educational interventions

	in conflict settings.
1.1. Give your story a title or a hashtag#:	
In the course of the sociopolitical crisis in the Northwest and Southwest regions which started in 2016, there was an established Education cluster, which was new to me and all the other education development actors within the context since we had never been faced with any crisis before, especially not one of this magnitude. I understood from introductory meetings that this was a coordination mechanism put in place to ensure coordination of education responses through the cluster, for strengthening system-wide preparedness (after identifying gaps in	The socio-political crisis in NWSW Cameroon led to the formation of an Education Cluster to coordinate responses. This mechanism improved preparedness, reduced duplication of efforts, and ensured better quality interventions. It also facilitated advocacy, monitoring, and collaboration with other sectors to address cross-cutting issues. The cluster's strategy review improved the response quality and accountability, enabling better advocacy for funding and providing conflict-affected children with safe, quality education.

response) and for avoiding duplication of efforts. Since the establishment of this coordination mechanism, education actors within the NWSW regions and especially within the cluster have built the capacity they need to respond according to set national and international standards for EiE; the quality of the response is better, there is a transparency and accountability in the responses, responses are more predictable and timelier which reduces waste and duplication of efforts. The cluster has also played a major role in supporting robust advocacy and in monitoring and evaluating performance of the interventions carried out so far. Together with the cluster members, there was a cluster strategy review that was effectively and efficiently done to ensure a coordinated and effective response. Thanks to the knowledge gained, we are able to work closely with other sectors and their clusters (such as Protection including Child Protection, Gender, Health, Nutrition, Livelihood etc) to address cross-cutting issues such as gender inequality, inclusion, child safeguarding and child protection, child participation, as well as other problems that have come up in the course of the crisis such as COVID-19, Cholera and the issue of hunger and attacks on schools that prevents children from learning in schools. Before the technical capacities of education actors was built, there used to be a lot of	Key findings Adaptability in Dynamic Systems (Morin, 2005; Snowden, 2011) in the adaptation of children's behavior story: The adaptation of children to using non-school bags and regular clothing illustrates the principles of complexity theory, which emphasize the adaptability and flexibility of dynamic systems in response to evolving conditions. The children's and the community's adaptability showcase their resilience and the inherent flexibility within social systems to thrive amidst uncertainty and instability.
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confusion, duplication of efforts, low/inadequate quality interventions between the education actors which led to more problems in a context where education was already being used as a weapon of war. Children have a right to learn and thanks to the coordination mechanism of the Education cluster, decisions are made in a coordinated/orderly manner with a proper mechanism set for accountability to the affected population. Furthermore, thanks to activities such as the Education cluster strategy review, there is a reliable document that can be used to advocate for funding required to ensure that more conflict-affected children have an opportunity to access safe, quality and inclusive education within their current host communities.	
1.1. Give your story a title or a hashtag#: #readapt	
I'm a member of the ed cluster and I'm always participating in the meetings and so. I think the cluster helps us a lot. The meetings are always very interesting but the people are always changing and many times there are no coordinator or no IMO. So all the time the cluster is learning our names and our posts...	As a member of the Education Cluster, the participant regularly attends meetings, finding them beneficial and interesting. However, he notes that frequent changes in participants and the absence of consistent leadership, such as coordinators or Information Management Officers (IMOs), lead to inefficiencies.
1.1. Give your story a title or a hashtag#: BEST PRACTICES IN EDUCATION IN EMERGENCIES	
In 2018, I initiated E I E after my field work in Zambia: South Africa. I return home to Cameroon and I am currently working in	After fieldwork in Zambia and South Africa, the participant initiated the EiE project in Cameroon, focusing on Gender-Based

GBVIE and EiE . It's a great success stories.I registered	Violence in Emergencies (GBVIE) and EiE. The initiative achieved significant success.
1.1. Give your story a title or a hashtag#: THE IMPACT OF COVID 19 PANDEMIC TO THE COORDINATION OF EDUCATION ACTIVITIES IN EASTERN REGION OF CAMEROON.	
In Cameroon's Eastern Region, an education sector coordination mechanism was set up and brought together the various actors involved in the education sector, under the leadership of the Ministry of Basic Education (Regional Delegation of Basic Education) and the UNICEF co-lead. Unfortunately, with the occurrence of the covid 19 pandemic, the meetings were suspended, and even after the resumption of the activities, a slackening was observed because it was necessary to organize the meetings remotely using technologies which were accessible to some actors, taking into account the lack of appropriate tools (computers, problems of internet connection, difficulties of use of the computer tool with new software, ...). Today, we are at the phase of revitalization (...)	An education sector coordination mechanism was established in Cameroon's Eastern Region, led by the Ministry of Basic Education and UNICEF. The COVID-19 pandemic disrupted activities, but efforts to revitalize the mechanism continue despite challenges related to technology.