

Technology to Support Education in Crisis and Conflict Settings Ideation Challenge

Summary

The disruption of basic education services due to crisis and conflict situations has long-term consequences for students' educational attainment and development. Technology offers an opportunity to reach and teach learners, who often cannot gather in traditional school settings in periods of such disruption, and prevent the stalling or reversal of educational and literacy gains in affected regions. Education could also provide psycho-social support and promote child and youth well-being in these settings. **The Seeker is looking for technology-enabled approaches to provide basic education in one or more of the following crisis or conflict situations: Health Crisis, Natural Disaster, and Conflict Zones.** Proposed Solutions should be usable within the first six months after the onset of the crisis or conflict and be usable within the context of a developing country.

Submit your idea in 1,000 words or less

Background

- **Crisis or conflict situations, and their immediate aftermath, can severely disrupt the delivery and quality of basic education services.**
- Even once the crisis or conflict subsides, this interruption can **have long-term consequences on student enrolment and retention in school as well as their cognitive, academic and socio- emotional development.**
- This means **educational gains in affected regions can quickly be stalled or even reversed** as a result of this disruption.
- As a result of missed schooling due to conflict or crisis, a large number of students are over age per grade level. (i.e. older than the average age of those in the same grade level).
- **Girls' educational attainment is particularly impacted by crises or conflicts** since they are already disproportionately under-enrolled in school and subject to gender-based violence. The educational attainment of marginalised children, such as children with disabilities, is particularly impacted by crises and conflict.
- **Child welfare is also impacted by teaching and learning materials, provided in areas where children have been relocated to, which may contain discriminatory content and/or promote controversial and exclusionary messages.**
- Crisis and conflict often **disrupts other resources, beyond access to formal education that could be used to provide alternative educational delivery mechanisms**, including trained human resources (e.g. qualified teachers).

The Challenge

The Seeker is looking for technology--supported approaches for adapting, developing and delivering learner-centered educational materials for learners in crisis and conflict situations



where formal schooling has been interrupted and infrastructure and trained, in-person human resources are extremely limited.

Students may have:

- impaired educational cognition/retention due to trauma or injuries sustained as part of the crisis
- socio-emotional needs and difficulties engaging in the learning process

Proposed Solutions should focus on a specific country, area or region in a developing country and be deployable within the first six months after the onset of one or more of the following crisis or conflict situations:

- **Health Crisis:** (e.g. Ebola Crisis) As has been seen with the recent Ebola crisis, schools may be closed as a containment measure to prevent the spread of disease. Infrastructure, while perhaps weakened due to lack of manpower, may still be present.
- **Natural Disaster:** (e.g. Philippines Typhoon Haiyan) In the aftermath of typhoons, earthquakes, floods, storms, or other natural disaster events, schools and homes may be destroyed or damaged along with power, transportation, utilities, and telecommunications infrastructure. Students and their families may relocate to temporary camps.
- **Conflict Zone:** (e.g. Syrian Refugee Crisis) During conflict, violence by armed groups may force school closures or schools may remain open but serious safety concerns exist regarding student welfare at school. Additionally, conflict often disrupts existing infrastructure and limits the availability of human resources, such as teachers. Depending on the type of violence, students and their families remain at home or may flee to displacement or refugee camps with limited infrastructure and dismal living conditions. Curricular content, particularly as it relates to ethnic, social, and religious norms, may be a source of contention.

Proposed Solutions should specify the crisis and/or conflict situation(s) selected and include a description of the setting the approach is being implemented in, the telecommunication infrastructure and technology assets being utilized, the form in which the educational content would be delivered and the target group.

Proposed Solutions should not include any personal identifying information the Solvers do not wish to make public, or any information the Solvers may consider as their Intellectual Property that they do not wish to share. While the settings should be realistic and Solvers may choose to highlight a specific crisis and/or conflict, there should be justification for the assumptions made, deep knowledge or research is not necessary and the setting can be theoretical.

Awards

This is an Ideation Challenge, which has the following unique features:

- **There is a guaranteed award.** The awards will be paid to the best submission(s) **as solely determined by a panel of expert judges, based on the Evaluation Criteria.** The total payout will be up to \$50,000, with at least one award in each of the three categories being no smaller than \$5,000 and no other award being smaller than \$1,500.



- The Solvers are not required to transfer exclusive intellectual property rights to the Seeker. **Rather, by submitting a proposal, the Solvers grants to the Seeker a royalty-free, perpetual, and non-exclusive license to use any information included in this proposal.**

Submissions to this Challenge must be received by 11:59 PM (US Eastern Time) on 30 March 2015. Late submissions will not be considered.

After the Challenge deadline, the Seeker will complete a review process and determine the Winning Solution(s). All Solvers that submitted a proposal will be notified on the status of their submissions; however, **no detailed evaluation of individual submissions will be provided.**

ABOUT THE SEEKER

The partners for this call are the [U.S. Agency for International Development \(USAID\)](#), [World Vision](#), the [Australian government](#), [Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation \(NORAD\)](#), and the [United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees \(UNHCR\)](#). All partners have an interest in leveraging innovative approaches to improve access to quality education in crisis and/or conflict situations.

All Children Reading: A Grand Challenge for Development ([ACR GCD](#)), established in 2011 as a partnership between the [U.S. Agency for International Development \(USAID\)](#), [World Vision](#) and the [Australian Government](#), aims to catalyze the creation and expansion of scalable, low-cost solutions to improve literacy for early-grade students in developing countries, including those in crisis and/or conflict. For the purposes of this call, ACR GCD is collaborating with additional organizations to incorporate a broader range of basic education services which can include, though not exclusively focus on, early grade reading.



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Solution Requirements

For all three crisis/conflict situations:

1. *Time Frame:* Solvers should target their Proposed Solutions toward providing learners **access to basic education within the first six months** after the onset of the crisis.
2. *Location:* **Solvers should specify the country, area or region** they are targeting within developing countries and where their Proposed Solution would take place, for example, within a student's home, other community space, or in a camp for displaced persons. If targeted learners are living outside of their home country, some reference should be made by solvers to the realities of instruction and content reflecting the local language and culture as opposed to the learners' native language and culture.
3. *Available assets and infrastructure:* Proposed Solutions should **work using the expected functioning technology assets and telecommunications infrastructure available in their target country, area or region** after the onset of the crisis and/or conflict situation. While this wouldn't preclude introduction of other externally-sourced technologies and accompanying assets, these should build upon existing assets already present in the target country, area, or region.
4. *Form of educational content:* Proposed Solutions should include **a description of the technologies that are being utilized and the form in which the educational content might be delivered** (i.e. the teaching methodology used and what the output would look like). The Solver's approach should adapt/develop and deliver the educational content so that it is **relevant, engaging, and encourages usage by students**. It could also include a description of whether it can be adapted to the individual learning needs of students. Solvers are not required to generate a new program of educational content. However, proposed solutions **should ideally be able to incorporate existing materials and techniques** and reinforce and improve upon existing Ministry of Education strategies. Proposed Solutions can be designed to be implemented by any educational actor in the targeted country, area or region.
5. *Cost-effective and appropriate:* Proposed Solutions should be **cost-effective and appropriate for the age group and local context**.
6. *Vulnerable populations:* Proposed Solutions should address the particular **needs of vulnerable populations** (i.e. girls, religious/ethnic minorities and students with disabilities).

Desired but non-essential inclusions and considerations

- Solvers should consider the four Protection Principles of the Humanitarian Charter, as described [here](#), when developing their Proposed Solutions.

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Judging Criteria

Idea submissions will be screened to ensure they meet the following mandatory criteria. The proposed solution must:

- Utilize technology-supported approaches
- Provide basic education content
- Be deliverable outside of formal schooling contexts

Ideas that meet these three criteria will be eligible for further judging. Judges will evaluate submitted ideas based on the following categories and award points as described below. Scores from all categories will be totaled and scores from judges will be averaged.

Criteria	Point Values	Points
Appropriateness to described context within the first six months of a crisis or conflict onset	<p>0: Solution does not consider local context or effects of crisis or conflict on available infrastructure or services.</p> <p>1: Solution considers effects of crisis or conflict but does not present a realistic depiction of available infrastructure and services available within six months.</p> <p>2: Solution is responsive to realistic depiction of potential crisis within six months but does not fully build upon functioning infrastructure and services. Solution may not be tailored to local culture.</p> <p>3: Submission features realistic depiction of potential crisis. Solution utilizes and builds upon functioning infrastructure and services available within the first six months of described crisis and does not require infrastructure that is unavailable. Solution is tailored to local culture, as described by solver.</p>	/3
Technical feasibility of developing and implementing the idea	<p>0: Solution proposes technology or delivery mechanisms that are beyond logical possibility.</p> <p>1: Solution utilizes technology or delivery mechanisms that are technically possible but has large practical hurdles to its implementation.</p> <p>2: Solution could feasibly be implemented but will require extensive time and resources for development.</p> <p>3: Solution uses existing technical capabilities that could be feasibly implemented and would not require extensive time or resources for development.</p>	/3

Potential impact on maintaining educational outcomes	<p>0: Solution is likely to have minimal effect in preserving educational outcomes.</p> <p>1: Solution provides educational value but does not build upon existing instructional materials and provides minimal engagement with student.</p> <p>2: Solution has the ability to adapt or incorporate existing instructional materials and techniques but does not ensure student engagement with material (or vice versa).</p> <p>3: Solution has the ability to adapt or incorporate existing instructional materials and techniques. Solution will ensure student engagement with material.</p>	/3
Cost-effectiveness	<p>0: Cost-per-learner is too high to consider implementation.</p> <p>1: Cost-per-learner is high but still viable for potential implementation.</p> <p>2: Solution offers reasonable cost-per-learner estimate which represents an excellent investment for potential implementer.</p>	/2
Innovativeness of approach	<p>0: Solution already exists in its entirety and does not offer any new value.</p> <p>1: Solution is largely already in existence but adapts it in a new way.</p> <p>2: Solution represents bold and novel approach.</p>	/2
Inclusiveness for vulnerable populations	<p>0: Solution makes no consideration of vulnerable populations (i.e. girls, religious/ethnic minorities, students with disabilities).</p> <p>1: Solution considers vulnerable populations but does not adapt solution to engage these groups in meaningful way.</p> <p>2: Solution is adapted to ensure inclusiveness of vulnerable populations.</p>	/2
TOTAL		/15

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Resources and Definitions

Cost-effectiveness: This will be based on the estimated unit cost per learner (including fixed start-up costs and operating costs).

Basic education: For the purpose of this Challenge, this includes all program and policy efforts aimed at improving pre-primary education, primary education, secondary education (delivered informal or non-formal settings), and programs promoting learning for out-of school youth and adults. Capacity building for teachers, administrators, counsellors, and youth workers is included. Basic education includes literacy, numeracy, and other basic skills development for learners as described by [USAID](#). The common thread among these elements is that they help learners gain the general skills and basic knowledge needed to function effectively in all aspects of life.

Technology: A broad range of information and communications technologies, audio and video media. These can include: hardware, software, and Internet and mobile applications (among other platforms).

Further information on the minimum standards for education in emergency situations can be found [here](#).