



Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies  
Réseau Inter-Agences pour l'Éducation D'Urgence  
La Red Interagencial para Educación en Situaciones de Emergencia

## Case Study on Teacher Compensation

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**Name of your organisation:** War Child Holland

**Date of program or policy implementation described in the case study:** January 2007 – today.

**Location of program or policy implementation described in the case study:** Bukavu, DR Congo

### Background

Within War Child we have limited experience with teacher compensation. Mostly we are involved in a subsector of education, mainly training of teachers in e.g. child development, creative methods and participatory, child-centered learning. Not being part of the complete education picture, we are less confronted with the compensation issue. However our programme in Bukavu, DRC is an exception, and here we do feel the dilemmas on a small scale.

The context in which the programme takes place is in *chronic crisis*<sup>1</sup>. In the city of Bukavu we are building the capacity of 6 local NGO's who work with marginalized children and young people. These are small organizations specialized in non-formal education such as numeracy and literacy, catch up education and vocational training.

The teachers in these centers are:

- √ Teachers in NGO/ community supported non-formal education programs/ learning centers
- √ Teachers with or without formal teaching qualifications
- √ Volunteer teachers and paraprofessionals

Most teachers have a formal qualification, "D4/D6", indicating 4 to 6 years of secondary school in the teaching stream, same as teachers in regular primary schools.

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<sup>1</sup> Although, the war officially ended in 2003, the conflict persists within Eastern DRC.

## Teacher Compensation

Our NGO partners have found resources to pay their teachers in different way: sometimes supported by funds from INGOs (such as War Child Holland), sometimes their association members pay a regular contribution (people in the community who donate to the organization through membership fees), and sometimes children are asked to pay a small monthly fee for their classes.

The teacher compensation is an issue. We do now include payment of an incentive for the teachers (encadreurs), but it is very low - around \$10-\$15/month. Some partner organizations are increasing this amount in 2008, (to \$15 - \$25 and one even to \$80). This increase is accounted for in different ways: one NGO is requiring its members to contribute more; three NGOs are setting up income-generating projects with War Child Holland support that will bring in additional income to be used for increasing teacher salaries. Overall the vocational trainers are paid more than the primary level teachers as it is more difficult to find qualified vocational trainers who can teach well. The NGO with the highest standards and best vocational trainers is the one which pays the highest salaries; they also have the highest accounting & reporting standards and therefore receive more INGO support than other local NGOs.

Our funds are dispersed to the local NGOs in a transparent manner ensuring that all staff members are aware of the amount received and the way in which it is meant to be used. The partner organisation is required to deposit these funds directly into a bank account. An audit was carried out by internal War Child Holland staff after the first six months; at the end of the year an audit was completed by an external firm of professional auditors. After the first six months one partner organisation was found to have misused funds and our collaboration with this partner organisation was terminated. Partner organizations also received training in financial management at the start of the project.

Several of our partner organizations have had a serious problem with trained teachers leaving to find better-paid work elsewhere. The irony is that once they have undergone some training provided by War Child and receive a certificate, they can then find better-paid work. It is frustrating. One partner organisation, for example, had a good teacher who participated in our literacy training class and was very enthusiastic, but left not long after when offered a better-paid opportunity. Now they need to look for another teacher, and we must consider repeating our trainings.

We wish to keep the percentage of the project budget paid for NGO staff salaries within a certain range to ensure that enough is still spent on capacity building and equipment; however the high turnover of staff is also an impediment to our project goals. It is quite a challenge!

## Policy and Coordination

We do not discuss compensation issues with any government office.

We share/exchange information with other international donors on a regular basis to ensure that there is no double funding of projects. In one case this is done through the local NGO which openly reports to us the amount they receive from another INGO and explains clearly how the different aspects of their work will be funded by the two different INGOs. With another partner organisation we have checked the information provided to us with the other international organization. We participate in local INGO coordination meetings and share information generally with them.

## Teacher Motivation, Support and Supervision

Aside from salary payments through the project, our motivation and support has included regular visits to the partner organizations; regular teacher observations and feedback sessions; and a series of in-service trainings on a wide range of subjects. These trainings are on-going for the duration of the project.

In spite of this, teacher absenteeism and general lack of motivation (due to very low salaries) is a serious problem. There is also a high turnover rate for teachers, which reduces the overall impact of our work. The teachers in the local NGOs are paid between \$10 - \$25/month, whereas teachers in most primary schools get between \$30 - \$50/month. When an opening arises in a formal school, one of the NGO teachers will take the opportunity of the higher paid position. The more able/better motivated teachers find positions in regular schools faster once they've gained experience, and therefore it is the less-able teachers who remain in the NGOs. The NGO directors do not feel they can demand better work or more consistent presence because they know that their teachers are not paid enough to survive and they need to take on other outside work in order to eat.