

**MINUTES FROM NGO EDUCATION FORUM**  
**2 April 2003 at Flyktningerådet**

**Participants:** 19 representatives from various organisations. See attached list.

**Welcome and presentation of participants:**

- Petter Nome (Norwegian Refugee Council) wished everybody welcome to the Forum.
- Eldrid K. Midttun informed participants that the “Education – Job Number 1” strategy paper is now presented on the website of the International Network on Education in Emergencies ([www.ineesite.org](http://www.ineesite.org)). She also informed about her recent secondment as Education Sector Coordinator in Amman and the new sector cooperation model of UN agencies in preparedness for a post war Iraq. The positive aspect is that Education is established as a Sector on a par with the more traditional ones, like Water and Sanitation, Food and Health.
- Short round of presentations by the participants.

**The agenda was presented:**

1. Presentation by Robert Smith on Poverty Reduction Strategy Programmes (PRSPs) and their link to education.
2. Discussion.
3. Presentation by Kari Vestbø on research project.
4. Agreement on topic, venue and date for the next meeting.

**1. Presentation by Robert Smith on Poverty Reduction Strategy Programmes:**

Robert Smith informed the Forum about the increased international focus on poverty and the different definitions of the concept. He explained how the poverty perspective is being addressed in education planning, and what the competing imperatives in education are. Furthermore, he discussed the dominant influence of PRSPs in education planning and action, the advantages and disadvantages with PRSPs, and their role in relation to education. He concluded that PRSPs are important instruments and a step in the right direction (they demand a stronger focus on poverty and promote transparency), but said that they are too simplistic.

**2. Discussion:**

PRSPs are often not considered relevant for education projects. NGOs should make an effort to integrate their projects into PRSPs and to encourage local partners to provide input into the PRSP. NGOs can promote a wider understanding of poverty – not just poverty in the economic sense – and encourage authorities to treat PRSPs as a “living document” and not as a once off exercise. NGOs should encourage authorities to use the principles of PRSP development also in other contexts. The role of education should be to help to develop the capacity to participate.

Robert Smith suggested that we should not focus too much on documents but rather concentrate on identifying how we can make a real difference for the communities: to ask “if we do this, what impact will it have on you?”

**3. Presentation by Kari Vestbø on research project:**

The aim is to publish a book with articles on education and development, written preferably by authors from the South. Kari would like to have suggestions from Forum

participants on topics and persons who could possibly contribute with articles. NGOs will be able to sponsor the book by buying “advertising space” in the book.

**4. Agreement on topic, venue and date for the next meeting:**

The Forum agreed that the topic for the next meeting would be the role of NGOs in education (development programmes). The meeting will be hosted by LINS in mid-June. Suggestions for dates will be circulated by e-mail. Topics for future meetings: 1) AIDS and education, 2) The rights perspective on education, 3) Partnerships between North and South.

2 April 2003, Petra Pellfolk/Flyktingerådet