What are "recovery curricula" and what do they include? A literature review

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Abstract:

The concept of educational recovery is relevant to many systems, both those that experience some form of sudden disruption as well as those that historically have been prone to disruption. Our involvement in developing a curriculum framework for displaced learners in the Learning Passport project (UNICEF, 2020) made us more aware of the field of Education in Emergencies. An educational emergency is a situation where "man-made or natural disasters destroy, within a short period of time, the usual conditions of life, care and education facilities for children and therefore disrupt, deny, hinder, progress or delay the realisation of the right to education" (Committee on the Rights of the Child, 2008, p. 1). The COVID-19 pandemic has made the concept of emergency and recovery more relevant to even more education systems. The literature review described in this article was carried out to identify what recovery curricula are (e.g., what they seek to achieve, what information they cover, etc.), as well as to consider any evidence for their efficacy. By exploring the recovery curricula literature, we also wanted to consider the extent to which the concept is a singular, generalisable one, or whether it is tied to specific contexts.

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Introduction

Curriculum review, the systematic study of curriculum-related documents, allows us insight into the social context of education. Such study tells us something about the conditions, aspirations and objectives that are important when a curriculum was developed. This point is conveyed by Stabback (2016, p. 6) when he states: "the curriculum ... embodies a society's educational aims and purposes". Similarly, changes to educational curricula are also indicative of concurrent changes in the surrounding social context (Swiss National Science Foundation, 2017). Observations suggest that such changes may reflect responses to unfolding situations such as economic crisis (Ragnarsdóttir & Jóhannesson, 2014), ideological shifts (Dichter, 2012; Hallama, 2020) or calls for decolonisation (Lidher, McIntosh & Alexander, 2020; Winter, 2018).

Recovery curricula are developed in response to educational disruption and have an important role in educational rebuilding. "Recovery" has many associations, including medical, economic, and nation building (following conflict), although the common component of all emergencies is that they require an educational response to be developed in situations that are fluid and often unforeseen. This literature review draws from documents that cover all these forms of emergency, and includes academic papers, government policy and guidance documents, non-governmental organisation (NGO), charity and United Nations (UN) agency reports, and educationalists' blogs.

In the first two decades of the 21st century there appears to have been a heightened interest in recovery curricula[1], and so a study of the character of these curricula can also tell us something about the educational conditions over this period.

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1   The Scopus database contains 19 documents with the term "Recovery Curriculum" in the title. 18 of these documents were published between 2000 and 2022.

What do we mean by "educational curricula"?

Before looking at recovery curricula in detail it is useful to consider what is meant by educational curricula. Curriculum is a contested and often misunderstood concept. Simple conceptualisations that imply a course of study are insufficient for understanding the complex processes of schooling. Some educationalists favour a definition that considers curriculum to be an umbrella term denoting the totality of the learning experience of children and young people in school (Priestley, 2019). This mirrors the characterisation expressed by John Kerr, who defined the curriculum as "all the learning which is planned and guided by the school, whether it is carried on in groups or individually, inside or outside the school" (Kerr, 1968, p. 16). Both of these conceptualisations ensure that the concept of curriculum includes the "what", "how" and "why" of learning (learning objectives; content; the way that learning is structured; strategies for instruction; and assessment). This all-encompassing definition can be seen in some contemporary national initiatives. For example, in Scotland's *Curriculum for Excellence* the curriculum is "the totality of all that is planned for children and young people throughout their education" (Scottish Government, 2008, p. 13), and in the new curriculum for Wales "A school's curriculum is everything a learner experiences ... It is not simply what we teach, but how we teach and crucially, why we teach it" (Welsh Government, 2020b).

According to Porter and Smithson (2001) it is important to distinguish between "intended" and "enacted" curricula. Intended curricula include overt, documented, stated curricular ambitions, and these are likely to be found in published policy texts or guidance documents. In contrast, enacted curricula include the lived or received learning experiences that can be evidenced from observational data. For methodological reasons I use a relatively narrow conceptualisation of the curriculum, one with a greater emphasis on curricular aspirations than on observed curricular experiences. An important part of my literature review covers policy and guidance documents, and these tend to convey the intended rather than the enacted curriculum (see Creese, Gonzalez & Isaacs, 2016, for a study with similar aims and concerns). Moreover, the contemporaneous character of the review literature means that it is unlikely that there would be evidence of curriculum impact (since it can sometimes take years for the full effects of a curriculum initiative to achieve its impact). Despite this, my review methodology did allow me to gather information about a variety of curriculum contexts, which it would be difficult to achieve through other approaches.

Before looking in detail at the review methods, I will discuss the concept of educational recovery.

What do we mean by "recovery" in education?

Definitions of educational recovery and the role of curricula in that process are relatively opaque in the academic literature[2]. Dictionary definitions of recovery focus on ideas around returning to a previous or "normal" state or regaining possession or control of something lost. In educational terms, such loss might relate to a diminished access to learning, or reductions in expected levels of attainment as a consequence of some man-made or natural disruption to the education system. As a consequence, educational recovery appears to link with ideas around reinstating access to established curriculum objectives and content, and these will differ according to specific cultural and historical contexts.

Mentions of recovery curricula in relation to educational disruption are found across a variety of contexts. These contexts include post-conflict situations (Barakat et al., 2013), school closure (Carpenter & Carpenter 2020), and natural disaster (Akbar & Sims, 2008). These curricula also span educational phases, from early years (Goddard, 2020) to secondary level (Sherwood, 2020).

Interestingly, references to recovery curricula appear across a range of national contexts, including England (Brennan, 2020; Dickens, 2020), Scotland (McLaughlin, 2020), Ghana (GhanaWeb, 2020) and the United States (Jawor, 2020). This international dimension is understandable. Recovery has a global dimension as these issues tend to cross national boundaries and can often lead to human displacement. For example, the contemporary scale of emergency human displacement is considerable, with children accounting for around half of the estimated 26 million refugees reported in 2019 (UNHCR, 2019b).

Recovery in education: from a specialised to a universal concern

These demographics help to explain why the field of Education in Emergencies has emerged and grown since the turn of the century. Reflecting on some recent intergovernmental responses to emerging crises, it appears that educational recovery is a central concept. For example, in outlining their mission UNESCO states "(a)s the UN lead agency for Education, UNESCO plays an active role in promoting education as a part of emergency response and for long-term recovery" (UNESCO, 2017). Looking at some specific initiatives across other UN agencies, we can see similar messages. In response to the effects of Hurricane Matthew in Cuba in 2017 UNICEF explains that "Many children ... needed early psychosocial recovery and new learning materials. UNICEF supported the Ministry of Education's recovery efforts by donating cases with school kits, primary education kits and recreation kits, all of which have helped children continue to learn" (López Fesser, 2017). In their review of their refugee education initiatives, UNHCR outlines that "For refugees, [education] is ... the surest road to recovering a sense of purpose and dignity after the trauma of displacement. It is – or should

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2 An initial search of academic literature reveals many references to "recovery education". This form of recovery tends to have a specifically medical focus, such as educational programmes dealing with mental health or alcohol dependency issues (e.g., see, Moos & Moos, 2006; Reid et al., 2020). This article does not deal with this medicalised concept of recovery but focuses on curricula that are designed in response to a general disruption in educational provision.

be – the route to labour markets and economic self-sufficiency, spelling an end to months or sometimes years of depending on others" (UNHCR, 2019b, p. 5).

This shared, intergovernmental interest led to the development of the Inter-agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE) in 2000 "as a communication mechanism for advocacy, knowledge sharing and the distribution of materials to promote improved collaboration and effectiveness in the context of education in emergencies" (Mendizabal & Hearn, 2011, p. 109). The centrality of educational recovery (and the influence of curricula on this) is clear in the INEE Minimum Standards for Education which they claim are "A global tool that articulates the minimum level of educational quality and access in emergencies through to recovery" (INEE, 2010). The Standards cover guidance on learning access, curricula and pedagogy, and policy formation (among other things).

There are clear parallels between the educational recovery work of the INEE and its partners and the educational responses to the COVID-19 pandemic. The emergency status of education in the pandemic is highlighted by data from the UNESCO Institute for Statistics. This data shows that there have been 130 country-wide school closures during the pandemic, affecting around 990 million learners (UNESCO, 2020).

The disruption to education systems as a response to the pandemic has led to an interest in the concept of a recovery curriculum and around the nature of the sorts of curricular responses that may be appropriate to this situation. In the next section of this article, I outline how I gathered and analysed information about recovery curricula to get a picture of this particular type of curriculum.

Review method

Fink (2010) and Heyvaert, Hannes and Onghena (2016) outline six curriculum review stages. These stages include research question formulation, database identification, search term definition, literature selection, literature reviewing, and synthesis of the research literature data. In my review I wanted to identify (1) the objectives and content that are included in recovery curriculum documents and (2) any evidence for the efficacy of such curricula. I included seven document sources[3], which then led to a snowball approach (e.g., see Atkinson & Flint 2001) that picked up some additional secondary sources. All the documents were published in English. I used three sets of search terms ("Recovery + Curriculum"; "Catch up + Curriculum", and "Education + Emergency + Curriculum"). I also limited the searches to research from the year 2000 as this coincides with the establishment of the INEE. This search identified 38 documents, and these included academic papers, government policy and guidance documents, NGO, charity and UN agency reports, and educationalists' blogs.

I used MAXQDA (VERBI Software, 2021) to collate and code these documents. These sources were tagged to identify the country, the educational phase, the

3 Clarivate Web of Science™; University of Cambridge iDiscover; Taylor & Francis Online; Wiley Online Library; ARD *Curriculum Watch* Data; Education Sub Saharan Africa Research Database; Inter-agency Network for Education in Emergencies website.

scope (i.e., national or regional), and the form of emergency that they related to. The 38 documents covered five different (although sometimes overlapping) emergency types (Figure 1). Health Emergency was the most commonly covered emergency type. Civil Conflict and Migration shared some overlaps (since one is often a spur for the other) but I kept these categories separate since their link is not a necessary one. I also had a "General" category of documents as some sources covered a variety of emergencies.
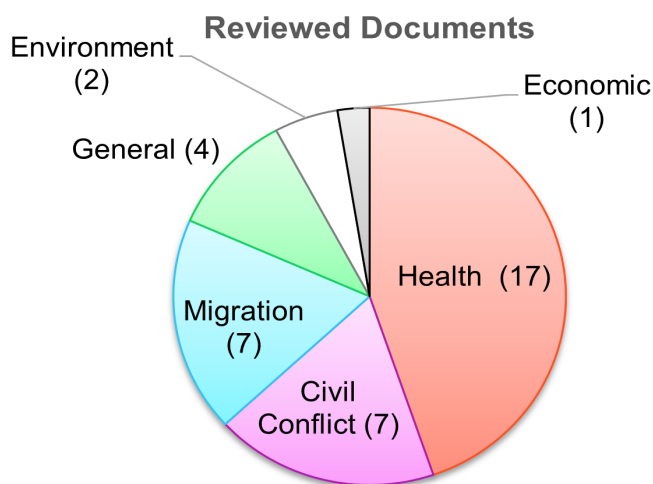
Figure 1: Emergency types covered in the source documents.

There were some apparent relationships between the curriculum document publication dates and the type of emergency that they were designed to deal with (Figure 2). The Health Emergency documents all emerged in 2020 (linked with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic), the Civil Conflict documents were published between 2000 and 2010 (focusing on education in East Timor-Leste, former Yugoslavia, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Liberia and Rwanda), while the Migration documents were published between 2009 and 2019 (focusing on South Africa, Kenya, Lebanon, Libya, Syria and Turkey).

Figure 2: Source document publication dates.

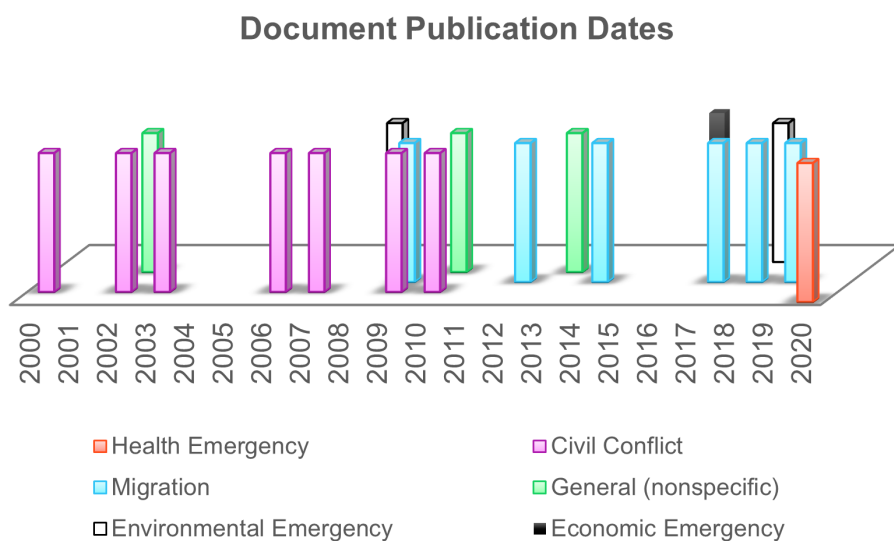The source documents were then reviewed, and a set of thematic codes developed and applied to each document. This coding then formed the basis of my synthesised analysis.

Analysis

My coding analysis suggested that the documents included information that fell into five different thematic areas. These areas were Curriculum Objectives; Pedagogy; Curriculum Content; information about the Curriculum Development Process, and Efficacy. My coding also allowed me to identify the most common information that was related to each thematic area (Table 1).

Table 1: Curriculum review themes.

Objective	Pedagogy	Content	Development	Efficacy
• Support wellbeing • Support teacher readiness • Support learner readiness	• Parent/ community involvement • Contextual-isation • Cross-curricular	• Language/ literacy • Maths/ numeracy • Health and wellbeing	• Rich resource development • Prioritisation	• Participation rates • Educational outcomes • Behaviour • Integration

Curriculum Objectives

It was very common for the curriculum objectives in recovery curricula source documents to relate to supporting learner wellbeing and teacher and learner readiness. Coding analysis showed that these elements were not discrete from each other but were linked holistically.

Supporting learner readiness had a social and emotional component, as well as connections with specific learning content (such as access to core foundational learning concepts in Language/Literacy and Maths/Numeracy). Supporting learner readiness commonly linked with building learner resilience and preparing learners to deal with uncertainty and new situations. Supporting learner readiness also linked with the idea of taking steps to reduce learner anxiety and reinforcing wellbeing through helping learners to build relationships, e.g., "a recovery approach … enables students of all ages to reconnect and rebuild emotional resilience with a strong focus on relationships" (Gray, 2020).

There was also a common link between learner readiness and with ensuring that teaching focused on the fundamentals of core skills and knowledge which would support the learner for later learning. These core skills and knowledge are termed "priority outcomes" by the The Inter-agency Accelerated Learning Working Group (AEWG) (2020, p. 2). This linkage between readiness and core learning areas was reflected in advice from the UK Department of Education around the COVID-19 lockdown in England: "it may be in the best interests of a year 11 pupil to discontinue an examined subject because the school judges that, for example, they would achieve significantly better in their remaining subjects as a result, especially in GCSE English and mathematics" (Department for Education, 2020).

Pedagogy

The most common pedagogic messages in the source documents indicated that there was a dual focus on (1) the need to flexibly adapt education to local conditions, and (2) the need to consider learners' social development through the way that the curriculum was delivered. The Pedagogy codes that appeared in most recovery curricula source documents related to involving parents and the local community. For example, Almasri et al., (2019, p. 95) highlight how the accepted "basic principles of education in emergencies involve adopting a community-based approach".

There were also common references to the need for flexible approaches to the delivery of the curriculum (including decisions involving school management, timetabling, governance etc.), or to contextualising the curriculum to learner needs. This point has clear links with the social and emotional components of the recovery curriculum objectives covered in the last section. One curriculum document expressed this as "(a)llow time for individual children and families to tell their lockdown stories. You can adapt curriculum content to reflect this or be flexible with delivery" (Cornerstones Education, 2020).

Recovery curricula were generally cross-disciplinary in structure. By encouraging educators to establish links between different knowledge areas, the documents were drawing educators' attention to the possibility of organising and delivering the curriculum in flexible ways. This issue also linked closely to the explicit goal of focusing on core knowledge content. The literature highlighted how the key elements of language and mathematical core knowledge can be integrated across multiple areas of learning, for example, "Understanding informational texts and identifying important information helps learners in science and social studies, as well as language arts. Creating graphs and interpreting data helps learners in science and social studies, as well as mathematics. Analysing the meaning of a question or problem and responding to it are skills that can be applied to any subject area" (The Inter-agency Accelerated Learning Working Group (AEWG) 2020, p. 5), and "learners should have opportunities to develop and apply these [literacy, numeracy and digital competence] skills across the curriculum" (Welsh Government, 2020, p. 7).

The concern for learners' social development was also to the fore in the source curriculum documents. References to parent and community involvement were found most often in primary education phase documents, and these also reinforced the central importance of play, relationship building, and home links for the education of younger learners. In Northern Ireland, the Department of Education captured this in their COVID-19 advice to schools, "(i)nitially, in primary and special schools in particular, it is likely that activities will often focus on getting pupils used to routines and safe behaviours, interacting with others within the rules and building the ability to engage with activities and sustain concentration. Play and social interaction within the protective bubble of the class are centrally important for younger children" (Northern Ireland Department of Education 2020a, p. 6).

Curriculum Content

The curriculum content that appeared in most recovery curricula source documents related to Language & Literacy, Maths & Numeracy, and Health & Wellbeing.

Language & Literacy

Language & Literacy was particularly important in recovery curricula for several reasons. It was commonly associated with catch-up objectives which focused on bringing learners up to speed with expected levels of attainment. During the COVID-19 pandemic emergency, English schools, and particularly those in the primary sector, focused on aspects of potential language loss (e.g., "All the primary school leaders told us that they are concentrating hard on reading, including phonics. Many leaders explained that they wanted to make sure that if there have been any losses in learning, particularly in reading, these are quickly put right" (Ofsted, 2020, p. 3)). Language & Literacy was also linked with supporting social inclusion and peacebuilding initiatives in recovery curricula. It was noted that language learning is a component of recognising diversity and overcoming ethnic tensions in some post-conflict contexts (Obura, 2003, p. 88), and in creating a new shared national identity (Shah, 2009, p. 5).

When looking at the literature from international contexts it is important to consider whether Language & Literacy refers to home language (the learner's first language) or the host country language in which learning is taking place (which could be an additional language for the learner). To pull this issue apart I separated out the contexts in which the Language & Literacy references were made (i.e., "Health Emergency", "Migration", "Civil Conflict", etc.). My analysis showed that the distinction between home and host language mainly occurred in the Migration Emergency sources. The lack of discourse around the language of learning for the Health Emergency curricula suggested that language choice was not an issue for education systems where migration was not a factor.

In displacement contexts, such as in Migration Emergency and some Civil Conflict situations, language learning policy had a different emphasis and was marked by insecurity. The recovery curriculum literature suggests that decisions about the language of instruction were influenced by whether the curriculum objective was to support learner repatriation to the home system or to integrate them into the host system, and these decisions are not always clear cut. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR, 2012) favours host language instruction as this supports learner integration into the society where they are located. Despite this ambition, some have argued that this policy can shut down learners' opportunities, "choosing one [i.e., the home language rather than the host language] might effectively foreclose opportunities in the other", since teaching in the home language might "better prepare refugees to repatriate but might come at the expense of education in exile" (Karam et al., 2017, p. 460). There are also some concerns about the ability of displaced teachers to deliver education through a host language (Karam et al., 2017, p. 456), and that the use of the host language can erode learners' cultural identity (Karam et al., 2017, p. 457)

as language "carries notions of identity, culture, power and control" (Pausigere, 2009, p. 59).

Advocates for home language instruction argue that this better supports their repatriation once a crisis is over. Teaching through the home language can also benefit younger learners" access to core knowledge (e.g., "Using a child's first language or mother tongue for initial literacy instruction in school enhances pupils' achievement" (UNICEF, 2000, p. 6); "Pupil achievement is enhanced if pupils first become literate in their mother tongue" (UNICEF, 2000, p. 8). It is also recognised that learning through another language can be a significant hindrance to attending education (Sinclair, 2002 p. 10). Despite this ambition, some argue that home language policy risks maintaining the migrants "on the social and economic periphery of and in inferior positions within the host state" (Pausigere, 2009, p. 12).

Maths & Numeracy

Language & Literacy references in curriculum sources often sat alongside references to Maths & Numeracy, suggesting that these areas formed core curriculum components. It was notable that different education programme types highlighted the central importance of literacy and numeracy. These programme types included non-formal education programmes (Karam et al., 2017; Kagawa, 2005), refugee education programmes (Halstead & Affouneh, 2006; Pausigere, 2009; Smith, 2013), accelerated education programmes (The Inter-agency Accelerated Learning Working Group (AEWG) 2020), and COVID-19 recovery guidance (e.g., Scottish Government/Riaghaltas na h-Alba, 2020; Welsh Government, 2020; Northern Ireland Department of Education, 2020a, 2020b).

This reinforces the point that Language & Literacy and Maths & Numeracy were widely considered to be the common principal components of core knowledge across a variety of contexts, ensuring that they were the focus of many recovery curricula. This is articulated by the Inter-agency Accelerated Learning Working Group: "A condensed curriculum does not teach all subject areas faster. Rather, it centres teaching and learning activities on 'priority outcomes'. Priority outcomes describe essential skills and knowledge that are transferrable across multiple subject areas: reading, writing, mathematics, critical thinking, and problem solving. Priority outcomes give learners the tools they need for future, self-directed learning" (The Inter-agency Accelerated Learning Working Group (AEWG), 2020, p. 2).

It was also noteworthy that these components of core knowledge were mainly linked to Primary education documents, suggesting that they are key elements that need to be covered in the earliest phases of a recovery curriculum. UNICEF conveyed this in their guidance on curriculum design, "Curriculum must specify adequate instruction time for basic subjects, especially language development and mathematics in primary grades" (UNICEF, 2000, p. 7).

Health & Wellbeing

Health & Wellbeing was another content area that appeared more than most others in recovery curricula. It was generally associated with content to do with with peace, conflict resolution and citizenship education. This association reflected a perspective that education was important in helping learners to recover from the trauma related to conflict, with the curriculum "...supporting the development of refugee education programmes that meet the psychosocial needs of children and adolescents and promote health, safety, environmental awareness, and skills of conflict-resolution and citizenship" (Sinclair, 2002, p. 90). Recovery curricula content also reflected the health issues that were prevalent in some conflict contexts, where it was important to "Deploy literacy, numeracy, life skills, and other emergency education curricula, including on health, hygiene promotion, HIV prevention, environmental education, peace education, and other appropriate emergency themes" (Smith, 2013, p. 48).

"Non-core" content elements

It is also important to note that these foundational skills were not the only areas of learning included in the recovery curricula. For example, the documents from the UK were explicit in their appeal for recovery curricula to "teach an ambitious and broad curriculum in all subjects" (Department of Education, 2020); and for "learners [to] have learning experiences that span a broad curriculum and include opportunities to develop a breadth of understanding and a range of knowledge and skills that then lead to further depth" (Welsh Government, 2020a, p. 8). In addition to the core subject areas discussed above, the following areas of learning and development were also represented within the reviewed documents:

Non-core elements	
Creative Arts	Nature/Outdoor/Environmental Education
Digital Competences	Peace, Conflict Resolution, Citizenship
History/Humanities	Physical Development
Human Rights Education	Religious Education
Learning Skills/Metacognition	Science
Life Skills [Problem Solving, Creativity, Critical Thinking]	Social & Emotional Development

Curriculum Development Process

The reviewed literature also included some information and guidance on how to construct a recovery curriculum. This information related to (1) the importance of prioritisation, and (2) the role of resource development. Prioritisation involved decision making around identifying the elements of curriculum content that were the most important in a particular context. For example, OECD guidance for education planners responding to COVID-19 identified the need to "Re-prioritize curriculum goals ... Define what should be learned during the period of social distancing" (Reimers & Schleicher, 2020, p. 5). The development of resources to back up the recovery curriculum (to support teacher readiness) was also mentioned in many of the source documents (e.g., Reimers & Schleicher, 2020; UNICEF, 2000; Northern Ireland Department of Education, 2020a; Department for Education, 2020).

Looking at the ways that curriculum development connected with other issues in recovery curricula, resource development was most commonly associated with supporting teacher readiness and supporting social inclusion. While the links between resources and teacher readiness are alluded to above (e.g., Reimers & Schleicher, 2020), there was also recognition in the sources that development programmes that aimed to shift traditional and perhaps less inclusive curricula required adequate support materials if teachers were to transform established practices (Sinclair, 2002; Obura, 2003).

When considering reprioritisation, it was most common for this to focus on core knowledge, and Language & Literacy in particular. For example, observations of recent changes in Primary teacher practice in England highlighted that "they were teaching most of the subjects they usually teach, though many have reordered topics within subjects. Primary schools were giving even more attention to reading than usual" (Ofsted, 2020, p. 2).

The reviewed documents also suggested that when engaging in flexible curriculum delivery (e.g., reordering curriculum coverage to support cross-disciplinary teaching) educators needed to ensure that they maintained a transparent and sequential content structure. This transparency was helpful for supporting learner catch up in core knowledge (UNICEF, 2000) and teacher readiness (Shah, 2009).

Efficacy

I analysed the documents to find indications of positive outcomes from different recovery curricula. It is noteworthy that there was relatively little in the reviewed documents that evidenced where any particular curriculum had resulted in tangible benefits. This coheres with other observations "that there is an absence of robust evidence-based research for all educational interventions in crisis-affected zones" (Almasri et al., 2019, p. 96).

Measures of efficacy varied across the recovery curriculum contexts. For post-conflict and migration contexts efficacy indicators focused on increasing learner participation rates (Barakat et al., 2013; Shah, 2009), raising educational outcomes (Shah, 2009; UNICEF, 2000), and improving learner integration (Awada et al., 2018). For environmental emergency contexts efficacy focused on encouraging positive learner behaviours (Liberty, 2018).

Looking at how indications of efficacy linked with other elements of the recovery curricula, educational outcomes were most frequently linked with curriculum components that supported teacher readiness, implicating the provision of good quality support resources. Guidance from UNICEF highlights that "For pupils to achieve, teaching must be effective. This means that education systems must support teachers in developing appropriate teaching strategies for helping all children to achieve" (UNICEF, 2000, p. 6).

Where positive integration was considered to have occurred in some post-conflict migration emergencies, there was an association with curriculum objectives that

set out to support social inclusion and/or curriculum content that dealt with Human Rights Education. For example, one claim about the reforms in Lebanon was that "the 1997 curriculum was reformed upon the end of the civil war, and it helped unite the Lebanese again to a certain extent after incorporating Human Rights Education" (Awada et al., 2018, p. 44).

Discussion and conclusions

When considering the messages from my review, it is important to recognise some important methodological limitations. Earlier, I outlined how educationalists conceptualise curriculum in a broad sense, with curricula not being simply captured as documented intentions in texts but also existing in an enacted form, and this has implications for curriculum study. The curriculum concept that I use is a narrow one. For this review I had to take a more limited conceptualisation since my sources for review contained a number of policy and guidance documents, and a limitation of policy study is that it tends to focus on intentions rather than actual practices (which can differ dramatically).

At the same time, my review methodology did allow me to gather information about a variety of curriculum contexts, which would be difficult to achieve through other approaches. My review demonstrates that there is a lot of recent interest in the concept of recovery curricula, and this raises the question as to whether it is "a thing" or "many things". By gathering a collective pool of documents, I was able to see that, when taken together as a whole, there are some common features that pertain to recovery curricula. Many of the documents shared a focus on similar objectives (supporting learner wellbeing, learner readiness and teacher readiness) and prioritised an emphasis on covering core, foundational learning content in areas such as Language & Literacy and Maths & Numeracy. There was also a coherence across the documents in terms of how resources were expected to play a part in teacher preparation, particularly where recovery entailed teachers changing their already established practices.

There were also some differences between the recovery curricula, reflecting the different contexts for which they were designed. Health Emergency documents had a greater concern with guidance than those for other emergency types (which dealt more with design issues). This characteristic might reflect the fact that the Health Emergency documents dealt exclusively with the COVID-19 emergency and mainly addressed already well-developed education systems. Curricula for other emergency types might also be considering a variety of issues, such as the complete (re)design of education systems as they cope with displaced learner (and teacher) populations.

This point is reflected in the way that the objectives for the Health Emergency curricula focused on encouraging educational continuity (e.g., supporting learners' re-engagement with a previous curriculum, helping learners to catch up on missed learning from that curriculum, and helping planners to refocus on the key components of that curriculum). This contrasts with the narrative for other curricula which may require severe restructuring as they may contain the roots of conflict. These differences also feed through to the curriculum objectives for the

recovery curriculum documents across the emergency types, where we can see a contrasting emphasis on knowledge coverage in Health Emergency documents compared with social inclusion and teacher readiness in Civil Conflict/ Migration Emergencies.

On reflection, it appeared that divergences across the documents were found at the level of aims and objectives, pressing home the point that the context of the emergency that the recovery is designed to deal with is the overriding feature that influences the shape of a recovery curriculum. This means that although recovery is a common concept, the nature of what constitutes recovery depends on the nature of the emergency that instigates it.

Finally, I looked for evidence of the efficacy of recovery curricula and found relatively little in the reviewed documents to support claims that any particular curriculum had resulted in tangible benefits. It is important to recognise that this should not be taken to mean that there were no learning gains or other benefits related to recovery curricula, just that the evidence to evaluate or quantify any such gains was not found. This observation coheres with others who have noted an absence of robust evidence-based research for interventions in emergency contexts (e.g., Almasri et al., 2019). It is tempting to consider why this might be the case. It is possible that the often complex and fast-moving conditions in which emergency education initiatives are developed and enacted make it difficult to capture evidence of progress, with most effort being devoted to the delivery of education rather than its evaluation. This focus on managing education delivery during the course of an emergency may be more about adjusting education to new realities rather than about returning education to its to pre-emergency trajectory.

The lack of focus on evaluation may also be understandable as studying curriculum impact is highly complex, even in non-emergency situations. I have already alluded to how curriculum can be interpreted very broadly, covering learning across a variety of locations. For example, schooling incorporates both formal, timetabled learning activities as well as out-of-hours, extracurricular activities that influence learning outcomes. This reinforces the point that informal aspects of schooling should also be considered to be aspects of the curriculum (Kelly, 2004, p. 7). A natural extension of this argument is that the study of curriculum should consider activities beyond schooling. Studies suggest that out-of-school activities can impact learning in some cultural historical contexts (for example see the work of Ólafsson (2013) on home-based literacy learning expectations in 19th century Scandinavia, or the work of Pozzetta and Mormino (1998) and Tinajero (2010) on the "el lector" literacy learning traditions in Cuban cigar factories).

While reiterating the importance of building evaluation processes into the recovery curriculum design phase, the need to take a broad perspective of curriculum into account makes this challenging. Such an evaluation would need to consider a broad array of evidence that links to the objectives of the curricula.

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