Mainstreaming Protection in EDUCATION

Education actors are responsible for ensuring that beneficiaries safely access their services, without causing harm, and for promoting meaningful access, accountability and participation of beneficiaries in the provision of education assistance. By mainstreaming protection into education programming, humanitarian actors can maximise the positive impacts of education programs on people's safety and dignity and support affected populations access and enjoy their rights.

This note provides guidance on how to practically mainstream protection into education programmes in Somalia. It is divided into four sections, representing the four key elements of Protection Mainstreaming. The content is not meant to be exhaustive, but presents examples of key actions that should be taken to ensure the incorporation of protection elements in the delivery of education assistance in Somalia.

KEY ACTIONS

Prioritise _safety_ & _dignity_, and avoid causing harm

✓ Ensure the **location** of and **access routes** to schools, classrooms, teacher learning centers, playgrounds and child friendly spaces pose no safety risks to children and teachers:

- Identify safe residential locations and avoid placing facilities near military installations and conflict frontlines.

- Consider safety risks associated with landmines, explosive remnants of war (ERW), busy roads, exposed wires and dangerous materials on the ground.

- Consider the use of underground facilities or mobile education services

- Keep in mind the distances children have to travel and their mode of transport. Consider ways to reduce threats, including changing the location, accompaniment (eg. children walking in groups, crossing guard points)

- Check that the timing of classes is safe for children to travel to and from school without exposure to further risk of harm. Classes should take place in daylight hours giving children sufficient time to travel home before nightfall.

- Situate play areas in clearly visible and safe locations

- Ask children directly (and especially adolescent girls) about the safety of their travel to and presence at school.

✓ Provide a **secure learning environment**

- Supervise children during breaks and where possible to and from school.

- Train teachers in first aid (including psychological first aid) and that first aid kits are available/equipped.

- Carry out background checks of new staff working with children

✓ Advocate to end practices of using schools for **political** or **military purposes**, including recruiting students and teachers to attend political events or join armed entities.

✓ Ensure the **design of education facilities** preserves the safety and dignity of girls and boys.

- Provide separate, secure and private toilet/latrines for boys and girls and separate facilities for students and teachers. Ensure toilet/latrine design accounts for children (e.g. size of drop hole may present a safety risk for children).

- Ensure latrines are clearly marked in child-friendly form (pictorial) and work with teachers to ensure they are used by the indicated sex.

✓ Reduce the risk of harm to **girls** and **female teachers**

- Advocate for enrolling female teachers at all levels. If there are not enough qualified female teachers, have female teacher aids accompany classes and club activities.

- Develop and clearly communicate a school code of conduct that respects the safety and dignity of girls and female teachers to all teachers, students and parents.

✓ **Age limits** should not be enforced for conflict affected children and youth. However there are potential safety issues of combining much older children with young children in education facilities. These can be addressed through proper supervision and where appropriate separate classrooms and/or play areas.

✓ **Avoid community tensions**, by providing the local/host community with access to camp services in situations where they are experiencing similar shortages of basic education services and facilities.

- Consult both displaced and host communities about education needs and assess whether assistance could exacerbate tension, harassment or conflict between the two communities.

✓ Encourage the employment of **female teachers** and **teachers with disability** to build a more inclusive environment with tolerance and respect.

✓ Keep lists of students and teachers confidential and safe from unintended use - apply effective **data protection measures**.

✓ Offer **psychosocial support** to children in schools and for teachers who have also been impacted by the conflict.

✓ In cooperation with protection actors, establish **reporting mechanisms** to report security incidents concerning schools to advocate against attacks on schools, child recruitment by armed groups or armed forces and military use of schools eg. use as a weapons depot, operational centre, military barracks or observation point, conduct civil-military exercises with children.

Promote equitable and impartial access to all

✓ Collect and use data disaggregated by **age, gender** and **diversity** to effectively inform programming.

✓ Ensure that assistance and services are **reaching the most vulnerable** - Identify and prioritise the most vulnerable groups in the community and prevent discrimination or exclusion of marginalised groups (refer to Vulnerable Categories guidance note).

✓ Advocate for **equal access** to education for girls and sensitise the community about the value and benefits of girls' education.

✓ Identify and address **barriers** children face accessing education services:

- Identify groups of children who face difficulties accessing education (e.g. girls, children with disabilities, children from minority communities, children belonging to disadvantaged or marginalized groups) and work with children, teachers, community leaders and parents to support equal and safe access to education **without discrimination**.

- Ensure there are no financial barriers to accessing education. If so, consider waiving school fees or providing school materials to families affected by the conflict.

- Ensure that **lack of documentation** (birth records or school certificates) does not exclude children from accessing education services or prevent them from advancing to higher levels.

- Support non-formal education for girls where formal schooling to girls is not available due to local cultural barriers

✓ Make **infrastructure adaptions** to education facilities to make them user-friendly to children, teachers and parents with impaired mobility (eg. persons with physical disability, older persons).

- Install railings and handlebars, make access paths smooth and fit ramps for wheelchair access.

✓ Consider **special arrangements** are made for persons unable to access schools eg. mobile education teams; establish systems for transportation; distance learning; audio-visual materials; radio or television broadcasts; books etc.

✓ Respond to **specific needs**:

- Provide specialised education services for persons with non-mobility related disabilities (eg. the blind, hard of hearing, intellectually disabled) and provide assistive devices (hearing aids, braille books)

- Train teachers on how to teach children with disabilities. Teachers should at the very least be aware of any special needs of children with disabilities to facilitate learning and are mindful of discrimination by other children.

- Cater for the specific situations of former child combatants and unaccompanied children.

✓ **Curricula and instructional materials** developed or supported should be gender-sensitive, recognise diversity and promote respect for learners. Policies, curricula, textbooks and methods of learning need to be adjusted to promote tolerance, conflict resolution skills and an understanding of human rights, child rights and non-discrimination.

✓ Ensure that affected populations **know their right to education** and where/how to access education services.

- Communicate information through various means to ensure communication reaches the broader community and consider literacy levels (eg. teachers and teacher aids, door-to-door, poster, radio, social media, use of pictograms).

✓ Identify the **power dynamics** in the area. Who has access to education? Who manages the education facilities? Who is able influence decisions on education interventions?

- Use this information to inform monitoring activities and identify any barriers to access services or discrimination against particular groups. Take this into consideration when determining locations for education interventions.

Ensure <u>accountability</u> to affected populations

✓ Be **transparent** with the affected populations by providing them with accessible and timely information on selection criteria for targeted assistance, organisational procedures and processes that affect them.

✓ Set up accessible, confidential and well understood **feedback mechanisms** for suggestions and complaints with a view to improve programming, understand community perceptions, promote beneficiary empowerment and assist in detecting misconduct. Eg. feedback box at learning centres, phone lines

- Set up mechanisms for submitting feedback that do not require the beneficiary exposing themselves to project staff.

- RESPOND to complaints, regardless of whether corrective measures can/need to be put in place.

- Organize awareness raising sessions so that people know how it works.

- Consider a joint feedback mechanism with other sectors to minimize confusion.

✓ Consider the **gender balance** of education staff - ensure that there are enough women available as a contact point for female teachers and students.

✓ Ensure that all staff and committee representatives receive **protection mainstreaming** training.

✓ Work with education authorities and school management to establish **school rules** and a code of conduct that includes a child protection policy. Ensure all teachers and volunteers working in the education facility understand, sign and adhere to its content.

- The Code of Conduct should include a prohibition on corporal punishment

- Students and parents should be aware of these and know how to report any cases of exploitation and abuse, including sexual abuse.

✓ Ensure all staff, implementing partners and volunteers working with students, teachers and parents sign and adhere to a humanitarian **Code of Conduct** stating their commitment to respect and foster humanitarian standards and the rights of beneficiaries and receive training in **prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA)**

- Ensure child protection checks are carried out when recruiting new or temporary staff who will be working directly with children.

✓ In cooperation with protection actors, enhance the capacity of teachers to **monitor, report** and **refer protection cases** (such as abuse and exploitation) in accordance with standard operating procedures.

Strengthen participation and empowerment

✓ **Involve** and **consult** all categories and layers of the affected population in identifying and responding to education needs. Different criteria may affect the power dynamics.

- Consult women, men, boys, girls, adolescents, children with disabilities, teachers and parents to understand their needs and preferences for school location, design and education services.

- Engage the community and committee representative to play an active role in identifying solutions and in the decision-making processes that affect them, so as to promote a sense of ownership, build their self-esteem and improve the relevance and sustainability of the response

- Talk to girls and boys separately about the barriers they face and hold discussions with groups of children that could face added difficulties.

✓ Establish participatory **student associations** and **parent-teacher committees** and engage them in the design of education programs. Such associations can boost the confidence and self-protection capacities

of those involved whilst benefiting others eg. Student associations could engage in promoting attendance for out-of-school children.

✓ Ensure student, teacher, parent and school management committees are **democratic** and **inclusive** and members represent all groups within the community (e.g. gender, ethnicity, socioeconomic group, persons with disabilities).

- They can play a key role in identifying issues related to exclusion and discrimination and be proactive in ensuring the voice of marginalised groups is represented.

✓ Reinforce the **capacity of parents and teachers** to act as a protective layer for children against violations (eg. child recruitment, early and forced marriage, hazardous labour).

✓ Coordinate with **civil society** specialising in working with persons with impaired mobility or disabilities to help identify such individuals and use them as a resource to improve service delivery, train staff and for the referral of cases.

. __ .