Education Programs

Tips for Protection Mainstreaming

Edition 1 (May 2014)

> The content for this note is taken mainly from the following sources:
> - [Minimum Inter-Agency Standards for Protection Mainstreaming (WVI)](#)
> - [Disabilities among Refugees and Conflict-Affected Populations - Resource Kit for Fieldworkers (WRC)](#)
> - [Minimum Standards for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action (CPWG)](#)
> - [GBV Guidelines (IASC)](#)
> - [Humanitarian Charter & Minimum Standards in Humanitarian Response (SPHERE)](#)

This note is divided into three 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 integration of protection principles *in the delivery of humanitarian assistance*.

Although each action described should be considered throughout implementation, there are some key actions which are especially important to consider during emergencies and during the assessment/project design stage of the project cycle. These are highlighted with the following symbol-codes:

- Emergencies ⚠️
- Assessment & Project Design Stage 🔍

Some actions can be sensitive by their nature. In these cases, it is suggested to reach out to a Protection specialist. These are highlighted with the following symbol: 🤲

Prioritize safety & dignity, and avoid doing harm

☐ **TALK** to children about the threats they face. Talk to girls and boys separately, and hold discussions with groups of children that could face added difficulties (e.g. with disabilities, from ethnic minorities)

☐ Ensure that the **LOCATION** of Education facilities and routes to them are away from actual or potential threats such as violence; especially the risk or threat of gender based violence (GBV), and attacks from armed groups. 🔍 ⚠️

> Notes:
> - Keep in mind the distances children have to travel and the mode of transport. Do not place facilities near possible perpetrators. N.B. The police and armed forces are often seen as perpetrators of violations. Whether they provide a reassuring feeling or instill fear depends on the location. It is important to consult the children, community, and potential beneficiaries about their thoughts.
> - Ask children directly (and especially adolescent girls) about the safety of their travel to school.
> - Consider ways to reduce/manage/cope with these threats, including changing the location, accompaniment (e.g. children walking in groups, crossing guards, etc.)
> - In case of displacement, locate facilities near or within camps or settlements.
> - Ensure that child-friendly spaces, teacher learning centers, schools, classrooms, playgrounds and surrounding areas are in good condition, and pose no safety risks to children and teachers. For example, that there are no exposed wires, no dangerous materials on the ground, not in areas known to have landmines, and that they

> are not close to busy roads
> - Arrange appropriate policing if required (e.g. police, community patrols)
> - See if there is a possibility to offer psycho-social support to children in the schools, teachers who have been displaced may also need these services.

☐ Communities should advocate for **ENDING PRACTICES OF USING SCHOOLS FOR POLITICAL PURPOSES**, including political rallies, recruiting students and teachers to attend political events, and using schools as polling stations during elections where this could cause tensions or problems. The use of schools and teachers during elections, for instance as polling officials or vote counters, has triggered election and post-election violence against them in some countries.

☐ Make **INFRASTRUCTURE** adaptations such as ramps and railings to Education facilities and latrines so that all individuals and groups can access and use them in safety and dignity. Use direct observation and discussion groups with persons with disabilities in the community to identify the type of adaptations that are needed.

☐ Ensure that girls and teachers are not put at risk of increased harm in the establishment and running of education services for **WOMEN AND GIRLS**.

> **Notes:**
> - Using local knowledge, carry out a risk assessment before establishing any new facilities. Based on the assessment, put in place measures to reduce the risk, such as low profile, culturally sensitive uniform or dress codes etc. Girls have an equal right to education, and their safety should be ensured.
> - Advocate for enrolling female teachers in the higher levels. If there are not enough qualified female teachers have female teacher's aids who accompany classes and club activities.
> - Ensure codes of conducts are clearly communicated with teachers, students and parents.

☐ Ensure there are separate, secure, hygienic and private **WASHROOM** facilities for boys and girls.

> **Notes:**
> - Talk to the boys and girls about the design and location of latrines. *In one Education program, the staff knew that children would need latrines. They did not talk to the children, who it was later found out were afraid of the size of the hole. Children continued to defecate outside the latrines, which created a hygiene problem. Similar anecdotes have shown children not using latrines because of fear of "sliding locks" or simply the lack of a wall to separate boys and girls.*
> - Consider establishing student environmental committees. These can be responsible for monitoring the hygiene of facilities, encouraging hand-washing amongst students, and can also be involved in general environmental activities (e.g. taking care of plants)

☐ If setting up education facilities for displaced communities, consult them as well as host communities about education needs so as to avoid **COMMUNITY TENSIONS**. Make sure that there is no tension or inequality that could lead to violence and harassment of one group on another.

> **Notes:**
> - Assess whether inequitable access to education is causing tension or conflict within the community AND with other surrounding/local communities.
> - In camp settings, consider providing services to the local community as well.

☐ Ensure that the Education services are respectful and inclusive of **CULTURAL AND RELIGIOUS PRACTICE**.

> **Notes:**
> - Employ female staff members with skills and experience working with children

☐ Ensure a **SECURE** environment in schools

> **Notes:**
> - Ensure that the children supervised during breaks and where possible to and from school.
> - Ensure teachers are trained in first aid and that first aid kits are available/equipped.
> - Ensure that Education Sector Members all have in place a system for carrying out background checks for new staff working with children

☐ Put in place guidelines and mechanisms to **MONITOR AND REPORT INSTANCES OF ABUSE AND EXPLOITATION**.

> **Notes:**
> - Ensure all staff sign and adhere to a code of conduct that includes a "whistleblower" policy. Child Protection Policies must be signed by all staff and support the members to access training for staff on child protection.
> - The Code of Conduct should include a prohibition on corporal punishment
> - Children should be aware of the Code of Conduct and how to report any cases of exploitation and abuse, including sexual abuse.
> - Establish an accessible and well understood mechanism for complaints.

Meaningful Access ⚠

☐ **TALK TO CHILDREN** about the barriers they face accessing Education services.

> **Notes:**
> - Talk to girls and boys separately, and hold discussions with groups of children that could face added difficulties (e.g. with disabilities, from ethnic minorities)
> - Work with children, teachers, community leaders and parents to support equal and safe access to education and training opportunities without discrimination of any kind. Pay particular attention to the exclusion of girls, children with disabilities, children with HIV/AIDS, minority ethnic or religious communities, and other children belonging to disadvantaged or marginalized groups.

☐ Ensure that the **LOCATIONS** of schools are accessible to all.

> **Notes:**
> - Discuss with all representative samples of society (e.g. men, women, girls, boys, elderly, ethnic groups, children with disabilities) that should have access to the services we provide. If necessary, adapt the location to reduce the distance and to ensure that the most vulnerable/marginalized have access.

☐ Ensure that education **INFRASTRUCTURE** and services can be accessed by persons with reduced mobility (e.g. persons with physical disabilities, bed-ridden children) as well as persons with non-mobility-related disabilities (e.g. the blind, hard of hearing, intellectually disabled)

> **Notes:**
> - Make access paths smooth and fit ramps for wheelchair access. Consider different physical disabilities. Different wheelchairs may require different amounts of space. Artificial limbs may make even relatively short distances difficult. Talk to children with physical disabilities about what solutions would best fit their needs.
> - Provide assistive devices for children with disabilities (e.g. crutches, wheelchairs, hearing aides, 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
> - Install seats in latrines for children with disabilities.
> - If some children cannot access the services, consider what alternatives are possible (e.g. distance learning,

audio-visual materials, radio or television broadcasts, books, etc.).
- Provide information about services in both verbal and written form.
- Ensure that staff is trained to work with individuals with intellectual disabilities, including on how to ensure proper confidentiality and informed consent. Local NGOs often already have the technical knowledge.

☐ Ensure there are no **FINANCIAL BARRIERS** to accessing education.

Notes:
- See if there is a possibility to waive school fees for children affected by the conflict or a natural disaster.
- Consider the costs of school materials (e.g. uniforms, books) and whether this prevents access.

☐ Mitigate the impact of **ADMINISTRATIVE BARRIERS**, such as lack of documentation, which can be excluding children from accessing education and training opportunities.

Notes:
- If documents (such as birth records, school certificates) are prerequisite for education, work with the authorities to waive the requirement for disaster affected children or establish alternative procedure for ensuring all children have access to education.
- In camp settings, accept children with missing documents. If this is not possible because of overlap with local communities, consider a grace period during which parents can be assisted to obtain the documents. Work with local authorities to identify schools and never exclude a child from a school without a viable alternative.
- Consider that lack of documentation for other services can affect attendance. *E.g. in Pakistan, parents without documentation had no access to food distributions, and sent their children to work instead of school*.

☐ Examine the **CONTEXT-SPECIFIC OR CULTURAL BARRIERS** to attending school and see if it is possible to identify solutions.

Notes:
- Flexible hours of schooling to accommodate different needs. Children may have unavoidable commitments during the day. Adult learners may need to go to work. Nomadic groups may be involved in agricultural activities at certain times of the year.
- Non-formal education / after school classes for those students who need to catch-up (e.g. adults that missed some aspects of formal education, girls who may not have access to education because of traditional practice in the area)

☐ Ensure that beneficiaries **KNOW** their right to Education, and where/how to obtain it.

Notes:
- Rights awareness should be provided in sufficient quantity in languages understandable to all beneficiaries, especially to new arrivals in displacement settings.
- Printed materials should consider literacy levels (e.g. use of pictograms instead of text). Lack of awareness about rights and services is regularly a gap identified in assessments.

☐ Ensure that **WOMEN AND GIRLS** have access to education

- Notes:
- Sensitize the community about the value and benefits of girls' education. Build this into the program activities.
- Include proactive activities to encourage equal registration of boys and girls and maintain retention rates that are specific to adolescent girls and boys because they have different reasons/pressures for quitting early
- Support non-formal education / after school classes where formal schooling for girls is not available.

☐ **AGE LIMITS** should not be enforced for disaster or 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 by proper supervision and where appropriate separate classrooms and/or play areas. ⚠️

☐ **MONITOR ACCESS AND DISCRIMINATION**

> **Notes:**
> - Ensure project indicators (e.g. # of individuals accessing education services) are disaggregated by age, gender, and location or specific group (e.g. persons with disabilities, poverty, language ethnic minorities).
> - Compare enrollment figures to existing demographic data. Discrepancies can tell you which groups do not have access (e.g. if 10% of children are from an ethnic minority, are 10% of students also from this group?)
> - Where possible train the parent committees to do this. Committees can also work with contractors to make sure designs are disability friendly.
> - Involve men, women, boys, and girls, parent, students and teachers in the assessment, monitoring and reporting on education matters.

Accountability, Participation & Empowerment

☐ **CONSULT** with education authorities, local government, teachers, men, women, boys, and girls in the community to take into account their ideas and opinions about education needs in the community. 🔎

> **Notes:**
> - Ensure that local authorities are involved in education, including curriculum development and school certifications.
> - Curricula and instructional materials developed or supported should be gender-sensitive, recognize diversity and different learning needs, and promote respect for learners. Policies, curricula, textbooks and methods of learning need to be adjusted to promote tolerance, understanding and conflict resolution skills, as well as understanding of human rights, child rights, and non-discrimination.

☐ Identify **LOCAL AUTHORITIES AND CIVIL SOCIETY** specialized in working with **PERSONS WITH LOW MOBILITY OR DISABILITIES**. Strengthen and support their role, and learn from their experience how to improve service delivery.

> **Notes:**
> - Coordinate with specialized agencies to identify low-mobility individuals and include them in the program assistance. Most countries already have national or local NGOs offering services to vulnerable groups. These may not operate in the same areas, but could become a valuable resource for the training of staff and the referral of cases.
> - Actors operating in the same locality could help mobilizing low-mobility individuals for key activities.
> - Key international NGOs working on these issues include Handicap International and HelpAge

☐ **REPORT AND SHARE PROTECTION CONCERNS** with the Protection cluster, including the GBV and Child Protection sub-clusters. Other actors may be able to provide assistance. 🫶

> **Notes:**
> - Cases of violations should be referred promptly and in accordance with standard operating procedures established in the area.
> - Establish reporting mechanisms to report security incidents to enable proper monitoring and prevention of threats. Monitoring and reporting is vital to enable government and other actors to respond to threats to education; as well as to assist legal accountability and advocacy. Education clusters can take a lead by co-coordinating the development of such partnerships and ensuring use is made of existing human rights monitoring capacity

☐ Make sure to **CONSULT** all layers of society and children when identifying and responding to Education needs.

> **Notes:**
> - Different criteria may affect the power dynamics. In some places it will be important to consult different socio-economic groups (e.g. ethnic or economic minorities). In all situations, one should include women, men, boys, girls, adolescents, children with disabilities, and parents to understand their needs and preferences for location, design, and methodology of Education services.
> - It is not enough to just consider the needs of all layers of society. They have to be involved in identifying the solutions. In addition to making the response more relevant and potentially durable, this will build the confidence and self-esteem of the beneficiaries concerned. *Example: In one Education program, the staff knew that children would need latrines. They did not talk to the children, who it was later found out were afraid of the size of the hole. Children continued to defecate outside the latrines, which created a hygiene problem.*
> - Consult displaced communities to design appropriate vocational training in their language that will be recognized when they return or if they choose to locally integrate

☐ Engage children (both boys and girls) in **STUDENT ASSOCIATIONS** and parents (both men and women) in **PARENT-TEACHER ASSOCIATIONS**.

> **Notes:**
> - Empower the persons whose protection is concerned can help make response more relevant and sustainable while boosting the self-esteem and capacities of the working individuals concerned. *Example: In Pakistan, Student Committees hold several responsibilities, including monitoring school hygiene and promoting attendance for out of school children. This activity has the double benefit of benefiting others while strengthening one's own self-protection capacities.*
> - Ensure children (both boys and girls) have participatory committees (student advisory boards) to regularly ensure engagement between educators and the children themselves (child participation).
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☐ Include children and communities in **SCHOOL DESIGN & CONSTRUCTION** to promote a sense of ownership. Children should not be involved in the construction.

☐ Ensure **SCHOOL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEES** are democratic and inclusive. Involve religious or community leaders in school governance. This can remove ideological or religious motives to oppose or attack schools.

☐ Set up accessible, well understood **MECHANISMS FOR SUGGESTIONS AND COMPLAINTS**

> **Notes:**
> - Do not assume an "open door" policy is enough. Make sure that there are other possibilities for submitting complaints that do not require the beneficiary exposing themselves to Education/project staff.
> - RESPOND to complaints, regardless of whether corrective measures can/need to be put in place.
> - Staff the mechanism with both men and women and ensure it is accessible for children.
> - Organize awareness raising sessions so that all those concerned know how it works (i.e. children, students, parent committees, teachers).
> - Consider a joint complaints mechanism with other sectors (e.g. Protection) to minimize confusion.
> - Complaints mechanisms should be in line with Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abusive systems.