



## Briefing note to ensure child protection mainstreaming

# STANDARD 19: ECONOMIC RECOVERY AND CHILD PROTECTION

In emergencies, children's risks and exposure to violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation are further increased. Violations take place in health clinics, during food distributions, at water points, in schools and sometimes directly due to humanitarian workers' actions or non-actions. Many threats to the safety and wellbeing of children can be diminished or even eradicated through timely and child-sensitive provision of humanitarian aid across all sectors. We all therefore have a critical role to play in protecting children.

**Child protection in emergencies is the prevention of and response to abuse, neglect, exploitation and violence against children.**

To mainstream child protection means to ensure child protection considerations inform all aspects of humanitarian action. It also minimizes the risks of children being violated by programmes designed without proper consideration for children's safety or wellbeing.

**Mainstreaming child protection is an essential part of compliance with the 'do no harm' principle that applies to all humanitarian action.**

The Minimum Standards for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action (CPMS), like the Minimum Economic Recovery Standards (MERS), are **companion standards to the Sphere standards**, and each standard is accompanied by key actions, targets, indicators and guidance notes. The CPMS include eight standards on mainstreaming child protection within other sectors. The **mainstreaming standards** complement sector-specific guidelines and standards, as well as Sphere and companions.

### What to avoid!

**Have these situations occurred in an emergency where you have worked?**

Livelihood assessments only targeted adults, in a well-intentioned attempt to avoid child labour. This meant that older adolescents were left without economic opportunities that could have contributed to their development and to the welfare of their families. Many of these adolescents resorted to petty crime and begging to make a living.

The child protection response to unaccompanied children focused on finding family-based foster care solutions. However, in this particular society it was common to use children as domestic workers, and the children suffered forced labour and abuse.

*Situations like these can be avoided with better communication and coordination.*



## STANDARD 19: ECONOMIC RECOVERY AND CHILD PROTECTION

**"Child protection concerns are reflected in the assessment, design, monitoring and evaluation of camp management programmes. The safety and wellbeing of girls and boys of all ages living in camps is safeguarded through camp management structures." CPMS Standard 19**

They aim to:

1. Expose some of the 'hidden' links between the sector's humanitarian assistance and child protection;
2. Suggest key actions for child protection workers, as well as humanitarians in other sectors to ensure child protection is properly addressed in each sector;
3. Provide a menu of possible indicators, with targets, to assess progress towards reaching the Standards;
4. Give guidance on how workers in other sectors can ensure their programmes are accessible and beneficial to children.

Economic action – such as vocational skills training, provision of cash transfers and vouchers, enterprise development and microfinance initiatives – can stabilise and increase the income of populations affected by emergencies. Effective programmes are based on the SEEP Network's Minimum Economic Recovery Standards (MERS), and often have protective effects on children, particularly when mothers benefit directly, when they are used to provide livelihood opportunities for older adolescents, and when action builds on existing strategies to protect people's livelihoods.

However, even when programmes are effective at the household level, they can increase the risk of harm to children, including the risk of having to leave school or of being exploited due to an economic intervention. Where a caregiver is obliged to work in order to access economic recovery interventions, this may lead to a reduced level of care for children. Some children themselves are caregivers, either for siblings or for elderly or sick adults. Tailored action is

required to ensure that economic recovery interventions reach those households where child protection concerns are most pressing, and that they maximize children's chances of remaining with their families, accessing education, and keeping out of hazardous labour or other situations of exploitation.

The achievement of this Standard requires respectful dialogue between actors in both the Economic Recovery/Livelihood and Child Protection Sectors. **The Child Protection Working Group invites you to join us in that dialogue.**

Questions to ask:

- What systems are in place to ensure information sharing and referrals between child protection and economic recovery or livelihood actors?
- How can child protection and economic recovery actors work together to identify and prevent unintended consequences to children of economic recovery or livelihood interventions?
- How can child protection and economic recovery actors work together to ensure all children/youth are able to benefit from livelihood and protection services, including e.g. children with disabilities, LGBTI youth and other potentially excluded groups?

*To take this dialogue further, please contact \_\_\_\_\_ (locally) or the child protection focal point in your agency. If you would rather seek global guidance, go to [www.cpwg.net](http://www.cpwg.net) [www.globalccmcluster.org/](http://www.globalccmcluster.org/)*

### Afar region, Ethiopia

VSF Germany introduced an innovative food security and livelihoods project in the Afar region of Ethiopia. It targeted households that were most vulnerable due to poor crop performance as a result of drought. The result was an economic recovery intervention whose benefits included: improved diet, increased income to community members, support for local markets and -- critically -- improved child protection. The project distributed locally sourced meat through a voucher scheme and established women-led slaughter groups. This supplemented the food baskets of the drought-affected households but also created market linkages and increased the income opportunities for beneficiaries.

One mother-of-five stated: *'I gave birth to a baby girl three months before this project but I could not feed her because my breasts were dry. I lost all my goats to the drought. When I started receiving meat through the programme, I could not recall the last time we had such food in the house. I was very happy to receive the meat for my infant and three young children. I saw the change in them after eating the meat, and in myself. I was even able to bring back home our eldest son.'*

