



## Minimum Standards for Child Protection in Humanitarian

### Briefing note to ensure child protection mainstreaming

## STANDARD 20: EDUCATION 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) 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?

In an area subject to recurrent fighting between armed groups, school was not able to play any preventative role due to its unsafe learning environment. Children were pushed to leave the school because they were often mistreated and exploited by the teachers. Out of school children were more at risk to integrate armed groups.

In the aftermath of a conflict, girls were kept home from school. When asked, the parents said this was done to protect them from sexual abuse in, and on the road to, school.

*Situations like these can be avoided if the child protection and distribution staff coordinate between themselves and exchange information and skills.*

## STANDARD 20 : EDUCATION AND CHILD PROTECTION

***"Child protection concerns are reflected in the assessment, design, monitoring and evaluation of education programmes. Boys and girls of all ages can access safe, high-quality, child-friendly, flexible, relevant and protective learning opportunities in a protective environment."***

### CPMS Standard 20

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.

Quality, safe and relevant education contributes to the safety and wellbeing of girls and boys before, during and after emergencies. This is achieved through providing psychosocial support; establishing daily routines; reducing vulnerability to trafficking, exploitation and child labour; engaging children in positive alternatives to military recruitment, gangs and drugs; providing a means to identify children with special needs and vulnerabilities; and facilitating social integration of marginalized children. The safety and wellbeing of children in Education programming contributes to their overall protection, while the specific child protection programmes, such

as child-friendly spaces, can support and complement education and learning programs when coordinated with the Education sector.

Achieving this standard requires respectful dialogue between actors in both the Education 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 education actors?
- How can child protection and education actors work together to identify and prevent unintended consequences to children of education interventions?
- How can child protection and education actors work together to ensure that education services are child-friendly, safe, accessible and non-discriminatory?

*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.globalccmcluster.org/](http://www.globalccmcluster.org/) and [www.cpwg.net](http://www.cpwg.net)*

### Children walk in the Za'atari camp near Mafraq, Jordan.

Formal education is provided in Za'atari camp by the Jordanian Ministry of Education and UNICEF in two education complexes with a capacity of 5,000 students, each covering all grades except the final year of secondary school. However, these schools are not operating at full capacity. **78% of children in Za'atari camp are not attending school.**

There are diverse reasons for this from both children's and parents' perspectives. Some parents place higher value on the need for children to earn money for the household than on education and express concern about appropriate sanitation facilities. Girls' and boys' experiences of violence and harassment on the way to and from school are key deterrents, as well as discrimination, corporal punishment and bullying by both peers and staff. Additionally, children may become upset being away from parents for even a few hours – a major indicator of their level of fear and stress. The situation is exacerbated by inexperienced teachers, who themselves are often victims of war and who experience constant anxiety and struggle to create environments that are conducive to learning.

