Global Education Cluster

EDUCATION CANNOT WAIT

Good Practices on Gender and GBV Risk Mitigation Integration across the Humanitarian Programme Cycle phases by Education Clusters

Democratic Republic of Congo

The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) example shows how the Education Cluster leveraged OCHA's strategic commitment to cross-cutting issues to increase Gender / GBV risk mitigation measures integration and enhance Education in Emergencies (EiE) response monitoring.

What is the background?

The DRC's education sector remains severely affected by successive humanitarian crises – armed conflicts, inter-communal conflicts, natural disasters, epidemics/pandemics – affecting the access, continuity, quality and learning conditions of school-aged children and adolescent girls and boys.

Girls and adolescent girls are more likely to be excluded from education. Although the gender gap is moderate between 6 to 11 years (28% out-of-school girls, compared to 26% out-of-school boys), it becomes much more prominent for 12 and 13-year-olds as girls account for 60% of out-of-school children[1]. The reasons behind school exclusion based on gender are numerous and complex, varying from general insecurity, a male-dominated education workforce, poverty and strong gender stereotypes, often leading to a preference for boys' education. Girls are also subjected to early and forced marriage and pregnancy, forms of Gender-Based Violence (GBV) that are reinforced by deep-rooted harmful social and cultural norms and lead to school dropouts.

At school or on their way to school, girls are more likely to be exposed to different types of GBV, including rape and abduction. One in five girls is pressured by teachers to perform sexual favours in exchange for better grades. Although these acts are punishable by law, GBV committed by teachers is not systematically reported because schools are in too great need of teachers. In addition, the stigma attached to rape survivors prevents girls who have experienced rape from returning to school, increasing their drop-out rate.

The Humanitarian Country Team's commitment to cross-cutting issues, including GBV Risk Mitigation (GBV RM), is an incremental process which started in 2019 at the initiative of the Child Protection Area of Responsibility (CP AoR).

2019

The CP AoR Coordinator made an explicit commitment to increasing GBV risk mitigation efforts in other sectors, especially for girls

2020

The CP AoR coordinator developed a toolkit and adapted global tools to the DRC context with the support of the UNICEF Global Cluster Coordination Section (GCCS). The same year, a series of workshops took place, where good practices from other countries were reviewed and discussed, including examples of activities and indicators.

2021

The DRC became the first country to allocate 1% of the HRP budget to GBV RM and Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) in the Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP). The same year a Cross-cutting Working Group was created by the inter-cluster to support the implementation of clusters' sectoral objectives on cross-cutting issues.

2022

The DRC HRP has a Specific Objective on cross-cutting issues: *"The centrality of protection, Accountability to Affected Populations (AAP), PSEA, inclusion, GBV prevention and risk mitigation are strengthened in humanitarian action."*

2022

The Cross-cutting Working Group developed a road map on the HRP cross-cutting indicators and defined sectors' roles and responsibilities.

1   DRC's ECW-funded MYRP 2021–2023

How did the Education Cluster commit to gender and GBV risk mitigation integration?

1 Integrating Sectoral Objectives and Indicators in the HRP that reflect identified risks and barriers

The 2021 and 2022 Education Cluster Humanitarian Needs Overview (HNO) strongly analysed risks and barriers to girls' education. It outlined how school-related GBV, transactional sex, child marriage, and early pregnancy have increased the rate of school dropout among girls. In 2021, the increase in GBV cases as an impact of school closure was highlighted as an impact of COVID-19. Besides the CP AoR, the Cluster was one of the two sectors to have developed a **Sectoral Objective** with a **Matching Indicator** in the HRP for both years.

Sectoral Objective: *Girls and boys aged 6 to 17 attending targeted schools are protected against Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (SEA) as well as Gender-Based Violence (GBV) in schools thanks to a package of activities aimed at protecting and safeguarding children in school* (2021 and 2022 HRPs)

Indicator 1: *Number of students and teachers trained on child safeguarding and preventing SEA in the school (disaggregated by sex and age)* (2021 HRP only)

Indicator 2: *Number of schools with an established or strengthened complaint and referral mechanism on SEA and GBV adapted to children* (2021 and 2022 HRPs).

'Our role as Coordinators is to reflect gender and GBV risk mitigation considerations in all education strategies and to get our Cluster members to use a gender lens in all their activities. This is why you will see that GBV risk reduction in Education is a priority in our work.'

DRC Education Cluster Coordinator

2 Identifying and including new GBV RM activities and indicators in the monitoring mechanism

In the 2023 HRP, with the inclusion of a cross-cutting issues Specific Objective (SO), the Education Cluster identified new GBV RM activities, contributing to the HRP SO, on the one hand, and enhancing the Education sector's work on GBV risk mitigation, on the other. The following were included in the HRP:

▶ Systematic sex, age, and disability data disaggregation in sectoral evaluation,

▶ Strengthening the existing SEA complaints and reporting mechanism in schools, including enhancing community awareness about SEA reporting protocols and access to survivor-centred assistance

▶ Strengthening the capacity of Education Cluster members on GBV core concepts, risk analysis and referral pathways,

▶ Increasing sectoral projects abiding by the centrality of protection

With the support of the Gender/GBV/PSEA focal point in the Cross-cutting Working Group, the Education Cluster identified key GBV RM indicators integrated into the Cluster **Monitoring system**. The Cluster also developed a matrix identifying the 2023 priority tasks to support the implementation of the GBV RM measures. The critical tasks included (re)appointing cross-cutting themes focal points, strengthening Cluster' members' capacity on GBV, and further resource mobilisation for GBV RM activities led or supported by the Education Cluster.

Finally, the Education Cluster issued a Guidance Note for members on project submission for the reserve allocations, where it emphasised GBV response, prevention and risk mitigation as a critical principle of inclusive EiE and outlined the inclusion of cross-cutting issues such as GBV RM, Accountability to Affected Populations (AAP), PSEA and Disability Inclusion, as vetting criteria.

What are the persisting challenges and gaps?

- **The Cross-cutting Working Group is strongly dependent on individual agencies and organisations:** The focal points are specialists from different UN agencies and NGOs, and quite often, the high staff turnover weakens the Clusters' capacity to move forward on a specific cross-cutting issue.

- **The lack of understanding of cross-cutting issues, in general, and GBV RM particularly and how to address them** remains among Education Cluster members. Capacity development opportunities are less compared to the need.

- **Monitoring and reporting on cross-cutting indicators remains challenging**, and more support is required in GBV RM monitoring and measurement.

- There is a **lack of clarity on roles and responsibilities regarding the budget allocation and fundraising for GBV RM** between sectors and the cross-cutting themes working group. The working group was set up to lead the inter-cluster work on cross-cutting issues, including monitoring and fundraising. However, so far, the fundraising role remains the sectors' responsibility.

- **The lack of funding for cross-cutting issues** remains a challenge that impedes the implementation of GBV risk mitigation and prevention measures.

What are the key lessons learned?

- The **support** received from the **Cross-cutting Working Group has improved** the Education Cluster's **analysis** of education-related gender and GBV risks.

- Having a **cross-cutting thematic Sectoral Objective in the HRP compels the Education Cluster to work on measures** that reduce the risk of all issues rather than prioritising one issue over the others. This helps break the silo between the cross-cutting issues.

- Setting **GBV RM indicators has helped the Cluster monitor progress against targets**.

- **Opportunities for capacity development on GBV and other cross-cutting issues are not always enough** to meet the needs of the Education Cluster members across the country. To bridge this gap and the need to integrate those issues for safer, more inclusive and gender-transformative EiE responses, the Education Cluster has decided to establish a pool of trainers on EiE minimum standards[2], including on GBV RM and prevention and other cross-cutting issues.

2 As highlighted in the Inter-agency Network for Education in Emergencies Minimum Standards

How can you get more information on this good practice?

For additional information, including on how to financially support the Education Cluster on this initiative, contact:

Gilberte Amari
gamari@unicef.org

and

Hadissa Ouedraogo
hadissa.ouedraogo@savethechildren.org

Further on tools, resources are available:

GBV Risk analysis

Matching matrix for Education

HPC toolkit on GBV RM for Education Clusters

Measuring GBVRM in humanitarian settings

ECW **Guidance Note on integration of GBV risk mitigation measures**

Education Cluster **ToRs for the Pool of Trainers**

Reference group